

Navigating Career Services

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If you are in the market for a position in religious studies or Bible, do not underestimate the importance of the AAR's Career Services, formerly Employment Information Services (EIS). According to a survey conducted last year, 78 percent of the employers who came to the 2004 EIS interview center filled the position with a candidate they had interviewed there.

"The availability of the EIS has been central to most of the searches we have conducted in the past five years," Charles Carter, Seton Hall University, said. Familiarizing yourself with Career Services and getting an early start is integral to the job-search process.

Career Services consists primarily of two interrelated efforts, *Job Postings Online* and the AAR Annual Meeting Job Center. Published each month, *Job Postings* is the most comprehensive public record of job listings for credentialed scholars in religion. The Job Center, held each year at the Annual Meeting, provides both an interview center and a system for candidates and employers to communicate about job opportunities and credentials.

Candidates should begin preparing for the Job Center during the summer before they expect to graduate. The first step is to preregister for the Annual Meeting and for the Job Center. Preregistration opens in mid-April of each year, and closes in early-October. Once registered, you are able to submit your curriculum vitae (CV) to the Job Center Web site. Registered employers and *Job Postings* advertisers are able to view the online CVs beginning August 15 and ending January 31 of the following year. At any time, you may login and modify your CV, but it is best to have it posted by late-August, to receive maximum exposure. When you submit the CV, you will choose three areas of specialization from a provided list, under which your CV will be filed. Employers can browse the CVs by candidate name or by area of specialization. If an employer sees your CV and wants to interview you, he/she will contact you (using the information you provide) to schedule an interview during the Annual Meeting at the Job Center.

The next step is to review *Job Postings* and begin applying for jobs. A common misconception of candidates is that once they register for the Job Center and submit their CV, they need only sit back and wait to be contacted by employers. In fact, most interviews are the result of the candidate initiating contact with the institution, not the other way around. All employers who plan to use the Job Center will advertise in *Job Postings* in August, September, or October. Begin reviewing the ads in August, and go ahead and apply for positions that interest you. The majority of employers collect applications in the early fall and, in October, will contact those they want to interview at the Job Center. Employers who prearrange their interviews usually arrive at the Job Center with a full schedule and are not looking for new candidates, so the best way to get an interview is to apply early.

Once you are onsite at the Job Center, you will spend your time communicating with employers through our message center, and perhaps attending some interviews. If you applied early for jobs, you might arrive at the Job Center with a few interviews already scheduled. All interviews take place at the Job Center or in surrounding rooms, and employers should have already sent instructions to you regarding the location. Be sure to arrive ten minutes early for an interview to give yourself time to find the location and catch your breath.

Regardless of whether you arrive with scheduled interviews, you will want to look at all of the jobs that are at the Job Center and possibly contact a few new employers. Your copy of the onsite edition of *Job Postings* will contain a listing of all of the employers that are interviewing at the Job Center as well as an indication of the interview plans of each. Many employers will arrive with a full interview schedule, others will be looking for new candidates to interview. The best way to be scheduled onsite for an interview is, again, to contact the employer yourself rather than wait for the employer to contact you.

The CV that you submitted to the Job Center Web page will have been printed and placed in binders according to the specialties you chose. Your goal is to prompt employers to look at your CV. Go through the onsite edition of *Job Postings* and highlight the jobs that interest you. At our message center, leave a message for those employers, indicating your interest in the position and asking them to view your CV. Hopefully they will respond with a request for an interview.

When making your Annual Meeting arrangements, plan to visit the Job Center on Friday night. With the exception of interview space, the Center will be open for use from 7pm to 9pm. Most employers looking for new candidates will come to on Friday night and begin reviewing the onsite CVs and requesting interviews. This is a good time for you to leave messages for employers, pointing them to your CV. As time goes by, employers' interview schedules become full and they stop looking for new candidates. Also while making Annual Meeting arrangements, keep in mind that you will want to call the Job Center periodically to find out whether you have any messages. Make sure you keep some time available at various parts of the day in case you need to come to the Job Center to retrieve a message.

Using the above tips will help you receive the maximum benefit that the Career Services has to offer.

For more information about the AAR Career Services, contact Jessica Davenport, Associate Director of Professional Services, at 404-727-4707 or jdavenport@aarweb.org.