

CWEC/CDEC Job Market Mentoring Sessions: First Round Interview Tips

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ABOUT ME

- **Dr. Camille Simardone**, Senior Economist, Labour Economics Branch, Office of Economic Policy, Ontario Ministry of Finance
- Job market candidate 2020/2021
 - Hired as tenure-track Assistant Professor at UBC Okanagan
 - Now work in government
 - Pre-PhD, worked at the World Bank



ACADEMIC INTERVIEWS

20-30 minutes on Zoom (or some other platform)

Fairly standard

- Research questions
- Teaching questions

Weight on each will depend on the school.

Your goal: Entice the interviewers to want to learn more about your research

FIRST ROUND INTERVIEWS - GENERAL

- Practice! *Ask at your university for mock interviews*
- Be interested in your own research.
- Do not read. Perhaps a few post-it notes on your screen – skeleton of your talk. Look at the interviewers, not your notes.
- Listen to the questions asked and answer the questions you are asked.
- Take notes of suggestions or questions asked if needed.
- Dress as though an in-person interview. Have a professional looking background. Test out your connection, angle, microphone, camera, etc. beforehand.

RESEARCH IS KEY

First question: “Tell us about your research”

3 Minute elevator talk.

- Broad (<1 minute)
- Specific highlights of JMP (3-5 minutes)

Be clear on:

- Motivation – why should they care?
- What are the key contributions of your paper?
- How does your research fit into the broad literature in your area? *Know related literature*
- If not yet submitted, have an idea of the journals you are aiming for. *ASK PEOPLE*

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

- Ask who will be in the interview and look them up, e.g., specialists in your field vs. economists broadly vs. non-economist vs. student.
- Find out the research interests of the economists interviewing you. Note if they have done related research.
- Be prepared to answer tough questions.
 - Your ability to clearly discuss your research and economic concepts is a signal on your teaching ability.
 - Tailor your answer to the person who asked the question.

TEACHING

- Be prepared – know the programs at the school. (Graduate? Interdisciplinary? Business school or Arts?)
- Consider the courses you are being hired to teach
 - Understand the level, the broad topics, relevant textbooks, would you use a textbook?
 - Especially important for graduate classes – topics to cover, materials, etc.
- Potential vs. experience
- Take cues from teachers that you have had – signal that you have thought about it.

ALSO

If you wish to make a credible signal that you are interested in the position, don't simply say "I would very much like to work at your school." (costless signal)

- Spend time learning about school, department, people.
- Ask questions that are relevant.
- Location – stated preference vs. legitimate match.

NON-ACADEMIC INTERVIEWS

Very different and varied.

- Government
- Private Sector Research
- Post-Docs
- International Organizations

NON-ACADEMIC INTERVIEWS: GOVERNMENT

- Long process.
- Many written tests before meeting with anyone, e.g., skill/knowledge-based questions, leadership screening (different workplace scenarios).
- Initial application very long – be thorough on all questions.
- Bank of Canada – very similar to academic.
- Be prepared for skill-based questions in interview.
- Less focus on research – but be able to discuss how your research and research experience would fit with the tasks of the job, transferable skills.

NON-ACADEMIC INTERVIEWS: PRIVATE SECTOR

- Research related institutions – still focus on research questions and methods – but less on your research agenda and more on fitting in with theirs.
- More practical tasks – case studies, research projects, etc.
- Some have work trial period or require completion of small projects (paid).
- Initial interviews longer.
- Questions on work environment – e.g., How would you navigate aspects of the job – fast-paced, client-driven, grant funded.
- More technical questions.

NON-ACADEMIC INTERVIEWS: OTHER

Post-docs

- Research focussed, but often specific to a particular field, group so need to discuss how your interests overlap.

International Organizations (e.g., World Bank)

- Very technical interviews, time restricted test questions.
- Stata assignment to be completed prior to interview.
- Questions not relevant to own work but work of the institution.
- Know the institution and their work, determine how your interests and skills fit.

WHEN IT IS DONE

- A “Thank you” email is never going to hurt!

Mental health tips:

- Try to not start envisioning yourself living in cities based on a first round interview. Difficult to gauge. Most schools go from approx. 25 first round to 3 flyouts.
- Take some time to decompress after an interview.
- Get ready to travel!

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