**First Year**

* Get to know faculty members; start thinking about who might serve as your advisor and as members of your doctoral committee.
* Begin identifying your field of specialization and specific research topics you hope to pursue.
* In consultation with the DGS and faculty in your field of specialty, choose courses that will best fit your interests and help prepare you for exams, the dissertation, and your larger career as a teacher-scholar.
* Take a look at the MLA job list to see how fields (and specific jobs within those fields) are described.
* Read widely in primary and secondary materials; identify important journals in your field and read articles from them regularly in order to see what professional writing in your field looks like.
* Begin identifying and keeping track of the major voices in your field. What are the important conversations? How do different scholars relate to one another?
* Attend departmental and related scholarly events (such as brown bag lunches, job talks, guest speakers) as often as possible. Ideally you will see at least one job talk and one guest speaker each year.
* When you begin teaching, create a teaching file in which you save course evaluations, lesson plans, assignments, sample student papers, etc. for all classes you teach.
* Constitute your committee for your exams, draft your reading lists, and garner faculty advice about how best to structure your exams to position you well on the job market.

**Second Year**

* With your faculty advisors, identify the major conferences in your field; begin to write and submit abstracts to conferences in your area of interest. Ideally you should have two or three national or well-regarded regional conference presentations on your CV prior to beginning your job search.
* Enroll in the major scholarly organizations in your field (including MLA); subscribe to relevant scholarly listservs.
* Begin identifying seminar papers that could be revised and submitted as journal articles; ask professors for journal suggestions and advice on revisions. Ideally you should have at least one journal publication in a reputable peer-reviewed journal prior to beginning your job search.
* Draft (and regularly update) your CV (including things such as educational background, conference presentations, teaching experience, service, awards, and publications).
* Begin thinking about potential dissertation topics and discussing these with your advisor.
* As you prepare for exams, join or start a reading group with others (whether in your field or outside of it) to share work and set deadlines for each other.
* Take comprehensive exams.
* Write and get approval for your dissertation prospectus by the end of your second or at the beginning of your third year.

**Third Year**

* Have a candid conversation with your dissertation advisor about your career goals and what kind of job you would ideally like to have; this conversation can help determine the kinds of preparation you’ll need in the next few years of your program.
* Consider taking a look at the MLA *Job Information List* to see what kinds of things job ads are looking for.
* Go to at least a couple of events on campus outside of the English Department.
* Talk to both various faculty and staff with PhDs about their career trajectories. What did they do before they got their current position? How do these earlier experiences help them in their current position?
* Consider presenting at the Graduate School Research and Creativity Expo – this event is great preparation for talking about your project in a variety of contexts.

**Fourth and Fifth Years**

* Join or start a dissertation writing group.
* Revise a chapter of your emerging dissertation to submit as a journal article (having an “in press” article on your CV when you go on the job search carries more weight than an article “under review”).
* Make a point of speaking up at departmental and/or university talks and colloquia and of asking succinct, relevant questions at conferences in your field.
* Arrange for your advisor and/or another faculty member to observe your teaching.
* Line up references for your job search and familiarize yourself with the Interfolio dossier service. Ideally, you should begin asking for letters at the end of the spring semester prior to going on the market.
* In the summer before you plan to go on the job market, prepare drafts of all job materials (including your writing sample) and get feedback on these documents from your advisors and peers so you can revise in time to submit polished materials by early October. Participate in any job materials workshops that are offered by the Grad Placement Committee.
* Participate in the job materials workshops/job search meetins offered by the Grad Placement Committee in the fall before you plan to defend your dissertation.
* Finish writing and defend your dissertation!
* Complete the exit survey to provide feedback on your degree program.
* Update the Director of Graduate Studies about any employment changes over the coming years.