

Job Search Tips from Math Department Faculty and Graduate Alumni

At the Joint Mathematics Meetings:

- Half-hour interviews
- Try to leave time in between meetings rather than having back-to-back interviews. Be willing to tell employers (in advance) that you need to reschedule or choose a different time.
- Take your notes about each school.
- Listen to what the interviewers talk about and gather clues about what is important to them. (from a 2013 PhD alum) (Kelly Yancey)
- The Joint Mathematics Meetings are especially important for those seeking a primarily teaching position (from a 2012 PhD alum).

Networking:

- Talk with mathematicians informally at conferences. Let them know you're on the job market. You may hear about jobs informally or early this way. (from a 2014 PhD alum) (Anton Lukyanenko)
- Use your advisor's network; ask your advisor for help making connections. (from a 2014 PhD alum) (Qiang Zeng)
- Your advisor may be willing to contact some of the places you have applied to ask them to keep an eye out for your application. (from a 2014 PhD job seeker) (Greg Puleo)
- Your advisor, professors, postdocs in our department are good sources of information. Ask everyone for advice and let them know that you're on the job market. Be involved in seminars. (from a 2014 PhD alum) (Ser-Wei Fu)
- Build bridges when you hear talks on campus or at conferences. Look for mathematical connections with the speaker's work and talk with him or her if you see any connection at all. Go to conferences as much as possible (from Prof. Hal Schenck)

The job search process:

- Start early! Get all your application materials and your webpage ready the summer before and revise as needed. It will be harder to find time in the fall, and having them prepared will give you more confidence and peace of mind. (from several 2013 and 2014 PhD alums)
- Check mathjobs.org for new listing about once a week starting in August. (from a 2014 PhD alum) (Anton Lukyanenko)
- Don't apply for jobs which you would not be willing to accept. (from a 2014 PhD alum) (Katie Anders)
- Set aside one day per week or one half-day per week for job applications (from two 2014 PhD alums) (Katie Anders and Anton Lukyanenko)

- It took about 30 minutes to apply for each job, including looking at their website to personalize the cover letter. (from a 2014 PhD alum) (Anton Lukyanenko)
- Give a version of your “job talk” at a departmental seminar in September. It will force you to get your slides ready and you’ll get some valuable feedback and practice. (from a 2014 PhD alum) (Katie Anders)
- If you know someone, even a little bit, at an institution to which you are applying, send an email to let them know you are applying. (from Prof. Hal Schenck)
- Marci Blocher can keep a file of your recommendation letters and send them out to any place which requires letters on paper. There are fewer and fewer of these, but you may encounter one. (from a 2012 PhD alum)
- International students – be informed about the OPT rules and timing. ISSS, the international students’ office, can provide information and advice.

Using mathjobs.org:

- If you are looking for postdoctoral positions, check the listings for “professor” as well as for “postdoc.” Postdoctoral positions go by various names, such as “research assistant professor” or even “instructor,” so read the job listing. (from a 2014 PhD alum) (Anton Lukyanenko)
- Be sure to check the text of the listing for the application deadline, which may differ sometimes from the “deadline” field. (from a 2014 PhD alum) (Qiang Zeng)

Joint Math Meetings:

- Plan in advance to go to the JMM in the year of your job search, whether or not you have had any invitations for interviews. Last minute opportunities may arise. (from two 2014 PhD alums) (Katie Anders and Anton Lukyanenko)
- Plan to give a talk at the JMM – know the deadlines and apply in time. Then you can ask for travel funding from the department and/or AMS. (from a 2014 PhD alum) (Katie Anders)
- The Joint Meetings Employment Center is used a lot for teaching oriented job interviews. (from a 2014 PhD alum) (Katie Anders)
- Applicants dress up for the Joint Meetings Employment Center. Male applicants usually wear suits and ties. (from a 2014 PhD alum) (Katie Anders)

Personal Webpage:

- Not all employers will look at your website, so all of your important information should be in your application materials. (from a 2014 PhD alum) (Qiang Zeng)
- Having a good webpage ready in advance of the job application season helps you feel more confident and professional. (from a 2014 PhD alum) (Ser-Wei Fu)
- Tori Corkery can help you make your website functional and nice looking. The summer before is a good time to work on your webpage. You can have inactive links and fill them in as you prepare your materials. (from a 2014 PhD alum) (Katie Anders)

Finding jobs in Europe:

- In discrete math, the mailing list dmanet is a source of job listings worldwide. (from a 2014 PhD job seeker) (Greg Puleo)
- There is a European job listing site. It is used only for the listings, not for uploading application materials. (from a 2014 PhD job seeker) (Ser-Wei Fu)

On-campus visits:

- When you are invited for an on-campus visit/interview, the school will pay your expenses – travel, lodging, meals. (from a 2014 PhD job seeker) (Katie Anders)
- For postdoc positions, there usually isn't an on-campus visit or interview. (from a 2014 PhD job seeker) (Anton Lukyanenko)
- Before you give a talk in any setting, plan several places in the talk where you could end gracefully if you run short of time. (from Prof. Hal Schenck)
- A good Beamer talk has very little on each slide – don't fill it up. (from Prof. Hal Schenck)
- When you are on the job market, have a chalk talk ready also – it might be requested. (from Prof. Hal Schenck)

Interview questions and tips:

- "Tell us something about yourself which is not in your application materials." (asked of a 2014 PhD alum) (Katie Anders)
- At interviews for teaching-focused jobs, the interviewers were very interested in getting to know the applicant as a person. (from a 2014 PhD alum) (Katie Anders)
- "Why do you specifically want to move to (city where the job was located)?" (asked of a 2014 PhD job seeker)
- "What are your back-up plans if academia doesn't work out?" (asked of a 2014 PhD job seeker)
- "What do you know about (town where the job was located)?" (asked of a 2014 PhD alum) (Katie Anders)
- You can signal interest in the position by asking questions specific to that school or geographical location. (from a 2014 PhD alum) (Katie Anders)
- You might be asked about your teaching even at a primarily research position (from a 2012 PhD alum, Kunwoo Kim).
- Skype interviews and phone interviews are common. (from some 2012 PhD alumni)