

A Guide for European Job Market Candidates

European Economic Association *

2018-2019 Edition

1 Introduction

This guide provides information and some advice on the economic job market, specifically addressed to junior job market candidates from European institutions. The main focus is on the primary market, the largest segment, with interviews taking place during the European Job Market in early December and the ASSA meetings in early January.¹

The goal of a job market search is to find a good match between candidates and jobs. Success is not just getting an academic job or a job in a top-ranked university. Every year, there are more PhD candidates than academic positions, but there is high demand for economists and virtually all candidates will get a job (Cawley et al., 2016). Success is getting a job that you enjoy, in which your work is appreciated and where you can continue to improve. In your applications, consider economics departments, business schools, public policy schools, medical schools (if you are a health economist), central banks, international organizations (e.g. World Bank, IMF), research centers, and the private sector.

2 Getting ready for the job market

- Spring/Summer

- **Job Market Paper (JMP)**: What matters the most for your job search is your JMP. You should work hard on it, write and re-write it, especially abstract and introduction. Take advantage of writing tips, such as those in Cochrane (2005). Ask your advisors, colleagues, and friends to read it and give feedback. Continue to improve it.
- **Present** your JMP at your university. Ideally, you should present at least once in an informal seminar, and once in a ‘high stakes’ seminar with many faculty members.

*Compiled by Michela Carlana, job market candidate in 2017-18 from Bocconi University. This document is constantly being updated. If you have suggestions about useful additional content, please email admin@eeassoc.org

¹Candidates specifically interested in jobs in Spain and the UK may also wish to attend the local job markets organized by the Spanish Economic Association and the Royal Economic Society. The secondary market (the so-called “scramble” market) occurs among institutions and candidates who remain unmatched. Most of the secondary market in Europe is through an informal network, but new job posts will be available on [EconJobMarket](#). The formal application for the US “scramble” market opens in March through the [JOE network](#).

- **Discuss with your main advisor** whether you should go on the job market and, if so, to whom you should ask for reference letters. Consider that the fixed costs (monetary, time, and psychological) are pretty high and you want to avoid going on the market for two consecutive years;
 - **Conferences:** submit your paper to conferences in order to improve your presentation skills, familiarize with the questions typically asked on your JMP, and network. Some examples: [EEA Conference](#), [Econometric Society Winter Meetings](#), field-specific conferences (e.g., [NEUDC Development Conference](#), etc.). A great opportunity for JM candidates is the Job Market Bootcamp at the [Petralia Workshop](#).
 - **Grants and Prizes:** these are good signals on the job market, apply to all opportunities that match your profile. For instance, check the website of [Unicredit&Universities](#).
- **September/First Half of October**
 - **Website:** include a professional photo, your CV, research, references, contacts. If your website is ready before September, even better. Think twice before including any links to private material on your job market webpage.
 - **Prepare your JM material.** The list of documents required for the application is the following:
 1. **Cover letter:** it should be short (max one page) and it should include the position you are applying to, your research interests, the title of your job market paper, your availability for interviews at the European Job Market and/or at the ASSA meetings. If you are particularly interested in moving to Canada, signal your availability to go to the Canadian job market (even if most institutions will be present at the ASSA meetings). Not everyone does adapt the letter to the institution, but do it if you are particularly interested in a position.
 2. **CV:** it should include the contacts of your placement director and assistant (if any), your contact (including the link to you webpage and your phone number), research fields, references, working papers/ publications (with abstracts and link to papers), scholarships, grants and awards, professional activities (seminars, refereeing, conference organization, teaching and research experience). It may be useful to look at the CV's of the previous year's job market candidates from top programs.
 3. **Job Market Paper:** it is a good idea to include a hyperlink to get the most recent version of the paper.
 4. **Reference letters:** the standard is three reference letters, but sometimes only two are required or more than three are allowed. Ask your advisors a reference letter in September to avoid delays in your applications. In particular, the timing of the European JM is such that ideally *your letters should be ready by early November*. If you plan to attend the European JM, please *alert your advisors about this deadline*, as this is a new initiative and they are probably not aware of the earlier timing. Your advisors (or their administrative staff) can upload the letters on the websites of the [European Job Market](#) and [JOE/ASSA](#)

[network](#). Try to make sure your advisors take it seriously: letters matter a lot to get interviews. Other things equal, letters from senior faculty are more influential than those from junior faculty.

5. **Research Statement:** it should include your research agenda, what you have worked on during your PhD and what you are planning to do in the immediate future. Try to avoid a list of papers and organize your research statement connecting your papers and research ideas within a meaningful framework.
6. **Teaching Statement:** describe your teaching experience and philosophy in about one page. Include teaching evaluations if available (sometimes they are explicitly required).
7. **Additional Papers:** they are usually not compulsory, but you are often allowed to include additional papers.
8. **Diversity Statement:** it is required by some US universities (mainly in California). If required, you should discuss past and/or potential contributions to diversity through teaching and research.

– **Create your profile on the job search websites:**

- * [European Job Market \(EconJobMarket\)](#)
- * [JOE website](#)
- * You may use also [Interfolio](#) (even if it is less common).

You will find there most of the job posts and you will be able to apply directly from there. When your JM material is ready, upload it on your profile (and ask your advisors to upload reference letters there). It will be faster to apply for jobs.

● **Second Half of October/November**

- **Prepare your spiel:** this is a polished opening statement and structure of the discussion you may follow during the interviews. In the first 2-3 minutes, you need to state your field, a brief motivation, what you do in your JMP, and outline the main results. The next 10 minutes are devoted to elaborating on your methodology and results. It is very important to *signpost*: there are no slides and you need to have a clear structure of your discussion: “First, (...). Second, (...). Third, (...)”. Prepare also a short spiel on your research agenda, avoiding a dry list of papers. Practice your spiel up to a point in which it does not look as you know it by heart (even if you do): you must sound natural. A good strategy is to memorize the outline or mental list of things you want to say during the interview: this helps you go back to your main points after you are interrupted by questions during the interview. Practice a lot, it is more difficult than expected to organize an effective spiel.
- **Mock interviews at your university:** make sure your university organizes mock interviews with faculty members to practice your spiel. Ask for feedback after your mock interview and adjust your spiel. Practice with your friends and colleagues as well.
- **Mock job market talk at your universities:** make sure your university organizes a mock job market talk to get feedback on your presentation from all the faculty (also outside your field). Write down a list of questions frequently asked and prepare sharp answers.

- *Personal suggestion:* toward the end of this period, if you continue to get diverging opinions on your spiel, on the introduction of your JMP, or on your presentation, stand-up and go with one opinion (likely – that of your main advisor). Remember, YOU will need to use those slides and say that spiel. YOU need to like them.

3 Applying for jobs

Timing. Vacancies are posted from around August and deadlines are generally in November or December. The general advice is to apply from the second half of October to Thanksgiving (for the US market) – earlier for the European one. Most of the job posts will be available on [EconJobMarket](#) and/or [JOE website](#). Some additional job posts are available on [Interfolio](#) .

Process. For most positions, you need to submit the material described in Section 2 online through one of the job ad websites. Sometimes, employers have their own website and require that you apply also –or exclusively– on their own website. Occasionally, they may require that you send the material by email. All information is provided in the job post.

It is a good idea to create a spreadsheet with the list of applications done, the link to the job post, and the way in which you applied (i.e., through econjobmarket/JOE; website of the university; email). For each application, write down whether it is complete or references should be sent separately by your advisors (and, if so, include the deadline and the email/website).

How many places should you apply to? Apply to a wide range of job posts, including post-docs and private sector jobs. However, do not apply to a job you would never take. Show your letter-writers the list of jobs for which you plan to apply and ask for their advice.

3.1 Signaling

Through the [JOE website](#), you can send a signal to two institutions from mid-November. The signal makes your application credible and interesting to employers. Use it wisely to maximize the probability of a good match (and maybe ask for recommendation to your advisors).

4 Interviews

If employers want to invite you for an interview, they will typically schedule them during the European Job Market (this year: December 6-7, 2018 in Naples) and ASSA meetings (this year: January 4-6, 2019 in Atlanta). Some institutions may schedule a Skype or phone interview.

- **Before the interviews:**

- Scheduling: consider the time to go from one interview to another (especially at the ASSA meetings). Hotels are often not very close to each other.
- Try to know before the interview with whom you will meet and prepare by reading their profiles.

- Gather information on the department, seminar series, who else works in your field, potential coauthors
- Find out the place of the interview (e.g., the disclosure code for the ASSA meetings).
- **What may be asked during the interview:**
 - Tell us about your JMP (they may allow you around 10 minutes for your spiel).
 - In which field do you see yourself working in next 3 years?
 - What would you like to teach?
 - How did you get the idea for your JMP?
 - Why would you like to work at our university/ move to our city? Why did you apply here? Who could you work with in in our deparment/university?
 - Do you have questions for us?
- **Other tips:**
 - Bring water, a paper copy of your schedule, a map with all hotels where you have an interview, snow boots (for ASSA), a nice bag (better to avoid backpacks), a few copies of your CV and JMP (they will usually not be asked). If you have a busy schedule, you may have no time for lunch: bring power bars.
 - Be calm and talk slowly. Avoid jumping around different projects or different section of the paper. If you get a specific question, answer directly and then go back to your outline. Make sure the person who asked the question is satisfied with your answer, but also make sure everybody else can follow your interview. Most people are very nice, some people may be rude. Keep calm and never be put off: think that if they are rude it is their problem, not yours.
 - Be aware of time: interviews last 30 minutes. If you do not talk about something important, the interview will be over in any case.
 - Be clear. Many people in the interview team will not have read your JMP entirely (and if they divide up the candidates, some may not have read it at all).
- **After the interview:** use a notebook and keep track of all the people you met, your impression, whether they asked questions you did not know the answer to (if so, it is great if you find the answer and send an email to the person who asked, or be ready to bring it up during the flyout).

5 Fly-outs

- **Before the fly-outs:**
 - Scheduling: be eager to get Monday, Wednesday, and Friday slots. This will allow you to do three fly-outs per week. Try to put your favourite schools after about three fly-outs. Do your best to do only one trip to the US if you can.

- Preparation: download the CV of all faculty members you will meet and skim on the plane. Think about something you want to bring up during the conversation. Put on your tablet the schedule with a couple of sentences per person in order to be sure you remember who you will talk to.
- **During Fly-outs:**
 - **Job Talk:** manage your time wisely, answer questions by going right to the point, be smart but nice. Don't oversell. It is fine to acknowledge the limitations of your work (even better if you are planning to work on these limitations in your future research). In your last slide, give a sense of your future research agenda related to your job market talk.
 - **Individual meetings:** Be prepared to get more questions about your JMP. If they were at your JM talk and they don't have questions, talk about a different project. Everyone will ask you if you have questions for them. Do ask questions, show interest and enthusiasm. Some examples: *Seminars (formal and informal)? Mentoring for young faculty? Teaching? Tenure clock? Where do people live? Ask about the community.*
 - **Dinner:** this is when they get to know you as a person and a potential colleague. Be nice, avoid drinking more than one glass of wine, enjoy (and start thinking whether *you* would like to have them as colleagues).
 - Remember: they are looking for a colleague, someone they will have conversations about research, but also lunch and dinner with seminar speakers. Be courteous and willing to engage.
 - *Be honest:* there are no secrets on the job market about fly-outs and offers. Furthermore, remember that this is a great opportunity to meet people in your field and potential coauthors.
 - Use restroom breaks, it will be a very long and tiring day.
 - You will spend a lot of money: remember to keep receipts and send the originals to universities to get the reimbursements as soon as possible.

6 Offers and negotiation

After fly-outs, you will start to get some offers (if everything goes well). This process is not coordinated and you may get exploding offers. Share the information about offers and deadlines with schools that you prefer to those from whom you received the offers. It is usually possible to negotiate, but avoid over-pushing. Advisors may have very useful suggestions at this stage.

For some, waiting for offers is the worst part of the job market. Try to keep yourself busy with something while waiting.

7 Additional information

7.1 How to dress/ what to buy or do before the job market

- Be professional: get a good suit/tailleur, several non-wrinkle shirts and ties (for men), a nice pair of shoes. You need to look professional, and at the same time feel good and confident with what

you are wearing.

- Get a good carry-on bag and a nice bag for your laptop.
- Buy a laser pointer for your presentations.
- You will need to pay for flights for most fly-outs. Request increases on the limits for your credit cards.
- Cawley et al. (2016) provides summary statistics on several aspects of the job market – it is a useful read.

7.2 The ‘two-body’ issue

The ‘two-body’ career problem, i.e. the issue of couples with professional aspirations trying to end up in close geographical proximity, can be hard to solve – but there are some solutions. Search committees are fully aware of the difficulties of dual career couples and, if they can, they will try to help you in finding a solution.

If your partner or spouse is an academic, you should strongly consider revealing this information to the search committee during the fly-out. Many departments and universities have policies to help academic couples and they will try to resolve two jobs search fast. It may be particularly easy if one of you is willing to do a Post-Doc.

If your partner is not an academic, you should strongly consider discussing job prospects for him/her in the vicinity of the institution during the fly-out. The department may also be able to refer your partner to local job market resources.

References

Cawley, J. et al. (2016). A guide (and advice) for economists on the us junior academic job market. (<https://www.aeaweb.org/content/file?id=869>).

Cochrane, J. H. (2005). *Writing Tips for Ph. D. Students*. University of Chicago.