

Navigating “The Job Market” Within and Beyond Academia

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ABSTRACT

Navigating “the job market” is a major challenge for Ph.D. candidates and recent graduates. This panel from ALISE’s Doctoral Student Special Interest Group will focus on how to find and apply for a variety of positions that doctoral candidates and recent graduates are qualified to hold. After completing a poll from the SIG conveners, Doctoral Student SIG members indicated that they wanted the 2021 session to focus on the job market.

Jobs to be discussed include postdoctoral, tenure-track, government, and industry positions. Tenure-track academic jobs are scarce, especially given the saturation of the market with recent graduates and post docs looking for full-time positions. Challenges of COVID-19 including hiring freezes and budgetary cuts have exacerbated these circumstances. Further, when academic jobs are available, the process of applying to and interviewing for these positions is opaque, as students are unevenly mentored about how to prepare for job applications, initial interviews, and campus visits. However, given the scarcity of academic and especially tenure-track jobs, it is unreasonable to expect that all Ph.D. graduates will obtain a tenure-track position; many also do not want to remain in academia. Information and advice about how graduate students can translate their skills into other arenas, including government and industry jobs, can

be lacking in academic departments. This is a challenge for doctoral students who do not wish to remain in academia or who cannot do so due to market circumstances. When applying for industry and government jobs, students must translate the skills they gain through their Ph.D. in ways that appeal to either domain. Moreover, resumés, cover letters, and other supplementary application materials look very different from academic CVs, cover letters, and application statements. It can be difficult for students to receive advice about preparing for non-academic jobs outside of services that require them to pay significant sums of money for assistance.

This panel will therefore present advice and strategies about multiple iterations of the post-graduate “job market.” Panelists will discuss their experiences applying for jobs both within and outside of the academy. Specifically, they will discuss a) their decision-making processes about where to apply; b) the process of applying for academic jobs vs. government and industry jobs; c) preparing for interviews; d) negotiating offers. Panelists will also share virtual “handouts” with attendees, including examples of academic and non-academic job application materials. Attendees will be able to ask questions and/or share their own experiences after panelists present. Specifically, the session will proceed as follows:

1. Welcome and introduction of panelists (5 min)
2. Panelist presentations centered on key topics (15 min each)
3. Moderated Q&A (30 min)
4. Concluding thoughts and resource sharing (10 min)

Attendees should leave the SIG Session with practical knowledge about applying for jobs with a Ph.D.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

education of information professionals; students; standards

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

job market; academic jobs; government jobs; job applications; job interviews