

PhD Vlog Week 2: Emma Cole Transcript

TIME	SPEAKER	AUDIO
00:00:04	Emma Cole	Good morning and welcome back to my PHD Vlog. This video's going to be a little bit more information-heavy than the previous one. I started my first academic job at the beginning of September and this week, mid-September, is Induction week at my new University. I thought I would make this video about starting that first academic post. At the beginning I'm going to tell you a little bit about what I did to get the academic job, what the application and interview process was like and then at the end of the week I'm going to come back and film a reflection video on what I've learned during this first
00:00:34		week dealing with students which I think would benefit other people who are going forward to interview for academic jobs. So let's get to it! The most important thing to start off with is to let you know that the academic job cycle starts a year in advance of position start dates. So essentially if you were looking to start a job in September 2016, you need to know that jobs are being advertised now for that start date. The positions that are advertised in September are permanent positions or Post-Doctoral Research Associates or Fellowships.
00:01:04		For these positions, you really have to have a fully-fledged research proposal fleshed out, looked over by lots of people and to be really confident in your ideas – where you're going to get funding from, what conferences you're going to present at, etc. etc. It's not the kind of thing where you can just apply, tick off a criteria and sent it on. You need to be putting kind of a week or so into these applications. If you're coming back around January and following through to the start of the academic year, I mean positions are being advertised up until August – you're looking more at short term
00:01:34		Teaching Fellowships – so Maternity Leave covers, perhaps a new position which has not been made permanent yet, things like that.

		<p>Once you've found a job that you want to apply for, the application process is going to differ substantially depending on what type of a post it is but basically for everything you're going to have to write a cover letter, attach a full academic CV and sometimes supply a research statement as well. If you're lucky enough to get your application taken through to the next stage and you're invited for an interview, what's going to happen is you're going to be asked to do a research proposal and then go</p>
00:02:04		<p>through an academic interview which is with a panel of people rather than just one person. The biggest thing that I learned during the interview process was that if you're going for a teaching position, even though you might be asked to do a research presentation, the questions that you are going to be asked or that you might be asked during that presentation are likely to be Teaching focused. As you might have guessed from this little monologue, the best thing that you can do is to speak to other people as preparation. So speak to your Supervisor, speak to your peers who have gone through the academic job market. If your</p>
00:02:34		<p>University has a Careers Service, go and speak to them. Anyway, I'm off for my first week now. I'll come back at the end of the week and let you know what tips I have to pass on. The first thing that I learned is how important it is to seize opportunities for professional development as early as possible in your career. When I was at U.C.L. working as Post Graduate Teaching Assistant, I did my Associate Fellowship Qualification which is the first level Teaching qualification you can get. It's becoming increasingly common for jobs to require a Teaching qualification when you're</p>
00:03:04		<p>applying for them. Generally at a first post level, this is not a requirement but it is a recommended attribute and that was the case for the job that I ended up getting. However, it's becoming compulsory in a lot of Universities to have qualifications in order to move up – so to progress when you're going for a review. My University now, there are 300 people hoping to</p>

		get onto the Associate Fellowship Scheme and there are only 90 spaces each year. So I'm in a really privileged position in that I can go up at level
00:03:34		two going into the Fellowship Scheme where there's a lot less demand for places because people haven't always seized those opportunities. So if you're at an Institution as a PHD student and have the opportunity to do some professional development and get a Teaching qualification, seize it then and there. The second big thing I've learned this year is just how much administration comes with the University job and anyone who's watching this who works in University will probably laugh at this. Yes, it was expected but I still didn't realise just how much there was! So when you're Teaching as a PHD student
00:04:04		a lot of the administration is absorbed by a Course Convener or a Head of Department. Once you start as a proper staff member, there is just so much more work to be done and it's not only administration for your courses – for writing exams, preparing marking [inaudible 00:04:19], things like that – but it's also just departmental level administration. So reading through all the emails, the minutes that you get sent, making sure that you're aware of funding deadlines which are very rigorously imposed. Whereas when I was a PHD student
00:04:34		deadlines to apply for funding for a conference, you could apply all year round. It's certainly been a big learned experience dealing with all this admin, getting used to just how many emails that I receive every day but I'm learning to prioritise my time. The time major thing that I've learned this week is also about funding and it's about external grants. When I was a PHD student and I saw Lecturers getting external grants, I always assumed that this was kind of the cherry on the top and it wasn't expected of them and perhaps maybe it wasn't expected in the past and it was something
00:05:04		that very high-achieving academics were able to get. The thing that I've learned starting an

		academic job is that all staff members who are in post switch have a research component are expected to be applying for these external grants. So if you're out there applying for jobs as an early career researcher and are looking at permanent jobs which have a research component as opposed to being purely Teaching-orientated, I would definitely recommend that you attend interviews with a research plan and you know what grants you're going to be
00:05:34		Applying for, what timeframe you need to get your proposals in, how much money you're expecting to be awarded because it's not something that's an additional extra. Apparently it is something which is an essential part of your post. That might sound quite full-on dealing with so much new information, realising just how high the stakes are and how hard you need to work in a post like this but actually this week has been really joyous. All the new students have been arriving, it's been Induction week so there's been lots of welcome events and drinks and networking and social events
00:06:04		and the new students are arriving so optimistic, so excited to be at University and it's really infectious and I'm sure that come exam time, they all won't be so bubbly and happy and they'll be sick with fresher's flu and whatnot but it's been a really exciting week dealing with these new students and seeing how much they're looking forward to the year ahead. So I'm definitely looking forward to the year ahead, even if I do have my Viva to deal with in the meantime. More on that next week. Thanks for watching again! See you guys next week.

END OF TRANSCRIPT