

# Research on the Job Market: What Does It Tell Us?\*

## Research alone will not land you an academic job

After surveying over 900 hiring committees across institutional types and disciplines, researchers have found that while a candidate's research record matters to the academic job search process, employers also consider the department's teaching needs and the candidate's ability to meet them.

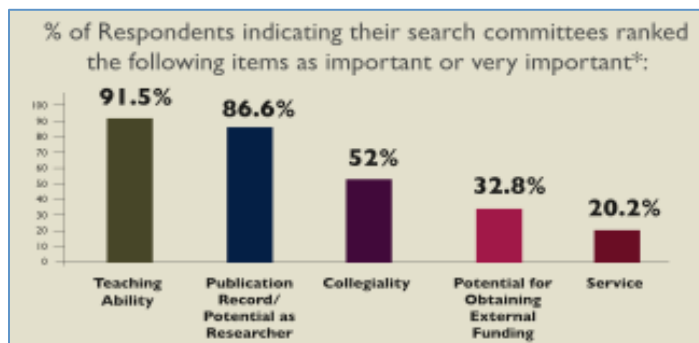
Though the formula that each institution uses to gauge a candidate's "fit" varies, both research and teaching records factor into the hiring decision. Generalizations can be made according to the type of institution pursuing the hiring. Those institutions, referred to as "undergraduate plus", "research extensive" or "research intensive," rank a candidate's research record as more important in the selection process than his or her teaching record, according to the studies discussed here. This emphasis, however, does not exclude a candidate's teaching record from the committee's evaluation at these institutions. In fact, as both studies make clear, departments are often looking to fill both research and teaching needs; accordingly, a candidate's teaching record is also an important part of the process. On the other hand, four-year institutions whose mission statements stress their focus exclusively on undergraduate education rank a candidate's teaching record and ability to work with undergraduates at the top of the list of criteria to be considered in the hiring process.

Disciplinary considerations also affect the way in which hiring committees rank research and teaching records. While one study found that the natural sciences generally rank research higher than teaching and that the social sciences value teaching and research equally, it also concludes that the humanities place a greater emphasis on teaching than research. Additionally, 91.5% of all committees surveyed in this study regard a candidate's teaching ability as important or very important to the search for a new faculty member. In other words, even in cases where teaching will not win the job, competency in teaching is required.

In evaluating a candidate's application materials, then, hiring committees look for an indication of how the candidate's research interests, as well as teaching record, fits with the department's needs. As all of the hiring committees surveyed highlighted "fit" as the most important criterion by which candidates are evaluated, applicants are encouraged to tailor their materials for each job application to clearly express how their research interests and teaching records meet the needs of the department in which the position is housed.

In our next report, we will offer some suggestions on how to reflect on your teaching record when applying for academic jobs.

## How important is teaching in decisions about academic hiring?



\* The two studies cited in this newsletter are R. Erik Ladrum and Michael A. Clump, "Departmental Search Committees and the Evaluation of Faculty Applicants," *Teaching of Psychology* 31:1 (2004) and Deborah Meizlish and Matthew Kaplan, "Valuing and Evaluating Teaching in Academic Hiring: A Multidisciplinary, Cross-Institutional Study," *The Journal of Higher Education*, 79:5 (2008). The graph is from Meizlish and Kaplan's larger chart titled "How Important is Teaching? Results of Research on Academic Hiring."