Many Brown graduate students obtain tenure-track teaching jobs after finishing their PhDs. But they don’t all start out on that track. Many students begin their full-time careers as adjunct or visiting professors on fixed term, often renewable appointments. Some secure post-doctoral fellowships that allow them to engage in further study or to finish a book. Still others find satisfying work in higher education administration.

The key to finding your first job in academia is to listen to your own values and interests. If your passion is teaching, a position at a smaller school may be a good fit. If you’re interested in the behind-the-scenes workings of a university, you may pursue a career in administration. This section describes the major kinds of jobs available in academia, including faculty positions, post doctoral positions, and administrative options. Learning about these options will help you craft a job search plan that is right for you.

**FACULTY POSITIONS**

The requirements, demands, and timing of an academic job search vary from discipline to discipline. In some fields, the majority of interviews for faculty positions take place at a major conference; in others, the process is more decentralized. Because the nature of the academic job search is discipline specific, the scholars in your department are often the best source of information and advice. Work with your advisor and committee members to develop an action plan for your search process. If your department has a job placement officer, consult him or her for tips on how to navigate the job market in your field.

**Learn About the Market**

One of the best resources for learning about the academic job market is The Chronicle of Higher Education. It’s not only the premier source for higher education job listings. It’s also the best source for getting the inside scoop on the nature of the market in any given year. Each year The Chronicle publishes first-person accounts of life on the market as well as advice from the pros, including faculty who’ve served on search committees. To learn more about how search committees work, read the UC Berkeley Career Center’s account of how departmental politics and institutional priorities inform the search committee process from the time the job ad is drafted to the time a hiring offer is made: [https://career.berkeley.edu/Phds/PhDhiring.stm](https://career.berkeley.edu/Phds/PhDhiring.stm).

**Plan Your Search**

Although the process of looking for a faculty appointment differs from discipline to discipline, all searches require an expenditure of time and money. You will spend an enormous amount of time preparing materials to send out to prospective employers. In addition to drafting letters of application, CVs, and preparing for interviews and job talks, you will correspond with the institutions you’ve applied to and travel to conferences and universities for interviews. Some students like to use a spreadsheet to track job applications, noting which documents were requested and when they were sent. Emily Peters writes of the expenses that add up in “The Cost of Applying for Academic Jobs,” at: [http://chronicle.com/article/The-Cost-of-Applying-for-Ac/46220/](http://chronicle.com/article/The-Cost-of-Applying-for-Ac/46220/).

**Finish Your Dissertation**

In the midst of all this frenetic activity, you'll probably need to be working on your dissertation. Talk to your advisor about how to balance your research with your search process. It’s important to be able to speak convincingly in interviews about your timeline for finishing your dissertation. Search committees will want to know that you’ll have your dissertation completed by the time you step into your new faculty position. Having most of your dissertation finished when you go
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on the market will enable you to talk with greater confidence about the significance of your work to your discipline.

**Talk to Experienced Job Seekers**

Graduate students who are a few years ahead of you can give you a good sense of the job search experience if your field. They can provide an insider's view on what to expect during interviews and campus visits, how to deal with and unexpected issues that come up along the way. You can read published accounts of former graduate students’ job searches at the sites below.

- Darren Narayan shares his experience on the market in math: www.maa.org/features/narayan.html
- In “Getting an Academic Job,” Michael Ernst provides not only his own advice, but also useful links about stages of the job market: http://www.cs.washington.edu/homes/mernst/advice/academic-job.html
- Mary Morris Heiberger and Julia Miller Vick also provide a useful discussion in “Getting Psyched up for the Market” https://webspace.utexas.edu/cherwitz/www/ie/process.html.

**Be Realistic**

When going on the academic market, it’s important to adopt a realistic attitude. You'll send out lots of applications. Some institutions will respond promptly, others not at all. Keeping a good attitude is essential to success. It’s also important to follow your own sense of what’s right for you. Oftentimes, the advice you receive from people at Brown is geared toward getting tenure-track jobs at places like Brown. But a different kind of job may suit you better. There are nearly 3,000 institutions of higher education in the United States alone; take the time to learn about the various institutions with openings before making a decision about applying.

**Additional Resources**

- “Your first academic job:” http://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2013/06/17/essay-how-land-firstacademic-jobs#sthash.mkKEYpxa.dpbs
- “How do you improve your chances of getting an academic job?” http://www.theguardian.com/highereducation-network/blog/2014/mar/05/careers-higher-education-phd-doctorate-employment
- “Academic Job Searching for Dummies (or, 10 Easy Ways to Avoid Unemployment)” http://chronicle.com/article/Academic-Job-Searching-for/45367

**COMMUNITY AND TWO-YEAR COLLEGES**

Teaching at community, technical, and junior colleges is fundamentally different from teaching at a four-year institution. The student population is much more diverse, and the work is centered almost exclusively on teaching (and service work in the department). While staying active in professional associations is increasingly expected of community college professors, the pressure to publish is less pronounced.

If you decide to pursue employment at a community college, you will have to develop a cover letter that emphasizes your teaching and that downplays your research. Discuss any courses you
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have taught, particularly those that you developed yourself. Expect to spend much of the interview discussing your teaching experience and pedagogy.

Is a Community College Right for You?
● Julie Miller Vick and Jennifer S. Furlong discuss what factors to consider when looking at employment in a community college: http://chronicle.com/article/Do-You-Belong-at-a-Community/45853/
● Rob Jenkins outlines the benefits of teaching at a community college: http://chronicle.com/article/Not-a-Bad-Gig/45224
● Rob Jenkins answers the question “Can I Teach at a Community College?” http://chronicle.com/article/Can-I-Teach-at-a-Community/124528/

Landing a Community College Position
● What community colleges look for in an applicant http://chronicle.com/article/What-Community-Colleges-Want/45793/
● What to do, and what NOT to do, when interviewing at a community college http://chronicle.com/article/The-Community-College/45951/
● Jenkins’ “A Foot in the Door at Community Colleges” is relevant to those with a master’s or doctoral degree: http://chronicle.com/article/A-Foot-in-the-Door-at/44561/

Community College Job Listings
● Community College Week online contains news on community, technical, and junior colleges, as well as a link to "CCjobsonline.com," a database of job listings at two-year colleges: www.ccweek.com/
● The Chronicle of Higher Education’s Community College section provides a wealth of information: http://chronicle.com)section/Community-Colleges/33/
● Stanford University’s “Community College Job Search” guide provides an overview of the application process, a timeline, and sample interview questions. Download the guide here: http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/cdc/files/CommunityCollegeCareer05-06.pdf
● The American Association of Community Colleges lists positions nationwide: http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Resources/Careers/Pages/default.aspx
● An extensive listing of community college positions in California: https://www.cccregistry.org/jobs/index.aspx

ADJUNCT TEACHING

A lot of ink has been spilled in academic circles over the plight of adjunct teaching instructors. Adjunct, part-time, and temporary instructors typically earn less than their tenure-track counterparts, teach heavy course loads, and often work without the benefits accorded to many other university employees. However, many adjunct instructors find their experience to be a rewarding one. If you’re a recently-minted Ph.D. with little teaching experience, working as an adjunct can provide you with the opportunity to sharpen your teaching skills, develop syllabi, and teach a wider range of courses.

For some, the heavy teaching load of adjunct work enables them to do what they love best - teach. Others use their adjunct experience to transition into more permanent, tenure-track positions. Still other adjuncts use their role as a part-time instructor to balance careers in college administration: teaching a couple of courses and working at a writing center, to name just one example. If you’re considering working as a part-time or temporary college instructor, it’s important to keep in mind why you’re adjuncting, so that you can get the most from your
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experience. The following articles and resources offer a range of perspective on how to use adjunct teaching to advance your career goals.

**Web Resources**

- Adjunct Nation provides news on issues facing adjunct instructors, links to funding sources, professional development resources, and job listings for part-time faculty. [www.adjunctnation.com/](http://www.adjunctnation.com/)
- Resources for adjunct professors, including an extensive listing of open adjunct positions: [www.adjunctprofessoronline.com/](http://www.adjunctprofessoronline.com/)
- HigherEdJobs.com allows you to search for open positions by type. If you are interested in adjunct or part-time teaching positions, click “Part-Time/Adjunct” under the “Type” heading: [https://www.higheredjobs.com/search/](https://www.higheredjobs.com/search/)