

Pursuing a Career in Legal Academia

Michigan is well-known nationally and internationally for being among the handful of law schools that produce the majority of legal academics. Our graduates are well represented on the faculties of the top law schools in the United States, and Michigan alums can be found writing, teaching, and practicing in universities throughout the country as well as in schools and institutions overseas.

Successfully launching a career in academia hinges on understanding the hiring process as well as effective planning and preparation over a number of years. The materials below outline the range of positions in legal academia (I), identify best practices for students and recent alums who are considering or preparing for a teaching position (II), offer a bare-bones outline of the hiring process (III), describe the services and support Michigan Law makes available to its students and graduates interested in this career track (IV), and summarizes various post-law school opportunities that may help prepare future candidates for the market (V).

I. Career Possibilities in Legal Academia

There are four broad categories of professors who teach in law schools: “research” professors, clinical professors, legal writing or legal practice professors, and adjunct professors.

Research professors are perhaps the most visible faculty in a law school – especially for a 1L class – because they regularly teach “core” law school courses, including much of the first-year curriculum (e.g., torts, contracts, and civil procedure). But law schools, universities, other academics, and the profession-at-large expect and encourage research professors to spend a majority of their time on research and writing. Consequently, individuals who lack a strong interest in legal scholarship are unlikely to be successful or happy as research professors in a law school. When seeking to hire a research professor, schools typically look for what are viewed as indicia of a future successful scholar, including a proven publication record, high-quality research and writing, success in law school, judicial clerkships, and/or graduate training in another academic field. Permanent research faculty positions are usually “tenure track.”

Clinical faculty members teach students by involving and guiding them in the actual practice of law. Clinical faculty supervise students providing direct representation to actual clients (typically indigent) and teach a corresponding classroom component that complements the substantive area of practice. Practice areas run the gamut, including, among many others,

civil and criminal litigation, child advocacy, immigration, as well as transactional fields such as low income housing or small urban business advising. Clinical faculty may also teach substantive law courses and most schools expect their clinical faculty to produce legal scholarship. Faculty hired for full-time clinical positions usually have practiced for at least three years in the area in which they will teach, and they may also have had clerkship experience. About a third of full-time clinical positions are tenure track. The balance are largely fixed-term contracts with many mimicking pre- and post-tenure employment models. At Michigan, for example, full-time, permanent clinical faculty are appointed for a series of two 3-year contracts with potential promotion to a presumptively renewable 7-year contract.

Legal writing or legal practice faculty teach required courses in legal research, writing, and analysis as well as advanced courses in those areas or in other practice skills areas such as drafting, ethics, or advanced appellate advocacy. At some schools, especially when such positions are full-time, legal practice faculty may teach traditional substantive courses. Candidates for such positions have generally been in practice for at least three years, and often have clerked in trial or appellate courts. A variety of employment arrangements exist, including traditional tenure-track appointments, three to seven-year clinical contracts, fixed-term renewable contracts of from one to five years, and adjunct contracts. Other schools have legal writing programs taught by "visiting assistant professors" or fellows on one, two or three year non-renewable contracts. Applicants for those positions are typically entry-level or pre-entry-level candidates for research faculty jobs who plan to spend the fellowship or VAP writing legal scholarship before seeking a tenure-track position. Increasingly, schools are hiring legal practice faculty members to teach transactional skills courses. These courses include basic or advanced drafting, and transactional "practicum" courses, in which faculty teach substantive law courses, such as securities law, using scenarios and documents from practice.

Adjunct professors typically teach part-time, usually continuing the practice of law as their principal occupation. Adjuncts may teach virtually any course, particularly in practice-related areas (e.g., bankruptcy, ethics, estate planning). Adjuncts are often hired on a per-course basis, with compensation tied to the number of credit hours taught. The pay is typically modest. Individuals interested in teaching as adjunct faculty often write directly to law schools in their geographic region.

If you are interested in finding an opportunity to teach as an adjunct, you should communicate directly with the law schools in your region. If you know any faculty members at any of those schools, it makes sense to reach

out to them and let them know that you are interested in teaching there as an adjunct and will be writing to the associate dean. Then, send an email to the associate dean attaching your CV and explaining what you would like to teach. If you have communicated with anyone on the faculty, or know anyone on the faculty, let the associate dean know about that. If the school has a need for a course you have offered to teach, the associate dean will probably check with that faculty member to get a general impression of whether you're a likely adjunct teacher for that school. It can also be helpful to speak with anyone at your workplace who has done or is doing adjunct teaching to indicate your interest — your coworkers who have taught are likely to know specifics of adjunct teaching at area law schools and will also be in a position to recommend you to the associate dean at schools at which they have taught.

II. Preparing for a Career in Legal Academia

Michigan's commitment to high-quality legal education and its record of producing successful academics opens many doors for our graduates interested in law teaching. But because every year law schools make hiring decisions in predictable (but not necessarily obvious) ways, aspiring academics from Michigan can, with planning and persistence, dramatically improve their chances of building a successful career in legal academia.

To that end, Michigan offers a diverse range of programs (available to students as early as the first day of their 1L year) to ensure that students and alumni both understand the academic market and receive the guidance and resources necessary to maximize their potential when they finally become teaching candidates. Before describing these programs, it makes sense to summarize the criteria schools typically employ when they search for promising young academics and to provide answers to questions frequently asked by those interested in an academic career.

General Advice:

Students who are interested in teaching law (in any capacity) ought to do as well as they can in their law school classes (many of which ought to be rigorous doctrinal courses covering a number of fields), serve on a law-oriented student journal, and build in-depth intellectual and research relationships with their professors.

We cannot overstate how important it is for students to work closely with their professors while in law school. The relationships students form with professors allow students to observe how to become and thrive as scholars; they can also be useful from a networking perspective, when it

comes time for the student to apply for a clerkship, a legal position, or an academic position.

Having strong faculty recommendations (the more the better) is absolutely essential to success on the academic market. Hiring committees tend to be much more attuned to recommendations from faculty than from judges or lawyers with whom candidates may have practiced.

Therefore, while still in law school, future candidates should take advantage of every opportunity to interact with their professors. Taking seminars or paper-writing courses will make this easier, and will make it easier for professors to ascertain a future candidate's writing skill and academic potential. Of course, not all professors will be equally effective in making recommendations. Some hiring committees place a premium on the prestige of a recommending professor, but typically it is more important for the recommender to know the candidate well and to be able to speak in some detail about the candidate's work as a student.

After graduation, future candidates should maintain if not deepen their professional relationships with their professors by sending them copies of their published work, discussing research ideas with them, and making sure they are aware of how the future candidate's career is developing. Although not strictly necessary, it is also usually very worthwhile for students to write and publish while in law school. This might take the form of a note published in a Michigan student-run law journal, or an article submitted for publication elsewhere.

Following graduation, it is often helpful to clerk with a judge, and it almost always makes sense for a future law professor to gain practical experience as a lawyer or policymaker. Real-world experience with clients, judges, policymakers, and other lawyers, and a deep working knowledge of the institutions in which law "happens" will stand a new academic in good stead when he or she begins to write and teach.

Advice on Timing:

There are, of course, exceptions to every rule, but most people seeking tenure track research professor jobs go on the academic job market within a few years after graduating from law school. Most schools prefer that candidates have some practice experience. After you have been out of law school more than a few years, though, it may become more difficult to get a tenure track job because hiring committees may doubt that you are serious about your academic agenda. The longer you have been out of law school, the more important it becomes that you have written and published

significant legal scholarship. Try to plan about two years ahead before you start teaching -- one year to put your writing together, perhaps to teach as an adjunct, hone your resume, and strategize with your recommenders, and then another year to be on the market and make the switch. If you earned your JD more than ten years ago, it's especially important to talk with your recommenders and the members of the Alumni Academic Placement Committee about how you might most effectively present your experience and scholarly potential. If you are seeking a job as a clinical professor or a legal practice professor, on the other hand, two or three years of actual law practice is essential, and we are aware of no informal upper limit on practice experience.

Advice for Future Research Professors:

In addition to all of the above, recent graduates who hope to become research professors ought to keep the following in mind as they build toward the law teaching market.

First, candidates will be evaluated primarily on their ability to produce an important and substantial body of published, scholarly work over the course of their careers. Not surprisingly, two key indicators of this potential are the quantity and the quality of published and publishable writing at the time the candidate applies for teaching jobs. Some hiring committees will pay attention to how much time candidates have had to produce writing, such that they will expect more from a PhD candidate than from a law firm associate. But that is not always the case: applicants coming from full-time practice should not assume that hiring committees will sensibly evaluate their productivity in light of competing demands on their time.

All else equal, more writing is better, not surprisingly. But candidates sometimes make the mistake of focusing too much on quantity and not enough on quality. Some of the most successful candidates every year have *relatively* little writing, but it is of the highest quality, making schools confident about the likely quality of future work. A candidate who has written five mediocre articles may be likely to be reliably productive, but will also be taken as less likely to start writing high-quality articles once hired than someone with fewer, high-quality pieces.

We believe that, in today's market, a candidate ought to have a minimum of two articles (not including student publications) to be successful on the market. Both need not be published. For example, a candidate might have one article published and a second highly polished draft that she can

use as a “job market paper.” Although some job market papers have been accepted at a journal and are forthcoming, they are usually not already out in print, which allows candidates to incorporate job talk feedback into their paper prior to its publication. (As explained below, research professor candidates are expected to describe their research during early interviews and to “present” a paper to interested faculties during a twenty minute “job talk” followed by a question and answer session in the final stages of the interview process.)

Assuming a future candidate can keep quality high, the job market is likely to be more receptive to a student with two or even three published papers, in addition to the draft “job market paper.” Note that faculties are usually interested in hiring research professors with a specific substantive focus and demonstrated expertise in a field, so in a perfect world a candidate’s published work would focus on one or maybe two areas of the law (presumably the areas in which the candidate is likely to teach, as well). For example, a candidate with four published papers on disparate topics may be viewed as less “focused” than a candidate with two or three published papers in the same field.

Keep in mind when you are choosing scholarly projects to pursue that schools expect entry-level candidates to be able to describe, intellectually, where they have been, where they are, and where they are headed over the next five years. It is important for a candidate to be able to tell a story about how all of her research projects fit together, and support the research she hopes to do in the future. Many candidates will draft a “research agenda” to describe their past and intended future scholarship to give schools a sense of the likely arc of their research.

If quantity of writing may be an issue, candidates in a jam may wish to consider reviewing an important book in their field. Although law reviews usually solicit book reviews from professors, most journals will also consider publishing unsolicited book reviews. Book reviews are usually easier and faster to write than articles because they are more structured and require less independent research. Consequently, they “count” less than articles do toward any quantity expectation, but can fill a gap, especially if the book and the claims made in the review mesh well with the candidate’s research agenda.

Second, aspiring research professors may benefit from having received graduate training or even a PhD in another field (e.g., economics, history, or philosophy), but it is important to recognize that pursuing an advanced degree also brings with it costs and risks.

Candidates with PhDs not only have significant writing experience (perhaps with a book or many articles already published), but they have been closely mentored by their advisers (who can usually provide a detailed recommendation) in how to conduct scholarly research successfully. Accordingly, such candidates come to a research professor position with more certainty about what the job entails and how to make a successful transition quickly and easily. Where the PhD research is closely connected with the areas of legal teaching and research interest, these candidates can bring insights and tools from the allied methodology to bear on their legal scholarship and teaching.

At the same time, schools also *expect* more from candidates with PhDs and can be less forgiving of a “beginner’s” mistake. Likewise, schools often expect PhDs to use their training in their research, and may draw negative inferences from a failure to do so. Candidates with PhDs will typically also be assessed not just by their legal chops, but are also expected, at least in part, to be well thought of by scholars in their cognate field. It can thus be hard to march to the beat of two drums. Where the relationship between the PhD and the substantive legal focus seems attenuated, moreover, the PhD is unlikely to count as a plus in the file.

Third, both before and after graduation, aspiring professors ought to attend academic workshops and lectures, either at Michigan or at other law schools. These experiences with cutting-edge scholarship will provide you with an insight into the culture and thinking of the academic world and will better enable you to anticipate the questions that you may be asked in an interview or during a future job talk.

Advice for Future Clinical Professors:

Generally speaking, those interested in clinical teaching should keep the following in mind as they work their way towards a job in clinical teaching:

First, while published scholarship is not an absolute must to enter the market, there are almost no *permanent* clinical teaching positions where scholarship isn’t expected or highly desired. Some clinical professors don’t begin to produce scholarship until their first teaching job, but better equipped candidates come with something published or a paper being prepared for publication in hand. While traditional law review articles are preferred, chapters in practice manuals, bar journal articles and the like can and do help, particularly with that first job.

Second, traditional indicia of academic success are, alone, rarely sufficient to land a job in clinical teaching. A candidate must have credentials

and references that strongly support his or her excellence or potential for excellence in their substantive area of practice, lawyering more generally, and clinical teaching. Applicants need to be very conversant not only in substantive areas of practice, but also in the fundamentals of clinic design and pedagogy. Familiarity with scholarship in these areas is often essential, particularly in landing a position that has the potential to be permanent (i.e., tenure, clinical tenure, presumptively renewable long-term contract).

Third, with one small exception, a record of public service is a must. The vast majority of clinics serve low income populations and one's record of commitment to that mission or public service more generally is critical. Few are able to make the transition from private practice to clinical teaching without some intervening public interest employment or exceptional record of public service while in private practice. The exception here is a subset of transactional clinics where there are relatively fewer substantively qualified candidates with public interest backgrounds.

Advice for Future Legal Writing/Practice Professors:

Legal writing and legal practice programs follow a variety of hiring models. For those programs who hire full-time, permanent faculty to teach legal writing or legal practice, it is important that candidates have at least two or three years of actual law practice in addition to any experience clerking or working in a non-practice setting. In addition, some teaching experience, either as an adjunct professor, in a fellowship, or in connection with CLE programs is highly desirable. Many programs will want to see a sample of your writing from practice.

III. The Nuts-and-Bolts of the Hiring Process

Schools seek to hire different categories of law professors in very different ways, and even within a category, the process varies a lot over time and across schools and fields.

Hiring in all categories of law teaching can occur by word-of-mouth or as the result of a little-noticed announcement by a law school of an open position. Therefore, to stay in the loop and abreast of all "market" activity, candidates ought to stay in close contact with their former professors, recommenders, and mentors as well with the professors and administrators who make up Michigan Law's Academic Placement Committee.

All students and alumni with any interest in law teaching should provide their contact details, any teaching interests, and a rough career timeline to the Alumni Academic Placement Committee at LawAlumAcademicPlacement@umich.edu. This is best done early (even 1L year, although future candidates ought to update the committee from time to time as their plans change) so that members of the committee know of the candidates' existence and can reach them easily.

For research professor hiring and, to a lesser extent, clinical faculty hiring, there is a formal hiring process sponsored by the American Association of Law Schools (AALS). All students and graduates interested in teaching full-time should plan and expect to participate in this process. Although the relative importance of the AALS market in clinical hiring is hard to gauge, AALS does account for the vast majority of research professor hiring. The market is complicated, involving many steps and spanning months (the market begins more than a year before a successful candidate can expect to receive a paycheck of any kind!), so it is crucial that candidates look ahead and begin preparing years in advance.

The Market for Research Professors:

Preparing for the Market. Candidates must begin preparing in earnest for the formal AALS process about 18 months before they hope to begin teaching. (Note: this chronology does not include conducting research, writing, and publishing, which really must begin long before AALS even starts to warm up.)

There are six key items requiring a candidate's time and attention in the spring before the market begins:

(1) By 18 months before the candidate hopes to start teaching, he or she should have begun drafting a scholarly article to use as the basis for interviews and job talks. This paper will need to be sufficiently polished to be circulated to schools by the middle of August. Preferably the article should not yet be published in a law review or journal, though it is fine if the draft is posted online on SSRN or BEPress.

(2) A candidate should begin regularly communicating with his or her potential law professor references (as well as any other references, including advisers from other graduate programs) and obtain permission from each to be listed as a reference. Before the market begins in earnest, a candidate must help these recommenders become intimately familiar with his or her written work, scholarly agenda, and teaching interests. (It can be a

candidacy killer if a hiring committee chair calls a reference who has no recollection of the candidate.)

(3) A candidate should alert Michigan's Alumni Academic Placement Committee of the plan to participate in AALS and, more generally, to seek an academic job over the next year or two (LawAlumAcademicPlacement@umich.edu) and seek advice from the committee or ask it any questions.

(4) A candidate should prepare an academic CV, which differs in many ways from other forms of resumes (e.g., it focuses on education academic publications and lists academic references)

(5) A candidate should begin drafting a research agenda, with the support and advice of the candidate's recommenders as well as Michigan's Alumni Academic Placement Committee. An effective research agenda briefly summarizes a candidate's work-to-date (with a focus on the job market paper) and describes the scholarly trajectory the candidate anticipates following over the next few years (e.g., the next few articles).

(6) A candidate should also begin preparing a Faculty Appointments Register (FAR) form – a one-page, standardized form (see a 2012 blank copy via the link on <http://www.law.umich.edu/careers/Pages/legalacademia.aspx>) containing a candidate's CV information as well as teaching preferences. This form, and the impression it conveys, is surprisingly important – schools often make initial screening decisions on the basis of this form alone. Consequently, it should be drafted with great care and attention to every detail, and feedback should be solicited early and often from a candidate's recommenders and the Alumni Academic Placement Committee.

All of these decisions should be weighed and documents drafted with the advice and feedback of a candidate's advisers and the Alumni Academic Placement Committee. This back and forth can take some time.

Candidates will want to have all of their documents finalized (especially their FAR forms, their academic CVs, and their research agendas) by early summer at the latest so they will be included in the AALS's August distribution (the first and most important distribution) listing job market candidates. In addition, if these materials are finalized by early summer Michigan Law can take additional, timely steps to support the candidate on the market. In the past, for example, Michigan has distributed a "CV book" containing the FAR forms and CVs of all Michigan candidates on the market to law schools around the country.

With the same goal, candidates during this time must be proactive and entrepreneurial, making their interest in particular schools clear, either by having a recommender reach out to someone on a school's hiring committee or, more commonly, by sending an independent application packet directly to the hiring chair or the dean of the law school. Each packet should include a cover letter, an academic resume, and publication reprints or scholarly writing samples. If there are genuine personal connections to the region or the school, a brief personalized paragraph summarizing these can sometimes also make sense for schools where it is relevant. More generally, candidates should reach out to every contact they have in the law teaching world, seek out every potential ally, write every thank-you letter, and make every phone call. As in all things, hustle and plain luck can matter a lot.

AALS Faculty Recruitment Conference. Most entry-level law school hiring begins at the AALS Faculty Recruitment Conference, unfortunately known as the "meat market." The conference takes place in October or November of every year in Washington, D.C., at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel over approximately two days. More information on the AALS Conference can be found at www.aals.org, including the size of the non-trivial registration fee – \$450 in 2012.

Most candidates attend the FRC "by advanced invitation only," in the sense that they will only come if they have scheduled interviews ahead of time with particular schools. Months (or at least weeks) before the conference is held, law school hiring committees scour the FAR forms and CVs of all the teaching candidates who have registered for AALS (typically using the August distribution) and identify the candidates they find most attractive as potential hires. Hiring committees then invite these candidates to meet with them for a 20- to 30-minute interview (typically in a hotel room) during the conference. Some hiring committees schedule meetings with only a handful of candidates. Other schools meet with candidates essentially back-to-back for two exhausting days.

Hiring committees typically prioritize candidates about which they are most excited (usually relying on candidates' FAR forms and CVs, but also on recommendations from faculty at other schools), which in turn gives these candidates more choice over potential interview slots and more flexibility in how they organize their day. Regardless, candidates should do their best to schedule as many interviews as they can in a way that makes the most of their natural rhythms and gives them time to rest, eat, use the bathroom, and get from one interview to another.

Most candidates receive a handful of AALS interviews at most. It does not make sense for a candidate to attend the conference if he or she has not received any invitations to interview, and it may not make sense for some candidates to attend if they have received only one or two invitations to interview from schools they view as relatively unattractive. In most cases, however, candidates ought to meet with as many schools as they can.

AALS interviews are brief and so candidates must make their case efficiently. Over 20 to 30 minutes, candidates will meet with anywhere from two to ten faculty members in a single group. It is usually possible for candidates to ascertain who they will be meeting with in advance, which can sometimes help with preparation. Questions will relate primarily to a candidate's research, and will often begin with something like, "Great to meet you. Let's get to it. Tell us about your paper?" Anything on a candidate's CV (or anything a candidate says) is of course fair game. Questions about a candidate's past work or about future research are common. Interviews often end with the candidate being invited to ask any questions he or she may have about the interviewing school.

Candidates should remember that AALS interviews are ultimately employment interviews. Candidates should smile, laugh, be polite, and show passion for their work. Schools obviously want to hire the best future scholars, but they are also selecting, potentially, a co-worker and a potential friend for the next thirty years of their lives.

Campus Visits, and Job Talks: On the basis of these initial interviews, the interviewers' impression of a candidate's written work, conversations with a candidate's recommenders, and a candidate's CV, schools will decide whether to invite the candidate to campus for additional extended interviews with a small group of faculty members, a meal or two with faculty members, the center-piece of the on-campus interview – the "job talk," and occasionally a meeting with students. During the visit, a school's faculty will seek to discover what the candidate would be like as a scholar, a teacher, and a colleague.

The job talk is a scholarly presentation of research typically consisting of a twenty-minute presentation by the candidate on a scholarly topic, followed by a question and answer session with the faculty. The questions posed are designed to reveal how your mind works, how you respond to questions, and how you handle new ideas, unexpected problems, and challenges. The topic should be one on which the candidate has done, or is doing, scholarly research and writing. It should make an argument and should display legal analysis and familiarity with the relevant scholarly literature, statutes and case law. The most important part of the job talk is the question and answer

session, where potential future colleagues try to see how a candidate responds to different questions, ideas, and challenges.

The Clinical Teaching Market:

The law school clinical teaching market is more varied than the traditional “research faculty” teaching market. Each year an increasing number of schools look to hire clinical faculty by way of the traditional AALS hiring process. Accordingly, much of the advice given above applies equally to those seeking clinical faculty appointments, though for aspiring clinicians your lawyering experience and understanding of clinical pedagogy will be as, if not in at some schools more critical than your scholarship. Some schools, however, continue to hire clinical faculty using a wide variety of other approaches. As a result, candidates seeking clinical teaching jobs should use a twofold approach: (i) register for and participate in the AALS recruitment conference; and (ii) spend significant time making direct applications for clinical openings irrespective of whether a school is also interviewing at the conference. The vast majority of clinical openings are posted on the Clinical Legal Education Association’s website (<http://cleaweb.org/jobs>). Many jobs are also posted on the LawClinic listserve (subscription information here: <http://lists.washlaw.edu/mailman/listinfo/lawclinic/>), although list membership is limited to those with some present involvement in teaching law. Once an opening is announced, the candidate should send an application package directly to the school.

Application materials for a clinical position should include a cover letter, an academic CV, and, if available, a reprint or copies of the applicant’s strongest scholarly publication. Strong applications equally emphasize the candidate’s excellent academic record and practice experience. Generally, schools are interested in candidates with at least three years of practice experience. Importantly, the majority of clinical faculty are expected to produce legal scholarship with some regularity. Accordingly, a candidate’s materials should emphasize any publication record and promise for scholarship.

In preparing for a clinical teaching job interview, a candidate must research the school’s clinical hiring process and expectations. The process differs from school to school and position to position. For example, some schools expect a traditional job talk (delivered to the entire faculty) describing a scholarly research project. Other schools expect a talk focused on clinical teaching, delivered to a subset of the faculty. Still others expect the candidate to “teach” a class to a group of faculty and/or students. Candidates must find out in advance exactly what the school wants and expects and prepare for the interview accordingly.

In addition, strong candidates must be conversant in clinical teaching methodology and pedagogy. One straightforward way for you to familiarize yourself with the clinical teaching profession is to become a member of the Clinical Legal Education Association (<http://cleaweb.org>). Its newsletters and the included subscription to the Clinical Law Review are well worth the \$40.00 per year. The National Archive of Clinical Legal Education is also a great, free resource with an exhaustive bibliography of scholarly articles on clinical education (<http://lib.law.cua.edu/nacle/>).

Legal Writing and Legal Practice Market:

At many schools, the interview process for legal writing and legal practice faculty is the same as it is for all other faculty members. Almost all schools do an initial screening interview either at AALS or over the phone. Because openings often become available after the traditional fall recruiting period has ended, most schools (including those interviewing at AALS) welcome direct applications for open positions.

Open positions can often be found through the Legal Writing Institute's website (<http://www.lwionline.org>). Many schools also advertise legal writing and skills positions in print and web-based legal publications. State bar journals, the *National Law Journal*, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and *Lawyer's Weekly* are excellent sources.

A candidate's application materials should include a cover letter, an academic CV, and a writing sample. It is not enough to highlight a candidate's excellent academic performance. A strong application will also stress a candidate's practice experience, prior teaching experience, and scholarly publications, if any. Generally, schools are interested in candidates with at least three years of practice experience. Not surprisingly, judicial clerkships and law journal experience are viewed favorably.

Candidates selected for more intensive interviews may then go through another round of telephone interviews with program directors or hiring committee chairs. Candidates being seriously considered will be invited to the school for a half or full day of interviews. Interviews may range from one-on-one interviews with the dean or the director of the program to small group interviews with faculty members and administrators.

A second model of legal writing and legal practice teaching uses fellows or "visiting assistant professors" as instructors. Unlike permanent legal practice faculty, who rarely move into research faculty jobs, these instructors are using the fellowship or visiting assistant professor position to

assist their transition into a search for a tenure track research faculty job. The fellowships are typically one or two year non-renewable contracts. Applicants for these fellowships should write directly to the schools that have such programs. Different schools have different deadlines, but the season begins in late autumn.

An increasing number of schools (particularly those with tenure-track programs) expect a traditional job talk on a research project delivered either to the whole faculty or to the committee responsible for hiring legal practice faculty. Other schools require a talk focused on teaching philosophy and methodology. Still other schools require candidates to instead teach a mock class to a group of legal writing and legal practice faculty members.

Some schools expect their legal writing and legal practice faculty to produce legal scholarship. Accordingly, an application should emphasize a candidate's publication record and promise for future scholarship. On the other hand, a legal writing and legal practice position is very teaching-intensive. The best candidates will be those who express a commitment to (and an aptitude for) both teaching and scholarship. For this reason, an aspiring legal writing and legal practice professor should indicate any past teaching or mentoring experience on his or her CV, even if the experience is not legal teaching experience.

IV. Michigan's Academic Placement Program

Michigan Law graduates teaching in law schools throughout the country and abroad offer a rich networking resource for other graduates interested in pursuing this career path. In addition, the school has developed resources that are particularly useful for those interested in an academic career.

Every year, the Dean appoints faculty to an Alumni Academic Placement Committee, which advises UMLS alumni interested in seeking teaching positions. Members of the committee can review your CV, advise on the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) hiring conference, and generally help you navigate the hiring process. In some past years, the committee has also held a fall workshop for alumni on the teaching market where they can meet one another, get advice from a wide range of faculty members, and take the opportunity to present a mock job talk.

The Office of Career Services provides additional support. OCS counselors are available to review your application materials and provide advice to those interested in legal academia. OCS sponsors panels throughout the year on the variety of teaching jobs available, including

tenure-track professorships, clinical positions, legal research and writing, and adjunct or visiting opportunities.

Every semester, Michigan Law hosts the Student Research Roundtable Lunch series, which provides current students with an interest in academic research a forum to present a paper proposal, a work-in-progress, or even a complete draft to a group of interested students and faculty. The roundtable not only offers student presenters an opportunity to receive feedback on their work and to practice their presentation of scholarly ideas, but allows student audience members to engage and collaborate with an intellectual community of peers and professors as it produces scholarship. Moreover, the regularity of the roundtable meetings (usually 4-6 times a semester) fosters the development of strong ties and support among students (and faculty) with a shared interest in pursuing an academic career.

Students interested in producing a substantial piece of scholarly work in preparation for the job market (or for any other purpose) can also take advantage of other opportunities to work on writing and publishing legal scholarship. In addition to the opportunity to write and publish a Note with one of UMLS's law journals, students may enroll in for-credit independent research under the supervision of a faculty member. In most years, UMLS also offers a for-credit Student Scholarship Workshop. This workshop allows students to spend a semester developing and refining a scholarly paper with a group of other students working on their own papers and the guidance of a member of the law faculty.

V. Post Law School Preparation

Teaching Fellowships or Visiting Professorships. Some law schools offer one or two year fellowships or Visiting Assistant Professor (VAP) programs. These will give you time to write and publish and can also produce contacts that will be helpful to obtaining a faculty position. The schools offering these programs are constantly changing. For those interested in clinical teaching, an increasing number of schools offer clinical teaching fellowships to people with just a few years of lawyering experience. Most of these positions are short-term contractual positions, although there are several schools that confer LL.M. degrees in clinical legal education.

Jobs Before Teaching. Law schools generally do not make distinctions among jobs after a clerkship. But two types of jobs can matter: jobs that are prestigious because they're hard to get (e.g., a Bristow Fellowship at the Solicitor General's Office) and jobs in which applicants have acquired

significant substantive knowledge that will be directly relevant to their teaching and writing (e.g., staff member on the Joint Committee on Taxation intending to concentrate in tax; prosecutor or public defender intending to concentrate in criminal justice). It can be difficult to switch into teaching after too many years in practice. After more than several years of practice, law schools may worry that you will have trouble starting to write academic articles. Candidates who succeed in finding teaching jobs when they're more than several years out of law school almost always have compiled strong publication records while in practice.