

# NAVIGATING THE ACADEMIC JOB MARKET AS AN EARLY- CAREER HEALTH HUMANITIES SCHOLAR

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**Health Humanities**  
CONSORTIUM

Before you enter  
the job market...



Attend others' job talks!



Defend your dissertation proposal



Discuss your job search & dissertation timelines  
with your committee

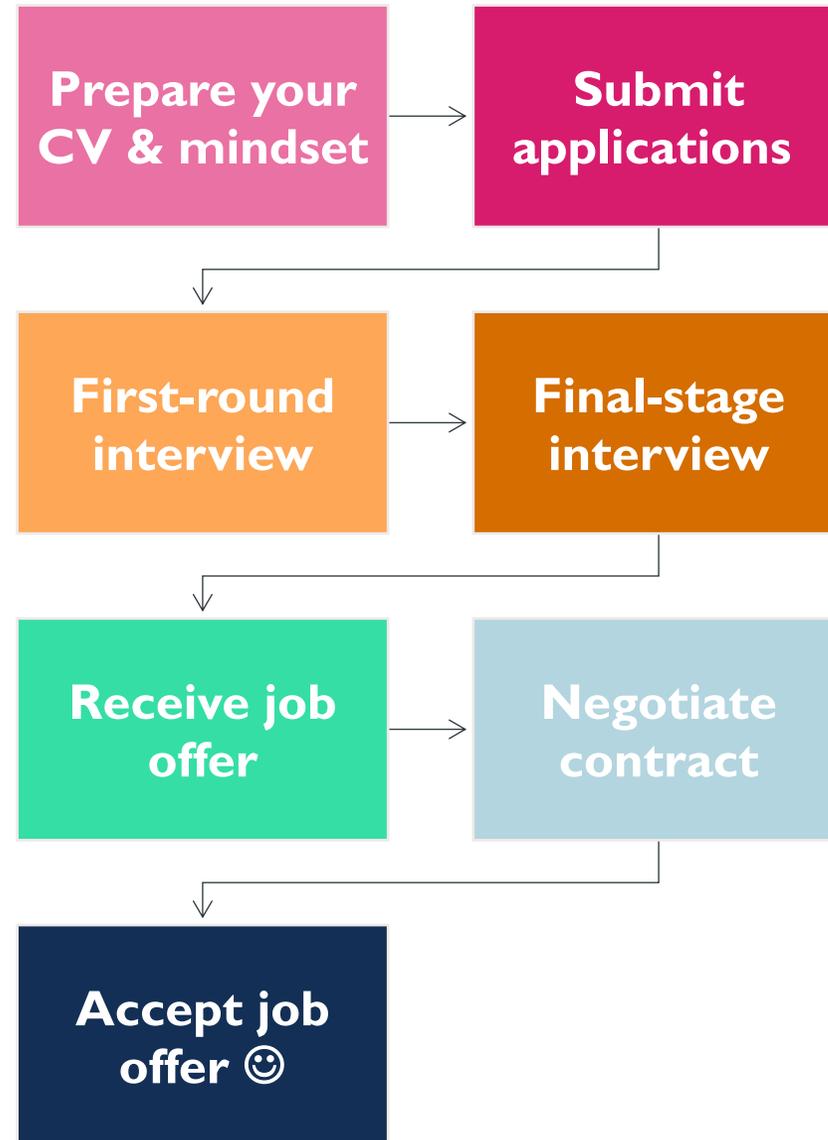


Ask faculty to be your letter writers



Create a professional presence online

# Academic job search process





WHO DO YOU WANT TO BE?

I take a critical perspective to understand how power, politics, organizational contexts, and identity influence and shape healthcare interactions. I am also interested in medical education, particularly how narrative pedagogies, experiential learning, and mentorship influence identity formation and communication approaches among healthcare providers.



As a teacher-scholar, I explore the role of *narratives* in perpetuating *health disparities*; resisting oppression; & imagining healthier and more *just* futures.

# Starting Your Job Search



Connect with your advisor



Determine what type of calls you will apply to



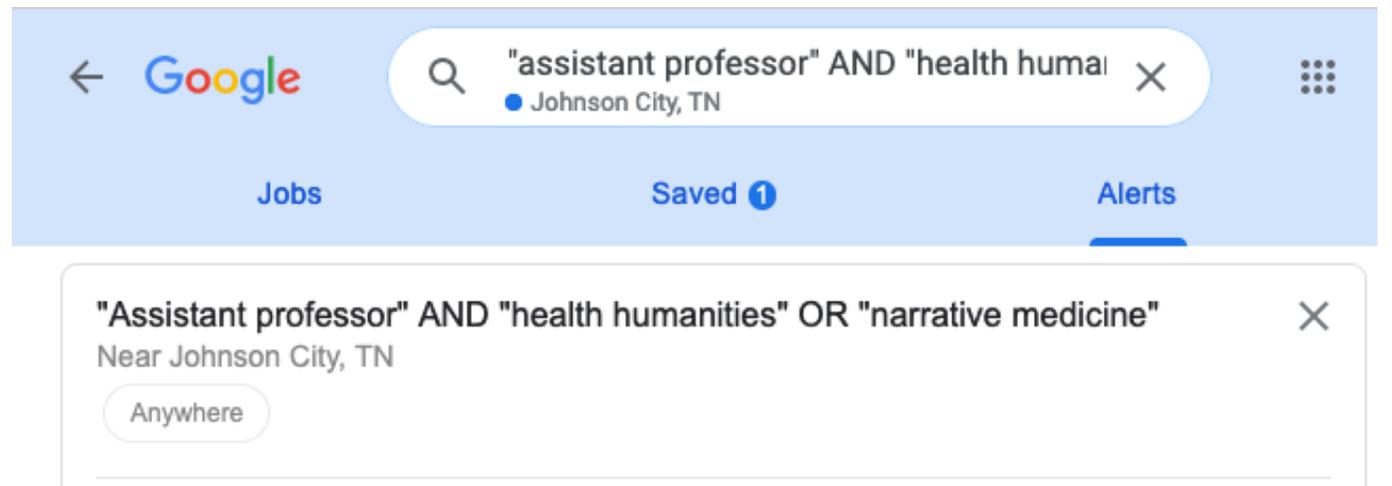
Sign up for list-servs and create auto-alerts through online job boards



Connect with your professional network



Check in with your support system



# Components of a Job Application

CV

Cover letter

May also require...

- ✓ Statement on your research program
- ✓ Writing sample
- ✓ Teaching philosophy
- ✓ Teaching portfolio
- ✓ Diversity, equity, and inclusion statement
- ✓ Reference letters

# Tailoring Your CV

- ✓ Review CVs from department faculty
- ✓ Place sections on CV (roughly) based on order of importance of duties as described in job call

# Writing a Strong Cover Letter

- Tell your story
- Show why you would succeed in *this job*
- Length: 2 pages or less
- Order paragraphs (roughly) based on order of importance of duties as described in job call
- Provide illustrative examples

Dear [Search Committee Chair Name] and Search Committee Members,

**Para 1:** My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am applying for the position of \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ University/College. I am an ABD doctoral candidate in the Department of \_\_\_\_\_ at the University of \_\_\_\_\_. I successfully defended my dissertation proposal and am on track to graduate in \_\_\_\_\_. I am impressed by your department's commitment to \_\_\_\_\_. As this letter shows, my experiences with \_\_\_\_\_ mean I am uniquely positioned to contribute to your department's mission.

**Body paragraphs** (about teaching, research, and or service depending on focus for the call): Start with a statement about who you are as a teacher or researcher / what you aim to accomplish through your teaching / research. Then provide examples (such as class activities you designed, research projects you did, awards, etc.) that illustrate how you work towards accomplishing your aims.

**Conclusion:** Restate why you are excited for this job. Thank the committee for their time and consideration and provide respectful sign-off.



# TAILORING YOUR APPLICATION MATERIALS

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	School Name	Position Title	Deadline	App Reqs (+ cover letter & CV)	Learners	Focus Area 1	Focus Area 2	App Status
2	<i>University A</i>	Assistant Professor	1/1/24	Research statement	Med students	Health humanities	Program evaluation	Completed 1st round interview
3	<i>College B</i>	Assistant Teaching Professor	2/2/24	Teaching philosophy	Undergrads	Lit & medicine	Gender	Invited for 1st round interview
4	<i>University C</i>	Clinical Ethics Fellow	3/3/34	DEI statement; writing sample	Residents	Bioethics	Health disparities	Submitted
5	<i>College D</i>	Instructor	4/4/24	Teaching philosophy; DEI statement	Undergrads	Qualitative research	Health humanities	In process

	A	B	C	D
1		<b>Teaching Philosophy</b>	<b>Research statement</b>	<b>DEI Statement</b>
2	<i>University A</i>		Mixed methods (ex., publication X); Evaluation experience (ex., grad certificate)	
3	<i>College B</i>	Commitment to equity (ex., decolonize syllabus); Centering student voices (ex., feedback surveys)		
4	<i>University C</i>			Commitment to equity (ex., decolonize syllabus); Health disparities research (ex., publication X)
5	<i>College D</i>	Commitment to equity (ex., decolonize syllabus); Centering student voices (ex., feedback surveys)		Health disparities research program (ex., publication X); University service (ex., Safe Zone facilitator)

# First-round Interviews

- 20-45-minute phone/video call with members of the search committee
- You should be informed who will be on the call, how long it will last, etc.
- Be prepared to broadly introduce yourself
- Prepare 1-2 questions to ask the search committee

**Introduce yourself & your work to the committee.**

**What attracted you to this job / department?**

**Tell a story about a challenge in your teaching/research, how you responded, and what you learned.**

**Describe your teaching philosophy.**

**What scholarly work are you engaged in? How did you come to this work?**

**Describe your research program & future plans.**

**What questions do you have for us?**

# Acing Your First-round Interviews

- ✓ Connect with your advisor
- ✓ Practice your answers
- ✓ Structure for answers: Thesis, example, way out.
- ✓ Identify 3-4 key points you want to make
- ✓ Pause & take a breath.
- ✓ Be engaged, curious, & collegial
- ✓ Adapt based on what works
- ✓ Send 'thank you' emails
- ✓ Don't freak out!



# The Final Interview

- Top 3-4 candidates are invited
- Conducted on campus
- Typical schedule
  - **Day 1:** You arrive & have dinner with a faculty member
  - **Day 2:** A long day of meetings, tours, & presentations
  - **Day 3:** Another meeting or two before you depart
- Meet with faculty, search committee, students, & admins
- Present research talk and/or teaching demonstration

# Preparing for a Final-round Interview



Talk to your advisor!



Practice your presentations (in front of an audience!)



Research the university, department, & faculty



Keep an open mind



Remember: You are interviewing them, too

# When you're on campus...

- Pay attention & adapt
- Bring snacks!
- Ask thoughtful questions
- Consider what personal information you will share
- Do not forget: This is an interview!



# Meeting with the Dean

You get one shot. It matters.

Research the institution's history,  
goals, & strategic plan

- How can you contribute?

Make use of this opportunity: Ask  
good questions!

- What is the college's perception of this department?
- What are the college's goals for this department?
- How is departmental funding allocated?
- How is departmental success assessed?

# The Teaching Demonstration

1

Choose a topic that aligns with the call & department

2

Know your audience & time limit

3

Begin with a hook & point of connection

4

Center a problem/issue



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EAST TENNESSEE STATE  
UNIVERSITY

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# QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS IN HEALTH COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

*Brianna R. Cusanno*  
*Teaching Demonstration*

# The Research Talk

- ✓ Know your time limit & audience
- ✓ Present on a specific project, but speak to your broader program
- ✓ Show why your research matters
- ✓ Practice!
- ✓ Prepare for questions
- ✓ Show enthusiasm



# After the Final Interview



Feel proud!



Send 'thank you' emails



Wait for a call

# When You Receive a Job Offer

Do NOT accept immediately

Express excitement & gratitude

Ask questions

- Decision deadline
- Salary
- Teaching load
- Research & service expectations
- Start-up funds
- Anything else included in offer?

“I’m thrilled with this opportunity. I need some time to discuss with my family.”

Reflect: Is this job the right fit?

- Location
- Department & university cultures
- Job expectations vs. your goals

You have power. Advocate for yourself!

**Salary** (use other offers or peer schools)

Course releases

Startup research funds

Technology & software

Funding for RA

Summer stipend

Travel funding

Moving expenses

Partner hire

Something creative?

# Negotiating

“I’m so excited about this offer. This position is my top choice. These asks are the things I need to be 100% confident in committing to this position.”



EMAIL CLARIFYING  
QUESTIONS



KNOW WHAT YOU  
WANT BEFORE  
INITIATING  
NEGOTIATIONS



NEGOTIATE IN  
GOOD FAITH



ENTER WITH  
HUMILITY, RESPECT,  
& CLEAR  
BOUNDARIES



# Success!

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