

Helpful Hints for Those New to the Interview Process at the ALISE Annual Conference

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A FACULTY POSITION:

If you are actively seeking a position as an LIS faculty member at one of the LIS programs in the United States or Canada, there are several things that you can do to increase the likelihood of success in securing a position.

1) Plan to attend the ALISE annual conference. A great deal of interviewing takes place at the conference and often hiring committees from the various universities use the ALISE interview process as a way to select a shortlist of candidates who will be invited to the university for a formal interview later on. If you do not attend ALISE, you will not be able to participate in the interview process. You should think carefully about when is the best time to attend ALISE and put yourself forward as a job applicant. You don't want to do this too early in your doctoral program. The best time is when you are either very close to the defense of your thesis or after you have defended.

2) Once you have decided to attend ALISE, you will want to do some exploration about possible sources of funding. Sometimes graduate programs have a bit of money to enable doctoral students to travel to conferences, particularly if presenting a paper. So, you may also want to plan to give a paper in one of the Special Interest Group sessions. To do this, you must be aware of the submission deadlines for the particular SIG of interest to you so check the conference web site early. You may also want to consider contributing a poster to the doctoral poster session, which is one of the high points of the conference. Hiring committees often use the poster session as a way to get an early glimpse of the work and interests of job applicants. Again, you'll need to be aware of any deadlines for submission, so watch for details either on JESSE or the ALISE conference web site.

3) Watch for the call for submission of CVs by the ALISE headquarters office. In the fall prior to the ALISE conference, the ALISE staff announce the deadline for submission of the CVs of those individuals who are interested in being interviewed at ALISE. All the CVs are collected and posted on the CV Portal for institutions to review. Make sure that your CV is concise, and states clearly the topic of your doctoral dissertation and the anticipated defense date.

4) Once your CV goes into the packet, and the packet is distributed to various LIS programs, you may be contacted before the conference by individual members of hiring committees to arrange interview times. While it is fine to go to an interview with a program that you had not previously considered seriously to find out more details, you should be clear in your own mind if you have specific schools and/or geographic locations that you would never consider. If that is the case, it is probably better not to interview with those programs rather than take up their limited interview time. You should prepare for any scheduled interviews by reviewing the program's web site and having a basic understanding of the particular characteristics of that program and its faculty.

5) Once you are at the conference, visit the unCommons to check the job advertisement binder to ensure that you are aware of all the faculty positions available. If there are positions you were not aware of, or if no one has contacted you from a particular university that you are interested in, you may want to post a message. Contact is facilitated by a large message board located in the unCommons. You may be contacted further regarding interviews that have already been arranged, or regarding new interviews. Be sure to check the board several times a day to see if anyone is trying to reach you. Similarly, you may post messages for individuals or for programs that you would like to contact.

6) There are only a limited number of formal interview rooms, so some programs conduct some of their interviews in public areas of the hotel, such as the lobby, the bar and other seating locations. Don't be fooled into thinking that some of these locations mean that the interview is informal. All interviews, no matter where conducted, are equally important so you should be prepared to do your best on every occasion.

7) Once the conference has passed, it is often a good idea to follow up with the programs of interest to you, to thank them for their time in interviewing you and to enquire as to the next steps in the process. Some programs may act quickly and may schedule the formal interviews within a few weeks, while other programs take much longer in their hiring process.

IF YOU HAVE A FACULTY POSITION AVAILABLE:

If you are actively seeking to fill a position, there are several things that you can do to increase the likelihood of success in finding a suitable applicant.

1) Plan to attend the ALISE annual conference. A great deal of interviewing takes place at the conference and often hiring committees from the various universities use the ALISE interview process as a way to select a shortlist of candidates who later will be invited to the university for a formal interview. Typically, programs send 2-3 faculty members to ALISE to conduct the interviews. Having more than one representative shares the work and also provides multiple perspectives on the applicants.

2) Make sure the ALISE Headquarters office has a copy of all faculty positions that you have available. The open positions are gathered together in a binder which is used by job seekers at the conference.

3) In the fall prior to the conference, watch for information from ALISE Headquarters about booking interview rooms. The number of rooms is limited so you'll need to respond in a timely fashion if you want to book interview space. Take a look at the preliminary conference program to determine what might be good times to interview that do not conflict with sessions and meetings that you want to attend. If you are not successful in booking an interview room, don't despair – there are many other kinds of areas in the hotel (such as the lobby, bar, restaurants etc.) where interviews can be held.

4) Job applicants submit their CVs to ALISE staff, who then post them to the Resume Portal on the ALISE website.

5) Take the time to review the CVs (and/or have other members of the hiring committee review them) as soon as you can and contact the applicants of interest by email to arrange an interview time. Desirable applicants have interviews scheduled well before arriving at the conference, so if you do not contact them as early as possible, you may risk not be able to interview them at all. As well, if you are the representative of your hiring committee at the ALISE conference, be sure that you are clear about the details of the position and other issues such as workload, remuneration, benefits, housing etc., as well as the next steps in the hiring process. Be sure to let applicants know when they can expect to hear from you regarding their application.

6) Plan out how many applicants you would like to interview and determine the length of each interview. If you are interviewing a large number of applicants (e.g. 8-10), a 30 minute interview may be all you can devote to each applicant.

7) Once at the conference, you can check the applicant binder to see if there are any new applicants who did not have their CVs online.

8) If there are applicants you were not aware of, or if you have not heard from a particular applicant in whom you are interested, you may want to post a message. Contact is facilitated by a large message board located in the unCommons. You may be contacted regarding interviews that have already been arranged, or regarding new interviews. Be sure to check the board several times a day to see if anyone is trying to reach you. Similarly, you may post messages for individuals that you would like to contact. If you do not have a formal interview room, you'll need to indicate to applicants when and where they should meet you for the interview.

9) After the conference, a complaint from some applicants/interviewees is that they never hear from those who have interviewed them, particularly if they are not really in the running for a position. Common courtesy would suggest that keeping all interviewees informed is a good idea, no matter what their ultimate status in the competition.