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What to look out for in your job interview

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Preparing for the interview

- Check out the School/department webpage and see if you can figure out what they're looking for.
- How do you think you'd fit in *even beyond the job description*?
- Don't be afraid to use this information in the interview.
 - Can you teach in any gaps they have?
- If you have any personal contacts, ask them.

Preparing for the interview

- What kind of job is it?
 - Primarily a teaching position
 - A lectureship
 - Primarily a research position
- What sort of presentation is it?





If it's a teaching position

- Prepare to give a teaching-related talk.
- The length will be specified in advance
- The audience probably not specified.
 - Probably a mixed audience
 - Specialist staff members; staff members from other departments; postgrads; some university bigwig(s) who are on your panel, e.g. a dean, a PVC...

If it's a teaching position



- Prepare your mini-lecture so as not to completely bemuse the non-linguists.
- Focus most of all on the quality of your explanations.
- Show you're a great teacher!
- Give lots of examples... include a handout.
- **Don't go too fast!**
- If you tend to have timing issues, use the timer for your slides.

Your mini-lecture

- Don't try to fit too much in.
- You will probably be asked to “teach” an area that would be part of your duties.
- Specify how it would fit into the course or module.
- Do stop and ask along the way if anyone has questions.
- Give time for questions at the end.



If it's a research-related talk

- The same applies: there will be audience members who don't work in Ix.
- So make it accessible to them too.
- As before:
 - Give plenty of examples
 - If they're in languages other than English, **give folks time to go through the glosses!**



If it's a research-related talk

- Don't go too fast – time slides if you need.
- Do allow time for questions.
- Define specialist technical terms.
- Make it clear what the theoretical point of your work is.
- Make sure to give some directions for your future research.



In the interview



- Questions are normally carved up in advance by the panel, so e.g. the Dean / PVC may ask about research;
- The Head of Department may ask about teaching, etc.
- If you have teaching experience, think about what you've already learned from it.
 - Do you have any positive evaluations?

In the interview



- Take your time to think about questions and give a considered response.
- If you've just finished your PhD:
 - prepare to discuss your findings
 - remember to look **forward** to future research.
- Have some research plans ready to discuss; even if you haven't truly made any, sound as if you have!

In the interview



- Future work is **always** more interesting to the panel than completed work.
- Research plans:
 - aim high, e.g. in terms of journals targeted etc
 - can you envisage publishing your thesis?
 - have you contacted a publisher?
 - what is your next project?
 - what grants can you envisage applying for?

Fitting into the department



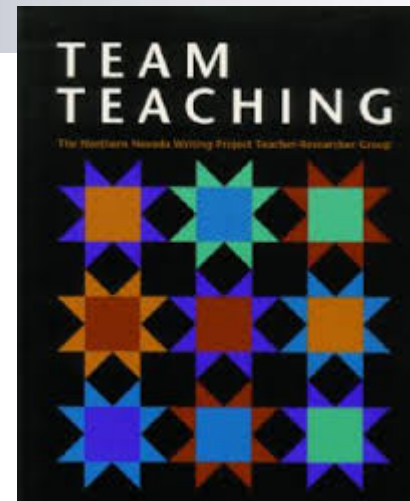
- Can you play a role in the life of the department?
- What do they specialize in?
- Can you be part of the teaching team for module X?
- Can you fit into their research profile?
- What are your plans for the next REF?

Be flexible!



- OK, so my PhD is in phonology, but sure I can teach an intermediate module in semantics!
- Yes, no problem at all team-teaching with Professor X!
- I'd be delighted to be the assistant admissions tutor / Erasmus advisor...

But do be honest...



- I've never taught semantics, but I'm willing to prepare a module if I have at least a couple of months.
- I've never team-taught, but I'm good at team work and happy to fit in where necessary.
- Can I please get a job description for that admin position once I'm appointed?

Most important attributes

- **Flexible** ✓
- **Competent** in teaching, prompt in dealing with admin, able in research ✓
- **Pleasant to work with; a good team member** ✓
- **Good attitude with students** ✓
- **Willing** to volunteer for School jobs ✓



Interview technique



- Everyone is nervous; don't let your nerves ruin your chances.
- Try visualizing the scary situation, to habituate yourself to it.
- Speak up – don't appear shy.
- **Act confident**, even if you feel far from it!
- Look the panel in the eye.

Good luck!

