Psychology students often expect that following their baccalaureate degrees, a few extra years of doctoral work will clarify their career paths and job search savvy. However, the informal nature of learning career path options and job search skills during graduate school tends to frustrate even the most diligent student—an issue that Morgan and Landrum superbly understand and address in their book *You’ve Earned Your Doctorate in Psychology . . . Now What? Securing a Job as an Academic or Professional Psychologist*. This book fulfills two informational needs for new doctoral graduates in psychology, namely (a) ways in which career options dictate graduate preparation focus and (b) how to develop specific materials and job search skills for landing an academic or applied job.

**Career Options and Preparation**

First, it is of no surprise that more education leads to more opportunities and a richer understanding of the entire playing field, as Morgan and Landrum suggest. Career paths look deceptively dichotomous (academic or applied) at first glance to prospective and first-year psychology graduate students. As students progress through their doctoral programs, the landscape shifts to a multitude of academic and applied job options, which complicate career path fit and the ability to develop one’s credentials to be competitive for open positions.

Morgan and Landrum stress the importance of researching possible career opportunities and aligning experiences to fit career opportunities early on in graduate school, which is a great suggestion, given that self-reflection/career exploration is often not explicitly provided in graduate school. They provide excellent tips on how students can be more purposeful in their doctoral training, including a candidate preparation time line that starts during the first year of doctoral program training.

Critical advice also includes how to think about one’s research, teaching, and service experiences in graduate school in terms of knowledge and skill selling points for any type of position. For example, research assistantships and teaching duties can be translated to organizational, analytical, teamwork, presentation, and supervisory skills relevant to applied jobs. The authors also include useful tools for exploring career options, such as a listing of psychology-based job search websites, which will help new students get acquainted with various types of positions and streamline the job search process for graduates.

**Developing Job Search Materials and Skills**

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Second, given that the focus of doctoral training is highly specialized with respect to job skills and knowledge, less time and formal training are spent on job search preparation skills. In this regard, new psychology graduates will appreciate the templates for cover letters, resumés, and letters of recommendation provided throughout the book. These templates are useful not only in crafting such documents but also for comparing already-drafted documents to successful examples. Students interested in academic positions will find the sections on research and teaching statements extremely beneficial for not only marketing themselves for future positions, but also for building a coherent research program and clarifying teaching objectives and indicators of effectiveness that will serve them well into developing tenure and promotion materials.

The authors also emphasize useful job research strategies important for successful interviewing, such as researching a company’s goals and values and incorporating such information into interview responses to show applicant interest and preparation. Other concrete tips for navigating the interview process include managing one’s online presence, how to avoid salary talks early on, dealing with illegal questions, and an excellent list of questions to ask, an often-overlooked but important topic. A helpful appendix outlines key considerations for negotiating an offer, including multiple negotiation points other than just salary.

**Other Limitations and Strengths**

Although the authors’ intent is geared toward helping those applying for both academic and professional jobs, it is worth noting that the book is more slanted toward those applying for academic jobs. The chapter devoted to letters of recommendation is not as relevant to applied applicants, as letters of recommendations are not often solicited for applied positions. As the authors provide possible questions that academic candidates could ask during on-site interviews, possible questions (based on subspecialty) that applied applicants could ask would be also helpful.

The chapter about on-site interviews is also geared more toward academic applicants, with little information regarding presentations that applied candidates might be asked to give during on-site interviews. Also, almost all of the From the Trenches excerpts—helpful suggestions based on various contributors’ personal experiences—are from those holding academic positions, and thus many sections would benefit from including comments from applied job search candidates or interviewers.

The most distinctively interesting aspect of the book is the endeavor to incorporate research evidence (What the Literature Says sections) to support the authors’ suggestions or merely to explain more about why certain types of decisions are made in the application process from the search committee’s perspective. Although the authors note that there is disappointingly little direct research into hiring processes on psychology-relevant positions, descriptions of industrial–organizational psychology research into general hiring processes (and potential biases) could have helped fill this void.

For example, the authors accurately point out that the goal of screening interviews is to assess candidate fit with the academic institution or organization, but the prevailing evidence questioning person–organization fit in predicting actual job performance and turnover would be a helpful limitation to mention (Arthur, Bell, Villado, & Doverspike, 2006), as well as additional research on the overreliance of intuition in hiring processes (Highhouse, 2008).

Morgan and Landrum also provide some excellent advice on seeking additional training opportunities, as well as opportunities for networking and being mentored, though this section could have also been supplemented with more references to research. For example, empirical evidence regarding the importance of gaining internship experience or specialized teaching experience in one’s desired type of institution as a method for exploring personal vocational preferences could also be addressed (e.g., Carless & Prodan, 2003; D’Abate, Youndt, & Wenzel, 2009), as well as research on positive career outcomes associated with being mentored in graduate school (e.g., Austin, 2002; Tenenbaum, Crosby, & Gliner, 2001).

Perhaps the only rising concern on the job market that we found completely missing from this impressive coverage of
information is the topic of dual-career couples (especially in academia; also known as the "two-body problem"). A small section (or appendix) devoted to this issue with a few quick tips for dual-career searchers and avenues for further reading (e.g., Kaplan, 2010; Wolf-Wendel, Twombly, & Rice, 2003) would be helpful to new graduates wanting to know more about their options for managing this process.

Overall, we conclude that Morgan and Landrum’s book provides critical information for doctoral students in psychology for not only preparing a successful job search but also planning a rewarding career in multiple areas of psychology. Excellently balancing informative detail and an easy-to-read structure, this book should be required introductory reading for all new graduate students in psychology, as well as an invaluable job search resource for those close to completing their degree. It is also a must read for faculty mentors wishing to fine-tune their advice and feedback to students preparing for the job market in both academic and applied positions. There are many exciting places psychology doctorates can go, and You’ve Earned Your Doctorate in Psychology . . . Now What? is the perfect tool to help students get there.

References


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