

Tips on the Academic Job Search

GSD students are often interested in pursuing careers in academia. Many GSD alumni combine part time teaching and practice in design firms, whereas others seek full time employment.

An effective academic job search requires several steps: preparation, timetable for a full time search, the mechanics of the search, the interview and the job offer. We encourage you to visit GSD Career Services for advice and support as you plan and implement your search.

I. Preparation

Academic search committees seek candidates who are potentially eligible for tenure. They seek candidates who:

- Have research experience or have practiced (and can demonstrate this in a good portfolio)
- Are published in journals
- Have good teaching experience
- Have won awards
- Have given lectures and presentations
- Are supported by excellent letters of recommendation/references

Research your field

Preparation for your academic career includes researching the field as well as your own interests. Identify leading researchers and practitioners in your field and learn about their work. Consider joining the professional organization for your field. Attend conferences to keep abreast of the “hot topics” and to network with other professionals.

We recommend the following professional organizations that are related to GSD student interests:

ACSA – Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture www.acsa-arch.org

ASLA – American Society of Landscape Architects www.asla.org

ACSP – Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning www.acsp.org

APA – American Planning Association www.planning.org

AIA – American Institute of Architects www.aia.org

SAH – Society of Architectural Historians www.sah.org

II. Timetable for the Academic Job Search *

The academic job search can be a lengthy process. This is a “generalized” view of the time table for a person seeking a full time tenure track position. There may be a shorter timetable if you are seeking an adjunct position.

For academic jobs beginning in September:

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|---------|--|
| March | 18 months prior to starting in a new position <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Discuss applications with your advisor➤ Work on dissertation |
| October | 12 months prior <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Look and apply for jobs➤ Finalize letters of reference➤ Register for national meetings when appropriate➤ Attend conferences when appropriate |

- Nov - Jan **10 months prior**
- Practice for interviews and conference presentations
 - Keep in touch with your advisor. Can he or she help you network?
 - Attend conferences when appropriate
- Jan - March **8 months prior**
- Attend conferences
 - Prepare for campus visits
 - Look for late job opportunities
 - Develop fallback options
- March **6 months prior**
- Late Campus visits
 - Negotiate any job offers
 - Finish dissertation
- June **3 months prior**
- Prepare for job if you have one
 - Finish dissertation (for DDes & PhD)
 - If you don't have a job, go to fallback plan.
- September **Start job**
Or renew search

Career services staff are available for consultation at every stage of the academic job search. Visit us at 422 Gund Hall.

Another valuable resource is the **Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning**. The center offers extensive services, publications and advice for those pursuing an academic career.

Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning -- <http://www.bokcenter.harvard.edu>
Science Center 318, One Oxford St., Cambridge, MA
617-495-4869

* Adapted from *Cracking the Academia Nut: A Guide to Preparing for Your Academic Career*, available at GSD Career Services.

III. Research schools which are a “good fit” with your interests

Consider the type of institution for whom you want to work. Schools often seek a “good fit” between a candidate’s interests and the school’s mission, so it is important to be aware of your preferences.

Learn more about schools in your field using the following directories:

- Architecture, Urban Design and Digital Media – View “NAAB Accredited Programs in Architecture” at www.naab.org/cal_cat1724/cal_cat.htm
- Landscape Architecture – www.asla.org/nonmembers/accredited_programs.cfm
- Planning – http://www.acsp.org/CareerInfo/links_to_planning_schools.htm
- Chronicle for Higher Education features university profiles – <http://chronicle.com/jobs/profiles>

Seek connections in your field

A doctoral student will benefit from a close relationship with his/her advisor. The advisor should offer advice on research topics and also help the student connect with other practitioners in the field. GSD professors are often well connected and can advise both doctoral and masters level students on academic opportunities.

Consider scheduling informational interviews with people working in your field. Informational interviews are 20 minute interviews that allow you to gain advice from a professional. Informational interviews are not job interviews.

Gather references

Identify 3-5 people who can serve as references for your academic job search. These references may be professors or former supervisors. They should be able to speak highly of your work. If you require a letter of recommendation, be certain to give your reference advance notice and a copy of your resume.

You may also want to give them information on what makes you a good candidate to help them write a letter targeted specifically to the opportunity.

Gain experience

To secure teaching experience and build your teaching portfolio, consider:

- Teaching at Boston Architectural College (BAC) www.the-bac.edu To apply, send your cover letter & resume to teaching@the-bac.edu
- Teaching within Career Discovery, a six week summer program that hires students every spring to teach the following summer. Watch your GSD email in early February for hiring announcements. www.gsd.harvard.edu/professional/career_discovery

Publish

Ask your advisor for suggestions on where to publish. You may also check the Loeb Library for periodicals in your field and learn about the submission process.

Enter competitions

Competitions can be found at the following websites:

Death By Architecture www.deathbyarchitecture.com

Competitions Magazine www.competitions.org

ASCA news lists competitions; be sure to also check AIA, ASLA, APA

IV. The Mechanics of the Search

Begin by considering what you will do if your academic job search is not successful the first time around. You may be able to find work as an adjunct or practice in a design firm if you wish.

View job openings [under your field of interest/at your school of interest](#):

- Chronicle of Higher Education <http://chronicle.com/jobs> (GSD Career Services is a subscriber)
- HigherEdJobs.com www.higheredjobs.com
- Academic Careers Online www.academiccareers.com
- AIA Career Center <http://careercenter.aia.org>
- ASCA News has job postings for Architecture jobs. Check Loeb Library for ACSA News.
- ACSP job listings www.acsp.org/jobs/jobs.html
- 'eRecruiting at GSD' – Accessible via GSD student & alumni job seeker account <http://harvardgsd.erecruiting.com>

When you identify a position of interest, begin by researching the university and checking your contacts to learn as much as you can about that organization and department. You may apply for many positions, so develop a filing system to keep track of your submissions.

V. The Interview and Job Offer

The Interview

If you are contacted for an interview, be certain that you have thoroughly researched the department and the school (including the philosophy, courses offered, and faculty work).

Interviews for full time, tenure track positions may involve a short phone or conference interview and then an extended campus visit. During the campus visit, you may interview with other faculty, the chair of the department, and with students. Be certain to be relaxed and positive during these interviews.

Campus interviews can involve many elements, including a job talk. The job talk is a lecture, similar to public lectures given at the GSD. You may want to prepare more than one job talk and offer the department a choice. Ideally, this talk will be 30 minutes to one hour in length. Strive to focus on 3 main points and indicate the broad implications of your work.

You may also be required to give a teaching demonstration, and participate in other informal social occasions such as tours, receptions and meals.

Tip: Write thank you notes to the chair and to those who take primary responsibility for your visit.

The Job Offer

You may be offered a job via a phone call. We strongly encourage you to consider calling back to give yourself a chance to prepare for negotiating terms of the offer. Do not make requests or attempt to negotiate prior to receiving an offer.

Consult your advisor and other professional contacts about how best to negotiate with this department. Items you may negotiate include:

- Amount of time to decide on the offer; starting date
- Office space
- Assistance in finding spousal employment
- Funding for resources
- Parking permit
- Tenure review timing
- Summer research support
- Moving expenses
- Travel funds for conferences
- Teaching assistants or fellows, other administrative support
- Benefits (health, life, disability and retirement)
- Assistance in finding, and sometimes in financing, housing
- Sabbatical leave

Negotiations may occur in several stages. Through each stage, think of common interests, explain and justify them, and be honest and straightforward. Be certain to get the final offer details in writing from the chair of the department.

Print Resources

Check the following books in the GSD Career Services Office for more information:

“Cracking the Academia Nut” by Margaret Newhouse, Ph.D., President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1997.

“The Academic Job Search Handbook” by Mary Morris Heiberger, and Julia Miller Vick, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996.