



Strategies for a Successful Academic Interview

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22nd NIEHS Annual Career Symposium

April 26, 2019



Objectives

- Interview process – how it operates from the inside
- Preparing your application package
- Preparing for the Interview
- Interview Day
- After the Interview



What do you want?

- List your priorities
- Why do you want an academic job?

What do you need?

- List your needs
 - Space, equipment, travel funds, etc



Be selective

- Don't apply to all postings
- Consider each one and decide – Is this *really* a place I'd want to live and work?



University Perspective

- We want to grow our research portfolio
- We need good educators
- We need colleagues



Search Committee and Timeline

- Appointed by the Department Chair
- Search Committee has a Chair
- Initial review
- Rank candidates
- Invite top candidates for online interview
- Invite a few for on site interviews



Preparing your Application: Key Steps to Land the On Site Interview

- CV
- Cover Letter
- Web interview





Preparing Your Curriculum Vitae (CV)

- professional qualifications
- education
- experience
- accomplishments
- activities
- special qualifications



Cover Letter

- Purpose: to introduce yourself in a narrative format.
- It demonstrates your writing skills – proofread and spell check
- Articulate your fit
- Show enthusiasm
- Demonstrate your abilities in teaching, research, and service



- 1 page, 3-4 paragraphs
- Single-spaced
- 10-12 point font, 1” margins
- Use same font as CV for unified application
- Edit/proofread carefully
- Use active voice – keeping the tone positive and profession.



Introduction

- “Dear Members of the Search Committee” (or if a name is given for the Search Committee Chair – address it to them)
- Refer to the specific position/announcement
- How did you learn about the position?
- Why you are a good fit/excellent candidate
- If you spoke with someone or know someone at the University, include that person’s name



Body of Letter

- Demonstrate your ability in **research**, teaching, and service
- Provide brief specific examples
 - Use verbs: “led,” “developed,” “innovated” – actual contribution
- Express your motivation and how your skills and experiences prepared you for the job.
- Name Centers, Labs, resources at that institution that you could work with
- Organize by relevance – not chronology.
- Do identify potential collaborators from the institution



Last paragraph/Conclusion

- Reemphasize your enthusiasm
 - “I look forward to speaking with the search committee.”
- Thank them for their time and consideration
- End with “Kind Regards” or “Sincerely”
- Sign with your full name



A Letterhead

B Date
Department
University

C Salutation

D Brief introduction

E Strong Opening Statement

F Scientific Achievements
Pedigree & productivity

G Motivation & Impact
Innovation, creativity, & passion
Areas of expertise / Aims of future research
Demonstrate fit

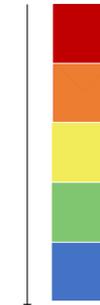
H Teaching & Mentorship
Experience/perspectives that differentiate you

I Wrap-Up

J Follow-Up & Thank You

K Closure

*Most differentiates you
from other candidates*



Least



Skype or Zoom Interviews

- Choose a professional location
- Do practice – view the space you’ve selected, as they see it
- Make notes – they will only see you, not your notes
- Highlight your research experience
- Be prepared to elaborate on your research – and where you see it going/next steps
- Convey your interest in their institution



So you've landed an Interview! what to expect

- Interviews with numerous faculty
- Scientific presentation
- Lots of walking
- Dinner with faculty
- Meet with students and staff





Prepare for the Interview

- Know who you are meeting
- Know the school/department
- Be able to discuss your research skills – and future ideas
- What classes could you teach?
- You are also interviewing them – what questions do you have?



Be prepared to answer these questions:

- Tell me about yourself?
- Why do you want this position?
- Why are you interested in our institution?
- Tell us about your research – where is it going/next steps?
- Tell us about your teaching experience?
- What classes could you teach for us?
- What can you contribute to the work we do?
- Do you have any questions for us?



Beyond the Bench

- Dinner or meals are social.
- Be prepared to talk about topics beyond the Bench
 - Sports, news, world events

A low-angle photograph of a person's hands holding a white rectangular sign. The sign features the words "BE AUTHENTIC" in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The background consists of several tall, modern buildings with a mix of grey and yellowish-brown facades, set against a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The perspective is looking up, making the buildings appear to converge towards the top of the frame.

**BE
AUTHENTIC**



Presentation

- Consider the time allotted – do not run over!
- Practice your presentation: emphasis, volume, and clarity.
- Be positive. Share your passion.



Questions you should ask:

- Tell me about the research infrastructure support that is available to faculty?
- Describe the support mechanisms for junior faculty – does the Department have a mentorship plan?
- What are sources of pilot data?
- What are the roles of the faculty in governance of the Department/College?
- Tell me about you the courses your Department offers and current teaching needs.
- Timeline for the interview process



What to wear

- Be professional
- Represent your best professional self
- Wear comfortable shoes – you will be walking a lot
- Be prepared for a long day



After the interview

- Write (hand written) thank you notes
- OK to email and follow-up with each interviewer.
- Each interviewer will complete an evaluation of you within the next few days – so don't wait!



Resources

- [https://www.training.nih.gov/assets/Preparing for Academic Interviews Handout.pdf](https://www.training.nih.gov/assets/Preparing%20for%20Academic%20Interviews%20Handout.pdf)
- <https://www.careereducation.columbia.edu/resources/how-and-why-write-great-cover-letter>