

Phone interviews are a total bitch, only because the questions they ask are so contrived and ridiculous that you have no choice but to sound like a tool. On the upside, all phone interviews are very similar, often asking the same questions. This allows you to be prepared with your answers.

Know ahead of time:

- Who is in the department, what do they do, and are they research active? If a teaching university, what do they teach?
- the number of students (undergrad and grad, if applicable) of the college/university
- the number of professors in the department
- what courses are offered
- what courses you are prepared to teach (unless they already know what they want you to teach; are they labs vs. lectures?)
- if possible, the institution-wide teaching philosophy or mission (if you couldn't find information on this, this will be a good question to ask them)
- less important: if possible, who teaches what, so when you talk to the person/people, you'll have an idea of where they're coming from

Questions they might ask you:

General

- Why are you interested in our position?
- Why should we hire you? (this is one of the worst questions but super common)
- What does our department have to offer you? (perhaps the most awkward question I've gotten, but there it is.)

Research

- Tell us about your research. (This question demands some snide remark about not having read my research statement, but the point here is to see how good you are at communicating your research on the fly.)
- Who in the department could you collaborate with?
- How do you see your research program developing in our department? Can you give some benchmark goals for your career over the next five years?
- What would be your equipment needs?
- How would you incorporate undergraduates into your research?
- Describe your past research experiences, training, coursework in Field X.

Teaching

- What strategies and approaches would you use to teach to the diversity in our student body? (super common)
- How would you incorporate your research experience into teaching?
- Be prepared to expound in detail on your teaching philosophy, giving concrete examples to back up your points.
- What will be your approach to teaching courses that you have not taught before?

- What was your worst teaching experience, why, and how did you handle it?
- What was your best teaching experience? (a good answer is if you can come up with the same incident for both of these questions!)
- What is your approach to how you interact with students? (to get a feel for whether you are a disciplinarian or a softie, or if you actually think about how to interact with students.)
- They might want you to describe some of your past teaching experiences – courses, class size, your responsibilities

Question you might want to ask them:

The search

- What is the committee and department looking for in this search, what do you want the candidate to bring to the table?
- What courses would you like the new hire to teach?
- What is the timeline for the search (when can I expect to hear from you)?

The department

- What is the department's trajectory over the next five or ten years?
- Will there be other hires over the next few years?
- What is the funding like for the department at the college level?

Teaching

- What are the teaching responsibilities like? (Some departments don't like to use the term "teaching load.")
- What courses would you want the new hire to teach? Ask about undergraduate and graduate level courses
- What are the class sizes like?
- What are the student backgrounds like, where are they typically coming from? Students returning to school? From the local population? What is the range of student quality like?

Research

- What are the requirements for tenure? Grants, papers?
- What kinds of resources and facilities are available?

Graduate program

- How are graduate students funded? Where does their summer funding come from?
- What is the graduate curriculum like?
- How many grads are supported on RA's vs. TA's? Are there typically enough TA positions available for everyone who needs one?
- Where does grad funding come from?
- Do graduate students apply for their own fellowships? Are they successful?