

The LS PhD Job Market: A Collection of Thoughts and Tips from IU LS

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Caveat: The information provided in this document is based on our opinions, and is highly subjective. As with many things, we encourage you to ask around, do your own research, and develop your own opinion. This information is also highly subjective, and it is up to you to decide what is best for you and your career / life aspirations.

Caveat 2: The LS Faculty are TT Faculty and this is our specialization. Our focus is on preparing you for a TT position (or a postdoc or related academic position). We can and will support you in pursuing other types of positions, but you will want to make sure that you take initiative in thinking about what kind of training you need and then requesting it.

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What kinds of jobs are out there?

Type	Summary
Research Oriented Tenure Track (TT)	This is the kind of position the LS faculty have. The expectation is typically 50% research, 40% teaching, 10% service. The tenure case (after 5 years) is usually based on excellence in research which is measured in number and reach of publications. Expectation is typically 2 peer reviewed publications per year once on the job. Some evidence of publication and possibly of ability to write grants is ideal in applying for these. A typical teaching load is 2-2 (2 courses per semester). In addition to LS, students may be qualified for positions in adjacent fields such as curriculum and instruction, IST, ed psych, cognitive science, inquiry and informatics to name a few. Though, which depends on your prior experience and dissertation / research work and you'll want to explore what the expectations of your work are for any fields you'd like to pursue well in advance. See the note below about looking at the job market regularly.
Post Doctoral Researcher / Scholar (postdoc)	PostDocs are typically 1-3 years, and the goal is to hire someone qualified to help advance a specific project or set of projects. For you, this is ideally an opportunity to learn some new techniques, approaches, methods, or theory. This is also a key chance to publish your prior work. This is always assumed to be short-term (at most a few years) while you are on the market for one of the other positions listed (usually, but not always a TT position). Note that most federal grant proposals that include postdoc positions are required to include a postdoc mentoring plan. Also note that ETS and some of the other places listed below under Research Scientist have centrally funded postdoc programs as well as external grants that will hire postdocs.
Teaching Position, generally at 4 year college	This kind of position is focused primarily on teaching, and research may either be a small percentage or not present. Typical teaching load is 4-4. However, there are usually not LS (or IST or Ed Psych) programs at four year colleges. So there are relatively few positions, likely teaching courses like our undergrad ed psych courses.

Research Scientist	This is a research position at either a university or a non-profit / corporation. In universities there is typically a promotion structure similar to TT positions, which is driven by publication. Examples of well known organizations outside of the academy include: WestEd, ETS, TERC, Digital Promise, SRI, MenloEDU and Concord Consortium. Some school corporations / districts also hire analysts. Each of these has its own expectations / requirements so I encourage you to explore and potentially arrange an informational interview.
Industry	The sky is the limit with positions available in: • Educational material / technology development • Testing companies (e.g. ACT / ETS) • Museums and out of school education spaces • Corporate training • Etc. Each of these has its own expectations / requirements so I encourage you to explore and potentially arrange an informational interview.

Tips for thinking about your path and the emotions that come with this process

To be added

How do I look for jobs?

Places to look:

- List-serves
 - We most often see job listings on key mailing lists such as the AERA SIG LS / ATL, ISLS, and others that are within your field (AERA Division C). It's good to subscribe to these or make sure someone who does, such as your advisor, is looking at them.
- Websites
 - Some programs will list jobs on their websites before / in ways that are easier to find than the aggregate websites so it's good to check your favorite programs occasionally.
 - Chronicle of Higher Ed
 - ISLS website and FB page or other professional organizations

- Industry postings - I am not up to date on what popular industry sites are so you are encouraged to ask around (Joshua)
- LinkedIn
- Versatile PhD (website?)
- Social Networks
 - The real value in getting to know scholars in your field at conferences is that they will share positions via email, talk, and social media. If they know you are going on the market, they will also be more likely to reach out in person. This is why it is good to try and attend conferences (and present) in the final year or two of your program. Before that is great too, but being out there as you wrap up is often quite valuable.
 - Your advisor will likely be asked / told of many positions
 - Get to know speakers and other visitors when they come

When should I look for jobs?

I (Joshua) recommend looking at the job postings on an annual basis starting in your first year. The reason is that this will give you a sense of what kinds of positions are out there, and what their expectations are. For example, in my case, I considered positions in LS, Ed Psych, IST, and Science Education when I first started looking. I realized over time that LS was the best fit for my interests and experience. While much of my work is in Science Education, it was clear that most Science Ed positions required teaching experience that I don't have. Based on these postings, I continued to work towards a CV that I felt would prepare me best for the positions I was excited by.

From Cindy: I didn't look until closer to finishing, probably in my last 2-3 years but I did go to job talks when prospective faculty came to interview to get a sense of what that genre of talk was. I looked at a lot of interdisciplinary positions as well as educational psychology and educational technology. My work too was in science education but I didn't think I would be prepared to teach science methods courses. When I was working on my dissertation, I felt like a post-doc would be the route to go, partly based on the timing. There were few options for LS positions at that time and I wanted to be sure that I had multiple options.

The academic calendar can be quite tricky. In general, though:

Job Type	When to look
Research Oriented Tenure Track (TT)	● These are typically posted late summer and early fall with an intention of having applications submitted by late fall and interviewing before or after the new year. The goal is usually to hire someone to start the following fall (positions posted in Fall 2018 are for

	people to start in Fall 2019). • These positions require you have your degree completed to start (though *some* have slight wiggle room on that). Ideally, you have your degree finished when you apply, but it is quite common to be completing your degree while applying. Just be prepared to demonstrate that you will finish in time to start.
Post Doctoral Researcher / Scholar (Post Doc)	• These are posted in a less consistent manner than TT or teaching positions. In many cases, they are posted as soon as funding is secured. So it's good to keep an eye out starting whenever you are ready, and to work with your social networks to be aware of openings. They tend to want someone to start soon (within a few months) rather than one full academic year later. • These positions require you have your degree completed to start (though *some* have slight wiggle room on that). Ideally, you have your degree finished when you apply, but it is quite common to be completing your degree while applying. Just be prepared to demonstrate that you will finish in time to start. • These also tend to have a little bit of leeway on start dates if it will help you complete your dissertation
Teaching Position	• These are typically posted late summer and early-mid fall with an intention of having applications submitted by late fall and interviewing before or after the new year. The goal is usually to hire someone to start the following fall (positions posted in Fall 2018 are for people to start in Fall 2019). • These positions require you have your degree completed to start (though *some* have slight wiggle room on that). Ideally, you have your degree finished when you apply, but it is quite common to be completing your degree while applying. Just be prepared to demonstrate that you will finish in time to start.
Research Scientist	• These are similar to post docs in that they are posted when available, which often depends on funding, and they typically want someone to start relatively soon rather than a full academic year later. • I (Joshua) am less familiar with these but imagine that those positions that require a PhD operate

	similar to TT positions in that they want the degree “in hand” prior to starting. Some positions do not require a PhD, though, and so are less rigid on that.
Industry	• These can be posted at any time and typically want someone to start relatively soon. • Some industry positions require a PhD and then likely want it “in hand.” However, some may simply require a demonstration of specific skills in which case they may not care if you ever finish your PhD (though make sure you know how that will impact you and your completion!!).

What does my Resume or CV need to look like?

Type	CV / Resume
Research Oriented Tenure Track (TT)	Typical “academic” CV: • Length doesn’t matter • Include your education, publications, research positions. Awards / honors, and professional membership / service. • Publications should typically be separated into peer-reviewed and not, and conference presentations as a final group. • You can list courses taught, but do not need to (you will typically note this in a teaching statement). • I found this site to be decent: https://theprofessorisin.com/2016/08/19/dr-karens-rules-of-the-academic-cv/ (note, I do not endorse all of the content on the site, just the CV section that I mostly agree with).
Post Doctoral Researcher / Scholar (Post Doc)	
Teaching Position	Similar to a TT or PD CV as above, but definitely list courses and likely put them higher up on the CV itself.
Research Scientist	Typical “academic” CV (see above). Maybe also add key methodological skills / experience.
Industry	Get to know the specific company / position. Some may expect an academic CV and others a more traditional corporate Resume. Resumes are typically expected to be much briefer (ideally 1 page), to list positions and concrete skills in each position. Given that the faculty have no had to prepare one of these in quite some time I advise you to check in with career

How do I apply for a job?

Each job will indicate what they need / want. It's always good to reach out to the search chair / lead with questions and ask what they want in a candidate / application, though.

A typical academic position requires most of the following:

1. Cover letter:
 - a. If the other items on this list are requested, this is just a paragraph or two indicating your interest and why you are a good fit. If they are not listed, this is usually expected to have the research and teaching statement baked in.
2. Research statement:
 - a. For a TT or PostDoc position, this is likely the most important / longest section. You usually want 2-3 pages here highlighting your core research interest, and how you are breaking new ground / making a contribution. You should list your dissertation as the major project here. This is often adjusted to show your fit for the specific positions.
3. Teaching statement:
 - a. This will vary depending on the job.
 - i. For a TT position this is likely a page long and lists your: 1) basic approach / philosophy; 2) courses you'd like to teach (make sure you know what the department offers or could offer); 3) some summary of your teaching experience and success (summarizing student evals, for example).
 - ii. For a teaching position, this will need to be more substantive, and many such positions request a teaching portfolio. I encourage you to reach out to CITL for advice on how to prepare one as we have less experience in this area.
4. Diversity statement:
 - a. This is a recent addition. We need to ask around what folks are looking for - Joshua
5. CV
6. Writing Samples (ideally publications)
 - a. Usually 2-3
 - b. Co-authored pieces are quite common.
 - c. In your cover letter and / or research statement you should indicate how each piece represents your work, and if it is co-authored, indicate what your role was in producing it.
 - d. If you have any first authored pieces, be sure to include those
7. List of references or letters of reference

- a. You will typically want your advisor and then folks who know you well. You might adjust the list based on the kind of position / specific institution if you feel certain people are either known to the search committee or have expertise that is better aligned with the search.
- b. Make sure to ask your references well in advance, tell them for each specific application submitted, and check with them about what information they'll find helpful in crafting their letter (I, Joshua, usually ask for a draft of the cover letter and recent CV to make sure I am speaking to the specific expertise / focus of the candidate). Note that Cindy asks for the same things.

Networking

Tips and tricks to be added

How to prepare for the interview (some tips)

- Be clear on the position requirements (ask the chair if needed)
 - Know why you are a good fit
- Find out who will be present and at least read their CV to target your answers to their likely expertise
- Reading a recent article written by the person interviewing you is also helpful - it's great to be able to connect your work to what each of your interviewers has been working on. If someone is clearly not in your area of expertise, though, or this is an on-campus interview, Joshua recommends you do not stress out to read more than a few articles total. Most people are happy to tell you where their work is at to help you connect. Cindy recommends at least skimming something by everyone on your schedule (except statisticians).
- Project descriptions for postdocs are also really important to read (and anything you can find related to the grant that funded this work; pieces that have already been written about the project if it is underway, etc.)
- Have a list of questions you want to ask--you might check with recently hired grad students or new faculty you know to get a list.
- Be prepared to indicate when you will be done and make sure your references / chair are on board with that answer as they'll likely be asked to confirm.

The campus visit

Many programs will invite their "finalists" (usually around 3 people) to visit campus and give a job talk. This visit is usually 1-2 very intensive days where the applicant will typically:

1. Give a research talk (the “job talk”) where they have 45 minutes - 1 hour to explain their program of research and answer questions of the department and guests from elsewhere in the school;
2. Possibly give a teaching presentation / teach a sample lesson
3. Meet with the search committee
4. Attend at least one meal with the search committee
5. Meet with other program faculty
6. Meet with some key administrators such as the department chair, executive dean, and possibly dean
7. Meet with some of the students in the program

International Job Searches / Searches for International Students in the US

We need to add something

What will they ask my references?

Many jobs simply ask for the referee to send in a letter describing the candidate's strengths and weaknesses and fit for a job. Sometimes, however, they ask to speak to the recommender, particularly if it is someone they know. Here are some of the questions we've been asked:

- How is their teaching?
- Here is my project ... bla bla bla ... how is the candidate a good fit?
- When will they be done?
- How are they to work with?
- Strengths?
- Weaknesses?
- Are they interested in doing this kind of work?
- Will they both engage in theory and do practical work?
- Can they do theory and practice?
- Are they flexible?
- Will they get along with teachers?
- I need someone who can _____ ... can they?
- What do you want for your student?
- Will they be willing to take initiative and make progress on things like _____ ?
- Will they be willing to do some of this practical logistical work in addition to helping me think through the big theory questions?

Other tips

It is really helpful to have a basic **webpage** so that when you are on the market, if anyone googles you, they will find your information. You'll want your CV, publications, and basic research interests. A picture is also a good idea to help jog people's memory of who you are if they have seen you at a conference or other location. There are free website options available such as Wordpress. Ideally, you want your webpage to come up in the first page of google results for your name.

IU Preparing Future Faculty Conference is a great learning opportunity.