Navigating Your Academic Job Market Search

Graduate Student and Postdoc “Summer Camp”
Day 2: Winning the First Round of Interviews

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Winning the First Round of Interviews.
Agenda:

- In General...
- Skype Interviews
- In-Person Interviews
- Additional Tips
- Practice
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In General: Look the Part

WOMEN
- Gray/Brown Suit
- Color Can Work
- Easy on the Jewels
- Pants vs. Skirt
- Heels vs. No Heels

MEN
- Gray/Blue Suit
- Blazers can Work
- Tame the Beard
- New Leather Shoes
- New Belt

EVERYONE
- **FIT, NOT fortune**
- Haircut
- Wear it all first
- Ask for honesty
- Get it tailored!
In General: Accessorize

- Your pens
- Copies of CV
- Notebook
- H$_2$O or Coffee
- Post-it notes
- Breath mints
In General: This, Not That
In General: This, Not That
In General: This, Not That
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More and More via Skype...
What makes a Skype Interview different from an in-person interview?
Is a Skype interview more like an in-person or a phone interview?
Why Prep for “VI”?  
- 10% in 2010  
- 42% in 2012  
- 60% in 2013  

Sources: WSJ (2010/2012); Forbes (2013)
Profile Upkeep

48 Hours Before:
Confirm Skype Handle
“Can you hear me now?”
“Can you hear me now?”

- Use a hardwired connection if possible
- Rent a microphone (or make sure that your space has great acoustics)
- Find the right volume on your speakers (headphones are not ideal)
- Make sure you’ve used the equipment
- Always have a second device
Oh &@(*# I can’t hear a thing and the image is garbled.
Relax. It will probably happen.
Nip it in the bud.
Have that second device and contact information.
What Kind of Space?

HOW WAS YOUR INTERVIEW I LOVE YOU SWEETIE???
Background...
Background...

- Everyone always says “find a bookcase”
- Keep things **simple** but **not bland**
  - Don’t distract the viewer
  - e.g. Table with a flower vase off to the side
  - Bookshelf: varied patterns/empty space
  - Art posters on a blank wall
- What to **avoid**
  - Busy, Blank, Bright (or reflective)
Jobs Get in at the Eyes
Jobs Get in at the...camera

“Eyes up”
Regardless of the number of interviewers

Orient Yourself
Check to make sure you’re smiling

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Skype Etiquette

- DO close all programs
- DO use your hands
- DO sit with feet flat
- DO pause

- DON’T cross arms
- DON’T hunch over
- DON’T shout
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Conference Interviews
Do Prep for the Elements
Do Your HW / Don’t Freak

In the Week(s) before:
- Do research
- Record yourself
- ...in front of a mirror
- Practice with partners
- Develop questions
- Know:
  - Your research
  - Your courses
  - Next project
  - Mentoring
  - Tricky questions

24 hours before:
- Arrive in town with time to spare
- Check out location
- Sleep (but caffeinate)
- No conference trolls
- Read something unrelated to the job market—even enjoyable—on the morning of your conversation.
- Goldilocks zone
In the Room
(It May Get...Weird).
In the Room

- **80% in 20 Seconds**
  - Smile / Energy
  - Handshake-ready

- **Eyes up**
  - Where?
  - Bridge of the nose
  - Keep them level
  - But you can look off!

- **Posture**
  - Hands at side
  - Minimal gestures
  - Feet flat
  - Back straight
At the Reception

(It May Get... Weirder).
Answer Formulation

- **Elements of strong answers:**
  - **Brevity**—two sentences instead of three
  - Articulating broad **stakes** of the question
  - Addressing **opposing** views
  - **Positive** accounts of your department/experience

- **Other indicators of confidence to faculty:**
  - Rephrasing a question to **clarify** or **shift focus**
  - Tying answers to **previous** questions or comments
  - Taking a moment to **think** about an answer
Rhetorical Tactics

- **Acknowledge, Adjust, Pivot**
  - “I thought exactly the same thing at first, but I think that the real concern is [x].”

- **Admit a Hard Question**
  - “That’s a really interesting thought. Do you mind if I take a second to think about it?”
  - “That’s a tough question to unpack. What do you think would be the first step?”

- **Provide the motivation for your questions.**
  - “I’ve spent some very productive time on committees in my department and I’ve enjoyed the experience. Can you say more about opportunities to do department service at University X?”
Questions?
Workshop/Practice

- Groups of 3
- One Packet/Group
- Introductions
Workshop/Practice

- A → B, B → C, C → A

Feedback

- Positives / areas to improve
- Regroup after 10 mins, repeat
- Research/Teaching/General