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Faculty Work: Comprehensive List

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# Application

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# Application

**Keywords**

vocational guidance, resumes (employment), philosophy of teaching, philosophy of research

**Disciplines**

Christianity | Higher Education

**Comments**

Presentation at the 20th Biennial Conference of the Association for Christians in the Mathematical Sciences held at Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ontario, Canada, for graduate students on the process of applying for academic jobs.

# The Application

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Compiled by Mike Janssen

27 May 2015

# Introduction

Goal: start a conversation about the academic job market

Outline:

- Timeline
- Advice for Writing
  - CV
  - Cover Letters
  - Teaching Statement
  - Research Statement
  - Interlude: R1 schools
  - Faith Statement
- References/Letters of Recommendation
- An opportunity to write

## Main piece of advice

Go the extra mile to tailor your application to the position!

# Timeline

- Applications generally open approximately a year before the job starts (e.g., Fall 2016 positions will be advertised in Fall 2015)
- Applications are generally due somewhere in October–December
- Exceptions exist, though – visiting positions tend to be posted in the spring, and the job I was hired for was not posted until January 31.

# Where to find job postings

Several good websites to keep in mind:

- [mathjobs.org](http://mathjobs.org) – many applications submitted here
- [higheredjobs.com](http://higheredjobs.com)
- AMS EIMS
- Chronicle of Higher Education
- ACMS

# CV

Your “*course of life*” – in the US, it is intended to give a comprehensive overview of your academic life.

- Put most important things like education, teaching experience, research interest, publications, presentations, etc., first.
- If applying to both types of jobs, have a “research” version and a “teaching” version (they can have the same information, just ordered appropriately)
- Try to save space to fit more on the first two pages
- Look at examples online

# Cover Letters

A letter of introduction. Can be more than one page long (but don't make it unnecessarily long).

- Your opportunity to sell yourself.
- Explain why you are a fit for their school (read and refer to the mission statement!).
- If you have a past connection to the school/area, mention it! *Hard to take the risk*
- Highlight relevant ideas from your teaching/research statements
- Are you interested in getting involved with a program (or starting one) at the school?
- If a faith-oriented school, mention your Christian commitment
- Find ways to make your letter/application stand out!
- Invite to JMM talk if giving one
- Double check school name/contact info before sending!

# Teaching Statement

A statement which describes your philosophy of and approach to teaching.

- Make it memorable and enjoyable to read
- Keep it around 2–3 pages; don't ramble!
- Include concrete examples wherever possible
- Avoid clichés whenever possible.
- Mention the actions you have taken to improve as a teacher; what do you want to do to improve in the future (NExT, faculty learning group, etc.)?

# Research Statement

A statement describing your current research interests and future plans.

- Make it as readable for nonexperts; strike a balance between giving a good intuitive feel for the work without trivializing it
- Explain why your research is *interesting* – sell it *Fit in the field?*
- If undergraduates could be involved (they probably can be!), explain how
- Tailor to the school/type of job; especially important for smaller, 4-year schools.

# R1 (research-oriented) schools

- Research is the focus; rule of thumb is 2 accepted publications with more submitted by the end of graduate school
- A postdoc is required (maybe more than 1)
- You still need to put the time in to create a thoughtful teaching statement
- Emphasis on research “fit”

# Faith Statement

A statement describing your faith and its impact on your life and work.

- Assent to creeds/confessions/school-specific statements of faith
- Explain how your faith impacts your view of higher education
- Refer to books/ideas that have impacted you
- This is what deans/administrators/board members will read *My experience*

# Letters of Recommendation

Who should you ask? Someone who can write a good, meaningful letter.

- Your advisor – an absence will need to be addressed *Observe teaching*
- If you know someone who knows someone at the school you're applying to, don't be afraid to leverage that relationship
- Ask around to find good letter-writers
- If you know someone outside your school who can write a meaningful letter, this can look very good.
- Give your materials to your letter-writers to help them.
- Usually at least one letter should address teaching, but it's great if they all do – ask your letter-writers to come observe you teach!
- Ask early! August is not too early. June is not too early.
- Don't be afraid to remind your writers as deadlines approach.

# Staying organized

It's a big job, and you probably have other things you need to do; how can you stay organized and be efficient?

- Have drafts of your generic materials done the summer before; tailor as needed.
- Spreadsheet – store due dates, addresses, # of letters, required materials, responsibilities, etc.
- Reminders/task management application to set and stick to deadlines
- Computer foldering system – each job gets a folder named by the due date and school name, e.g., 20140228\_Dordt. All files go in there (even if the same as some other place) so you know what you're sending to that school. When done, rename the folder with a z at the front to move it to the bottom of the list.

# Teaching Statement Prompts

Here are some questions to consider as you begin writing.

- What are some of the qualities that best define the teaching style of your best teachers?
- What larger values do you (wish to) impart to your students?
- How do you know when you have taught successfully?
- What motivates you to learn about a specific subject area?
- Describe a time something in your class went well. How did you build on it?
- Describe a time something didn't go well. How did you adjust?