

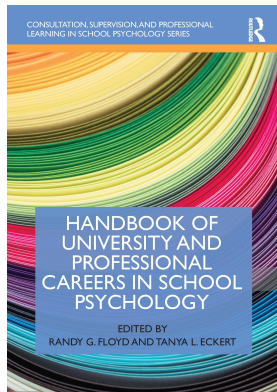
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Obtaining Your First Academic Job

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3 Obtaining Your First Academic Job

*Amanda L. Sullivan, Scott P. Ardoin, Kathrin E. Maki,
Erin A. Harper, and Tara Kulkarni*

As noted earlier in this book, there are a range of university positions available in school psychology and related fields. The academic job search process has several unique features, so this chapter provides an overview of common processes and considerations. For many prospective faculty, the process of applying for your first academic job is likely anxiety provoking. You have worked so hard for so many years with the hope that one day all of your hard work will come to fruition and you will land that perfect position. Anxiety can be heightened by the limited and variable number of positions available in any given year, the uniqueness and unpredictability of the process compared to other settings, and the fact that few, if any, of your family and friends will be familiar with the process. The purpose of this chapter is to help you as a prospective applicant and hopefully relieve some of your anxiety.

Academic Careers in School Psychology

Historically, professorial careers were considered not just a job but a “calling” (Hartnett & Kline, 2005), but studies indicate today’s graduate students consider the professoriate “not a value sphere, but an industry” (Oaks, 2003, p. 601) similar to other corporate entities in universities’ quests for profitability and recognition (Herrmann, 2009). There is an increasing proliferation of differentiated positions, particularly non-tenure-track (i.e., clinical, contract, or “career track” positions) research and teaching positions increasingly common in psychology, including the oft lamented adjunct positions subject to extensive hours and low pay (Hurlburt & McGarrah, 2016). This means pursuing an academic career may require considerable persistence and resilience in finding a position that suits one’s aspirations (Herrmann, 2012). In many fields, the hiring process for a single tenure-track position spans several months. In the lore surrounding academic job searches, for a single job seeker, the process can be more extensive and can consist of traveling to conferences, extensive networking, and several rejections, often all during the final graduate school years where students are completing internships and writing dissertations (Herrmann, 2012; Horner, Cape, & Conner, 2001).

Yet, there are several features that distinguish school psychology’s academic job market from others. Truthfully (and luckily), it is much less dire in our field than others. Notably, school psychology continues to be characterized by a chronic shortage of individuals entering academic positions (Castillo, Curtis, & Tan, 2014). In addition, the program standards set forth by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2006) and National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, 2010) are formulated such that they can operate to discourage the reliance on adjunct instructors that is commonplace in other areas of the academy. In addition, most graduate students in school psychology choose to enter practice-based positions (Stark, Perfect, Simpson, Schnoebelen, & Glenn, 2004). An intrinsic interest in direct service (Stark et al., 2004), misconceptions about low academic faculty salaries compared to practitioners

(Baker et al., 2008), and concerns about the fast-pace of tenure expectations being detrimental to work–life balance (Mason, Golden, & Frasch, 2009) may discourage prospective faculty and other highly capable individuals from choosing academia.

As such, school psychology is more of a job-seekers' market in ways that simply are not seen in related fields. For instance, unlike some other areas of psychology, an individual interested in a faculty role need not pursue multiple (potentially unpaid or underpaid) postdoctoral positions in order to be competitive for faculty positions that may take years to materialize. Indeed, many positions, particularly at research-intensive institutions, require neither postdoctoral positions nor applied experience beyond degree requirements. In addition, rarely do our searches net the *hundreds* of applicants often noted in the hard sciences or humanities. Instead, it is school psychology programs that often find themselves competing for a limited pool of potential applicants. Thus, barring geographic restrictions or narrow preferences, you have a high probability of being hired your first time on the academic market.

Characteristics of School Psychology's Professoriate

Most individuals are drawn to the professoriate by the intellectual challenge and freedom (Lindholm, 2004). In school psychology, this is true, but prospective faculty report that the primary motivations are interest in research and the potential to contribute to society (Baker et al., 2008). The decision to pursue an academic career is also frequently driven by perceived graduate school success, self-competency in teaching or research positions, and mentorship for faculty roles (Baker et al., 2008; Lindholm, Astin, Sax, & Korn, 2002; Zacher, Rudolph, Todorovic, & Ammann, 2019). Psychology faculty have historically been predominantly White men (APA, 2014), but the professoriate is becoming increasingly diverse, particularly in school psychology where women comprise more than 60% of tenure-track faculty (Castillo, Curtis, & Gelley, 2013). However, the underrepresentation of faculty of color remains severe (APA, 2018; Bocanegra, Gubi, & Cappaert, 2014) and contributes to the field's limited racial diversity among practitioners (NASP, 2016).

Job Search Process

In the sections that follow, we describe the faculty job search process and strategies for success based on our collective experiences on both sides of the hiring process as candidates and individuals involved in the selection of new hires. We focus on the process characteristic of tenure-track positions while recognizing that many individuals will be pursuing other opportunities within university settings, either out of interest or necessity. In such cases, some elements may be common (e.g., providing cover letters, personal statements, and full curriculum vitae [CV] rather than resumes and being selected by a committee), but others are often more streamlined, both in scope of materials or duration of various elements of the search process (e.g., interviews and campus visits). In addition, many non-tenure-track positions have a simpler hiring process because they do not require the extensive review and approval processes characteristic of tenure-track hires wherein unit colleagues, administrators, and upper administration may be involved in the selection of potential hires. For example, hiring for a research position on a funded project may involve only the principle investigator's approval. Likewise, an instructional position may involve only a small committee of program faculty and require only the unit administrator's approval to hire. Often, the hiring process for non-tenure-track positions is highly idiosyncratic, so—as with all academic positions—we encourage prospective applicants to pay careful attention to job postings and seek clarification from search chairs or other contacts when anything is unclear.

Importantly, the hiring process can vary across institutions, even for tenure-track positions, which can be a source of anxiety, frustration, and confusion. Thus, although conversations with mentors can be helpful in navigating the process, always attend to the unique specifications in postings and the advice of individuals involved in the hiring process for each individual position. Our goal here is to provide general insight while acknowledging individual experiences may vary.

Hiring Process

The hiring process starts far earlier than you might expect, typically one academic year before the process is made public. In many institutions, this means that in the spring semester or summer, an administrative unit (e.g., department, school, or college) will engage various stakeholders, including administrators and current faculty, in prioritizing hires for the coming year based on programmatic or instructional needs. This may involve an approval process by assorted governing bodies (e.g., voting faculty or board of trustees), upper administration offices (e.g., provost), or units (e.g., college dean) about the need for and likely contributions of a proposed position. The general process is presented in Figure 3.1. Once a position request is approved and before anyone is brought to campus for an interview, the following steps generally occur: (a) a search committee is formed; (b) a position description, including review dates and application requirements, is drafted and approved by administrators or governing bodies (e.g., program or department faculty, chairs, deans, and human resource administrators); (c) the position announcement is disseminated for an amount of time predetermined by the university's human resources office; (d) the search committee screens applicants; (e) the committee recommends candidates to advance in the process (either to remote interviews or campus visits), perhaps to be approved by an administrator; and (f) a slate of the most promising candidates are invited for campus visits.

Potential candidates are generally unaware of the last steps in this process, and complications or delays can occur throughout. Applicants, therefore, should not be surprised if they do not hear back on an application for several days or even weeks. If nothing else, the process of screening applicants to select those for campus visits can take several weeks and generally includes (a) scheduling one or more meetings of the search committee; (b) developing selection criteria for applicant review; (c) screening of applications; (d) preparing for brief remote interviews of an initial slate of candidates; (e) receiving approval of shortlisted applicants by one or more levels of administration; and (f) identifying potential dates for campus visits, taking into account the committee and administrators' schedules—with little to no communication with candidates. We have seen these steps take a full 2 months before any candidates were contacted. The final step alone can take several days because of the complexity of administrators' schedules. As hard as it may be, resist the inclination to infer rejection from the silence or to allow the delays to ramp up your anxiety, because it may have nothing to do with the program's interest in you. The process for non-tenure-track positions can be quicker because the committee process or administrator approvals may be abbreviated or unnecessary. In addition, these positions are likely to be posted later in the academic year or summer.

Finding Position Postings

It can be hard to know where to start when transitioning from graduate school or practice to academia. The good news is there are several resources for locating open academic positions.

Use your professional network. When entering the job market, an important resource on open positions may be your graduate school advisors and mentors. School psychology is a relatively small field, and academics typically have many connections with faculty at other

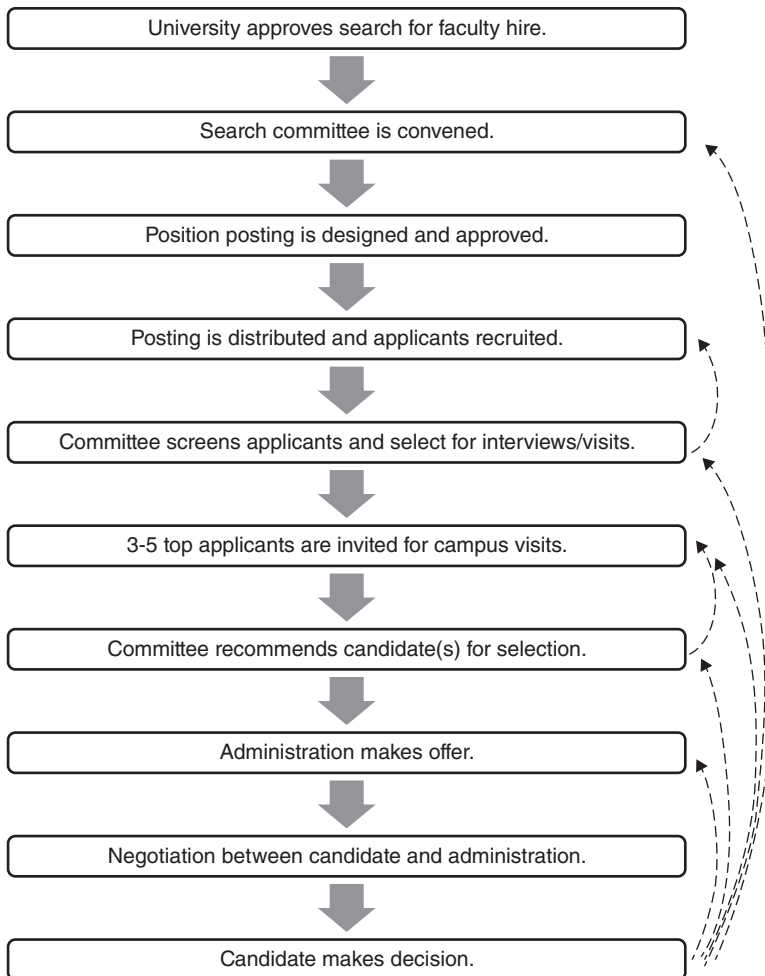


Figure 3.1 General overview of the hiring process. Solid lines indicate typical process. Dotted lines indicate iterative steps when challenges encountered, such as administration rejection of a shortlist for campus visits.

universities. Through these connections, your mentors may be aware of positions that will be posted or have already been posted. Be open and clear with your mentors about what you are looking for in an academic position and ask if they can share position listings.

Seeking additional mentorship around the job search process from your mentors is important, but creating your own networks will also benefit you when you are searching for a job. Introduce yourself to school psychology faculty at conferences (or ask others for help). Do not be afraid to introduce yourself to someone after their conference presentation. Although you may not be actively looking for a job, getting to know people in the field can be beneficial when you later enter the job market.

Pay attention to professional listservs and websites. In the past, positions were largely advertised in classified advertisements at the back of scholarly journals and professional newsletters or through direct mailings to program faculty. Today, school psychology positions are generally disseminated through school psychology's professional organizations, such as the

Council of Directors of School Psychology Programs Google group (<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/CDSPP>) the APA Division 16 website (<https://apadivision16.org/category/job-posts/faculty/>) and the Trainers in School Psychology listserv. School psychology positions may also be posted on general higher education websites (e.g., Chronicle of Higher Education [https://chroniclevitae.com/job_search/new] [Higheredjobs.com] Higher Education Recruitment Consortium [<https://main.hercjobs.org/jobs>] and Psychology Job Wiki [<http://psychjobsearch.wikidot.com/#toc13>]). Because these sites organize job postings across fields, you will need to be thoughtful with your search process and search terms (e.g., “school psychology,” “education,” and “psychology”). We experienced the most success finding position announcements through school psychology listservs since their audiences include faculty in doctoral programs and member institutions. However, because these organizations are for trainers in the field, when you are a graduate student, you may not be able to access these resources directly. Ask your mentors if they are willing to forward job postings from the listservs to you (even if you graduated some time ago). Remember, do not be afraid to ask; your advisor wants you to find a job, too!

Put your professional memberships to work. As noted previously, professional listservs can be a great way to find information on available positions. In addition, many professional associations have career services or centers that not only advertise positions but provide professional developmental materials to aid the job seeker, such as NASP’s Communities (<http://communities.nasponline.org/home>) and Career Center. Additional networking and professional development are available through the Early Career Forum (<http://www.sssp-research.org/earlycareerforum/>) and the early committees and interest groups of APA and NASP.

Determining Fit and Deciding to Apply

With the range and relative availability of academic positions in school psychology, choosing to apply for a specific one can involve several considerations: position type, program type, position requirements and expectations, institutional resources, terms of the contract (e.g., tenure-track, renewable, and temporary). Despite the common perceptions that academic positions are highly stressful and financially less lucrative (Mason et al., 2009), a 2010 survey of school psychology faculty nationwide reported that choosing a faculty position was associated with high levels of job satisfaction (Crothers et al., 2010). Among individuals with high educational attainment, job satisfaction is linked to the expectations a person holds of their job (Clark, Kamesaka, & Tamura, 2015). Thus, ensuring alignment of goals and expectations to the unique features of a faculty position is critical to personal satisfaction.

Unsurprisingly, when applying for positions, the “shotgun” approach of applying widely or indiscriminately is discouraged because the expectations and requirements for positions can vary substantially. Instead, we recommend prospective applicants carefully consider their interests, goals, and preferences. Key considerations may include (a) the aspects of university positions you find most appealing; (b) the distribution of research and teaching activities you want; (c) the kind of scholar you want to be; (d) how you want to contribute to the field; (e) the type of work you see yourself doing long-term; (f) the type of research environment you could find fulfilling; and (g) other professional roles (e.g., administration, supervision, and direct services) you hope to play. The goal is to identify and pursue positions that best align with your interests and goals in order to increase the likelihood of success *and* satisfaction. Geographical location can be one of the key considerations of many applicants, even more so than the match between qualifications and position (Horner et al., 2001), such that balancing geographic constraints with the aforementioned considerations can be especially challenging and important.

An increasingly common consideration may be whether to pursue a tenure-track position. The perceived high levels of stress associated with tenure-track positions can be unappealing

for prospective faculty (Mason et al., 2009). Further the perceived stigma for not pursuing or securing a tenure-track position can be particularly demoralizing (Herrmann, 2012). This can be especially true for individuals who may be deterred from applying to research-intensive institutions or tenure-track positions due to family obligations (Bender & Heywood, 2006). Given research indicating that women are less likely to apply for faculty positions than men and may hesitate to apply if they do not meet all the requirements posted (Mohr, 2014), we suggest you be more daring than you might first be inclined in your application process if a position fits your interests. Actual expectations and requirements vary across institutions and positions, as do related supports. Therefore we caution you against letting assumptions (and even rumors and myths) about the pursuit of tenure detract from positions of interest. Instead, we encourage you to gather data regarding positions in different types of institutions. Sources of information include program websites, faculty profiles and CVs, institutional policies and procedures (e.g., tenure codes and periodic review requirements), and colleagues.

Your Application Package

Application requirements vary across the types of academic positions. For tenure-track positions, applications likely require a cover letter, CV, research materials, and teaching materials. You will also be required to provide references or letters of recommendation from individuals who can attest to your ability to meet the position requirements.

General considerations. Before preparing your application package, read the job posting multiple times. It may be useful to use the job posting to develop a checklist that will help you keep track of the elements of the posting that you will need to address. After reading the posting multiple times and making your checklist, be sure to carefully follow the directions within the job posting when preparing and submitting your materials. No matter how well you think you fit a position description, if you fail to follow basic directions, you are unlikely to impress reviewers. Moreover, failure to submit all required materials or demonstrate minimum requirements is often grounds for removal from consideration.

New job seekers are often well served by identifying one or more trusted advisors, mentors, or colleagues who are willing to give them credible feedback on their materials. Ideally, one or more faculty who have served on search committees for the type of position to which you are applying will review your full application package and provide constructive feedback. Plan to give your reviewers the materials well in advance, so they are able to provide feedback early enough for you to revise and submit the application materials by the deadline. If you are requesting letters of recommendation, do so in a timely manner and provide as much information as possible to allow your letter writers to craft strong positive recommendations. Oftentimes, letter writers appreciate being provided your CV, cover letter, and accompanying statements so that they can tailor their letters to the position.

Cover letter. The purpose of the cover letter is to communicate your qualifications for, suitability to, and familiarity with the position (Sullivan & Harris, 2012). When search committees review the cover letter, it should be clear that the applicant has read the job posting carefully. Include information that is relevant to the job posting without simply restating what will be presented in the CV. Unlike applying for non-academic jobs, single-page cover letters (and CVs) are generally inadvisable for academic jobs. That is not to say extensive letters are required for all positions. However, it is important to articulate how you fit the required and preferred qualifications of the position. It is also important to personalize your cover letter for each position. Form letters are not a good strategy because of the relative uniqueness of each posting. If you are applying for multiple positions or updating a cover letter that was used previously, carefully proofread your letter to ensure that you have not included information intended for a different

position (e.g., university name, job title, roles, and responsibilities). Search committees tend to view careless errors unfavorably.

Curriculum vitae. The CV presents an opportunity for you to provide the search committee (and others who may review your application package) with in-depth information about your experiences and qualifications for the job. CVs for academic jobs in school psychology typically contain (1) contact information; (2) educational background and credentials; (3) professional or applied experiences, including fieldwork and practica; (4) publications and presentations; (5) awards and honors; (6) teaching experiences; (7) funding; and (8) service and professional affiliations. The order of the sections of your CV will vary depending upon the type of job for which you are applying. For example, if you are applying for a research position, you will want research- and grant-related content to appear earlier in the CV, whereas applied and teaching experiences may be emphasized for teaching positions. Finally, it is important that your CV is an accurate and honest representation of your experiences. Certainly be sure to include all relevant professional activities, but avoid exaggeration, misrepresentation, or falsification of these experiences.

Research materials. Examples of research materials that may be required for an application include research statements and writing samples or representative publications. Your research statement should generally overview your program of research (what are your aims, goals, or interests), past and current research activities, future research directions, and relevance to the field. Write the statement in a way that is digestible for familiar and lay audiences alike because search committees may include individuals in and out of school psychology and some have little background in your area of interest. Many job postings for research positions will pinpoint a specific area of research focus. Use your statement to emphasize how your research agenda aligns with those priorities. It can also be helpful to highlight the potential for your research to be externally funded and to provide concrete examples of past, current, or potential funding sources.

Teaching materials. Requested teaching materials may include a teaching philosophy, evidence of teaching effectiveness (e.g., teaching evaluations or evaluation summaries), and representative syllabi. The purpose of the teaching philosophy statement is to describe the values and beliefs that guide your teaching with clear examples of how these values and beliefs have manifested in your instruction and course content. If you have not had an opportunity to teach, you can describe how you plan to use your philosophy to guide your teaching practices and course development. When possible, draw connections to your scholarship. In addition, if you have received course evaluations, it is helpful to convey how you have used or plan to use the feedback to improve your teaching. Any syllabi included in your application should contain content that aligns with your teaching philosophy statement.

References. Professional references may come from mentors, advisors, supervisors, or colleagues who can provide strong favorable evaluations of your potential for success in the desired positions. If you are uncertain about whether individuals will provide a positive recommendation, either confirm with them or find someone else. Whenever possible, solicit recommenders who are familiar enough with your work and potential as a faculty member to be able to provide detailed commentary on your accomplishments, dispositions, and likelihood for success.

Navigating the Campus Visit

Many hiring processes will include an extended campus visit ranging from a few hours to a few days. Example itineraries are provided in Table 3.1. During these visits, candidates will meet with relevant stakeholders. For tenure-track positions, this often includes the search committee; program faculty, students, or supervisors; prospective colleagues or collaborators from throughout the administrative unit (e.g., department, school, and college); and administrators

Table 3.1 Sample Itineraries for Campus Visits

Example 1: Tenure-Track Position, Research-Intensive Institution

<i>Day 1</i>		<i>Day 2</i>	
8:00	Breakfast with search chair	8:00	Breakfast with department chair
9:00	Meeting with program chair	9:00	15 minute one-to-one meetings with faculty
10:00	Meeting with research administrator	10:15	Coffee with fieldwork supervisors
11:30	Lunch with program students	11:00	Meeting with center director
1:00	Meeting with instructors	11:30	Lunch with department faculty
2:00	Break/talk prep	1:00	Meeting with dean
3:00	Research talk	1:30	Interview with search committee
5:00	Break	3:00	Depart to airport with search chair
6:00	Dinner with program faculty		

Example 2: Tenure-Track Position, Teaching Institution

<i>Day 1</i>		<i>Day 2</i>	
8:00	Breakfast with search chair	8:00	Breakfast with department chair
9:00	Meeting with program chair	9:00	Sit in on class
10:00	Meeting with vice provost	10:00	Coffee with fieldwork supervisors
11:30	Lunch with students	11:00	Break/prep
1:00	Meeting with instructors	11:30	Research talk
2:00	Break/talk prep	12:30	Lunch with department faculty
3:00	Teaching demonstration	1:30	Meeting with dean
5:00	Break	2:00	Interview with search committee
6:00	Dinner with program faculty	3:30	Depart to airport with search chair

Example 3: Teaching Position

9:00	Meeting with search committee
10:00	Teaching demonstration
11:30	Lunch with students
12:30	Meeting with program faculty
2:00	Meeting with supervisors and instructor
1:30	Meeting with department chair

Example 4: Research Position

9:00	Interview with principal investigator
10:00	Tour of center/lab
10:30	Coffee with PI and project manager

from throughout the institution. Candidates may also be invited to identify individuals to meet with or entities they would like to learn more about (e.g., a university center related to their research area, partner school districts, and teaching centers), so it pays to take some time to familiarize yourself before this point. In addition, do not be afraid to ask for accommodations in your itinerary (e.g., extra rest breaks, including pump breaks, walk through of presentation space, and time to test technology).

Pre-visit preparation. Although exciting, campus visits can be intimidating and overwhelming. First and foremost, know that if you get the invitation, the committee and others are very interested in learning more about you. It means they think there is a strong likelihood that you would be a good fit for the position. If this does not quell your fears, one way to ease some of the stress of the process is to adequately prepare beforehand. To do so, you will need to spend time further researching the program, department or college, and university as well as specific people with whom you will meet during your visit. Explore the program website to learn about the program orientation, vision, curriculum, and other unique features (e.g., specializations). Doing so will help you evaluate your fit with the program, where the program fits within its university, and resources or opportunities that may be of interest. Your research will also allow you to have effective conversations and ask thoughtful questions during your visit.

Most visits will include a research or teaching presentation and potentially a case presentation. Be sure to query expectations for these activities (e.g., length, structure, depth, and audience) so that you can plan accordingly. It will be helpful to consider whether presentation attendees with hearing, visual, or physical impairments will be able to access the presentation content. Most universities have staff and other resources available to help candidates enhance the accessibility of their materials for diverse audiences.

Once you have your itinerary, familiarize yourself with the individuals you will meet by reviewing their websites, CVs, articles, and other relevant materials so that you can ask informed questions. Do not hesitate to bring lists of questions with you. The campus visit can be so busy that chances are slim that you will remember every question you want to ask if you do not prepare in advance. The people you meet will appreciate your interest and preparation. As

Table 3.2 Potential Questions to Ask Others during Campus Visits and Interviews

<i>Administrators</i>	<i>Program Faculty</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the ideal candidate from your perspective? • What are the immediate needs of the program? How do you see me fitting into those needs? • What are the strengths and challenges of the program/department/college? • What are the department’s plans for growth and hiring? • What professional behaviors are valued here? • What supports are there for junior faculty? • What are the expectation and procedures for promotion and tenure? • What are the relationships like among the various departments in the college? • How are departmental decisions made that affect the faculty? • Five years from now, where do you see program/department/college? • How is the local economy/legislature affecting the financial status of the program/department/college? How does this state compare with other states in terms of funding for higher education? • What have been the enrollment trends in the program/department/college/ university? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the strengths and challenges of the program? • What is the anticipated future direction of the program? • What are the needs of the program? • What would you change about the department? What is being done about those issues? • What are the areas of conflict in the department? How is the conflict handled? • What is the department’s vision for the future? How does it see itself positioned (with respect to the field or to other departments)? What areas are priorities for expansion/development? • How would you describe the ideal candidate for this position? • What is the expected course load/caseload/ number of advisees? • What are the students in the program like? How are they selected? What are their post-grad outcomes? • What classes did you teach in the last year? How much influence did you have regarding teaching/supervision/advising/ administrative assignments? • What kind of collaborative research is being conducted within the program/department college? • How are students funded?
<i>Students</i>	<i>Others</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did you choose to study here? • How frequently do you socialize within the program? • How is the program atmosphere conducive to your development? • What supports are in place for graduate students? • What could be improved in this program? • What do you want from new faculty? • What is the best thing about this program and department? • Who among the faculty do you think does a great job? What do they do particularly well? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did you choose this university above other options? Why do you remain here? • You must have expected many things about this place before you accepted the job offer. What was your biggest surprise once you arrived? • How would you compare this school to peer programs/institutions? • What supports are in place to support your professional development/advancement? • How do you collaborate with colleagues?

suggested in Table 3.2, we found it helpful to organize our questions by groups of individuals. Keep in mind that not only is the search committee interviewing you for the position, but you also want to ascertain if the position will be right for you. Your preparation will help to ensure that you are able to gather important information to help you make a decision about whether the position is a good fit.

In the final days or hours before your visit, create backup and hardcopies of any materials you plan to access during your visit (e.g., presentation slides and copies of your handouts, CV, list of questions, itinerary, and contact information for the search chair and administrative staff assisting with your visit). Plan for the unexpected, including conducting the presentations (a) without technology (due to mishaps) or (b) with technology that involves a different platform. If you prepare for all possibilities in advance, then hopefully you will be able to laugh it off and proceed with a great presentation rather than letting it derail you.

Making the best impression. During your visit, the goal is to show the institution why you would make a great colleague *and* to determine whether you want to be their colleague. Remember that your campus visit is so much more than an interview. For the most part, you will be engaging in a series of conversations with program stakeholders to help ascertain the possibility for a long-term partnership. It is important to be confident and open. Do not be shy about asking questions. It will communicate your interest and investment in the process. Be prepared to answer questions about yourself as a scholar and professional. However, it is also important to know that your interviewers should not ask questions regarding your age, ancestry, citizenship, native language, marital status or children, non-professional organization memberships, protected class statuses, religion, or sexuality. Depending on who you are meeting with, questions may span (a) your short- and long-term plans for professional activities; (b) teaching interests; (c) how you see yourself contributing to the program, university, community, and field; (d) perspectives on key issues in the field or your area of scholarship or professional practice; (e) approach to collaboration, teaching, supervision, mentoring, advising, or teaming; (f) what you seek in a work environment; and (g) resources to support your scholarship and professional development.

Although one purpose of campus visits is to evaluate candidates' teaching and research potential, much of that information can be gleaned through a review of candidates' CVs and other materials. What many faculty are trying to determine when meeting candidates is whether the candidate will make a good colleague and a good citizen in the unit and be successful there. For tenure-track positions, universities hope to hire someone likely to achieve tenure and be there for their entire career. Therefore, faculty want to hire a colleague with whom they will (a) enjoy spending time, (b) contribute to the department not only through research but also through instruction, mentoring, supervision, and service, and (c) make meetings more—not less—enjoyable. Show them how you are that person.

After the Visit

Once you have completed your visit, you should email the individuals with whom you interacted, including in individual and group meetings, interviews, and meals. In your email, express your gratitude for the person taking time to meet with you and indicate your excitement about the potential of becoming part of the program and department. Personal emails that demonstrate your interest in the position and convey that you would be a great colleague are important. If you connected with a faculty member in some way during the interview process, highlighting that connection can be helpful. Likewise, if there was a student on the committee or a student who led a group interview make sure to send the student an email and ask the student to share your thoughts with the other students. You should send the emails soon after your interview is completed, as discussions and voting may start the day of the last candidate's interview.

Unfortunately, even when votes are taken quickly, candidates may not receive any information for a number of days or even weeks after interviewing. Just as many approvals are required before candidates are invited to campus, many approvals are required before a candidate is made an initial offer. After interviewing all candidates, the search committee generally meets to summarize their collective thoughts regarding all candidates (e.g., relative strengths and weaknesses, distinctive aspects, and preferences or concerns in making an offer). The decision of who to offer a position to or how to rank a slate of candidates can be made by multiple individuals or entities, along or in combination, including program faculty; search committee members; department, college, and university administrators; department and college faculty; or governing bodies (e.g., all tenured faculty). Depending on the type of hire and the institutional policies, an upper-level administrator within the college or university (e.g., dean, provost, or president) may be required to grant permission for an offer to be extended to a candidate. As such, the post-visit process can surprisingly take a considerable amount of time even when most parties want to move it along rapidly to avoid losing potential hires to other universities. If you have been on other interviews and already have an offer, it is beneficial during the interview process (or after) to inform the search committee chair or unit administrator of relevant deadlines or conditions (e.g., contract terms essential to your consideration or acceptance of a competing offer). Knowing that you already have an offer may speed up the process and potentially give you bargaining power. That said, absent an offer in hand from another university, it is best not to query about the status of a decision (e.g., whether an offer is forthcoming).

If the college or university decides to offer you a position, you will generally receive a contract offer letter from the unit administrator. You may negotiate terms with this administrator, but certain aspects, such as salary adjustments or other costly requests, will often require they relay requests and related considerations to a higher administrator. Despite lacking the authority to make final decisions, the administrator can be influential with those who do and can advocate for reasonable requests or other adjustments. Although the administrator is not necessarily in a position to provide a candidate with suggestions for terms, often times the search committee chair and other faculty within the department can be helpful. Thus, you might communicate with other faculty in the department after an offer is made to ask if they have any suggestions.

Given that the first candidate does not always work out, other potential candidates are typically not contacted until a contract is officially finalized or declined so as to prevent them from knowing they were not the top choice if they are eventually offered a position or to prevent them from moving on to accept another opportunity. Unfortunately, this means candidates that were not the first choice often find out that they were not selected by discovering someone else was offered the position or hired. Remember that much goes into selecting a candidate, so if you are not the first choice but are offered the position after the first person declines, do not take that as a reason not to accept the position. Quite often, multiple people are strong fits but even minor differences in experience or accomplishments can sway decisions at various points in the process. Research indicates fit with a department is often the determining factor for those who receive an offer (Nalbone, 2011), but determinants of fit are often fairly idiosyncratic. Whether you were the first choice or not, receiving an offer means they believe you are a good fit. Otherwise, a committee or university could instead choose to revisit the applicant pool, restart the search, or try again the following year; this is often called a failed search.

Negotiating and Making a Decision

The negotiation process is not particularly enjoyable for anyone involved. Although it is very exhilarating and validating to receive an offer, after that contact, you *must* start negotiating. It is much like buying a house; while exciting, it is also nerve racking. Fortunately, it is an applicant's market for two reasons. First, for many years there have been more school psychology faculty openings than qualified applicants. If you are made an offer, the university will not want to lose

you to another university. Second, administrators generally feel a sense of obligation to get the hire that the faculty want. No one wants a failed search, given the considerable investment of time and money in conducting a search. With that said, unlike buying a house and having little personal interaction with the home owners, you will be negotiating with someone who will become your colleague and potentially be your supervisor. Thus, negotiate but negotiate wisely and courteously by gaining data before starting the negotiation process.

An initial offer will likely include your base salary, start-up funds, and moving expenses as well as specification of duties or release thereof in the first year(s) or pre-tenure (e.g., full-time equivalent allocation per area of work, course load, teaching assignments or releases, research support) and other supports for professional development. Do not immediately accept these offers. Rather, simply express your excitement about the possibility of working at the university and that you have a lot to think over. Make sure that you are sent an email that details the initial offer, celebrate for a while, and then start gathering data so that you can make an informed counteroffer. In most cases, particularly at research-intensive institutions, it is expected that you will ask for more than what was offered. So although you may think that the offer sounds great, you can usually get more. In the rare case that you will not be able to negotiate, the administrator should (or can, if pressed) explicitly state what is and is not up for negotiation. If you are not informed that it is not up for negotiation, consider it an area open for negotiation.

Before making any request, you need to do a good bit of information gathering. First, a web search can typically yield salary information for public institutions either via the university website, state agencies, or local news outlets. You will want to locate salary information for recently hired individuals of the same rank and comparable experience. Be sure to attend to exactly what is reported—base academic year salary, total salary, or total compensation and fringe benefits—because you may have exaggerated expectations for salary if a state website includes total compensation (e.g., salary plus health coverage, retirement benefits, other fringe benefits) but your offer letter describes only your base 9-month salary. It is appropriate to ask for more information regarding what the published salaries represent. When countering, you may be offered additional summer salary for one or more summers as opposed to an increase in the base salary, which can be helpful, but it is less valuable over time than a base increase. Future raises and summer salary rates will likely be based upon your base salary, and thus, it is important to get your initial base salary as high as possible.

Another key area of negotiation is start-up or professional development funds that will largely be contingent on expectations for tenure and your individual program of research. Although you may be asked about your research plans and what kinds of resources you need (e.g., space, technology, and research assistance), which can inform your initial offer, try to avoid detailing *everything* you might need then. Instead, consider doing the following:

- develop a list of essential and highly preferred resources (e.g., materials, staff support, student support, discretionary funds, lab and office space for research studies; time via course releases; and summer salary);
- discuss with the administrator what, if any, resources are provided to all faculty independent of individual contracts (e.g., office computers or laptops and specific software; access to particular materials; office furniture; printers or printing access; lab space; and computers for research assistants and staff);
- contact recently hired faculty to ask what they were provided generally and as part of their start-up but remember differences in research results in different needs; and
- talk to advisors and mentors about norms in the field and other considerations.

You may be asked to provide a detailed list of needed purchases or specific or general cost estimates. In addition, request that your start-up funds be accessible across multiple years (or even non-expiring) as opposed to having to spend it all during your first year.

Moving expenses are another potential area of negotiation. Some universities set a rate or percentage of salary and will not exceed that amount, whereas others will vary. Estimate the cost of moving and read the college or university policy on eligible reimbursements since it can vary widely (e.g., packing and shipping, mileage, deposits, closing costs, and visits to find housing). Consider requesting funds to visit the campus to find housing, including for your partner if you have one. That said, it is not recommended that you negotiate too hard on these items as they are one-time costs. Rather, consider emphasizing salary and start-up (if applicable) in your negotiations because they will likely have the greatest long-term financial implications. For example, a starting salary of \$80,000 rather than \$75,000, with 2% increases each year, will result in \$163,000 more income over 25 years.

Spousal hires are likely the most difficult part of negotiations. When asking a university to find an academic position for your spouse, you are essentially asking the unit and college administrators to ask a huge favor of another department with limited input and potentially decreasing their future chance of hiring for position they were planning. Your partner may be required to engage in a consolidated campus visit before an offer can be made. If your partner is not seeking or is not considered for a tenure-track hire, you may have more or less latitude depending on the institution, but it will be essential to have detailed *in writing* all terms associated with the position (e.g., years of guaranteed support and contingencies) before you accept your offer. After you submit the counteroffer, which you should do within 1–3 days of receiving the initial offer, be patient because the offer will likely need to be approved by senior administrators. Once you know you will be accepting an offer, contact other institutions to withdraw your application from consideration so as not to create any unnecessary delays (or to impede other applicants' opportunities) in other hiring processes.

Dealing with Rejection

The relative abundance of school psychology positions notwithstanding, we all experience rejection at some point. Sometimes, this means we do not land a highly coveted position. Other times, it means a hiring season ends without securing any of the positions. In the case of the former, you can shift your energy and aspirations to other openings. In the case of the latter, you can take heart in obtaining a position somewhere else (e.g., as a school psychologist in the schools) while you continue to develop your relevant experience.

Although search committees cannot generally provide specifics on why you were not selected, you may ask mentors or colleagues to review your materials and identify areas for improvement. If you happen to have associates in the types of universities to which you applied, they can provide valuable insight into how to be more competitive for future positions. You might also take advantage of the mentoring programs available through NASP and APA to engage more senior faculty in targeted mentoring to increase your knowledge and experience.

If you were unsuccessful in landing the position of interest, you can use the interim between hiring seasons to develop your relevant experience. Worthy targets include (a) publishing past research (e.g., dissertations or other unpublished studies), (b) conducting and publishing new research (e.g., practice-based research or action research completed during your employment as a school psychologist, systematic reviews or meta-analyses, and collaborative projects with prior or new university associates), (c) obtaining training or experience in grant writing (e.g., attending workshops or webinars and preparing school or district proposals for state or federal grants), (d) seeking additional teaching experience (e.g., guest lecturing, providing adjunct instruction, and offering conference or professional learning presentations), (e) supervising graduate students or early career school psychologists, (f) contributing to the field in other ways (e.g., reviewing for journals, reviewing conference proposals and serving in state or national

association committees or other leadership positions), or (g) obtaining additional research training. How you allocate your time should depend on the type of position you seek.

Returning to the Job Market

Securing your first position is immensely satisfying, but there are many reasons you might return to the job market, from desire or need to relocate to interest in different types of institutions, programs, positions, or opportunities. Regardless of your motives, as with your initial search, it will be helpful to clarify your values and goals. One advantage of returning to the job market is that you now have some experience and greater perspective on your priorities. Reflect on what you value in a position (e.g., research collaboration among colleagues, geographic location, and graduate student mentorship), the type of position important to you (e.g., teaching versus research intensive), and your career goals and aspirations (e.g., opportunities for research collaboration, grant funding, administrative experience, supervision, and direct service), and the specific features missing from your current position.

Preparing materials and interviewing. Although returning to the job market can still be as intimidating as your first occasion, the good news is that you are likely more marketable. Search committees want to know that you can do the job, so in preparing your application materials and during interviews, be clear about your accomplishments and skills acquired in your current position. This generally also means you will be well served not to lean too heavily on your original materials. Show the search committee how you have developed as a scholar, instructor, and mentor in your current position and how that development makes you the right fit for this new position.

Re-entering the job market includes the added complexity of managing the search process, including developing strong materials and scheduling campus visits, around teaching obligations and other faculty responsibilities. It is appropriate to ask to schedule your interview around your teaching schedule, although search committees may not always be able to accommodate your request. However, this type of request conveys your commitment to your work and students. Securing strong positive references can also present a challenge because you may not want your current colleagues, who arguably know you best, to know you are considering leaving. Thus, consider carefully your relationships to determine if a colleague can support your applications and maintain a positive working relationship. Even if you do not ask a colleague for a reference, you will still need to weigh whether you should disclose to colleagues your return to the job market. Similar to asking for recommendation letters, deciding to disclose that you are applying for other positions depends on your specific context and relationships. It is likely that your current colleagues will find out about your decision to return to the job market from others (e.g., faculty or students at the university to which you are applying). Generally, once your campus visit is promoted by the hiring department, typically through announcement about your colloquium, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Although situation-specific, if you do decide to discuss your return to the job market with colleagues, we suggest being thoughtful about those discussions and sharing that information with trusted colleagues. It is possible you will not get a job offer, and therefore you will need to maintain positive relationships with your current colleagues.

Making the transition. If you do accept an offer, you will need to consider how you will tell your current colleagues about your departure. We suggest sharing the news as soon as possible after the new contract is set given our field is relatively small and news travels fast. Moreover, your colleagues will likely want to initiate arrangements to replace your position, so they will appreciate you being forthcoming. It is also important to start planning for the transition as soon as possible. Consult with faculty or staff at your new institution who can provide helpful information during your transition. Your unit administrator or program director may be able to recommend faculty and support staff who can help you navigate the process or identify other

relevant supports (e.g., offices for relocation, research, and teaching) to support establishment of your scholarship and course preparation in line with the expectations of your new institution. Reaching out to colleagues for support with the transition is a natural foundation for building positive relationships at your new academic home. It may also be helpful to talk to colleagues at other universities who have made similar transitions to find out what strategies they found to be helpful.

Changing positions can be a stressful process, particularly if the transition requires you to relocate or disrupts collegial or mentoring relationships. Thus, it will be important to be proactive and intentional about self-care during the transition. Self-care strategies that include a mindfulness component such as practicing gratitude, journaling positive events, and exercise may be particularly beneficial. Prior to relocating, it will be helpful to start looking for professionals (e.g., therapists or physicians) and activities that can help to promote self-care and self-development during your transition. Once you implement your self-care plan, you will need to monitor your progress.

Summary

The academic job search process can be intimidating but the payoffs—contributing to advancement of the field through graduate education, scholarship, and service—are great. This chapter provided an overview of common processes and considerations, including how the faculty search process varies across various types of university positions and the process generally applied during hiring for tenure-track positions. We described how prospective applicants can locate information on university positions, develop strong application packages, navigate campus visits, and negotiate contracts. Resources provided include sample itineraries and questions to ask during campus visits. We also discussed dealing with rejection and returning to the market after a failed search or when seeking a new position. Please know that the process is worth it. Best of luck with the job hunt!

Suggested Resources

A variety of resources exist to support prospective and early career faculty in our field. These include the Society for the Study of School Psychology's Early Career Forum (<http://sssp-research.org/earlycareerforum/>) and NASP's Future Faculty Interest Group and Early Career Professionals resources. General higher education resources include the Chronicle of Higher Education (often available through your university library) and its blog, Chronicle Vitae, and the National Center for Faculty Diversity and Development (to which your university may have an institutional membership). A note of caution in accessing general resources: Beware of the doomsday vibe many often have, particularly where they draw heavily on trends and perspectives from the humanities and other disciplines where shortages of positions are severe and often increasingly dire.

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