



# The Elevator Pitch



**THE NCA JOB FAIR CAN BE OVERWHELMING FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS.** It is natural to feel intimidated and flustered when speaking with potential employers. It is also natural to have questions about how the job fair works, and to prepare for the event. With that in mind, please note the following tips, gathered from academic faculty and employment professionals.

## WHAT TO DO AND NOT TO DO

Once you enter the Job Fair, make your way through the booths, noting which organizations you want to approach. Often, there are lines to speak with these individuals and you may need to wait. Please keep in mind that the Job Fair is not the place for a 45-minute conversation or an interview. Job seekers are encouraged to limit their time at each booth to a few minutes. Doing so enables the organization's representative to continue moving through the line, but also gives the job seeker an opportunity to give a strong elevator pitch and provide a curriculum vita (CV).

## WHAT IS AN ELEVATOR PITCH?

The elevator pitch helps convey relevant information in just a few minutes. As the name implies, an elevator pitch is a concise statement that can be expressed in the length of an elevator ride (approximately 30-60 seconds). Imagine you hop on the elevator at the convention and inside is a faculty member at your ideal college or university. What do you want them to know about you in the brief time you have with them? The same premise can be employed at the NCA Job Fair.

## BE MEMORABLE BUT KEEP IT BRIEF

In every interview process, someone will ask for a brief summary of who you are, your background, and what you are seeking in a job. Having this information ready to go is a great way to start a conversation at a job fair, and helps you break the ice. In developing your elevator speech, think about the best way to provide the following important information:

**Introduction:** Give your name and your current institution and year in your doctoral program or current

position. Be sure to shake hands and give a friendly greeting, such as "It's great to meet you."

**Summarize:** Briefly explain your research focus and what you are prepared to teach. State your employment goal (tenure-track position, lecturer position, administrative position, etc.).

**Explain Your Goal:** Explain why you are interested in the position and why you would be an asset to the program.

**Action:** Ask for what you want. This may mean stating that you will follow-up via email or providing a business card and asking them to follow up. Follow up your action request with a handshake and thank the representative for their time.

## REMEMBER!

**Practice makes perfect!** Practice your pitch so you feel comfortable with the information and to ensure it does not sound rehearsed. Despite rehearsing, you should be able to connect with the other person and respond to their reactions and questions.

**Use plain language!** You may be speaking to a recruiter, someone outside the discipline, or someone who focuses on a different area of study. Avoid acronyms and jargon. When discussing your research, make it easy to understand.

**Be confident!** Let your passion shine through.

*You can use your elevator pitch in all networking situations. Any time you meet someone new, use the opportunity to share some information about yourself and further hone your elevator pitch.*

## EXAMPLE ELEVATOR PITCH

Good morning! It's so nice to meet you! My name is Jane and I am a third-year doctoral student in Communication at Best University. In May 2020, I will be defending my dissertation, which examines instructional immediacy in online learning environments. As a doctoral student, I taught two courses per semester as a graduate teaching assistant. I am seeking a tenure-track position upon graduation and I am really interested in your Assistant Professor position. With my teaching and research experience, I believe I can be an immediate asset to your program. I have my CV for your review. I also have a business card and will follow up at a more convenient time to discuss my qualifications.

