

Job Market Interviews

Most employers will interview job applicants during the January ASSA meetings. You can expect interviews to be scheduled on all three days. It is your responsibility to make travel arrangements and hotel reservations. In previous years the main hotels have filled up early, forcing late registrants to find lodging in less convenient hotels. I recommend that you make hotel reservations in November.

In December, employers will contact you to schedule interviews. When making your schedule, be sure to leave time to get from one interview to the next. Most interviews will take place in hotel rooms, and there are a large number of hotels involved. Getting from one room to another can be quite time-consuming, especially if you have to change hotels. Most interviews are 30 minutes, but some are 45 minutes. Ask when scheduling.

These interviews are a **very** critical step towards landing a campus invitation. The key to success is being prepared.

Most interviewers start by giving you the opportunity to explain your research. They might give you 5 to 15 minutes. This is similar to a mini seminar without visual aids. You need to develop a 5 minute summary of your research. This is very difficult. The temptation is to start with motivation, but this can take you adrift for 15 minutes before you discuss your research! You need to start with a direct summary of your research question, methods and conclusions. You need to be clear and direct.

Many interviewers will ask you about future research. Be prepared to talk in detail about future research plans. This should not be an off-the-top-of-the-head discussion.

Many interviewers will ask you about teaching interests. Your answer should depend on who you are talking to. Large departments have highly specialized faculty, so everyone primarily teaches in their field of research. Smaller departments require broader teaching. Departments with graduate programs will typically expect new assistant professors to teach in both their graduate and undergraduate programs. You may be asked what textbook you will use, or what topics you would cover. The interviewer is probably trying to see if you have thought about the issue or not.

Many students have interviews with a broad range of potential employers (economics departments, business schools, consulting firms, etc.) Some will ask you directly: “Are you really interested in (a liberal arts college)?” Be prepared for such questions, and answer directly. If you are hesitant or ambiguous, the interviewer might conclude that you are not truly interested, and will not pursue your application.

Some tips:

1. Be energetic, engaged, and interested. Be excited about research and teaching.
2. Know who you are talking to.
3. Keep the discussion professional.
4. Stay away from personal issues.