

## Tips on Organizing a Job Search

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What follows is a calendar and a list of suggested "due dates" for the things you will have to get done if you are going on the market for a job search. Nothing is graven in stone, but this order of proceedings and this schedule has proved itself to be the optimal for your best chances at self-presentation and for your dissertation committee to be able to recommend you effectively.

### BY MID-SEPTEMBER

1) Find out how your field(s) advertises for jobs and does credentials files (at the professional organization, or on campus), where interviews are conducted

- start a credentials file (if relevant)
- make it a closed file, since confidential letters look better (your supervisor can have access with your permission)
- include a transcript (unofficial will do)

2) Join the relevant professional organization or organizations as a student member if you haven't already -- you'll need to get the convention mailing that lets you reserve a hotel room at convention rates.

3) Prepare (or update) and insert in your credentials file a complete and updated CV (*curriculum vitae, vita*)

- if you don't know what one looks like, get a copy of the manual written by Arens -- a how-to assemble one (available in Germanic Studies graduate office).
- let at least three people look it over for balance.
- if you have two areas of specialization, you may not want to put one in your credential file, but instead have two versions which you send out yourself.

4) Prepare a dissertation abstract (400-500 words; NEVER more than two pages with nice margins); this will be sent out with your job applications. Interdisciplinary topics may need to be described two ways, one for each

5) Prepare one or more lists of courses completed, as indicators of areas of specialization or possible future teaching areas, as a key to the word hash that's on your transcript (see the CV manual to clarify that). You'll send this out with your job applications.

- consider the possibility of multiple lists for different profiles
- have at least 3 people look it over for coherence, sense, and balance

6) Request letters of reference from approximately 5 professors who know you well

- one *must* be from your supervisor (or co-supervisor), or it looks strange
- one should be a teaching reference (ask a coordinator to observe you, if necessary)

\*\*HOW TO DO THIS, POLITELY:

- give your recommenders an envelope with the correct credentials address on it (you don't need to use the forms; letterhead is fine), if a service is used; give address labels if directly to departments
- give your recommenders your vita and dissertation abstract at the same time
- give your recommenders a cover letter indicating what kinds of jobs you'd prefer; what contact you've had with them when; when you need the letter; when you are going to defend, proper title of your dissertation -- to remind them of what you represent

- GIVE YOUR RECOMMENDERS AT LEAST 3 WEEKS

**\*\*NOTE:** To get the best letter possible, make sure your recommenders have at least one-two chapters of your dissertation in hand to refer to (and to make your claims of finishing credible) - about 50-60 pp. is ideal, but the issue is to give them something, with a proposed schedule for completion (and at this time, arrange how and when they want to see the rest, in pieces, or all in one lump, or some other combination).

7) Clean up your personal website, with course materials and CV (note easy directions for a professional-looking website at Germanic Studies home page ([www.utexas.edu/depts/german/main.html](http://www.utexas.edu/depts/german/main.html)). Clean up the message on your answering machine.

### **BETWEEN MID-SEPTEMBER AND MID-OCTOBER**

(before the first "Job Lists" come out)

1) Draft sample job application letters (see C-V manual), and have your dissertation supervisor and at least three other people react to them. NEVER send out the same letter to every job -- they sound canned, too generic. Consider drafting several versions:

- one for research-intensive institutions
- one for comprehensive institutions (like UT, that also hires for teaching); this will also do for liberal arts colleges, who want research from their faculty since they send their students to graduate education
- one for teaching colleges, urban state campuses, junior colleges

2) The first due dates for applications are around November 1. Only consider those jobs which fit you, but NEVER decide in advance that you don't fit unless it expressly says so.

3) Between mid-September and mid-December (while you're doing sample letters), work on course proposals that would be "naturals" for you in your fields (in order of priority): the introductory or survey course in your major field (graduate and undergraduate levels), a senior seminar, a graduate seminar in your specialty, a lower-division humanities, interdisciplinary, or general education offering -- and have ideas about what canonical and non-canonical approaches and textbooks you'd use, what approaches, what goals. ALSO: know take on current issues in pedagogy (e.g. "multiculturalism", "proficiency," "science literacy").

4) Lobby for and arrange mock interviews for your department before the end of the semester.

**\*\*See information on Interview Questions by Hess and Wright, posted at the Germanic Studies home page, under the section on Professional Development ([www.utexas.edu/depts/german/main.html](http://www.utexas.edu/depts/german/main.html)).**

5) Practice a job talk. . . . most departments will help you schedule them as an "official" talk for feedback -- ask your audience for ALL kinds of critique (even on your tics).

6) Arrange a working credit card and clothes. Most job visits require that you buy the plane tickets, and then will reimburse you. Similarly, you may have two or three interviews back to back, and no time to get to the cleaners. Ask for your holiday gifts early! Do you, for example, have a proper-looking winter coat or jacket?

**\*\*Again, none of these things are compulsory, but if you hold to something like this schedule, you have the best chance of not driving yourself or your committee crazy and conducting an effective job search.**

This is part of your job-- you have to figure out how to do these things while you're doing something else. Work on them a bit each day, and you won't have a major divot out of your life for the job search -- it'll take just a week to send completed things out and retool the letters for each available job.