

## Second interviews

### *What is a campus visit?*

A campus visit is a two-day event in which a department flies a candidate to its university; hosts the candidate in a variety of social settings; introduces the candidate to various stakeholders within the department, unit, and university; and—most importantly—listens to the candidate give a job talk.

The purpose of a campus visit is for the entire department (or as many of its faculty as possible) to meet the candidate. Moreover, it is an opportunity for faculty to get to know the candidate's ideas, methodological investments, and ways of thinking. It's true that all of the coffees, meals, fifteen-minute office visits, and rides to and from the airport *are* interviews, but it is not true that they are assessments. This is where the all-elusive, yet all-important, word “fit” enters the job search equation.

A university department is an ecosystem in which individual faculty specialize in different, and sometimes overlapping, content areas. When a department searches for a new candidate, it is looking for someone whose interests will compliment and extend these content areas—because a job hire is an investment in a department's future. Consequently, while the job candidate's scholarship and academic interests are very important, a job will be offered to the candidate who “fits” a department's ecosystem, which is both actual (in terms of present-tense needs) and aspirational (in terms of future academic programming).

### *What is a job talk?*

Here are several things to take into account when you write your job talk:

- The job talk should not rehash one's writing sample; it should present a different and/or complimentary set of materials.
- The talk should be 30-40 minutes long.
- The talk should consider audience very carefully: faculty in attendance probably do not specialize in your field and therefore may not be familiar with certain texts, historical events, and/or methodologies central to your area of expertise.
  - Build into your talk background information and/or key terms.
  - Focus your talk on “big picture” ideas rather than complex and nuanced arguments about a particular text.

Remember that a department is looking for a colleague whose interests will compliment and extend its intellectual ecosystem. Therefore, your goal in the job talk is not only to show a department what you think about a given topic but, perhaps moreover, how you approach this topic. What kinds of questions do you ask? What tools do you use to approach material? What is your critical “range”?

### *How should you prepare?*

The most important thing you can do (in addition to writing your job talk) to prepare for a campus visit is to educate yourself about the university.

Spend time researching the department, unit, and university along with the area in which the school is located:

- In what fields do department faculty specialize? What do they teach?
- What are the departmental requirements for undergraduate and, if applicable, graduate programs? What are the department's curricular values?
- How is the general education curriculum structured?

- What is the college or university's mission statement? How does it understand diversity and inclusivity? How does it enact these values within units and departments?
- What interdepartmental / interdisciplinary centers, programs, initiatives, and/or grants are available?

In advance of your arrival, you will receive a detailed schedule from the department chair or administrator in which every minute (quite literally) of your visit is mapped out in advance. Use this schedule to help you prepare for all the conversations you will have. If you are set to have coffee with a particular faculty member, learn about them in advance of the coffee. If you will meet the Dean of your unit, learn about the unit. These are opportunities to 1) ask educated questions; 2) receive good information; and 3) show that you have done your research and want the job.

## Thank You Notes & Emails

It is customary to write a short, email thank you after an interview. The appropriate action is to email your thank you to your main contact—such as the job search committee chair—and ask them to forward the thank you to the search committee.

The thank you note should be short and include the following information:

- Thanking them for their time and effort to interview you
- Personal note(s) related to something you learned (*I was impressed by your presentation on \_\_\_\_\_, I hope you have a great vacation to Maine, etc.*)
- Reiterate your interest in the position