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*Note to Wisconsin folks: this contains some Brown University lingo, including Natalie (the math department secretary) and the Sheridan Center (rough equivalent of the Delta Center here). Some of the other details below also will not apply literally to Wisconsin.*

### **Suggested Job Application Timetable**

Here is how I would do my job search if I had it to do over again. This represents only my opinions, as there's no canonical way of going about the job application process. But I think it provides a useful blueprint, especially if you have no idea what the process looks like. Note that some of these dates are specific to the 2004-2005 job search, so verify them for the present year. Good luck!

**Summer** – choose three or four faculty (one being your advisor) to write you research letters and one to write you a teaching letter. It's a bonus if one or more are from institutions other than yours. Think about this carefully and discuss with your advisor. Don't ask them for letters yet, just start thinking about who you want to write for you. You might also want to start identifying researchers out there whose work ties in with yours or interests you a lot (see Early December entry).

**Summer** – if at all possible, write up a preliminary research statement. Do a 2-3 page version and a 5-7 page version (the longer one can often be parlayed into an introduction to your dissertation). Revise these documents periodically into the fall as you get new insight about your project and especially about how it relates to existing research.

**Late August/early September** – begin compiling a list of places you want to apply and fellowships that interest you. This really makes life easier later on. The earliest deadlines are in mid-October, such as the NSF Postdoctoral Fellowships and some tenure-track jobs or jobs overseas. Most tenure-track positions and some postdocs have deadlines in November (Nov. 15 is popular), while most postdocs have Dec. 1 or Dec. 15 deadlines.

The most comprehensive method of assembling this list is to go to schools' homepages and look for links to job ads. This is a bit time-consuming, but worth it. Also talk to your advisor about fellowships and schools where people are doing work similar to yours. There are also some bulletin-board style places where jobs are listed; I used the AMS's EIMS listing, but many good jobs are not posted on any bulletin board.

I suggest making a spreadsheet of the places you want to apply, and writing down their deadlines and required material in the sheet. Write down all info the first time you look at a place's homepage so you don't have to keep checking it. Another labor-saving tip for later on is to start a labels document (say in Word) and the first time you visit a university's homepage cut and paste the address where the application needs to be sent.

**Mid-September** – ask your chosen reference writers to write their letters for you. Include with your request detailed instructions about where to send the letter (in 2004 it was just to Natalie, the math department secretary, who kept a file and then mailed them out all at once when I gave her the address labels of places in early November). Also make sure to tell the writer to use letterhead. If you can, include a 2-3 page summary (your research statement will do) and also a longer summary (or the introduction). If possible, meet with each writer other than your advisor to discuss your thesis.

Tell the writer you need the letter by a week before your earliest deadline. This ensures you'll have time to meet the deadline, as they tend to be receipt deadlines rather than postmark ones. The NSF deadline is likely your earliest, and you'll need to contact an outside researcher about submitting an application to work with him or her. Even if you're not applying for it, you should ask for your letters by late October, since it will be good to have all the letters taken care of before the business of assembling your own materials starts.

**Late September** – write drafts of your CV and teaching statement. These are hard to write, especially the teaching statement, and you should just get something down at first. Then get feedback and revise. Good people to see for feedback are Laura Hess and Janet Rankin of the Sheridan Center (for teaching statements in particular but also CVs) and Bev Ehrich of Career Services (for CVs). Start a portfolio on mathjobs, and when you do each draft upload it there.

**Early October** – If you're interested more in tenure-track jobs, it may be a good idea to participate in the employment center at the Joint Math Meetings. The deadline for getting your info in the Winter Employment Bulletin (so that employers can look at it before they get to the meetings) is usually sometime in October. Note that the typical universities who send representatives to the employment center are smaller universities or liberal arts colleges offering tenure-track jobs.

**Mid-October** – Send off that NSF application. It can't hurt to apply for this, and it might make the next few years really nice. Your CV and Research Statement don't have to be in final, perfect form for this, either. Just get them looking OK. I don't know if you'll need a cover letter, but if so, just come up with something respectable. Then give yourself a week off of the job grind. The hardest part is in some ways over, as you've got your letters and solid drafts of the other major documents.

**Late October** – Keep working on the CV, Research Statement, and Teaching Statement. You should be getting these into near-final form. If you're applying for any tenure-track jobs, you probably have Nov.1 deadlines.

**November** – It's probably a good idea to send out most of your applications this month. It never hurts to send them off early.

**Early December** – Choose 3-5 professors at schools you've applied to whose work meshes well with your own or whose work you find particularly interesting. Send each one an email introducing yourself, mentioning that you're applying for a post-doc at the

prof's institution, and explaining how his/her work fits in with yours or interests you. Attach your 2-3 page research statement, and ask the prof. to take a look at your application (which is not too much to ask). Writing these messages is not an easy thing to do, but it is enormously beneficial. It signals to the university that you are serious about the job, and nearly always results in their paying you some attention (I sent five such messages and received personal replies from the faculty member each time). Also, even if nothing comes of it, it makes you look around and see who's doing work that interests you and ties in with your own, which can help open avenues for future research and collaboration. In my case, I think that one of the five messages I sent really did help me get a job.

***Late January*** – By this time you have submitted all of your applications and are waiting for responses. If you've applied for tenure-track jobs, the responses usually take the form of requests for campus interviews. For tips on dealing with these, you might make an appointment with Janet Rankin at the Sheridan Center. Also, keep an eye out for Sheridan Center and Career Services programs in the fall that deal with campus interviews.

For postdocs you usually just get an offer without interviewing. Generally the first round of offers comes about Jan. 25, but it is very common (even among those who wind up with good jobs) not to hear anything for several weeks after that. Usually you have about a week to respond to an offer, which can be kind of stressful, especially when you don't know what other offers you'll be getting. Talk to everyone you can about the decision (particularly your advisor, of course) so as to get as much info as possible.

If nothing comes through that you like, don't despair. Another whole market opens up in the spring for one- and two-year positions, some of which can turn into longer-term jobs. They can also be at some first-rate places. Unfortunately, I don't know the details about how this process works, so I can't enlighten you here.