**Making the Short List: Strategies for Writing Academic Job Materials  
Date & Time: FRI, SEP 24, 2021 02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EDT**

**Moderator:** Welcome to today's "How did you get that job?" workshop These workshops are geared toward providing you with the knowledge and skills needed to find secure and keep a job. Today's workshop will last 60 minutes, and include a presentation on strategies for writing academic job materials. After the presentation, we'll spend the remaining time answering some of your questions. You can submit a question by using the questions box located in your webinar control panel.

Our presenter today is Dr. Guy A. Boysen. Boysen is a professor of psychology at McKendree University. He received his bachelor's degree from St. John's University and his PhD from Iowa State University. His scholarship emphasizes the professional development of psychology faculty, the teaching of psychology, and stigma toward mental illness. He's the author of *Becoming a Psychology Professor: Your Guide to Landing the Right Academic Job*, and co-author of *An Evidence-Based Guide for College and University Teaching: Developing the Model Teacher*. Welcome, Dr. Boysen.

**Dr. Guy A. Boysen:** Thank you so much. It's great to be here. Thanks to all of our attendees, the numbers keep going up here. It's very wonderful that this many people are spending some of their Friday afternoon to talk about and listen to some information about their future. I'm really excited about this topic and it's something that I'm very passionate about. I really appreciate this opportunity to speak with you all. I want to start off with just a very brief story to illustrate how I got into this.

It brings me back to a memory of a conference many years ago. I was sitting and I'll be honest, I was eavesdropping on some graduate students who were having a conversation. The conversation was about what they were going to do after graduate school. There was an older one who was closer to graduation. This person was saying, "Hey, what I plan to do is I plan to get a job at a small liberal arts college and then I'm going to apply for a bunch of grants. Then I'm going to use that grant money to go ahead and buy out of all my teachings so I don't have to teach classes and I can do research."

I was sitting there just dumbfounded because as someone who spent my entire academic life in a setting where I was at a small liberal arts college, I couldn't believe that this person thought that was what faculty life was like at a small liberal arts college. It really showed a fundamental miscommunication, or maybe not so good advising about what the fundamentals of work are at different types of colleges. Being a psychology professor is not one job, it's dozens and dozens and dozens of different jobs based on the type of institution you work at.

That's the main theme that's going to run through my entire presentation today. That you have to, if you're applying for an academic job, fit the institution you're applying at. I want to talk first about what the different types of academic institutions are. Also a little bit about the different positions. Then how you express fit in your materials like your CV and your cover letter, and then talk just a little bit about those dreaded kisses of death in the application process.

Let's start off with the different types of institution. If you like music, then you love something like this, because this is the tool that you use to adjust the sound coming out of your stereo so that it fits your ears. You can crank up one of these, turn down one or the other so everything is perfect. In the academic world, this is the version of the equalizer you have. You can crank up teaching, you can crank up research, you can crank up service, and you can fine tune this based on exactly what your interests are. You can do what fits your passions in terms of the combination of these things.

The trick is, your passions have to match up with the place that you're applying for a job. Whether you have a teaching or research dialed in a certain way, to get an academic job, you have to find an institution where they have it dialed in the same way as well. That's the key and the main theme I'm going to talk about throughout the rest of the talk. I'm going to give you just a second, literally just a second. To get the most out of this talk you should be thinking about your ideal. If you thought about 100% of your work as an academic, what percentage of it should break down to teaching, research and service? Just put together what your numbers if you add them up to 100 would look like.

**[pause 00:04:58]**

Okay, hopefully you have a number in mind there. What I want to talk about here is, there are different types of institutions. I think, like that grad student I talked about at the beginning, probably had only gotten information about one type of institution, but there are many different types of institutions. I'm going to argue that there are four main ones you need to keep in mind when you're considering academic jobs. I want to say that there are community colleges, baccalaureate colleges, master's universities, and research universities are all what I call doctoral universities.

Each one is very different in terms of how you're going to apply and what they're looking for for a professor. Let's start with faculty work at community colleges. At community colleges, the breakdown of teaching, research, and service looks something like this. Obviously, this isn't exact, it's just a representation. Teaching is the main thing. It's not just teaching, it's teaching of undergraduates and open enrollment undergraduates.

Anyone can take a class at a community college. There is some service, but you'll notice that research isn't on here and that's because the research is not part of the contractual obligations of community college professors. Lots of people do research at community colleges, but it's not something that they typically are required to do. Now, compare that to a baccalaureate college. This is a four year university or college, where undergraduate education is primary. There is some research that would be required, but it's always going to take a backseat to teaching.

At baccalaureate colleges, teaching is the thing that gets you hired, it's the thing that you spend most of your time on, it's the thing that's going to get you tenured and promoted. It's really dominant, teaching has to be excellent at a baccalaureate college. In contrast, research is quite variable. Depending on the type of college and at an elite baccalaureate university or college, the expectation for research might be as high as at a doctoral institution, but at other colleges that are not quite as elite, then it might just be you have to have some activity you're doing that's scholarly, something that students can get involved with.

It's just a different combination of those things. Master's universities, the idea of master's universities is often the prototype that people have in their head of like a large State College, where maybe they have a lot of undergrads and then a few graduate programs at the master's level. Even though these might be large state colleges, teaching is typically the number one thing. There might be a little bit more emphasis on research, maybe some more specific demands on what research productivity should be.

Even at these large state colleges, it's often teaching primarily the thing that gets you hired and the thing that you're going to spend the most of your time on. Doesn't mean you can't do research and very productive research, it just means that you really need to focus on a combination of them, not one more than the other. Then finally, the one that I think a lot of people have in mind, when they are taught about being a professor is doctoral universities.

This is the one place where research really is the primary thing that gets you hired, that gets you promoted. You still have to teach, teaching is important but as some famous advisor once said, it's okay to be an okay teacher at a doctoral university. That's different from the other places that I've talked about. Research really is primary and that's what makes this a unique setting. You got four different types. In terms of the positions that occur at these types, there is some variety in the positions. You've heard me mention the tenure-track.

A tenure-track means that you're hired and might be promoted from assistant to a full professor, and so on but not every college has tenure. Some just have continuing contracts where they hire you for maybe five years or seven years, and then they evaluate you after that. If you were talking about tenure-track or continuing-track positions, the faculty work is going to be exactly the same as the institution itself. When you're making your case for being a good faculty member at these places, keep in mind the overall mission.

These aren't the only type of positions that occur at these schools though. You may have heard of people who have a position called an instructor and there are instructor positions at all types of institutions. The thing about them is they're going to be focused on teaching only. They typically teach a few more courses than other people, but then they don't have as many obligations or maybe service or research.

If you want to really be at a place like a large research institution, but maybe don't love research so much, instructor positions are a great way to be in that setting, but focus primarily on teaching rather than research. This is really a type of position that's growing in importance as time goes on. Then the final position I'll mention here are adjunct positions or part-time positions.

These are people who are paid to teach individual courses, and all they're paid to do is come in and teach that one specific course, or maybe they teach multiple courses. Basically, it's a contract for a course only. These are positions where if you're a graduate student or you've been out of teaching, this is a great way to get your foot in the door and show that you can teach and have interest in teaching. I would caution you that these are not the best ways to get a position at a four year institution, because it just doesn't give you the time and the resources to do a lot of service or research.

However, at a community college where they only want teaching and they often expect a lot of teaching experience, adjunct positions actually can be a great foot in the door. The advice on whether adjuncting is good or bad, really depends on where you are in your career and what type of institution you want to get. Let's move on to the materials here. What I want to illustrate about applying for jobs is that this image I have here, three piles of CVs, is actually accurate. Really, when you apply for a position you're often one of maybe hundreds of people and the vast majority of those people find themselves in the rejection pile.

A small number of people who all have all of the qualifications needed to have the position, they make it on the short list. Then finally, there's a smaller number of people typically only two or three who get an interview. This is a representation of what's going on. The question is, how do you make it on this interview list here. The short list of just two or three people, and the CV is one of the main things that allows you to do that. I'm keeping one eye on the questions as they come up, and someone posted, "Is instructor position the same as lecturer?"

Yes, there can be positions called lecturer positions, clinical specialists. They come by a lot of different names, but again, the idea is that it's not a tenure-track or continuing-track position where there's a balance of research and anything, it's just going to be focused on teaching. A little bit going back one step there. Okay. CVs for academic jobs. CVS are an exhaustive list of academic qualifications. There's no page limit, in fact a longer CV is better than a shorter CV because it means that you've accomplished more.

That's the key thing about a CV. It's only going to present objective accomplishments. It is a list of every publication, every presentation, all of your teaching accomplishments, all of your awards, all of your grants, all of your post-docs, all of that stuff. There's no real subjective component to it, although you can arrange it in a way to make a case for certain things as I'll show you in a second. The thing I really can't emphasize, it's not the same as a resume.

A resume is a one or two page argument that you have certain skills, and you're often putting together, I don't know, like subjective judgements about who you are and what you can do. That's not a CV, a CV is just your accomplishments. I just came across this quote earlier this week in a book, and it just hit home because it's exactly what I'm talking about today. You are what your record says you are, and that's true of CVs and that's really important in terms of getting a job in an academic setting, because you're looking at a CV, you have to have the record to meet the needs of the college.

One thing that is similar with resumes, however, is that maybe you heard that you only get a minute when you're talking about someone reviewing your resume and I'm going to cut that down even further. I would say that you need about in 30 seconds or so, so someone be able to look at your CV and make a quick judgment just in 30 seconds of whether you are a fit for the position. If that 30 seconds is up and they say things look pretty good, they'll read more closely.

Let's do an example here. This is a completely fictional made up, not realistic, well realistic CV. What I want you to do is just look at this and decide whether you would interview this candidate for a clinical/developmental position at a baccalaureate college. I'm literally going to give you 30 seconds to do this. I'll zoom in a little bit here, go down to the second part. I'll give you a bit of second page. All right. That was it. That was quick. Right. Think, what would you do?

Is that a rejection, a shortlist or an interview? Well, I'm going to argue that that was a pretty clear put on the reject pile. Why would I say that? I would say that there's two fundamental flaws in this fictional CV. The first flaw is this is for a clinical/developmental position. If you looked at that CV, you wouldn't have seen any evidence that person fit a developmental focus at all. Clinical, perhaps, developmental, not at all. There's some missing content that illustrated fit.

Then the other thing that's going on there is this is for a baccalaureate college. You know that they're going to be focused mainly on teaching and teaching was definitely on this, but it was not super prominent. I would get the message that this person valued research over teaching. Hey, yes, there might be typos in there. There certainly could be and we'll talk about those in maybe a kiss of death. 30 seconds, how do you convey your fit? Well, there's three parts to that.

One, probably the arguably the most important part is your academic pedigree, who you are as an academic. Then also the research and the teaching that you engage in. Essential CV content. When I say that you have to have an academic pedigree, what I mean by that is you have to have the degree that would be required by the position and then for most, but not all academic positions, you also need to match the specialty area. In terms of research, you all know what research consists of.

You can have a perfectly wonderful great CV and just have these areas, or maybe just publications and presentations, depending on what type of program you're applying to. Then in terms of teaching key things like courses taught, teaching assistantships, and then perhaps also some teacher training that you've had a class or a workshop. You'll notice I don't have service up there. You definitely should have service on your CV, but it's just not going to be anywhere near as important as these three things. Because there's so many people at different levels of like graduate students and people who've been out in the field forever, service is maybe not weighted as much because people haven't had the same opportunity to do it.

I don't have service up here, but don't think that means that service doesn't mean anything. Okay. Let's break this down. What do you need to emphasize in terms of your CV if you're applying to a community college? The most important thing is number one, the degree, because they're going to require a master's degree and then maybe some specialization as well, occasionally, and then courses taught. Many places at community colleges, there's literally a number of courses you had to have taught even to be considered for the position. That's super important, research, not important.

At a baccalaureate college the academic pedigree is important, both the degree, but then also the specialty area is going to be important because there's often some missing part that they're trying to fill. They have courses on a certain area that they need to fill, and they need someone in that specialty area to teach them. Research becomes more important, but maybe not so much grants and postdocs, just some evidence that you've had some scholarship. Then in terms of teaching, the most important thing is to have a lot of it, and to really emphasize that you're good at it and take it seriously. There's no amount of teaching information that would be too much.

I do see a question in the chat here about what do we mean by service. The types of things that would fall into service would be if you've served on committees. If you have done, perhaps, some work at helping organize the APA convention. If you are someone who is a leader in an organization for graduate students, or you do something with probably not as-- Well, you certainly can list like community service on your CV, but it's more like the things that you've done for free to promote your profession that's consistent with the other stuff. Those are the typical things that go into service.

Okay, continuing on here, master's universities look a lot like baccalaureate universities, and then maybe a slightly less teacher training emphasis. Still, you don't necessarily have to have grants or postdocs to get a good job at master's university. Then, finally, at a doctoral University, they care a lot about the academic pedigree because you have to have a PhD. They care a lot about the specialty area, because they're looking for research in a specific area and then probably also some teaching in a specific area. Then teaching, you probably need to have done some teaching, but it's not going to be the primary thing that gets you a job.

Okay, it's Friday, I've been talking for 20 minutes of your time, or it will be soon. To my mind, there's nothing better if you're having a beer than a properly poured pint of Guinness in a nice pint glass. This is just the best. All right.

This, however, is a nightmare. This is a Guinness in a plastic cup. Urgh, the worst. Why is this the worst? I didn't take either one of these pictures but I took this particular picture off a very negative review of a restaurant that I won't name and it was really interesting. The person who wrote this negative review said that everyone who ordered a Guinness got it in a plastic cup and that didn't make any sense to them and so they asked, "Why is this Guinness coming in a plastic cup?"

The bartender had a super telling answer. The bartender said, "Well, we have some real Guinness glasses, but not enough for everybody. If we serve some people a glass of Guinness in the right class and some in a plastic glass, the people who get beer in a plastic glass get really mad and so we just serve everyone a Guinness in a plastic cup." The thing that the bartender knew and the customers knew is that Guinness is better if it's in the proper vessel.

It literally is going to taste better if it looks the right way and it's served up the right way. Hopefully, you can see where I'm going with this. If your CV looks the right way, and it's formatted and arranged the right way, even if you have the same content, it's going to look better to the people who are evaluating it. That's my next message here. Your CV arrangement and format is important. Let's use an example. Again, totally fictional made up CVs here. If you read it closely, you'll maybe get some of my jokes that I've embedded in here but this person in terms of the the format, and the arrangement has made of super serious mistake.

Their education, they have the degrees, but what's their specialty area? People want to know the specialty area maybe more than anything else if you're applying for a four year institution. Not only do you have to list that education first, but you need to give the details of it that allow them to know that you're the right type of psychologist for the position. You'll notice that this person has publications and presentations first. That is completely legitimate, that is probably the best way to have it for most positions but it sends a pretty clear message of what your priorities are.

If you're applying to a position that does not prioritize publications and presentations first, then you probably should have switched up were teaching experience is first. Exact same content, but just a little shift in your emphasis sends a very clear message to the people that you're applying to about what you consider to be most important.

Continuing on here, in terms of format, it's a small thing, but one of the things you should consider is whether you have a clear record of productivity and one of the things you can do in lots of different ways. One way you can do this is by saying here all the years that I've done things, and people will be looking for a clear record where year after year after year, you're sort of meeting their minimum expectations of the activities that you're engaging in. I know that some people have questions about what do you do if you have gaps in that? That's something that people will notice and you should address that in, say, your cover letter or in some other format. You don't want to try and hide that by hiding years, you want to make your record as clear as possible for people.

Another question I think, some people had had was, what do you do to show that you've mentored people? You can put little tweaks in the format of your CV to illustrate things like that. Something that especially an undergraduate focused institution would love to see is that you've pulled out the people that you've mentored who are undergraduates. You can do the same thing with doctoral students, with master's students, with students that you've worked with in any capacity.

In the CV, the take home message here is whatever you want to emphasize in terms of fit with the position you're applying for, pull that out and arrange your CV so that is up in front and make sure that your format makes it easy for people to see that as you're doing it. Okay, let's transition from CVs. CVs is like your record, it's what you have available and then you have more than that in terms of the materials you're going to submit. Especially I'm going to spend a lot of time talking about cover letters. You don't have to be Shakespeare to write a good cover letter to get an academic job, but you do have to spend time crafting all of your materials and including cover letters so that it is more than just a list of things because the list of things is your CV.

You have to think about how to send that message of fit using all of the materials that you submit. I'm going to start with cover letters. Cover letters, we've all written academic papers. It's an abstract, but it's an abstract for your fit with a specific position. Roughly speaking, you have about two pages to write your abstracts. Now, three pages, four pages, these people on the search committees are busy and reading long letters is pretty tedious. You don't want to make it too long.

On the flip side of that, though, one page is pretty perfunctory, and it can look like maybe you didn't put a lot of effort in. Two pages of is a pretty good balance of showing that you've done the work, but also that you're not too confident, if you will, and you want to be respectful of their time. Just like a Guinness tastes better in a glass instead of a plastic cup, your cover letter is going to look better on letterhead.

Make it look really nice. In terms of just sort of the who you write it to, address it to the search committee chair. I would really encourage you to have the search committee chair in mind as you're writing it, that sort of the audience. Don't address it to whomever it may concern or to HR, or to anybody else other than the people who are going to make the decision on whether to interview you. Okay, when you're expressing fit in application materials, you've got three goals. Goal number one, I would argue is the most important one and the one that is non negotiable. You have to advertise yourself as having very good fit with that advertisement that led you to apply for the position, establish your fit with the advertised qualifications.

An advertisement is written by committee. Basically, a bunch of people in the department get together and agree on what they want in their person that they're going to hire and then the advertisement is hopefully a very truthful indication of what they're looking for. I have here, again, a totally fictional example of an advertisement. What I want you to do is just read this over. What I want you to do mentally is think about if you were thinking about what the qualifications they're looking for, and making a list of those, what would it look like. I'm just going to give you a minute to read over this advertisement and think about the qualifications. **[pause 00:30:00]**

Hopefully, you've gotten through that here. When you're writing a cover letter, I would argue that you should make a checklist. The checklist that you should make should have all of the things that are mentioned in the advertisement that they're looking for. If I were to go through this advertisement and make a checklist, this is what it would look like.

The more of those things you have addressed, the better your chances of getting interviewed. You don't necessarily have to have all of them, but remember, you're competing at a national level with people, and the people who are applying for this position are going to have a very high number of qualifications and the people who get the job or who are interviewed for the job are going to be virtually a perfect fit for the job.

You really have to work hard to make the case, that you have the qualification or you have the potential to meet the qualification. It's absolutely essential. There are some of these things that are just non-negotiable that you have to be clinical and counseling, you have to be license-eligible, you have to have publishing and teaching research. The stuff in the first paragraph is non-negotiable and then the other stuff you just want to make sure you have as much of it as possible.

There was a question that popped up about whose cover letter or whose letterhead do you use? If you are a graduate student, get permission to use the institution that you're at. If you feel like it's maybe unethical, if you're applying for a position at a different place, you could create your own letterhead. I would say it just looks better and more professional if it has a university on it. If it looks like you're at a university or a college already, and you are applying for a position, it's just sort of expected. That's the answer to that one. Don't get me wrong. You're not gonna get automatically rejected if you don't have letterhead, but that Guinness is going to taste a little better if it's on letterhead to mix my analogies there.

Second goal, demonstrate knowledge about the setting. Lots and lots of people writing letters, saying they're a great fit, what makes someone stand out? A lot of times what makes people stand out is when they have some specific thing that they know about your department, about your institution, and they've mentioned it to make the argument that they're a good fit. Letters kind of go together but when something catches your attention is when it's very specific and very different and it shows a lot of research and insight.

To use an example with this letter, you've already seen, this last paragraph talks about military-friendly, adult-learning courses at regional institutions, blah, blah, blah. An example of how you might pull something out and include in your letter is this. [silence] Remember people who are on these committees, they like their institution. They like who they are as a psychologist. They like what they do. If you can appeal to them and say, "I like that as well. Here's a specific example of why your institution is a good fit for me. Why your department--" Then that's really gonna stand out for them.

Final goal, maintain a consistent message. There can't be any ambiguity about who you are and what type of job you're trying to get. This is all stuff I've already said, community college, I'm a great teacher. Baccalaureate college, I'm a great teacher and I also can do research. Master's university, I'm a good teacher and a productive researcher. Doctoral university, I am a research dog, I am great at research, I'm going to change the world with my research. Maintain that message throughout your cover letter.

Now there are other materials. I would encourage you to go ahead and look online. There's lots of guides about how to write these materials. There's tons of examples of how to write a teaching statement. My goal isn't to really tell you how to write a teaching statement. I just want to emphasize that you can use your teaching statement to express fit with the institution that you're applying to, and that's going to vary depending on what type of college you're applying to. Generally speaking, teaching statements say, "Here is how I approach teaching as a general philosophy. Here are some specific ways I do that. Here are some evidence that I'm good at." That's what a teaching statement is.

Within that though, you can still make a point that your style of instruction fits the institution's mission and the students. Think about the difference in how you would write a teaching statement. If you are applying to a community college where there's open enrollment and literally anyone can take your class from a high school student to a person who's retired and just doing it for fun versus if you are writing to an elite baccalaureate college that can pick and choose from tens of thousands of applications just the best students reply, your style of instruction is gonna be very different.

Another simple example, if you're applying to a large state institution where your smallest class might have a few hundred people in it, your instruction is probably going to be different than if you're talking about a very small setting. You probably don't want to talk about as much about like the individual mentorship you give to make students write 40-page research papers. That's going to sound ridiculous if you've got 200 people in a class. To use another, even more simple example, if you're applying to a women's only college, a historically Black college university, a Hispanic serving institution, make sure that you address, that you know the types of students that you are going to be serving.

Try and match the specialty in the advertisement. If there's a list of courses that they say you have to be able to teach, if you can address specific ways you would teach that class and your teaching statement, that's really going to be ideal. Even if you maybe haven't taught those courses, it might be good to come up with some examples that fit those courses. Then, finally, make sure you're just sort of, in general, matching the institutional emphasis.

If you are applying for a baccalaureate college and your teaching statement sounds like you didn't put much thought into it, that's not going to fit your message. If you're applying to a doctoral university and all your materials is about what a research machine you are, and then your teaching statement actually makes it sound like teaching is your most important thing that you're passionate about, that doesn't really fit the message either.

Research statements, these are like teaching statements. It's an abstract for your program of research. You talk about your overall research, the research that you've done, how it was supported, how you conducted it, what it contributed, and then also your future plans, and how you'll conduct the same level of research later on. This is actually more important than a teaching statement, probably, to match the specialty because research statements are going to be very important. They're looking for someone who will do research and contribute to a specific area. If it's saying they want someone to do research on the neuroscience of stigma, then you better address in your research statement how you do that specific form of research.

However, if you're doing research on the neuroscience of stigma, you better also make an argument about how you're going to do that in the setting that you're applying to. If you are doing all this fMRI research in your postdoc, and you're applying to an institution that can't support an fMRI, you better have a very clear explanation of how you're going to translate that into the setting. You need to know the type of institution and the department that you're applying to and make the argument that I can continue to be productive as a researcher given where I will be if I work at your institution.

Make sure you include mentorship, appropriate students. At a baccalaureate college, they very much want people who can incorporate students into research at the undergraduate level. At a doctoral institution, you probably want to mention your approach to incorporating students and mentoring students who are part of your doctoral program or postdocs. Then again, match the institutional emphasis. If you're applying to a teaching-focused institution, your research statement probably shouldn't make it sound like that's the most important thing in your life, but if you are applying to a research-focused institution, then definitely it needs to be maybe as important as your teaching statement because they need to hire productive researchers.

Then finally, the diversity statement. People have tons of questions about diversity statements and these are the newest thing and so they're the most sort of amorphous. No one really knows what they're supposed to look like, and they haven't taken a set form yet. In general, a diversity statement is about expressing how much you value diversity, your experience in promoting and working with diversity and diverse peoples, and then your plan for continuing to work toward increased diversity, and equity, and justice. You can also think about it if you're familiar with multicultural education as an expression of your knowledge awareness and skills in terms of working with diverse people.

A diversity statement, the values should match that institution. Maybe the prompt when they said you should give a diversity statements and what they're looking for, what values they're looking for, so make sure you express those values. Maybe the department or the institution has a diversity statement of itself so make sure that the values you're expressing are consistent with those.

In terms of experiences, do you have any experiences and skills working with diverse students that are served by the institution? You can do a little research on the demographics of the institution and make sure you're addressing the types of students that are served by that institution. If you don't, if you can't do that, then you can just talk about diversity in general. What are ways that you've done research related to diversity, covered course content related to diversity, mentored students with diverse backgrounds. Just make a general case that you have those experiences and skills, but the more you can tailor it to what the institution does the better.

Then what plans do you have that match the institution's goals for diversity? I'll give you an example. If they're trying to increase diversity, maybe of certain underrepresented groups, how could you in your teaching and your research incorporate those students into your programs? What would be your plans to do that? I was fiddling around on a psych Wiki page, looking at job advertisements today, and I saw something where they were looking for a researcher to investigate systematic racism. If that's what they're looking for, then your diversity statement probably should address your plans to deal with systematic racism through your research, your teaching, or otherwise. Then finally, if you have self-disclosures of your own diversity experiences or who you are as a diverse person, feel free to put those in, but only if they're beneficial. If you don't think that they'll serve you, don't include them.

All right, we're into the last section here we've entered the realm of the dreaded kisses of death. Kisses of death refer to the things that will automatically lead to a rejection, even if you are a highly qualified candidate. What are the things that a search committee sees these things and they automatically move you to that reject pile? Where I'm getting the kisses of death are from a couple of publications I did on this topic over the last few years. One where I just asked people what are kisses of death, and then another one where I followed up on what the qualifications that are the minimum qualifications for four-year colleges.

I will say that these are mostly geared at four-year colleges. Community colleges probably will have a little bit different list here. Let's start off with just the list of kisses of death. One of the most important kisses of death, one of the most universal ones is negativity indicating that you are difficult. [chuckles] Basically, people are reading your cover letter and looking at your materials and they're imagining you in the next office over. The thing is you might be in that next office for the next several decades. If they don't like thinking about you being in that office, you're going to be rejected.

What kind of negativity would lead to rejection? Complaining, talking negatively about students, saying bad things about your advisor, or the institution your at or your previous institution. Basically, you have to keep it all positive. You don't want to come off like a jerk in any way. Unprofessional style, so no typos, make sure things look clean, and neat, and nice, and that you've had lots of people look at them besides yourself and make it look like you are a competent person or very conscientious, even if you're not.

Then ignorance about the position. You don't want to look like you have not done your research so don't make mistakes about where you're applying. Don't talk about grad students, if there's no graduate students. Don't talk about people who aren't there. Don't talk about the amazing institutional reputation for research at a place that it doesn't have any research requirements. You cannot send out a generic letter because you're probably going to illustrate some ignorance about the decision.

Then finally, you can't send out a generic letter because it's also probably not going to have very good fit with the qualifications, so having a bad fit for a position is a kiss of death. It sounds counter-intuitive sometimes, but the best candidate for a doctoral university would get rejected at a community college because they don't fit. The best candidate for a job at a community college would get rejected by a research institution because they don't fit.

What qualifications do you need? One of the surveys I sent out to psychology faculty asked them what's the minimum qualifications for graduate students, the minimum qualifications? I surveyed baccalaureate, master's, and PhD people and the first thing I asked them was how many presentations do you need? This one was pretty interesting because basically everybody said about two, and it didn't matter. About every year the minimum qualification for a qualified candidate is about two presentations a year.

How about journal publications? Here's where we start to see some differentiation. At a baccalaureate college, roughly one master's, roughly one PhD, significant jump here, two journal publications a year. I see something about co-authored or single-authored really keep in mind that you probably can get away with co-authored stuff, but it depends on the position. At a small place that doesn't really emphasize productivity of research, a co-author isn't going to look that bad, but if you're applying for a doctoral position and all you have is like third author things that doesn't look like you know how to run a program or research yourself, so it really depends on the institution.

Okay. How about teaching-wise, how many semesters taught? We're up way above close to three, two-and-a-half at the bachelors, a little bit lower, a little bit lower. We go from about almost three down to close to one-and-a-half for semesters taught. Then finally, how many courses taught. For graduate students close to two, a little bit lower for master's, and then at a doctoral place, that's really you can probably get away with less than one so maybe even being a TA and never having taught a full course.

Let's put this together, in terms of your minimum qualifications at four-year institutions, how do you know whether you have the right record or not? Do this math in your head. What's your average for the last two years? How many publications? How many presentations? Now add that up with your total experience with teaching. You had so many courses, full courses that you've taught, number of semesters as a teacher or a TA?

My argument is that if you are going to be a qualified candidate, to be minimally qualified at a four-year institution, you probably need to be somewhere around the magic number seven plus or minus two of these. It doesn't mean you're going to get the job, it doesn't mean you're even going to get interviewed, but that's the minimum level of qualification that you should have in order to feel like you've got a good argument to be competitive in this very competitive academic world.

Final advice before we get to the Q&A here, how do you get seven plus or minus two? Well, you start early. For those of you that are far away from applying, I'm glad you're here because the job hunt starts years in advance. It starts from the first day of graduate school because that's when you need to start amassing your record, your clear record of teaching research and service. Believe the advertisement. They're telling you what they want and so you should tell them how you can give them what they want. This myth that you throw out a million applications that are all exactly the same and eventually someone will find them, it's not a good use of your time, and in fact, generic applications are a kiss of death. Give people what they want in the advertisement.

It's completely a lie and everyone knows it's a lie, but make them believe this is your only application. Include the details and the effort and the matching that I've been talking about so that it seems like this is my dream job. Everyone knows it's not true but it still makes you stand out. Then the very last point here is it's all about fitting well enough to be interviewed. No one gets a job from their materials only. You are just advertising yourself to say, "I'm a good enough fit to make your shortlist to be interviewed." I've got an APA webinar coming up in a couple of weeks that takes this advice and translate it to the interview. If you've found what you've seen here useful, we'll give you some information about that one as well.

With that, let's transition into the questions. I've got my contact information, if you have questions for me, and then, also, the link to my book is there and if you're interested in what a cover letter looks like, what a research statement looks like tailored to different types of institutions, the supplemental material is right there for you.

**Moderator:** All right. That was a great presentation. Thank you, Dr. Boysen. A couple of follow-up mechanical questions, the application materials, a couple of questions about should it be single or double spaced?

**Dr. Boysen:** Single is normal.

**Moderator:** Also a font, is there a recommended font or is that something that's often put in the job announcement, the font they want?

**Dr. Boysen:** What I would generally say is we're all psychologists so we should follow APA style. That means 12-point font, Times New Roman or Arial. The only time that I would suggest really deviating from that is, obviously, your headings in your CV. You can use some of the features and word to make those pop out a little bit, make them maybe a little bit bigger. Then the other place would be, if you've got a cover letter and it is just over two pages or something like that, feel free to drop it down to a little 11.5 or whatever to make it fit on two, just so it's a little bit more convenient.

**Moderator:** Great. There were a couple of questions about length how long should the teaching and research statements be?

**Dr. Boysen:** Teaching statements really could be done pretty well in one page, single-spaced, one to two. Two's a pretty long teaching statement though. Research statements, generally, the advice is you can go quite a bit longer because you're covering a lot more material and you also can include things if you want like figures or tables or some sort of representation of things that you need to convey about your research. It's a little bit more and so it also depends on the institution. If you have a four-- Four would probably be too much, but two or three would probably be the max you'd want to go for but, again, think about the fit of your research statement with the place that you're sending it.

**Moderator:** I wanted to get this question in. I thought that was interesting. How much do search committees weigh cover letters?

**Dr. Boysen:** They weigh them quite heavily. It is a mark of-- Your CV needs to be solid. The CV is the objective list of things. Now, however, it can be hard to interpret CVs in terms of what everything means and a CV doesn't actually really tell anyone if you're interested in the position. That's where cover letters come in. It's how you make your argument for why you think you are a good fit for the position. It's really the only place where you can sort of be a cheerleader for how great you are in terms of a fit for the position. That's what they're looking for.

It would probably depend on the person, but really the CV and the cover letter are really the most essential things, and depending on the person they're either going to start with one or the other. Really it's weighted super high. You're not going to win over a committee by having a cover letter that's not backed up by a good CV, but it really- they're both super, super important. It's hard to say that one is more important because they're both essential.

**Moderator:** Okay. This is another really interesting question. How does this translate into applying for a position at an online university?

**Dr. Boysen:** Oh, yes, so online universities there's a pretty big important thing you need to establish and that is your ability to teach online. Depending on the online university, that might be your role is to teach online and you have no research expectations. That ends up looking more like a community college application or an application to a university where maybe closer to a baccalaureate institution. However, there are places that are online universities that have doctoral programs. Those doctoral programs you're going to be mentoring people in research, getting them their doctoral universities so that ends up looking more like a more traditional on-the-ground place.

Really the story is the same, you could ask that question, what does this look like for medical colleges or for colleges of pharmacy or a dental school or whatever? Then the key is you have to figure out what the balance is of research, teaching and service and then give them that right one. Then you also need to think about what the mission is and make the argument that your abilities fit that mission. Really, the more experience you have with online education, delivering it, consuming it the better fit you're going to be for that. It's really it's the same thing except it's a different mission and so your job is to make the case that you fit that mission.

**Moderator:** All right. How do you follow up on an application when you get no-- You submitted and you don't hear anything, you don't get any answer neither rejection or approval?

**Dr. Boysen:** That's the worst, right? It's screaming into the void and that is fairly common and not every institution is very good about sending feedback. It is appropriate to follow up with your contact to get an update on the status of your application. If it's been a few weeks after the deadline and then maybe closer to a month and you haven't heard anything, you might send a quick email to the search chair or to HR and say- ask if there are any updates. You have to balance things though because you don't want to end up being presumptuous and you also don't want to be annoying because people have lots of stuff going on. You want to follow up but do so in a way that's respectful and one that shows enthusiasm, so say, "I'm still very interested in this job and I'm still on the market, can you provide me an update?" Don't be demanding of that information. **[unintelligible 00:58:47]** demanding I should say.

**Moderator:** Oh, thank you. I just run the clock down here and unfortunately, we are out of time. Thank you so much for your presentation Dr. Boysen.

**Dr. Boysen:** Thank you for inviting me.

**Moderator:** Thank you to all our listeners for your participation in your great questions. We're so sorry we couldn't get to them all. Our next, how did you get that job workshop? We'll cover interview strategies for academic jobs. Dr. Boysen will join us again to go over how to prepare for interviews by researching the institution and having talking points for standard academic interview questions. It will take place Friday, October 8th at 2:00 PM. Please be on the lookout for this upcoming workshop.

Today's workshop is a complementary offering to our long-running how did you get that job webinar series, where we interview individuals with psychology degrees and learn what skills they use on a daily basis and their job and how they got to their current position. If you are new to the how did you get that job world or would like to review some of our previous talks, you can find them all on the membership section of apa.org.

The society for clinical psychology is hosting a professional development series, focused on internship application. Presentations will cover tips and tricks for applying to internships, exploring what sites are looking for and what fit truly means, and navigating the postdoc process. To learn more and register, please download the flyer in the handouts tab located in the webinar control panel.

A recording of this presentation will be emailed to everyone watching today within a few hours so be on the lookout. As soon as this workshop has ended, a short survey will appear on your screen. We hope you'll take just a few minutes to complete the survey and give us feedback on how we did and how we can improve. Thanks again and we hope to see you on October 8th.

**[01:00:47] [END OF AUDIO]**