

Building your portfolio in the years leading up to the job search

This is not “how to put together a job application”. Instead, this is advice for 1st—2nd—3rd year students, like the members of this seminar, regarding what to do now and in the coming years to ensure that you’ll have a strong application in due course.

Make sure you either retake this seminar or get other detailed technical advice before going on the job market. I’ll be happy to be on hand if you wish. For an overview, see “How to apply for academic jobs in Linguistics. UCLA advising” in the Gouskova—Barker folder.

- **Treat the graduate program’s requirements as professional activities.**
Don’t write term papers and QPs to have term papers and QPs done. Your projects should lead to publications and the formation of your longer-term research goals.
Don’t slave away in TA-ships without learning how to teach that (type of) course. Learn the trade and save the course materials. They may be vital when you apply for jobs, and will definitely be vital if you get a teaching position. See “Linguistics TA orientation” in Course Docs.
- **Work on finding out what you are about, professionally.**
Develop a clear sense of your broader research program. Learn to talk and write about it in a way that is understandable and inspiring to people outside your narrow specialization.
- **Be known in your subfield by the time you apply for jobs.**
Publish. Present at appropriate conferences. Go to affordable conferences even if you are not presenting. Engage in academic exchanges with fellow scholars at conferences and colloquium visits. Maintain a well-structured academic home page. Keep and post an up-to-date CV as soon as you have stuff to include. See links to sample home pages and CVs in Course Docs.
- **Round out your education with competence in...**
Proof-reading, copy-editing, indexing, compilation of data, using and creating internet tools;
Reviewing abstracts and papers; editing conference proceedings;
Organizing colloquia, workshops, conferences;
Being a lab manager, if you are in a lab-ful field;
Serving on search committees; representing student or scholarly bodies.
These are not college-app extra-curriculars. Your future employer will expect you to be ready to do all these things when you are on their faculty. The ability to do them is not innate. Most likely someone will have to teach you. Seek opportunities to apprentice. Whether you are a volunteer or a paid RA, take the job very seriously.
- **Learn to be a good manager of your time.**
Think about your priorities. When designing your activities, be sure to give preference to your important goals and tasks.
Be very aware of how long each type of task takes for you to complete.
Find coping strategies that fit your individual style. See “Time management” in the Gouskova—Barker folder.