Questions Frequently Asked in Academic Job Interviews

From Ad to Interview: Strategies for Scientists on the Job Market
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Questions about Research:

1. Describe your current research. Will you be continuing in this research track? What are your future research plans?

2. How would you involve graduate and undergraduate students in your research?

3. What audiences are you addressing? What are the hot works or scholars in your specialized field, and how does your work relate to theirs?

4. What is the cutting edge of your field, and how does your work extend it?

5. What is the broader significance of your research? Can you explain its value in terms for an educated layperson?

6. Where do your research strengths lie? What are your research weaknesses, and how will you improve?

7. What is the most significant piece of research that you have read in the last year?

8. If you were organizing a special symposium or conference related to your research topic, how would you frame it and which scholars would you invite?

9. What do you envision for creating a research program in our department? What support or facilities would you need? How would you plan to get the funding you need?

10. Tell us about a research project in which you’ve been involved that was successful and one that was not. What were reasons for these outcomes?

Questions about Teaching:

1. What is your philosophy of teaching?

2. What do you consider your teaching strengths and weaknesses?

3. What classes could you teach for us?

4. If you could design your own upper-level undergraduate course to add to our offerings, what would it be? And how would it be organized?

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5. If you could design a graduate course to add to our offerings, what would it be? And how would it be organized?

6. Can you tell us about a particularly challenging situation you encountered as a teacher and how you dealt with it?

7. How do you know when you’ve been successful in teaching particular material? Can you tell us something you learned about teaching based on a specific experience when you were successful?

8. Tell us about teaching techniques that you plan to use and your reasons for these choices.

9. What are approaches you’d use for teaching students of mixed abilities?

10. How would you teach a major work in your field?

Other Typical Questions:

1. Can you tell us about your long-range plans and commitment to this department?

2. How do you see yourself fitting into and contributing to our department?

3. Why in particular would you wish to work at this university?

4. How do you see yourself getting involved in campus initiatives or extra-curricular activities?

5. Where do you see yourself professionally in 5 years? in 10 years?

6. What about our position is particularly attractive to you?

7. If you get more than one offer, how will you decide between them?

8. Since your partner is finishing his/her PhD, what are your plans if the two of you receive job offers in different locations?

9. What kind of salary are you looking for?

10. Who else is interviewing you?

11. What is the last book you read for fun?

12. What do you do when you’re not working?

13. What questions do you have for us?

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