

## The Academic Job Interview: Sample Academic Job Interview Questions

### Questions about Research

- Describe your current research. Will you be continuing in this research track? Describe your future research plans.
- How would you involve graduate/undergraduate students in your research?
- Where do your research strengths lie? (Quantitative/qualitative, etc.?) Why? What are your research weaknesses? And how will you improve?
- Your current research requires more technological support than this institution is able to provide. How will you deal with this?
- We see that you have done a lot of conference papers and presentations; we have limited professional development funds. How do you feel about that as a limiting factor? (Will you continue to go and pay your own way – stop doing research? Resent the limitations?)
- Could you tell us about your dissertation?
- What audiences are you addressing, what are the other hot books or scholars in your field, and how does your work compare with theirs?
- What is the cutting edge in your field and how does your work extend it?
- How will you go about revising your dissertation for publication?  
What is the broader significance of your research? How does it expand our historic understanding, literary knowledge, humanistic horizons?
- Can you explain the value of your work to an educated layperson?
- Tell us how your research has influenced your teaching. In what ways have you been able to bring the insights of your research to your courses at the undergraduate level?
- How would you balance your teaching duties and your own research plans?
- If you were organizing a special symposium or conference on your research topic, which scholars would you invite?
- In what journals do you expect to publish your research?
- Would you be able to take on a graduate student immediately?
- Tell us briefly what theoretical framework you used in developing your research?
- If you were to begin it again, are there any changes you would make in your dissertation?
- What facilities do you need to carry out your research?
- How does your research address culture, language, race, ethnicity, socio-economic factors?
- What is left out of the talk?
- What is the most significant piece of research that you have read in the last year?
- What do you envision for creating a research program here?
- Do you plan to apply for research funding?
- What is the funding record of your field?
- We have a large teaching load here – 12 hours per term; how would you manage this and still work on doing research and publishing?
- Tell us about a research project in which you've been involved that was successful and one that was not. Why do you think these were the outcomes?

## Questions about Teaching

- What is your philosophy of teaching?
- What do you consider your teaching strengths/weaknesses?
- If you have a student who is doing poorly in your class, but has not missed classes and appears to be a good student, what would you do?
- There is a strong move to infuse interdisciplinary work into the curriculum. With what other disciplines could you work (teach/research)? Have you done such work in the past?
- What classes could you teach in our program?
- How would you plan a course in \_\_\_? What texts would you use? What topics would you cover?
- How would you evaluate student learning?
- How do you assess your students' performances?
- Have you ever conducted formative evaluation or an SGID?
- How do you bring diversity into your day to day teaching?
- What is the difference between collaborative and cooperative learning?
- Could you tell us about your teaching experiences?
- How have you used technology in the classroom?
- How do you feel about teaching students of mixed abilities?
- If you could teach any course you wanted, what would it be? What would you teach next if you could teach two of them?
- How would you organize a freshman composition course?
- How would you organize an upper division course in your field?
- How would you organize a senior seminar in your field?
- How would you organize a graduate course in your field?
- If you could teach your dream upper level specialty course, what would that be?
- What critical approaches do you find most persuasive? How do they translate into your teaching?
- What kinds of essays do you want your students to write?
- How do reading and writing interact in your classroom?
- How do you feel about teaching ..... (composition, calculus , public speaking – substitute course from your field) ?
- How do you know you've been successful in teaching ..... (composition, calculus, public speaking)?
- How would you teach a major work in your field? (They may name one)
- Can you think of a specific example of when a student you were teaching really seemed to learn something that you regarded as worthwhile? Briefly describe what happened. What thing or things did you do that contributed to that student learning? Why, do you think, did these actions of yours work?
- Take course \_\_\_. As you would teach it, what three goals would the course achieve? When students had completed your course, what would they have learned that is of lasting value?
- What experience have you had teaching at (community college, private, liberal arts, faith-based) institution? How if at all do you think teaching at [type of] institution differs from teaching at a four year college or university?
- What experiences have you had teaching diverse students? (Well prepared, under prepared, first-generation, low-income, full-time, part-time, students with full-time jobs and/or family care responsibilities, students representing different ethnic groups and races, religions, ages and genders?) What teaching methods have proved effective with such students?

- How well prepared are you to teach the following 5 basic level courses? (Insert appropriate courses from your field)
- Describe your familiarity and experience with different teaching methods such as collaborative learning, learning styles adaptation, and classroom assessment.
- Tell me about your teaching techniques (e.g., group projects, case method, etc.)
- What is your favorite lecture and why?
- Tell me about your industry experience (if you have any)? How would you bring that industry experience into the classroom?
- If you have no industry experience: How do you expect to be able to teach students about the field if you have never worked in it?
- What is your favorite theory or theorist to teach?
- How do you motivate your students?
- How would you encourage your students to major in our field?
- How would you work with our students as opposed to those at your current institution?
- What would you change in an undergraduate/graduate/teacher education curriculum?
- How do you address culture, language, ethnicity, race in your courses? Give me an example or an activity that helps teachers/researchers talk about these issues.
- How should teacher education programs be set up so that prospective teachers are prepared to teach?

## Questions about Department and Community Involvement

- Institution \_\_ is dedicated to providing a liberal arts/ spiritually based/ holistic education. How would you describe your place within that vision?
- You've seen our mission statement. How would you see yourself contributing to our mission and campus atmosphere?
- We have instituted a community service requirement for all undergraduates – how would you see yourself interface with such a program?
- Could you tell us about your long-range plans and commitment to this department?
- What is your opinion on single sex education? (if it is a Women's University/ College)
- How will you fit in as a department member and what kind of contribution will you make to our community?
- Why do you especially want to teach at University \_\_? How do you see yourself contributing to our department?
- Apart from the obvious financial reasons, why would you like to join the Faculty of Y at University X?
- We conceive of our campus as one large community. What non- or extra -academic activities would you be interested in sponsoring or participating in?
- What is your perception of the responsibilities of a full-time faculty member in a University / College? ...To the department? ...To the division? ...To the University / College as a whole?

## Questions about Career and Personal Choices

- Describe your goals and plans for professional development as a University / College instructor?
- Where do you see yourself professionally in 5 years? In 10 years?
- What are some of the specific things you would like to address/learn in your own professional development? How is this connected to your work as an academic?
- What about our position is particularly attractive to you?
- What do you do when you are not working? (Modern equivalent of “what are your hobbies?”)
- How long do you plan on staying at University \_\_\_?
- What is the last book that you read for fun?
- How do you feel about living in \_\_\_ city?
- I understand that your partner is completing his/her Ph.D. What if you receive job offers in different locations?
- What kind of salary are you looking for?
- Why have you changed jobs so frequently?
- If you get more than one job offer how will you decide between them?
- Who else is interviewing you?
- How did you go about researching / preparing for the interview for this position?
- What questions do you have for us?

### **Resources used in compiling this list include**

The Chronicle of Higher Education, Chronicle Careers  
Mary Dillon Johnson  
"The Academic Job Interview Revisited"  
<http://chronicle.com/jobs/2004/10/2004101501c.htm>

The University of Georgia, Teaching Assistant Resources  
"Job Search"  
[http://www.ctl.uga.edu/o\\_taresources/jobsearch.html](http://www.ctl.uga.edu/o_taresources/jobsearch.html)

University of Maryland College Park  
Department of American Studies, Mary Corbin Sies  
"Academic Job Interview Advice"  
<http://www.otal.umd.edu/~sies/jobadvice.html>

Michigan State University, University Teaching Assistant Programs  
K. M. Johnson  
"Talking about Teaching in the Interview"  
<http://tap.msu.edu/workshops/2007/oct.htm#101807>

The University of Michigan, Division of Student Affairs  
The Career Centre  
"Interview Questions – Academic Job Search"  
[http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/Interview\\_QAcademic\\_JS.pdf](http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/Interview_QAcademic_JS.pdf)

University of Pennsylvania School of Arts and Sciences, Department of English  
Michael Gamer and Anne K. Krook  
"Job-Interviewing Handout"  
<http://www.english.upenn.edu/mgamer/interview.html>

San Francisco State University, Department of Mathematics  
Julia Aguirre  
"Academic Interview Preparation Resource Document"  
<http://math.sfsu.edu/hsu/interviewprep.doc>

The University of Texas at Austin, Trina Sego and Jeff L. Richards  
"Ph.D. Interview Preparation Guide for Positions in Academia"  
<http://advertising.utexas.edu/IR/InterviewPrep.html>

The University of Western Ontario, Teaching Support Centre  
Graduate Career Day Handout October 2007  
"Entering the Academic Profession"  
[http://www.uwo.ca/tsc/future\\_professor.2007-2008.html?id=79](http://www.uwo.ca/tsc/future_professor.2007-2008.html?id=79)

University of Minnesota Centre for Teaching and Learning, Preparing Future Faculty Retreat Handouts (2001)

Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning Harvard University