This guide offers some advice to those with a PhD in philosophy who are seeking academic jobs. Like all advice, it should be taken with a grain of salt. It reflects the collective wisdom of multiple generations of the APA's Committee on Academic Career Opportunities and Placement. We hope that some of what we recommend will prove helpful to some of you, some of the time. Job seeking is one of the most difficult things in which people can engage. Anything that reduces that difficulty has value.

In any given year, there may be more philosophers hired into non-academic and temporary academic positions than into full-time, tenure-track academic positions. Job seekers should recognize that the number of academic jobs in philosophy is exceeded by several times the number of candidates. Philosophy PhDs should be open to seeking either non-academic careers, for which the APA's guidance document Beyond Academia: Professional Opportunities for Philosophers should be consulted, or pre-college (K-12) teaching careers, which may be pursued through fast-track programs offered by some schools of education.

This document, along with the related “Guidance for Placing Departments,” attempts to offer guidance for applying for the five basic kinds of academic positions: positions at elite private and flagship state universities, positions at regional comprehensives (i.e., second-tier public institutions), positions at liberal arts colleges, positions at two-year colleges, and online positions. That said, the differences between various kinds of positions are often a matter of degree, not in kind. Liberal arts colleges and regional comprehensives often require active research programs from their candidates, while elite institutions often care deeply about teaching effectiveness, as the key to maintaining the major. In the end, the hiring department’s needs depend upon the nature of the institution and the purpose that the open position serves for that institution.

In recent years, many institutions have offered fewer tenure-track positions and more teaching-track positions that come with little or no research expectations but higher teaching loads. In most cases, the process to apply for both full- and part-time, and both temporary and continuing adjunct positions at an institution is similar to that for tenure-track positions at that same institution. This document will indicate differences between applications for temporary positions and applications for both renewable and tenure-track positions, where appropriate.

Since the hiring process involves both job seekers and hiring institutions, understanding what to expect and what to accept requires carefully considering matters from the perspective of hiring institutions. We encourage job seekers to consult the “Good Practices for Interviewing” in the APA's Good Practices Guide as well as the Statement on the Job Market Calendar. At various points in what follows, we note especially relevant portions of the Good Practices Guide that job seekers might find helpful.

Members of underrepresented groups face special challenges in job seeking. For instance, implicit bias can creep into the candidate-selection process. In addition, members of underrepresented groups may face special challenges in interview settings (for instance, experiencing the effects of stereotype threat). All aspects of the hiring process must conform to the APA's Statement on Nondiscrimination and Statement on Sexual Harassment. If you suspect violations of the Statement on Nondiscrimination, refer to the APA’s Discrimination Complaint Procedure. For assistance with discrimination and sexual harassment issues, you should consult the APA’s Ombudsperson Concerning Discrimination and Sexual Harassment.
The APA is working to ensure fair and unbiased hiring procedures. It stands ready to intervene should candidates experience problems when on the job market. It is simply unacceptable for any job candidate to face discrimination based on race, color, religion, political convictions, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, or socio-economic class. Additionally, since concerns about implicit bias and interviewing practices often arise during the job-seeking process, we strongly encourage you to consult the “Good Practices for Interviewing” document, which includes two appendices that discuss each of these issues.

If you are a person with a disability, your right to full access in every aspect of the placement process ought to be extended without question or repercussion, just as you should be able to freely disclose your disability status. See the APA Statement on Nondiscrimination. For on-campus visits, some accommodations are routine and others need to be arranged. For instance, most campuses have by now made necessary accommodations for visitors in wheelchairs or with food allergies. But other accommodations needed for an effective campus visit, such as interpreter services for those who are deaf or hard of hearing, or travel support for a personal care assistant, may not be offered unless they are explicitly requested. Candidates might consider referring hiring institutions to the APA's Good Practices Guide with reference to the sections on interviewing in order to help ensure that relevant provisions are made. Concerns related to access or ableist bias in the placement process may be taken up with the APA ombudsperson.

1. Before You Go On the Market

When applying for jobs that are not teaching-focused, having at least one publication before you finish your PhD is a good idea. Getting published is no small matter. Some departments have courses on how to publish; if yours does not have such a course, you should talk to your faculty about the publication process.

In addition, you should try to demonstrate the ability to teach a diverse range of courses. If you are able to request TA assignments, you should try to TA in major introductory courses (introduction to philosophy, ethics, logic, and critical thinking) as well as some advanced courses in your areas of specialization and competence. For positions at teaching-focused institutions, job seekers who have taught at least two of their own courses, some first-year writing courses, and one or two topical seminars are stronger candidates. So it is advisable to pursue those opportunities as they arise both in and just after graduate school. At the same time, at large state universities, the trick will be to limit your teaching so you can get good writing done. Thus, the best-prepared candidates for teaching-focused positions may be philosophers who have completed their dissertations and have taught on their own for a few years in an adjunct position.

Keep your syllabi, assignments, a sample of student work (with your comments), and teaching evaluations from all of the courses you have taught. If your institution does not ask students to evaluate TAs specifically, design your own evaluation on the model of an evaluation from a well-known teaching center and administer the evaluation during the last week of classes. As with any course evaluation, have a student deliver them to a member of your department’s support staff to hold until grades are due so students can respond without concern that the evaluation will affect their grades.

Some departments arrange for a faculty TA director, faculty teaching mentor, or member of the university teaching center staff to visit your classroom. In order to be a strong candidate for a teaching-focused position, this person should visit two to three of your classes and write a detailed teaching letter for your placement file.
Teaching-focused institutions will ask for evidence of teaching excellence. This might include teaching awards, publications in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), textbook chapters, conference presentations at either the biennial AAPT conference or one of the APA-AAPT Teaching Hubs, participation in an NEH Summer Institute, an invitation to the AAPT “Seminar in Teaching and Learning in Philosophy” workshop, and/or courses that feature experiential learning or other classroom innovations.

Though it is typical for new teachers to run through standard anthologies in survey courses, advanced instructors think carefully about the development of a particular course narrative, about the particular needs of their local student population, and about how to teach and remediate philosophical skills such as close reading, argumentative writing, and in-class dialectic.

It is a good idea to join the APA as soon as you can. The rates for student members are very low. In your third or fourth year of graduate school, visit the PhilJobs: Jobs for Philosophers website. When reviewing PhilJobs: Jobs for Philosophers, you can scan through it and think to yourself: Do any of these jobs sound interesting to me? What do I need to do to stand the best chance of getting the job I like the most? Note how many jobs there are that are well suited to you. Note what combinations of things employers are looking for. For example, many jobs in philosophy of science or philosophy of mind involve teaching logic courses. Many positions in ethical theory or political philosophy include some courses in applied ethics.

In addition to the APA, experience and professional contacts can be found in the numerous smaller, specialized societies organized around particular subfields of philosophy, affinity groups, or particular periods or figures, such as the Society for Women in Philosophy, the International Society for Environmental Ethics, the Society for Realist/Antirealist Discussion, or the American Association of Philosophy Teachers. You may want to join one or two such organizations. They can be valuable for helping to establish you in the field and providing a set of interlocutors who can improve your work. One of the best ways to find such organizations is to survey the group meetings and sessions listed in the program for each divisional APA conference or the list of affiliated groups on the APA website. Note, also, that serving in an elected position, like treasurer or secretary, in such organizations can demonstrate your active role in the profession, while offering opportunities to raise your general visibility.

You should be aware of your web presence. Members of hiring committees and university officials often search the web for information about candidates. Your personal web page, your Facebook page, LinkedIn page, Academia.edu page, Research Gate page, and other such online profiles should be professional. Google yourself and make sure that your web presence is professional. Ideally, you would have a simple but professional web page of your own. You should also strongly consider having an up-to-date PhilPapers page. Remember that items put on the web are often difficult to remove. You should also review the privacy settings on your social networking accounts.

Consider using a dossier service. Some services do not charge for delivering dossiers; others offer free delivery only if the hiring institution has a subscription to the service. As noted in the Good Practices Guide, job seekers should be aware and plan accordingly for the costs of the job market, which may include, but are not limited to, interview attire, fees for dossier services, the mailing of applications, and travel to APA meetings.

2. When to Go On the Market

If you intend to pursue an academic career, one of the most important decisions you will make is when to go on the philosophy job market. The job search process is a time-consuming job. If you go early and you
don’t have enough of your dissertation done, you can find yourself six months later with no job prospects and no more done on your dissertation than when you started. If you go too late, you can find yourself facing concerns from hiring departments about your likely future productivity. (As of this writing, the national average is seven years from BA to completion of the PhD in philosophy, so if after completing your coursework you take longer than three or four years to write the dissertation, potential employers may consider this a sign that you will not be able to write enough in your probationary period to earn tenure.)

So, when is it optimal to go into the job market? While cases vary, in general, the best time is when you are nearly done with your dissertation and your letter writers are ready to write good letters for you. Both “nearly done” and “ready to write good letters” are relative terms. If you have a five-chapter dissertation, “nearly done” can mean four chapters drafted and approved by your committee and the other chapter at least begun. Or it can mean all five chapters drafted and some fairly minor revisions needed. At a minimum, you need three of those five chapters done by early September. The main reason for this is that you need your dissertation committee chair to say, in a letter written in late September, that you will be done and ready to start undistracted (usually in the fall of the next year). Since everyone supervising a dissertation is likely to say this in a letter, to prevent the application from being discarded immediately, your committee chair must cite evidence to back up this claim, such as that all five chapters are drafted and only need minor revisions. Moreover, a dissertation that is “nearly done” will not do you much good if your letter writers are not ready to write good letters for you. In other words, your letter writers have to think that, in addition to the quantity of your progress on your dissertation, the quality is there as well. Thus, the optimal time to go on the market is when your letter writers are ready to write you their most supportive letter. Because advisors are different, this can require different things.

As you are considering when to go on the market, your departmental placement director should be a sounding board for your questions about whether you are ready. And when you do go on the market, the placement director should be someone you communicate with regularly throughout the entire process. A good placement director can help you with everything from when to go on the market to the final negotiations when you get an offer. If you are uncertain about the guidance you receive from your department’s placement director, you should seek advice from other department members. If your department does not have a designated placement director, then you should work closely with your dissertation supervisor and at least one other faculty member to ensure that your dossier is complete and ready for distribution.

3. The System

In America, the majority of full-time, tenure-track academic jobs in philosophy are advertised in PhilJobs: Jobs for Philosophers in October and November. But some listings appear as early as August. There are some positions that are not posted on PhilJobs due to an institution’s noncompliance with the APA’s nondiscrimination statement. Part- and full-time one-year positions at regional universities and some permanent, full-time positions at two-year colleges are often filled instead by the review of a department chair alone, without an advertised search.

Schools that do a first round of interviews usually do 30- to 60-minute interviews. Almost all first-round interviews are now conducted via electronic means (Skype or similar software) any time from November through January. Interviews at APA meetings have become a rarity in recent years.

If you are ranked high in a first-round interview, you will be invited to campus for an on-campus interview. That interview will probably be spread over two days and will include meeting all the members of the
department, presenting a paper, and/or teaching a class. Most departments select two or three candidates and pay their expenses for this final interview.

There are also jobs advertised throughout the winter and spring, although fewer tenure-track positions are advertised in this time frame than in the fall. These are mostly temporary positions and post-doctoral fellowships of one or more years. These jobs may have first-round (usually online) interviews in March or April.

4. Job Advertisements and Where to Apply
An AOS is an area of philosophy in which you expect to do your research and publish your work. An area of competence (AOC) is an additional area of philosophy in which you are competent to teach. Some jobs list “open” specializations, or merely list courses to be taught. In these cases, you can apply regardless of your AOS. It is a waste of everyone’s time to apply for jobs that you are not qualified for, or for which you do not have the right area of specialization (AOS), so use your judgment.

Some applicants want to do a limited search, with limits set by geography or preferred areas of teaching or another criterion. Given the ratio of jobs to qualified applicants, it is wise to be as broad in your search as is possible. Apply to as many jobs as you can.

You should supply your placement director (and/or other faculty who are advising you) with a list of the schools to which you mean to apply. These faculty members may have good advice for you on which schools are most appropriate.

If you have a partner who is also seeking a position as a professor, this is the first time you will face the difficult question of when to inform the institutions to which you are applying. There are diverse views on this issue. Many people think that the best strategy is not to mention your partner until you have an offer. The thought is that mention of a partner any earlier in the search process may scare off departments and that, once you have an offer in hand, your bargaining position will be at its strongest. Some departments are at institutions with some flexibility in creating new positions, and they may have a strong desire to land their first choice candidate. Other people think that you should let departments know that you have a partner when you submit your initial application. They think that departments are looking to attract joint hires (because they will be less likely to leave) and that the more time you give a department to find a position for your partner, the more likely they are to be successful. At some institutions, if you first mention a partner when you get an offer, a positive response is not possible because the approval of positions takes months. At those institutions, if you mention a partner early in the process, the department might be able to seek a position for your partner. Another option is to tell departments about your partner during either first-round or on-campus interviews. All this puts you in a difficult position because there are almost certainly some departments at which the early mention of a partner reduces your chances of being hired and some departments at which it increases them. You may want to use different strategies at different departments. You should consult with the faculty in your department to see if they have any information about how the departments to which you are applying handle partner hires. At the end of the day, you will probably have to make a set of difficult decisions and make them without all the information that you would like to have. Regardless of your choice, acceptable interview questions will not require you to disclose information of this nature. On interview question guidelines, see “Acceptable Interview Questions” in the APA’s Best Practices for Interviewing.
According to the APA’s Statement on Clarification of Qualifications, job advertisements should list all of the key criteria that will be used by the search committee and the department in evaluating applications. For instance, for the sake of transparency, the advertisement should specify whether the department has a preference for candidates from a particular philosophical tradition or approach. However, experience shows that in some cases key criteria are not listed in the advertisement.

Note that ads in PhilJobs: Jobs for Philosophers must indicate whether the hiring process will conform to the APA’s Statement on the Job Market Calendar; if it will not, an explanation for the departure from the standard calendar must be provided.

You should review the APA’s Statement on Academic Freedom and Questionable Employment Practices, the AAUP censure list, and the APA censure list. That an institution is on a censure list does not automatically mean that you should not apply. But it is important to go into such a situation with your eyes open.

Hopefully, your department’s practices regarding the nomination of candidates and submission of dossiers conforms to the APA’s Statement on Placement Practices. However, if it doesn’t, as a graduate student, you may not feel well placed to take action. Referring your department (perhaps through your graduate representative) to the APA’s Good Practices Guide can be an effective means of raising issues about the handling of dossiers and other placement practices.

5. Your Dossier

In general, you should recognize that hiring departments will receive a great many applications and it is in your interest to make your dossiers as clear and complete as possible. You should carefully follow the instructions for applying and be sure to submit all requested material in a timely fashion. You should be aware that dossiers that arrive after the deadline normally do not get reviewed.

You should keep a record of the schools to which you have applied. You can update it with information as the search progresses. A spreadsheet may be useful here. PhilJobs offers job seekers the option to save the ads to which you plan to apply, and you can mark a job as applied-for after you submit your application. By using these features, you will retain access to the job description after the ad has expired, which can be helpful if you are invited for an interview.

Job seekers usually need two dossiers: one for positions that are teaching-focused, and one for positions that are not. The CVs, research interest statement, and teaching statement should be keyed to these two different types of institutions.

A standard dossier will contain the following:

1. Cover letter templates for different types of positions
2. A CV with contact information, higher educational history, AOS(s) and AOC(s), the title of the dissertation and the committee membership, a list of publications, a list of conference presentations, list of service to the department and/or the profession, graduate courses taken, and courses the candidate is now prepared to teach
3. Letters from research advisors and teaching mentors
4. A teaching statement outlining the candidate’s approach to teaching, areas of teaching interest, and experience in the classroom
5. Syllabi for courses taught as well as for courses the candidate is now prepared to teach
6. Course teaching evaluations, if available (both quantitative and qualitative, along with a summary of data)

The following are additional items that job seekers will need in their dossiers in order to apply for positions in which expert scholarship is expected:

7. A writing sample that reflects the candidate’s special expertise but which is accessible to general audiences
8. A statement of research interest

The following are additional items that applicants will need in their dossiers in order to apply for teaching-focused positions:

9. A complete teaching portfolio, which may include the following:
   (a) Teaching Statement (as in item 5 above)
       • What is distinctive about your approach to teaching?
       • What are your learning objectives for students?
       • Areas of teaching interest
       • Courses taught with paragraph-long descriptions
       • Examples of successful teaching
   (b) Training in Teaching
       • Development workshops (NEH Institutes, and AAPT, experiential learning, and writing-across-the-curriculum workshops)
   (c) Recognition of Teaching Expertise
       • Teaching Awards (with some context: departmental award, university-wide award, etc.)
       • SoTL publications
       • SoTL conference presentations
       • Leadership positions (graduate TA mentor or leader, AAPT officer, APA teaching committee member, etc.)
   (d) Teaching evaluations (as in item 7 above)
       • Summary of data (formatted for easy reading)
       • Qualitative feedback (refer back to your teaching objectives and demonstrate how the student feedback bears out these objectives)
       • Quantitative feedback (copies of original documents)
       • Testimonials or recommendation letters from students (no more than two)
   (e) Sample Syllabi, handouts and assignments
       • Intro-level course: Introduction to Philosophy, Introduction to Ethics, Critical Thinking or Logic
       • Intermediate level undergraduate course with writing instruction
       • Advanced course in your area of specialization, including area listed in job ad

10. A letter of recommendation from a pedagogical professional or teaching mentor (e.g., a director of teaching center, graduate teaching director, or teaching mentor) who has observed and advised you in your teaching

Some hiring departments request transcripts, which may at early stages be unofficial copies.

Some departments ask candidates for a diversity statement describing how their skills and experience could contribute to campus equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts.

Some departments now request that dossiers be formatted for anonymous review. Departments should prepare candidates for this possibility.
The following sections contain more specific advice on three of the items in your dossier.

**A. Your Curriculum Vitae**

A vita is an academic resume. You should show your vita to various faculty members and put it through the kind of drafting process that you would use for a term paper. For most applicants, the vita will be two to three pages long, with an additional three to four pages for a dissertation abstract and summary of teaching evaluations as supplements to the vita.

1. **Address.** List your departmental and home addresses and cell phone numbers.
2. **Area of specialization.** List one or two areas of philosophy that you are especially qualified in and expect to publish in. The dissertation is the primary, often only, basis for proof of a specialization. List something as an AOS only if you are prepared to teach advanced courses in the area; it is rare for a candidate to have more than two AOSs and not unusual to have only one. Exercise caution in listing your AOSs (and AOCs); you do not want to invite interview questions you are not well equipped to answer. To figure out what would be good combinations of specialization, consult past listings in PhilJobs: Jobs for Philosophers and then make sure that your dissertation and research plans really cover those areas.
3. **Area of competence.** List areas of philosophy (different from your areas of specialization) that you are ready to offer courses in. The best way to demonstrate this is in terms of what you have taught or TA-ed. List something as an AOC only if you are prepared to teach undergraduate courses in the area; if you have four or five such AOCs, go ahead and list them, but do not feel you need to list this many. In general, you may list more if you are applying primarily to small departments where faculty are expected to cover a wide range of courses, but you should be conservative if you are applying to research departments.
4. **Publications or conference presentations.** This could be one area of the vita or several, depending on what you have accomplished. Do not pad your vita with very minor things (or optimally, list them under a separate category for minor publications). List the most significant first. They don’t need to be in chronological order. Make sure to indicate whether something was peer reviewed. Also, give precise bibliographic detail, including journal page numbers of published pieces.
5. **Teaching experience.** List TA experience in a separate category from independent teaching. List the dates and places of the experience.
6. **Service.** If you have performed service roles for your department or the profession, such as serving on the APA Graduate Student Council or your department’s climate committee, or chairing sessions at conferences, list these roles and the dates you served.
7. **Special honors and awards.** List whatever seems relevant to a job search in philosophy. Mainly focus on things you earned in graduate school.
8. **Recommendation writers.** List the names of all of those who will write letters for you and their addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers. *See more advice about recommendation writers below.*
9. **List of graduate courses taken.** List all courses (including those you audited) along with the name of the professor and the semester taken. It is a good idea to group these by subject areas rather than present them chronologically.
10. **Summary of selected course evaluations.** On no more than two pages, list five or six sets of teaching evaluations, displayed in graphic form that is easy to read.
11. **Dissertation abstract.** On one or two pages, give a detailed description of the arguments of the dissertation. Provide a summary paragraph of the whole and longer paragraphs on each chapter. If you can’t easily provide this abstract, then you are not ready to go on the market.

The list above is in the approximate order that is common for a vita for a position that is not teaching-focused. For a teaching-focused position, you will need to reorder your vita to make teaching the top priority.

It is important that your vita is not artificially padded yet contains all of the important stuff about your fledgling professional life. You will likely need lots of feedback and re-drafting to get it right. If you have any questions about how you appear through the vita, ask people you can trust to give you frank advice, and then, with several such pieces of advice, make a decision about how you want to appear.

**Additional Advice about Recommendation Writers**

Your list of recommendation writers should include all three (or four) members of your primary dissertation committee as well as someone who will write specifically about your teaching, preferably someone who has good firsthand experience of it.

It can be beneficial to have someone write for you who is not a faculty member at your department or school, but only if the person has substantial familiarity with your work. Such letters can be highly credible, since the reputation of the recommendation writer is not tied up with whether you get a job. But keep in mind that all letter writers should be genuinely invested in you as a candidate; a letter from someone who doesn’t know your work all that well and can’t offer a strong endorsement of you can be detrimental rather than helpful. (One case in which a letter from someone outside your home institution can be especially helpful is when you have taught substantially at another institution; you might ask someone from the department in which you taught to observe a few of your classes and then write a letter speaking to your teaching abilities.)

It often is a good idea to give to prospective letter writers a letter from you that indicates what things you’d like them to cover in the recommendation. Give recommenders lots of time. Ask them by September 1 at the latest.

**B. Your Cover Letters**

The cover letter for each job application should basically be a one-page attempt to demonstrate that you fit the job description. This means that you should highlight aspects of the vita that demonstrate your qualifications for the things mentioned in the job ad. You should have a paragraph on your teaching and a paragraph on your research. In applying for jobs outside the US, where ads ask only for a cover letter and CV, the cover letter can be a bit longer than one page.

Take your time with your letter and try to convey as much information as you can in a page without being excessively wordy or using terms and expressions that may be unique to a particular subfield of philosophy. Keep in mind that most people reading this letter will not be working in the specialty area in which you work.

Liberal arts colleges may disregard boilerplate cover letters. While it may not be possible to do an individualized cover letter for each of your applications, you should at the very least have two cover letter templates: one for teaching-focused positions and another for those that are not teaching-focused. You should not simply flip the paragraph order in a cover letter for a teaching-focused institution, but make an
effort to think about how you might contribute to the institution’s student population. In other words, the templates should be tweaked for each application. Use your department’s letterhead on your cover letter. If you already have a job, this is easy. But if you are still in graduate school, most departments should be able to provide you with an electronic letterhead that can be used with your word-processing software.

C. Your Writing Sample
You will need to supply a writing sample for positions in which research is expected. The writing sample will likely come from your dissertation. You might take a chapter from the dissertation and make it a freestanding 15-page paper. Or you might create a synopsis of the whole. Whatever its subject, your writing sample should be your very best work. In many cases you will discuss the content of the paper at your interview. A writing sample should be very carefully edited for typos and infelicities of style, since this is the only piece of your work members of a hiring committee are likely to see. You should never send out a writing sample that has not been seen, and critiqued, by several people in your field, at least one of whom should be a faculty member. Do not assume that it is good enough if people have seen earlier drafts of the writing sample (say, when it was merely a chapter). As with everything else you send out for the purposes of getting a job, only send things that others have read and commented on in advance.

In general, hiring departments prefer to receive one and only one writing sample. Members of hiring committees are sometimes annoyed by candidates who send in several samples and request that departments pick the one they like best. Given time constraints, it is usually not possible for hiring committees to do this. It is to your advantage to make all works mentioned on your CV easily accessible. Personal web pages, or a PhilPapers profile, are ideal for this purpose.

You should not submit materials as part of your dossier unless they have been vetted by your placement director and/or other faculty members advising you.

6. First-Round Interviews
Before your first-round interviews, you should first have a mock interview. If this is not a regular feature of your graduate program, organize your own mock interviews. Find two or three faculty members, give them a copy of your vita a few minutes in advance (to make it seem like the real thing), and have them sit in a room with you for an hour and role-play. If your first-round interviews will be via electronic means (Skype or similar software), you should do a mock interview electronically. Your placement director can often help set up your mock interview(s).

At the mock interview, those interviewing you should put on different hats, preferably trying to simulate folks who will indeed interview you. Ask the mock interviewers to be brutally frank with you. A lot of what goes wrong in interviews is fixable if you know about it in advance. And if you display nervous habits (e.g., wringing your hands or biting your lip), this can be corrected once you know it.

For positions that are not teaching-focused, the first half of the interview is likely to be about research, and it is likely to begin with someone asking you to describe your dissertation in about ten minutes. This spiel should be memorized and well-rehearsed in front of a mirror. Of course, you will rarely get through ten minutes before questions start flying. And that’s good. The whole point of an interview is to have a conversation where three things are learned: how good a philosopher you are, what kind of a teacher you are likely to be, and whether you will be good as a colleague. Since you won’t normally be allowed to finish the spiel, front-load it with the most interesting ideas.
Remember that you are likely to be discussing your research with philosophers who do not know your area. You should make the importance of your research clear and be prepared to offer arguments that are accessible to a wide range of philosophers.

For positions with research expectations, the second part of the interview will be about teaching. You should come prepared to discuss in detail how you would teach courses that would fall both within and outside your areas of specialization and competence. Be prepared to explain what you think students should get out of a given course in order to motivate your teaching approach. Prepare in detail for the teaching portion of your interview, drafting sample syllabi and researching good texts to use.

Interviews for teaching-focused positions vary according to the institution’s student population. When you get invited to an interview, go onto the departmental website and look at the courses that would naturally fall into your specialization and competence. It is also a good idea to try to get a sense of what type of school it is. You should read some things that people in the department, especially those in your area, have written.

You might ask your department to invite philosophy faculty from a local teaching-focused institution (e.g., a local liberal arts or two-year college) to run a mock interview. There are significant differences between interviews at elite liberal arts colleges with a 3-2 teaching load, and at regional comprehensives that can require a 4-4 teaching load.

In a teaching-focused interview, you should be prepared to discuss the courses you can cover, the courses you would like to teach, your teaching style, special topics seminars you can offer, courses you might add to the department, SoTL publications or conference presentations, past teaching challenges and triumphs, successful assignments, in-class/small group activities, your response to course assessments, principles of course design, courses you have taught with experiential learning components (or other classroom innovations), your approach to remediation, how you teach specific skills (such as philosophical writing, close reading, and dialectic), and how you balance the teaching of skills with content.

At most actual interviews, you will be asked if you have any questions for them. Opinions vary about whether candidates must ask questions. Some people think it perfectly fine for candidates to simply say that they have no questions at the moment, and to ask for a contact name for future reference. Other people think it good for candidates to have one or two questions, based on your knowledge of the department and its curriculum (e.g., “Are your 400-level courses only upper-level undergraduate courses, or are there both graduate students and undergraduate students in these courses?”). Don’t be too provocative and stay away from salary issues and compensation issues, as it is too early in the process to raise questions about these matters.

For positions with research expectations, you may be asked what your next research project will be. You don’t have to have a detailed answer to this question, but you should have some answer. Don’t try to make something up on the spur of the moment. A good strategy is to work up a project that spins off from the dissertation, perhaps writing the chapter you never got to, or an article that is a natural follow-up to the dissertation. That way you can still talk about stuff you know something about.

Your clothes should be professional. Wear comfortable clothes that fit you well. A suit is not required, but a jacket or similarly professional attire is recommended. Avoid anything loud or conspicuous. You want to be remembered for what you said about your dissertation and your approach to teaching, not for the loud tie
or flamboyant clothing you were wearing. Dress for internet interviews should be as professional as dress for in-person interviews.

You should arrive/login on time to interviews. (At an APA meeting interview, in order to avoid disturbing other interviews, you should not knock on the door of the interview room/suite until the time scheduled for the interview.)

Hiring departments are usually on strict interview schedules, so their answers to questions may well be brief. It is normal for members of the interview team to interrupt, and you shouldn’t take offense at this. In fact, it is often a sign that the member of the interview team is interested in your point. Due to time constraints, interviews often end abruptly and you should quickly (but politely) leave the interview room/logout so that the next interview can take place on time.

You should review the APA’s [Statement on Hotel Room Interviews](#). It prohibits conducting interviews in hotel sleeping rooms. If you wish to make a complaint about an inappropriate interview room, discrimination (including sexual harassment), or another problem related to interviewing at an APA meeting, contact either the APA ombudsperson or the executive director (ED). The ED is on-site at all meetings and, depending on the nature of the complaint, may be able to act upon it immediately. The executive director can be reached at [executivedirector@apaonline.org](mailto:executivedirector@apaonline.org) or through the APA staff at the registration desk.

You should review the APA’s [Good Practices Guide](#) section on “Good practices for interviewing” so that you know the advice that the APA gives to hiring departments.

### 7. General Meeting Interview Advice

Generally, keep drinking of alcohol to a minimum during the meeting, or avoid alcohol consumption altogether. Try to stay away from folks who have been drinking and have interviewed you.

During one or two of the evenings, there will be receptions that often go on until late hours. (Some people still call these receptions “smokers,” even though there hasn’t been any smoking allowed in many years.) The APA discourages informal interviews at these receptions or anywhere else. In order to mitigate bias in interviewing, it is best for departments to treat all interviewees alike, as much as possible. Informal interviews, by their nature, introduce disparities among applicants. However, some people believe that there is nothing wrong with trying to find those who interviewed you earlier in the day at the receptions. If you do decide to go to the reception and talk to those who interviewed you, don’t be upset if they follow the APA recommendations and decline to speak with you. When you approach, ask if it is okay to continue the conversation that was begun earlier. Many departments reserve a table in the large hall where these events occur. When you enter the hall the APA will provide a list of the tables that have been reserved by various departments.

### 8. General Electronic Interview Advice

Many first-round interviews are done via Skype or some similar service. You should prepare as carefully for an electronic interview as you would for an interview at an APA meeting. You should also consult “Guidelines for Interviews via Internet Meeting Software and Telephone” (4a) for additional information about good practices for both departments and interviewees.
While a funny Skype ID is amusing, it may not set the correct tone for a first-round interview. We recommend that you use a professional and easy-to-remember ID. You should dress for a Skype interview just as you would for an in-person interview. You should test your connection, your lighting, and your audio. Be sure to check your microphone. If you wear glasses, make sure that there is no distracting glare.

In general, you want the lighting source to be behind your computer, not behind you. You need to do your interview in a professional setting and in one where there will be no distractions. You do not want a cat or a roommate walking through your interview. Silence your phone and turn off any notifications on your computer. You want a clean, neutral background with no visual distractions. Think about the placement of your camera. In general, you want it to be at eye level so that you do not appear to be looking down or looking up at those who are interviewing you. You should do a test with a friend to make sure that everything looks and sounds good. If your institution has a room for video conferencing, ask your department if you can hold the interview there.

During the interview, try as hard as you can to look at the webcam, not the screen. Looking at the webcam is how you will make eye contact. Some people find the image of themselves to be distracting. If that is you, just tape a piece of paper to the edge of your screen so that you can’t see your image.

Technical glitches happen. If there is a glitch, remain calm and friendly while you troubleshoot. It is okay to ask to break the connection and try again. Make sure you have an alternative means of contacting the person conducting the interview (email address, phone number) in case your electronic connection is a problem.

9. After the First-Round Interviews
After your first-round interviews, prepare a research presentation and start thinking about your teaching presentation. You should not delay because you might get a call only a few days after the meetings asking you to fly out for a campus visit. It is also a good idea to go over your first-round interviews with your placement director or mentor and see if follow-up emails might be warranted. Also, try to set up a mock research presentation.

10. On-Campus Interviews
In general, you should be aware that on-campus interviews, while primarily focused on a particular job, are also part of developing one’s reputation. Even if you are not hired to a position, your performance at on-campus interviews and/or in the offer process can lead to future contacts (e.g., invitations to conferences). Inviting you to campus is a significant outlay of resources for the department. You should respect this and try to minimize expenses. For example, you should keep travel expenses to a reasonable level and should not order extravagantly at restaurants.

11. Late-Breaking Jobs and Persistence
Keep yourself open to the possibility that nothing will happen as a result of the first set of job interviews. Keep sending out applications and leave no stone unturned. This is psychologically hard to do, but it is necessary. Many candidates get jobs in the second or third round, after the competition has diminished a bit. Those jobs are often no less desirable than those that have first-round interviews in December and January.

As was briefly mentioned above, some jobs advertised in the fall, and comparatively more advertised in the spring, are not tenure-track but limited-term appointments for a year or more. These jobs can be important
stepping-stones to a good tenure-track job. While many of these limited-term positions are for sabbatical replacements and so not renewable, some can become gateways for permanent positions at the same institution. In addition, having letters of reference from members of a department who have gotten to know you as a colleague, rather than as a graduate student, can be very valuable in helping you to land a tenure-track job.

It is also increasingly common for departments to advertise full-time post-doctoral fellowships of one to three years. In some cases, such positions are more desirable than available tenure-track positions. Most post-docs do not carry full-time teaching responsibilities and will allow you to build a strong record of publications. In many cases, the applicant pool for these positions is restricted to those who have completed their PhDs relatively recently. Many postdoctoral positions are not advertised in PhilJobs: Jobs for Philosophers when they are part of a college or university’s ongoing “society of fellows” program or part of an established research center. Those interested in such positions should consult the job listings in the Chronicle of Higher Education and individual university websites.

12. Offers

If you have worked hard and are lucky, you will get a job offer. The first thing to do is to celebrate! Then you need to consider how to respond to the offer.

You should review the APA’s Statement on Offers of Employment for information about norms regarding deadlines for replying to offers.

If you get a job offer, and you haven’t heard from a school that you prefer, and you are still in the running, email them. Nothing is lost here. If they don’t want you, and they have any manners at all, then they’ll let you down gently. If you are their preferred candidate, you want to avoid a scenario in which you don’t give them enough notice about a deadline for another job.

If your offer is for a non-tenure-track position, chances are that no negotiations are possible. The offer will be take-it-or-leave-it. You should take a day or two to consider the offer and then accept or decline it.

Things are more complicated if you receive an offer for a tenure-track position. In some cases, you can negotiate the terms of the offer and in other cases you cannot. In general, the more resources an institution has, the more likely it is that the offer is negotiable. In general, if an institution has unionized faculty, it is less likely that the offer is negotiable. Ideally, you will have been told about the negotiability of offers when you had your on-campus interview. If not, when you get an offer, it is perfectly appropriate to ask if the offer is negotiable and, if so, what parts of it are negotiable. For example, it might be that the salary is not negotiable because it is fixed by a union contract, but that travel funds are negotiable. It is also perfectly acceptable to ask questions about the practices in the department. You don’t want to make requests that are out of line with an institution’s practices. You are unlikely to be successful and you might breed resentment among your future colleagues. For example, if everyone in the department gets $500 for travel, you probably do not want to ask for $2,000. Before you respond to an offer, you might sit down and compose a list of questions about practices in the department, call the department chair to get answers to those questions, and then, with that information, make your requests. You should not expect to get everything you ask for, so restrict your requests to those issues you feel strongly about and try to identify your highest priority item in advance.
There are horror stories of offers withdrawn in the middle of negotiations. However, abrupt withdrawal is rare. Being aware of what is reasonable to attempt to negotiate is important: if your tenure-track offer is for a teaching-focused position, you should not attempt to negotiate a lower teaching load. This may well be a red flag to the institution that you are not genuinely interested in teaching-focused positions, and they may withdraw the offer. Candidates should be aware that in most cases, institutions are free to withdraw offers until the moment they are accepted. You should pay careful attention to the date the offer expires. That negotiations are occurring does not extend the time limit on the offer. If the date your offer expires is approaching, you need to accept the offer or get a written extension of your time to consider the offer.

As you negotiate, be alert for clues about the strength of your bargaining position. For this purpose, phone conversations can be more helpful than emails. For example, it might be that the department ranked you and another candidate as essentially tied. In that case, they might be happy to move to the other candidate instead of giving you terms that are out of line with those of the faculty currently in the department. On the other hand, the department may have brought three candidates to campus and the other two may have done poorly. You cannot ask direct questions about your bargaining position, so your information about your bargaining position is likely to be imperfect. Treat it accordingly.

If you receive an offer, you should make your decisions as quickly as reasonably possible. Other candidates are affected by your decisions, and slow decisions on offers can have negative impacts on them. Two weeks is a standard amount of time to ask for when considering an offer.

13. Taking Care of Yourself
Seeking a job as a philosophy professor is stressful. Members of underrepresented groups are likely to find extra stressors. As you are looking for a job, you should remember to take care of your body and your mind. Everyone has different ways of reducing stress, so follow through on stress reducers that work for you. Many institutions have professional counseling services available to students and employees; avail yourself of these services as needed.