

From the office to the battlefield

TI job market tips, 6 September 2017

David Smerdon



Winter is coming (and you still know nothing)

Outline

Today, we'll focus on four stages:

- 1 Preparation right now
- 2 Preparation when JOE opens
- 3 At the meetings
- 4 After the meetings

Market theory I

Always remember:

The goal of the market is **not** to score the highest position.

The goal is to find **the best fitting job** for you.

You may not know what a good match for you is at this stage. The market helps you find out. And in general, despite spending a colossal amount of junior researchers' time on essentially a zero-sum game, it does seem to work:

Market theory II

- 94% of JMCs get a job offer during the market
- 70% report being satisfied with their new position
- Econ PhDs have the lowest unemployment rate of any doctoral field, as well as one of the highest median salaries

Did you know...?

Successful JMCs will on average end up at a department ranked *60 places worse* than their graduating department

Your new best friends

- Supervisor(s)
- TI secretariat
- Placement coordinator
- UvA/VU/EUR secretariat
- Fellow JM candidates

Also part of your **'crew'**:

- Previous JM candidates
- Faculty in your department, and other professors (who like you)
- Your significant other (SO)
- Parents, family, friends, mentors, dog, cat...

And almost as important:

- Your **Calendar**

Preparation right now

Many resources for job market advice. In decreasing order of length:

- 1 **Must-read:** [Crawley 2016](#)
- 2 [Royal Economic Society advice](#)
- 3 [Advice from past Chicago PhD candidates](#)
- 4 [Chris Blattman's tips](#)
- 5 [David Laibson's tips](#)
- 6 [David Levine's cheap advice](#)

Checklist for THIS WEEK (1/2)

By September 10:

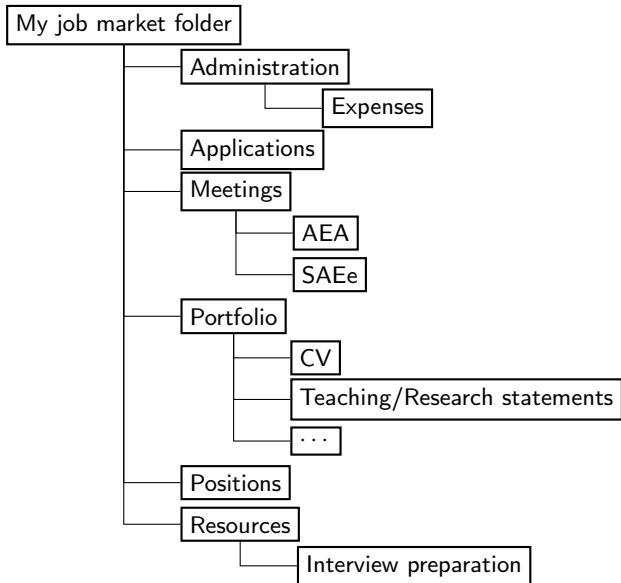
- Read Crawley immediately, up to “Interviewing at the ASSA Meetings” (p.35)
- Read the other shorter guides
- Make a **big, paper calendar**
 - Include your personal schedule/plan
- List of potential practice JM talks
- List of potential references
- Registration *and accommodation* for AEA
 - Check with your crew. If possible, coordinate.

Checklist for THIS WEEK (2/2)

By September 10:

- Schedule a meeting with your supervisor
 - Discuss the above
 - Aspirations
 - Frank assessment
- Subscribe to [New Economics Papers](#) notifications for your research interests
- Talk to your SO/family
- Organise your folders
 - Start a list of common JMP questions and general interview questions (+answers)

Be organised: File management



Checklist for THIS MONTH (1/2)

By end-of-September:


- Finish a **good draft** of your CV
- Finish a **good draft** of your research and teaching statements
 - Follow the “Every sentence” rule: *How does this sentence improve my profile?*
 - Send out CV/JMP/Statements/Cover Letter to your new Best Friends
- Collect your teaching evaluations
- Get a professional(-looking) photo
- Make your website, e.g. Google Sites (use the above)
 - Better yet: **Get someone else to do it**
- Make your **JOE profile** (use the above)
 - Video CV?**

JOE candidate profile

David Smerdon, 7289191's Candidate Profile

[Feedback](#) | [Candidate Dashboard](#) | [Edit Candidate Profile](#)

JOE » Candidate Profile View




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[Homepage and Other Links](#)
[Personal Home Page](#)

[Play Profile Video](#) 

Degree/Affiliation Information

Degree(s)

Ph.D. in Economics, University of Amsterdam / Tinbergen Institute
Expected 04/2017

M.Phil (cum laude) in Economics, Tinbergen Institute
Completed 11/2013

B.Commerce (cum laude) in Statistics, University of Melbourne
Completed 12/2006

B.Science (cum laude) in Discrete Mathematics, Psychology, University of Melbourne
Completed 12/2006

Dissertation Advisor(s)/References

Theo Offerman (University of Amsterdam)
Uri Gneezy (Rady School of Management, UC San Diego)

Present Institutional Affiliation(s)

Bocconi University, Postdoctoral Researcher (Milan, Italy)
University of Amsterdam, Graduate Student (Amsterdam, Netherlands)

Demographic Information (Optional)

Gender: Male

Ethnicity: Not Hispanic or Latino

Race: White

Citizenship: Non-U.S.

Country: AU - AUSTRALIA

Fields of Interest

JEL Codes

- F2 International Economics: International Factor Movements and International Business
- J1 Labor and Demographic Economics: Demographic Economics
- O1 Economic Development, Innovation, Technological Change, and Growth: Economic Development
- R2 Urban, Rural, Regional, Real Estate, and Transportation Economics: Household Analysis
- Z1 Other Special Topics: Cultural Economics; Economic Sociology; Economic Anthropology
- Z0 Other Special Topics: General
- D0 Microeconomics: General
- D1 Microeconomics: Household Behavior and Family Economics
- D6 Microeconomics: Welfare Economics
- D7 Microeconomics: Analysis of Collective Decision-Making
- D8 Microeconomics: Information, Knowledge, and Uncertainty
- C7 Mathematical and Quantitative Methods: Game Theory and Bargaining Theory
- C9 Mathematical and Quantitative Methods: Design of Experiments

Research/Teaching Fields

Statement of Purpose/Status

Statement of Purpose

I am a Marie Curie fellow at Bocconi University, and a PhD candidate at the University of Amsterdam (CREED) and the Tinbergen Institute in the Netherlands. My research interests lie in the fields of Behavioral and Development economics, with a particular focus on experiments.

Interests

Job Market Status

Active

Employment Types Considered

US: Full-Time Academic (Permanent, Tenure Track or Tenured)
International: Full-Time Academic (Permanent, Tenure Track or Tenured)
Full-Time Nonacademic
International: Other Academic (Temporary, Adjunct, Visiting, Part-Time)
Other Nonacademic (Temporary, Part-Time, Non-Salaried, Consulting, Etc.)

Personal website



David Smerdon

PODER fellow, Bocconi
University

[Welcome](#)

[About me](#)

[Research](#)

[CV](#)

[References](#)

[Contact](#)

[Miscellaneous](#)

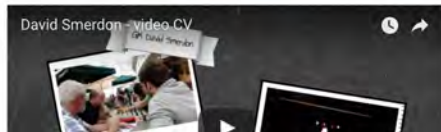
Welcome

I am a PhD candidate in economics at the [Tinbergen Institute](#) and the [University of Amsterdam](#) (UvA), and currently a [PODER fellow](#) at Bocconi University in Milan.

I primarily work in **behavioral** and **development economics**. My research involves theory and modelling, experiments in the lab and field, and microeconomic analysis in order to investigate topics such as [social norms](#), the impact of [refugee integration](#), the relationship between [inequality and trust](#), and attempts to stop female genital mutilation.

In November 2017, I will join the School of Economics at the [University of Queensland](#) as an Assistant Professor.

On this site, you can find out more about my [research](#), read my academic [CV](#), see information about my [references](#), or [get in touch](#).



Checklist for THIS MONTH (2/2)

By end-of-September:

- Book accommodation and (flexible) flights to the Meetings
 - Join a FF/hotel program
- Send your letter-writer request packages
 - See Chris Blattman's excellent [tips for recommendation letters](#)
- Check your **digital footprint**
- And of course, finish your JMP...
 - What's your **main contribution**?
 - What's the **closest published paper**?
 - What's its **biggest hole**?

By mid-October, **stop producing results/theory for your JMP**. Focus on writing a good intro/abstract, and improving your pitch.

Time management

Very important to minimise 'dead time'!

A lot of the market involves waiting. Make sure you can **always make progress on something**.

When you're not working on something, **someone else should be**.

- JMP
 - "Can you please give me your first reaction to my abstract and intro?"
- CV
- Research/Teaching Statement
- Pitches
- Website
- Cover letter

Preparation when JOE opens (1/3)

In October the listings will really start flowing.

- Make accounts and set up your job notifications and saved-searches for AEA's [JOE](#) and also [Econjobmarket.org](#)
 - You can also follow new JOE listings on Twitter
- **Share your list of positions** (downloading the JOE spreadsheet is easiest) with your SO and/or family. Filter by country and position type
- As you research positions that survive the filter, **make notes**
- Start making a list of your **top positions**

Preparation when JOE opens (2/3)

In November you will be crazy-busy with applications. It will be tempting to neglect your other JM duties...

- Try to get your applications in earlier rather than later. You don't **have** to wait until the deadline, and you don't need the extra stress.
- Prioritise your time for each application
 - Your effort should be an increasing function of the position's desirability and your realistic chances
 - Me: 100 applications, 75 personalised
 - Others: 200+ applications, 0 personalised (Mail-merge!)
- Send your top-10 to your supervisor. Ask for personal emails
- Plan to have all in by Thanksgiving (November 23)
 - Faculty will be thinking over their turkey weekend...

Preparation when JOE opens (3/3)

- Chase up your letter-writers
- Write a short (3-5 min) pitch for your next-best paper
- Send your 'final' version of your JMP presentation to your supervisor
 - You may have to go to a fly-out immediately after a meeting!
- Schedule mock interviews with faculty or other JMCs ← **Don't forget!**
- Practice your pitch with **everyone**
- By now, your list of questions/answers should be long
- Admin for the market:
 - Add days either side to your flights ← **Jet lag/Destress**
 - Don't schedule your favourite interviews up-front
 - Map of hotels, interview locations, supermarket, cafes (with wifi), colleague hotels, pharmacy
 - Buy a suit (some say two) and comfortable business shoes

Preparation for JOE - other

- **JOE Signals:** Probably won't be useful (not as useful as your supervisor's letters, at least) - but free, so use them.
- Apply wider than you initially think. Microsoft has a strong research department; Amazon and Facebook pay very well; many international aid organisations pay tax-free salaries; Australia isn't **that** far away. . .
- And to repeat again: **Stay very organised.** You will be juggling a lot of applications. Don't underestimate the time it will take you.

At the meetings (1/4)

Most JM advice articles focus on this part. **Reread sections of Crawley etc about the interviews.**

The most important points to remember (in my opinion):

① **Be honest all the time** (and open most of the time)

- ▶ Your interviewers may be your future colleagues or collaborators, or referees. . .
- ▶ Don't make statements you can't defend
- ▶ Ask questions you genuinely want to know the answers to (but know what to avoid - e.g. no salary talk!)

② **Enjoy yourself**

- ▶ Dozens of esteemed professors are giving up their time to talk one-on-one with you, a lowly PhD student, about your work. This is a rare opportunity!
- ▶ *"We should keep in touch about this, independent of how this job process proceeds"* ← if you find interesting common interests (and you genuinely want to work together)

At the meetings (2/4)

③ Don't get put off

- ▶ Some interviewers will be very pleasant. Some interviewers will be out to get you. Some interviewers will ignore you completely.
- ▶ Their job is also tough: 600+ applications, 30+ interviews, and 20-30 minutes to judge a candidate
- ▶ **Stay focussed.** You can only do your best. And every interview is +1 experience.
 - You will likely have at least one disaster (probably at the start). Move on.

④ Post-interview management is important

- ▶ Take notes after each interview, referring to them and their questions by name. You never know if this one will be a fly-out, and your future self will thank you.
- ▶ Meet your fellow JMCs for (short) dinners and/or breakfasts. Swap war stories. Remember: "You will never walk alone."

At the meetings (3/4)

5 Stay enthusiastic

- ▶ Believe in your paper. Be proud of your work. And perform with the same level of passion even if it's the sixth time you've sold it today.

6 Preparation calms nerves

- ▶ You should already know the answers to the three most common questions about your paper
- ▶ You should already know the answers (which may differ for each position) to the 'loaded questions': "How many interviews do you have?", "Where do we rank on your list?"
 - Your top places **should be told** that they're at the top.
- ▶ Carry your list of questions, CV, Pitch, JMP, Research Statement, Schedule, Map with you. And...
- ▶ Make **Cheat Sheets** for every interview - no more than 1 double-sided page:

Interview cheat-sheet

University of Westeros

Interviewers

Prof Cersei Lannister (Chair), Prof John Snow

Strengths

Diverse range of fields:

- Experimental, Behavioural
- Population models

Why I want to go

- My research interests closely align (especially dragons)
- I have close family connections to Westeros

Other researchers for collaboration:

- Tyrion Lannister: Contract theory (paper in AER, 2016)
- Daenerys Targaryen: Macroeconomics and globalisation

Cersei Lannister

Areas:

Macroeconomic Theory,
Microeconomic Theory,
Economic Development
and Growth,
Macroeconomics



- Interesting papers on using the Human Development Index (HDI) as a target for optimal social planner policies ([link1](#), [link2](#)).
- *JPE 2017* Paper: Maximising the HDI rather than income can lead to naturally equitable policies; in fact, she says that income should be dropped entirely from indices. **Stress that I'm interested at looking at the micro and behavioural foundations here: Would the public really prefer the HDI?**

Jon Snow

Areas:

Nothing



At the meetings (4/4)

Little “One-percenters”:

- **Your health:** Good food, and don't worry (much) about money. Carry paracetamol or aspirin
- **Routine:** Try to keep it as much as possible (gym?)
- **Water:** Hydration is important, but so are bathrooms. . .
- **Coffee:** As above, moderation is key
- **Lifts:** Always a JMC queue every 15 minutes
- **Music:** Something motivational and familiar
- **BBC:** Put a news channel on in the background of your room
- **Sleep is an investment.** It gives the best ROI, above last-minute cramming. Consider *Valerian Plus* if you're prone to insomnia

After the meetings

- You guessed it: **Go back and reread Crawley**
- Don't just sit there refreshing your inbox. Polish your presentation, work on your PhD thesis, get some exercise, be nice to your SO!
- Lots of other guides for fly-outs and job market talks (search online). E.g. for applied microeconomics, [see here](#).
- Ask junior faculty at your department, and other recent JMCs, for advice
- Keep close communication with your supervisor. Most likely, people in your faculty know your fly-out departments personally, and you can get some valuable inside information.

To recap:

- Be **organised**
- Be **prepared**
- Be **annoying**

Finally...

This will probably be one of the most exciting experiences of your professional life. Enjoy it! Positivity matters.

Take a short vacation after your market is over.
You (and your crew!) have earned it!