

APSA Graduate Placement Report:
Analysis of Political Science Placements for 2017-2018

July 2019



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Abstract

The Graduate Placement Report details findings on political science placements for the 2017-2018 academic year. More candidates found first placements in contingent academic positions, indicating an alteration to the most desirable placement path. Those from top NRC-ranked institutions are more likely to first take a post-doc or full-time non-tenure track position. Having a PhD in-hand, rather than ABD, and beginning with full funding, led to higher placement rates. Women and minorities are opting out of academia in larger proportions, except for minorities in academic administration, but are also more likely to first take tenure-track positions. On the other hand, men and non-URMs are taking post-docs and full-time non-tenure track positions as their first placement. In theory, these positions could allow newly placed graduates to increase their publications, grant applications, and works in progress before applying for and committing to both higher teaching loads and departmental and university service.

Executive Summary

The American Political Science Association has collected and analyzed data on how PhD candidates in political science perform on the job market for decades. Fielded since 2009 in its current format, APSA's annual Graduate Placement Survey first and foremost examines characteristics of candidates in political science doctoral programs who are entering the job market, recording outcomes of candidates' efforts to find their first employment. More recently, APSA has collected data on candidates entering doctoral programs, or cohorts of incoming students. The Graduate Placement Report details findings on graduates' placements in political science for the 2017-2018 academic year, including the nature of these first placements and of the institutions they have placed with.

Trends in the Job Market. Trends in the job market identified in the past have continued or strengthened over the last two decades, with the 2017-2018 academic year as no exception. Again, the proportion of candidates placed in post-doc positions increased, and it has been on the rise for nearly a decade. A review of APSA's research on graduate placement indicates post-doctoral positions have been increasing since at least 2010. More candidates are finding placement in contingent academic positions for their first positions. At this point, we believe this indicates an alteration to the desired path for candidates, when we consider those candidates' demographics and characteristics. Those from top tier institutions, according to department rankings from the National Research Council, are more likely to take a post-doc or full-time non-tenure track position as their first position. This trend has been noted in the natural sciences, as new PhDs are expected to take a post-doc before seeking a permanent position.

Trends for Placement and for Candidates. The job market for political science in the 2017-2018 academic year continued some long-standing trends in characteristics impacting placement. Degree status, or having a PhD in-hand, rather than being ABD, was associated with higher placement rates ("placed candidates") and with being on the market ("pool candidates") (79% of placed, 73% of pool, had PhDs). Funding at the start of a program, or having started graduate school with full

funding, is also strongly indicative of higher placement rates (92% of placed, 91% of pool, had full funding).

Gender and Under-Represented Minority status (URM) had mixed results, particularly when considering the type of placement. Women and URMs are opting out of academia in larger proportions, with the exception of URMs in academic administration, but are also taking more tenure-track positions as their first placement. Notably, these placements have higher teaching and service commitments straight out of graduate school than a post-doc or non-tenure track position. On the other hand, men and non-URMs are taking post-docs and full-time non-tenure track positions as their first placement, likely to increase their number of publications, grant applications, and works in progress before committing to both higher teaching loads and departmental and university service.

As has been the case historically, those studying top three subfields of Comparative Politics, American Politics, and International Relations have more positions available to them than other subfields, of the positions posted on eJobs (16%, 20%, 22%, respectively). These are also the top three subfields for all candidates on the job market (32%, 24%, and 23%, respectively). However, in comparing these subfields, the proportion of Comparativists on the market far exceeded the proportion of positions open in Comparative Politics, much more so than the other two subfields, indicating possible oversaturation in this field.

To review other reports from the Graduate Placement Survey as well as to view reports from previous years and other surveys, please visit <http://www.apsanet.org/Resources/Data-on-the-Profession>. Please contact us with any specific questions you may have at surveys@apsanet.org. We welcome any questions, thoughts, and ideas on Graduate Placement in political science and the job market in general. We would aim to fold in broader questions that members bring to our attention in subsequent reports and data collection efforts.

Erin C. McGrath and Megan Davis | American Political Science Association
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About the Data

Beginning in the 2009-2010 academic year, APSA has administered the Graduate Placement Survey annually to directors of graduate programs at departments granting doctoral degrees. Directors detail the individual candidates on the market in their departments, including whether they have completed their coursework, and are all-but-dissertation (ABD), or have defended their dissertation and have their doctoral degree in-hand. Directors list candidates regardless of the number of years they have been on the market until they are placed, and list placements regardless of the type of position, for example, academic or non-academic.

2017-2018 Graduate Placement Survey: Response Rates. The 2017-2018 survey was administered online to 133 graduate program directors from July 17, 2018 to November 14, 2018, at colleges and universities offering doctoral degrees in Political Science and Government in the United States. Directors from 83 institutions responded to the survey, for an overall response rate of 65%, providing individual-level information about 616 candidates who were actively seeking placements in political science. We capture over 80% of students on the market when comparing to the number of doctorates earned in 2017-2018 (see Survey of Earned Doctorates summary and Section 1 below). Response rates and data from previous years can be found online in historical reports on APSA's Data on the Profession page.

External Data Sources in This Report. In addition to using the [National Research Council's rankings](#) of institutions offering degrees in political science, which we aggregate into quintiles, we also utilize the [National Science Foundation Survey of Earned Doctorates](#) (NSF's SED). In 2017-2018, we compare the reported students on the job market each year with the number of earned doctorates in political science each year. Although some students are repeat candidates on the job market or are ABD status and are only preliminarily on the job market, we find these subsets of candidates tend to offset each other, and the proportion of the total student population remains the same.

Similarities and Departures from APSA's Previous Placement Reports. In 2016-2017, and 2017-2018, APSA collected data on cohorts of incoming doctoral students, and in 2017-2018, also collected data on retention efforts by department to keep students in their programs. We analyze these data separately. Prior to 2015-2016, from the 2009-2010 to the 2014-2015 academic years, student data were weighted by the size of the faculty in their doctoral department. However, in 2016-2017, after reviewing the NSF's SED, APSA concluded the job market was more accurately portrayed by presenting proportional placement data alongside departments' actual reported number of students than by normalizing them with faculty size. Departments report their complete number of students each year, therefore, our analysis cannot reflect any unreported students. We begin our report by examining the trends in coverage of the Graduate Placement Survey with comparison to the most informative dataset available, the NSF's SED. The SED is a census survey of all doctorates earned in the United States and has very low rates of both non-response and error.

Glossary of Terms for Concepts and Variables

Graduate Placement Concepts and Variables

Placement (vs. “not placed”). Students are measured as finding a “placement” if they find and accept *any type* of position or sector of employment, regardless of what they are employed as, or for how long that employment continues (e.g. whether they are tenure-track, non-tenure track, or another dedication for duration).

Placement Types. Types of academic placements include *post-doctoral placements; tenure-track placements; non-tenure track, full-time; non-tenure track, part-time; or non-tenure track, graduate institution placements*. Types of non-academic placements include *non-academic placements*, and placements in *academic administration*. If a position does not fall into one of these categories, respondents must choose “other” placement type.

Job Market Candidates. Candidates on the job market are defined as students reported by their departments as thought to be *seriously competing* on the job market for any type of position, academic or non-academic, whether they place in the academic year, or not.

Years on the Market/ Repeat-year Candidates. Candidates on the job market who were candidates in previous years, but were not placed in previous years, and are continuing to seek their first placement are repeat-year candidates. Students may be on the market for up to three years.

Candidates’ Characteristics Concepts and Variables

Degree Status (PhD vs. ABD). Students who have their degree in-hand are counted as PhD; students who have not received their PhD, even if they did so later in the year or in a later year, are counted as ABD.

Funding and Years of Funding. Departments report students as having had full, partial or no funding, and the number of years of that funding, as full funding (for 5 to 6 or more years); partial funding (for between 1 and 4 years; or no funding (for 0 years).

Academic Subfields. Students can specialize in two subfields and may be measured as studying the subfields of Comparative Politics, American Politics, International Relations, Political Philosophy/ Political Theory, Public Law, Public Policy, Public Administration and Methods.

Demographics: Gender, Under-Represented Minorities, Ethnicity, and Home Country. Students identification as male, female, or other gender identity. Students identification as African American/ Black, East Asian/ Asian-American, Hispanic/ Latina/o, Middle Eastern/ Arab-American, Candidates’ ethnicity is measured as Hispanic/ Latino/a, Not Hispanic/ Latino/a, or Other. Candidates home countries are their place of birth/ citizenship and aggregated into US/ International.

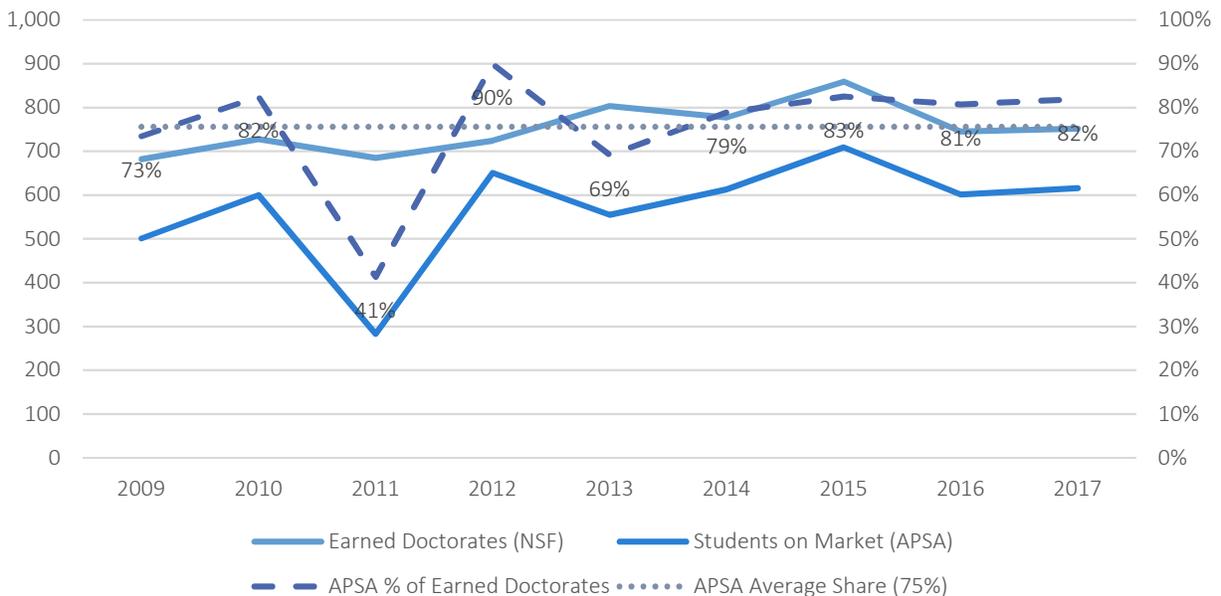
Section 1. Trends in Placement Data

Graduate Placement Survey Coverage

Over the last two decades, the American Political Science Association has examined the job market in political science, including characteristics of the open positions for placement, the candidates seeking placement on the job market, and their placement outcomes. Since 2009, these data are continuous and provide both an individual-level look at candidates, and an aggregate look at trends that impact the job market.

Because we lack a census of all positions that candidates on the market may consider in political science, we assess the Graduate Placement Survey’s coverage by calculating the proportion of students reported to APSA and recorded in the Graduate Placement Survey as on the market, regardless of their placement outcome. We compared this number to an annual census of doctoral degrees awarded in political science. We retrieved this number of doctorates in Political Science and Government from the Survey of Earned Doctorates fielded by the National Science Foundation, which has a very small degree of non-response (<5-10%) and of under-reporting (<1%) across years and fields.¹ The comparison shows a high degree of coverage of the total population of students on the market.

Figure 1. Earned Doctorates in Political Science (NSF) and Doctoral Program Students on the Job Market (APSA)



¹ See “Survey of Earned Doctorates: 5. Survey Quality Measures,” Accessed 21 May 2019. Available at: <https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/srvydoctorates/#qs&sd&tabs-1>.

Figure 1 shows the annual and average coverage rates of the Graduate Placement Survey as compared to the number of doctorates awarded, showing that the Survey has captured an average of 75% of the candidates on the market since 2008.² The Survey of Earned Doctorates censuses PhD recipients immediately after graduation. APSA's Graduate Placement Survey also captures some All-But-Dissertation (ABD) candidates that go on the market prior to having their PhD is in-hand. Only 155 of 616 students on the market in 2017-2018, or 25%, were ABD.³

The Graduate Placement Survey also captures the small number of candidates reported as on the market for multiple years, though their prior years on the market may have been as ABD candidates prior to the receipt of their doctoral degrees. Like the proportion of ABD candidates on the job market to the total population reported, about one-quarter, or 151 of 616 candidates, of all candidates were candidates repeating their search for the second or third year. These subsets of all students seeking placements on the market offset each other in our sample, giving us confidence that the Survey is capturing most students seeking placements on the market in a given academic year. The next section presents overall trends in our placements from our graduate placement data.

Section 2. Overall Trends in Placement

Encouragingly, the 2017-2018 academic year saw an increase in the overall rate of placement for candidates reported in the Graduate Placement Survey, and a decrease in the rate of candidates who did not find a placement. This is demonstrated in Figure 2 below. 496 out of 616 (80.5%) candidates found a placement, compared to 77.9% of candidates in 2016-2017 and 78.2% in 2015-2016. Only 88 candidates were unsuccessful in finding a placement (14.3%), slightly less than the 16% reported in 2016-2017. The proportion of repeat candidates who sought placement, but remained on the job market the following year, has been relatively stable in our data since the 2010-2011 academic year, giving us confidence that 2017-2018's proportion is not exceptional.⁴

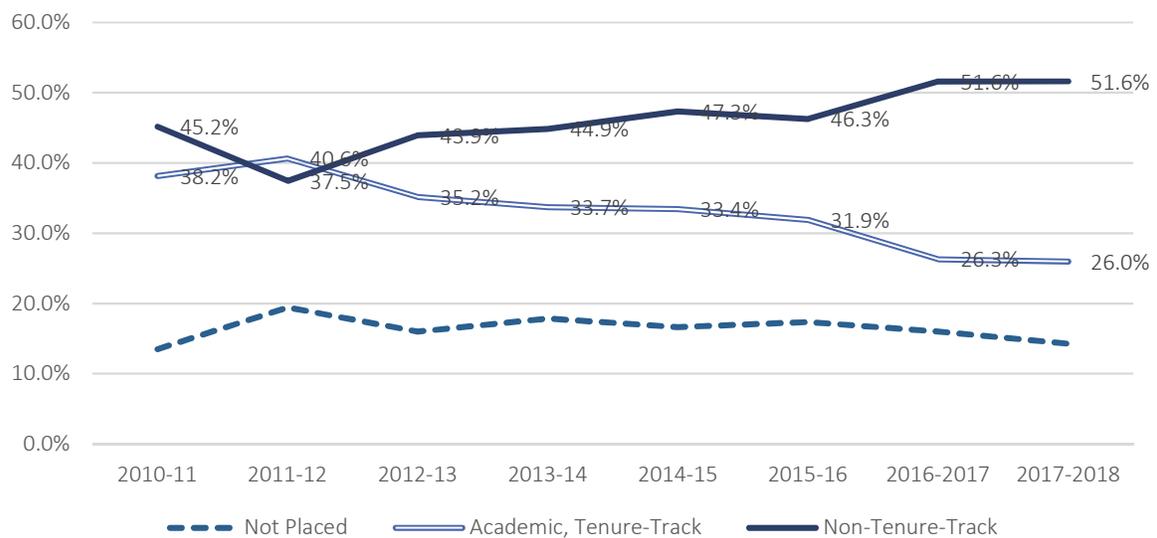
We also noted some continuing trends in the number of placements on the tenure-track for the overall population. Notably, 2017-2018 is the first academic year when together these positions accounted for more than half of all first-time placements (51.6%). At least half of those who start a PhD will transition into a position that is contingent, or not a tenure-track position, or a non-academic position, for their first placement, with implications for both job security and for the transferrable skills needed to succeed on the job market.

² The average goes up to 79% when removing 2011, an outlier year. Some departments filled out the survey for 2009-2010, and some for 2010-2011. The Graduate Placement Survey captured less than half of students on the market.

³ The proportion of ABD candidates was 1.5% below the 8-year average of 26.7%, with a moderate standard deviation of 3.8, indicating some dispersion.

⁴ 17.4% were second-year candidates, about 2% below the 8-year average with a standard deviation of 2.5, and 7.1% were third-year candidates, about 3% above the 8-year average, with a standard deviation of 1.6, both indicating moderate dispersion.

Figure 2. Tenure and Non-Tenure Placement Overall, 2010-2017



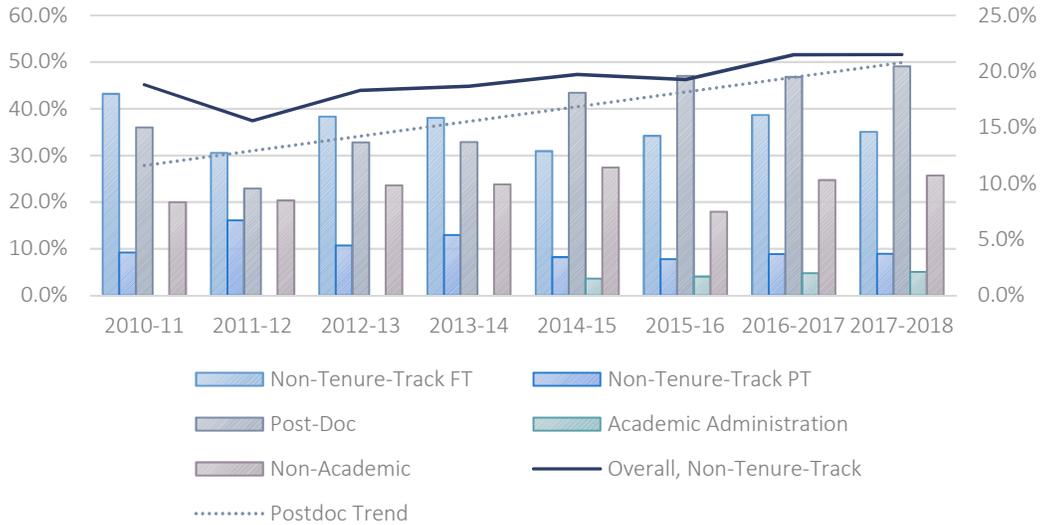
The aggregate categories of tenure-track placements and non-tenure-track placements demonstrate a steady decrease in the number of tenure-track positions over time, and a concomitant increase of non-tenure-track positions. The 2017-2018 academic year had 26% of all candidates place in a tenure-track position, five points lower than the 8-year average of 33.2%. 51.6% of candidates placed in a non-tenure track position, five points above the average of 46%. Just 2% of those positions were academic, but in academic administration, while 11% were non-academic placements.⁵ The overall proportion of candidates whose first placements after receiving their doctoral degrees were as post-docs (20%), in non-tenure-track academic positions (21%), in non-academic positions (11%), and in academic administration (2%) is increasing relative to those whose first placement is on the tenure-track.

Trends in Types of Placement

The data show a steady increase in the number of *post-doc positions* accepted as first placements, both for the 2017-2018 academic year, and over time, as well as a slight increase in those who accepted a *non-academic position* for their first placement. Post-docs accounted for nearly one-fifth of all placements in 2017-2018. Compared to those who place on the tenure-track, who accounted for about one-fourth of all placements, post-doctoral positions are now the second largest aggregate category of full-time employment for first-year graduate placements in political science.

⁵ Both tenure-track and non-tenure track aggregate categories had moderate standard deviations of 5% and 4.5%, respectively, indicating moderate dispersion in the data.

Figure 3. Non-Tenure-Track Placements and the Rise of Post-Doctoral Positions, 2010-2017



Of all placement types, post-docs and non-academic first placements show a general trend of increasing over the last eight years, while all other categories, including academic tenure-track, academic non-tenure-track part-time, full-time, and graduate institution, and academic administration placements are stable or decreasing.

	Type of Placement	Type of Placement, %
Academic, Tenure-track	160	26%
Tenure-track	160	26%
Post Doc	126	20%
Post Doc	126	20%
Academic, Non-tenure-track	131	21%
Non-tenure-track, Part-time	23	4%
Non-tenure-track, Full-time	90	15%
Non-tenure-track, Graduate Institution	18	3%
Admin/ Non-academic	79	13%
Academic Administration	13	2%
Non-academic	66	11%
Not Placed	88	14%
Not Placed	88	14%
Unknown/ NA	32	5%
Don't Know	14	2%
NA	18	3%
Grand Total	616	100%

Table 1. Count and Percentage of Types of Placement Outcomes, 2017-2018

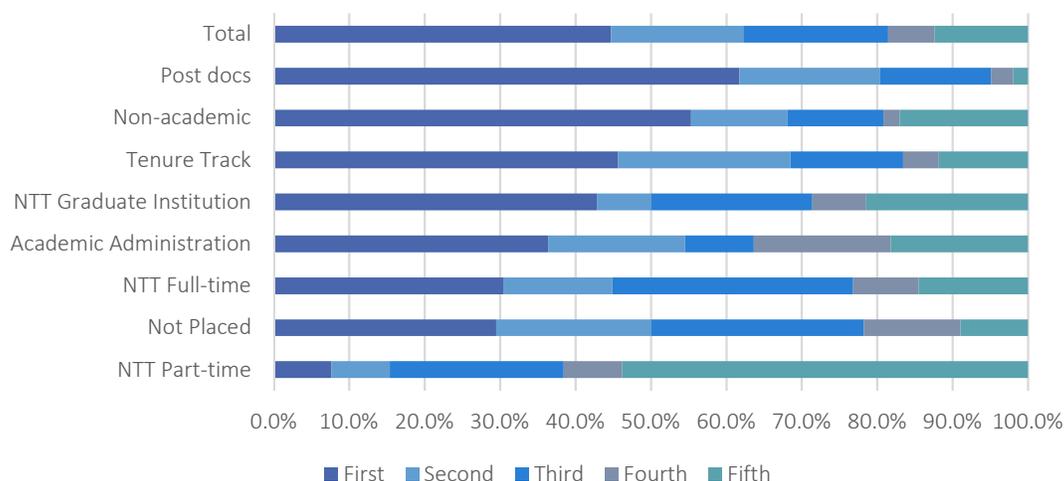
We also assessed placement types by the quintile ranking of the institutions granting job market candidates their doctoral degrees. Not all institutions are included in the NRC's rankings, therefore not all candidates are included in the assessment of quintiles. The largest proportion of job market candidates placing in a post-doc position were from first quintile-ranked institutions, indicating an alternate path for preferred first placements after receiving a PhD.

Nearly 62% of candidates in first quintile institution took post-doctoral positions for their first placements. 19% of second quintile candidates, and 15% of third quintile, 3% of fourth, and 2% of fifth quintile candidates took post-doctoral positions, indicating a steadily decreasing trend in the proportion of post-docs from the first to the fifth quintile.

Tenure track, non-academic, and non-tenure track (part-time, full-time, and graduate institution positions combined) categories follow a curvilinear trend, with an uptick in the fifth quintile. 46% first, 23% of second, 15% of third, 5% of fourth, and 12% of fifth quintile candidates took first positions on the tenure track, suggesting a different trend than the post-doc category that maintains its downward trend through all the quintiles.

Moreover, first quintile candidates were 16.1% more likely to have taken a *post-doc* than a *tenure track* position, while second quintile candidates were 4.2%, third quintile candidates .3%, fourth quintile candidates 1.8%, and fifth quintile candidates 9.8% more likely to take a *tenure-track* rather than a *post-doc* positions.

Figure 4. % of Candidates From NRC Ranking Quintiles Within Job Placement Type



Researchers have noted, particularly in the natural sciences, the process of hiring post-doctoral positions has been shown to be less transparent, and less equitable, making it a bottleneck for improving diversity in disciplines as scholars move to more senior positions in the academe, a phenomenon known as the “leaky pipeline.”⁶ Women, minorities and people with disabilities are less likely to be offered post-doctoral positions in STEM disciplines in the natural sciences. Some

⁶ Eaton, A.A., Saunders, J.F., Jacobson, R.K. et al. “How Gender and Race Stereotypes Impact the Advancement of Scholars in STEM: Professors’ Biased Evaluations of Physics and Biology Post-Doctoral Candidates” *Sex Roles* (2019), pp:1-15; Langin, K. “Racial and gender biases plague postdoc hiring” *Science*, 3 June 2019, available at: <https://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2019/06/racial-and-gender-biases-plague-postdoc-hiring>; McGlynn, T. “How the Opaque Way We Hire Postdocs Contributes to Science’s Diversity Problem” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 17 June 2019, available at: https://www.chronicle.com/article/How-the-Opaque-Way-We-Hire/246475?cid=wcontentgrid_hp_9

researchers acknowledge they are less likely to even publicly post open post-doctoral positions, and rather rely on informal networks to fill open positions with new PhDs, while it is becoming an expectation that new PhDs work as post-docs for one or more years before seeking a permanent position in academia.

Section 3. Characteristics of Candidates

We analyze the characteristics of candidates in two different ways. We summarize degree status (PhD or ABD), funding (full, partial, none), gender (women, man, other, not reported), underrepresented minority status,⁷ academic subfields,⁸ and years on the market (1, 2, 3, or don't know). First, we look to the difference between candidates who placed from the entire candidate pool, and compared both to the average change in candidate's characteristics over the last eight years to understand if, of the factors shown to be impactful in placement in previous association research, which ones may be growing in importance, or decreasing in importance. We summarize degree status (PhD or ABD), funding (full, partial, none), gender (women, man, other, not reported), underrepresented minority status,⁹ academic subfields,¹⁰ and years on the market (1, 2, 3, or don't know).

Degree Status. Candidates who placed in 2017-2018 were 7% more likely to have a PhD than to be All-But-Dissertation Status (79% PhD, 21% ABD) than all candidates who were on the job market in the same academic year (73% PhD, 25% ABD). Having a PhD in hand remains as important as it has been over the last decade, with no change from the 8-year average.

Funding. We only have been collecting data on funding for the last few years. For each year we have data, the trend is the same for the 2017-2018 academic year. Candidates who have full funding are more likely to continue to the job market (91%), than those with even partial funding (5%) or no funding (2%). Candidates who placed were nearly identical in proportions for funding than the proportion of the entire candidate pool for each funding category. Though we cannot compare this year's proportions to the 8-year average, the correlation is strong, with more than 9 in 10 candidates on the job market with full funding.

⁷ Categories included: African American/Black, Native Am./AK Native, White/Euro American, Hispanic/Latino/a, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, East Asian/Asian Am., South Asian/Indian Am., Middle Eastern/Arab Am., Two or More Races, Other, DK/Not Reported

⁸ Categories included: Comparative Politics, American Politics, International Relations, Methods, Political Philosophy, Public Administration, Public Law, Public Policy, Other, Don't Know, and Not Reported.

⁹ Categories included: African American/Black, Native Am./AK Native, White/Euro American, Hispanic/Latino/a, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, East Asian/Asian Am., South Asian/Indian Am., Middle Eastern/Arab Am., Two or More Races, Other, DK/Not Reported

¹⁰ Categories included: Comparative Politics, American Politics, International Relations, Methods, Political Philosophy, Public Administration, Public Law, Public Policy, Other, Don't Know, and Not Reported.

2017-18	Candidates Placed n = 496	Candidate Pool n = 616	Pool vs. Placement	Difference from 8 Yr. Average
Degree Status				
PhD	79%	73%	7%	0%
ABD	21%	25%	-4%	-1%
DK/Not Reported	0%	2%	-2%	1%
Major Field				
American Politics	25%	24%	1%	1%
Comparative Politics	32%	32%	0%	3%
International Politics	23%	23%	0%	-2%
Methods	1%	1%	0%	0%
Political Philosophy	11%	11%	0%	-2%
Public Administration	1%	1%	0%	-1%
Public Law	2%	2%	0%	0%
Public Policy	3%	3%	0%	1%
Other	3%	3%	-1%	1%
Don't Know	0%	1%	0%	0%
Not Reported		0%	0%	-1%
Funding Status				
Full Funding	92%	91%	1%	--
Partial Funding	5%	5%	1%	--
No Funding	2%	3%	-1%	--
Don't Know	1%	1%	0%	--
Gender				
Female	43%	42%	1%	3%
Male	57%	58%	-1%	-3%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%
Not Reported	0%	0%	0%	0%
Race/Ethnicity				
African American/Black	3%	3%	-1%	-1%
Native Am./AK Native	0%	0%	0%	0%
White/Euro American	63%	63%	0%	
Hispanic/Latino/a	6%	6%	-1%	-4%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1%	1%	0%	0%
East Asian/Asian Am.	10%	11%	0%	
South Asian/Indian Am.	4%	3%	1%	-1%
Middle Eastern/Arab Am.	4%	4%	-1%	1%
Two or More Races	1%	0%	0%	1%
Other	1%	1%	0%	1%
DK/Not Reported	7%	7%	1%	0%
Ethnicity				
Hispanic or Latino/a	7%	8%	-1%	
Not Hispanic or Latino/a	83%	83%	-1%	-1%
DK/Not Reported	11%	9%	2%	2%
Years on Market				
1	68%	66%	2%	-4%
2	18%	17%	0%	-2%
3	8%	7%	1%	3%
DK/Not Reported	6%	9%	-3%	3%

Table 2. Characteristics of Candidate Pool and Candidates with Graduate Placements, 2017-2018

Gender. Women and men candidates who placed in positions (43% women, 57% men) were nearly identical in proportion to candidates on the market as a whole (42% women, 58% men), and women were slightly more likely (3%) to be on the job market, and men slightly less likely (3%) to be on the job market than the average number over the last 8 years. Women make up 37% of APSA's membership, while men make up 63%. In comparison, there are more women placing (43%) than there are in, at least, APSA's membership.

Underrepresented Minority Status. Like for gender, the differential between underrepresented minority status in the candidate pool and in candidates who placed was also minimal. When comparing the proportions to APSA membership, the results were mixed, although these differences may be a reflection of the wider age range of APSA membership, as opposed to the younger age range of candidates on the job market, and that diversity has increased in the discipline more recently. Some minorities had slightly greater proportions placing than in APSA membership: 4% of placements were South Asian/ Indian American (2% of membership); 10% of placements were East Asians (7% of membership); 4% of placements were Middle Eastern/ Arab American (1% of membership); 6% of placements were Hispanic/ Latino/a (slightly less than 6% of membership). On the other hand, some URM groups had lower proportions among placements than their current representation in the APSA membership: 63% of placements were White/ Euro American (77% of membership); and 3% of placements were African American/ Black (4% of membership).

Academic Subfield. While candidates who placed maintained nearly identical proportions of academic subfields as the proportions of candidates' subfields in the job market pool overall, a slightly larger percentage of scholars who identified as Comparativists (3%) were on the market compared to the average from the last 8 years.

Years in Program. Candidates who placed were similar in proportion to candidates in the job market pool with regard to the number of years they had been seeking placement on the job market (66-68% for one year, 17-18% for two years, 7-8% for 3 years, and 6-9% not reported). Compared to the 8-year average, it seems to be becoming more common for candidates to spend several years on the market, but the percentages are still quite small compared to those on it for their first year.

Departments' and graduate directors' decision-making by departments seems to weigh heavily in how candidates fare on the job market. Whether or not a candidate receives a full funding package has grown more important as a characteristic determining placement. Whether or not a candidate passes a dissertation defense is also a strong determinant of placement. Characteristics of candidates like gender, and underrepresented minority status, may more strongly determine pathways before and after placement in acceptance to programs or promotion.

Characteristics by Placement Type

We concluded with several notable findings after disaggregating candidates' characteristics by placement type. In 2018-2019, women and minorities were more likely than their average, overall,

to be placed in tenure-track, academic administration, and non-academic positions than their overall proportion within the candidate pool for their first placement. Women made up 42.2% of the placed candidates, and 55.6% of the tenure track placements, and 53.9% of academic administration placements. Under-Represented Minorities made up 19.8% of placed candidates overall, 21.9% of tenure track, and 25.8% of non-academic jobs placements. The African American/ Black, East Asian/ Asian American, and Hispanic/ Latino/a categories accounted for the increase in tenure track positions, while the Hispanic/ Latino/a and South Asian/ Indian American categories accounted for the higher percentage in non-academic job placements.

Characteristics	Graduate Placement Types							
	Overall n=616	Post Doc n=126	TT n=160	NTT, FT n=90	NTT, PT n=23	Non-Academic n=66	Academic Administration n=13	Not Placed n=88
Gender								
Female	42.2%	36.5%	55.6%	27.8%	34.8%	45.5%	53.9%	38.6%
Male	57.6%	63.5%	44.4%	72.2%	65.2%	54.6%	46.2%	60.2%
Other	0.2%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Race/Ethnicity								
URM	19.8%	19.1%	21.9%	13.3%	21.7%	25.8%	15.4%	23.9%
Non-URM	73.7%	74.6%	66.9%	85.6%	73.9%	63.6%	76.9%	76.1%
Race								
African American/Black	3.1%	0.0%	5.0%	2.2%	4.4%	1.5%	7.7%	4.6%
East Asian/Asian Am.	10.6%	7.9%	14.4%	8.9%	13.0%	6.1%	7.7%	13.6%
Hispanic/Latino/a	6.2%	6.4%	6.3%	1.1%	0.0%	13.6%	0.0%	10.2%
Middle Eastern/Arab Am.	4.2%	4.8%	3.8%	4.4%	4.4%	1.5%	0.0%	8.0%
Native Am./AK Native	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1.1%	0.8%	0.6%	1.1%	4.4%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	1.1%	0.8%	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%	1.1%
South Asian/Indian Am.	3.4%	4.8%	3.1%	3.3%	8.7%	6.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Two or More Races	0.7%	1.6%	0.6%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
White/Euro American	63.2%	66.7%	52.5%	76.7%	60.9%	57.6%	53.9%	62.5%
Ethnicity								
Hispanic/Latino/a	7.5%	8.7%	6.9%	1.1%	0.0%	13.6%	8.3%	11.4%
Not Hispanic/Latino/a	83.4%	79.4%	83.1%	90.0%	100.0%	71.2%	91.7%	86.4%

Table 3. % of Candidates' with Characteristics Within Job Placement Type, 2017-2018

On the other hand, non-URMs (73.7% of placed candidates overall) and men (57.6% of placed candidates overall) were more likely to be placed in post-docs (63.5% men, 74.6% non-URMs) or non-tenure-track, full-time (72.2% men, 85.6% non-URMs) and part-time positions (65.2% men, 73.9% non-URMs). No African American students placed into a post doc position this academic year, this group's highest placements were in academic administration, on the tenure-track, and in non-tenure track, part-time, positions.

Placement and Field of Study

Although the Graduate Placement Survey does not capture the subfield of the positions that candidates place in, many candidates place into positions that reflect their subfield specialties. In comparing the subfields of the candidate pool (n = 616) to the subfields of the candidates who placed (n=496), they are, for all intents and purposes, the same. To substantiate the claim, that candidate’s subfield specialties were also the subfields of the positions they were placed into, we compared the Graduate Placement Survey data with data from postings of job advertisements on APSA’s *eJobs* website. The table below shows the subfields with color scaled to show the largest as most colorful, except for non-tenure track positions, for which color is scaled to show the smallest as most colorful.

Subfield	Graduate Placement Data by Subfield	
	% of Academic Placements	Difference from 8 Yr. Average
Comparative Politics	32%	3%
American Politics	24%	1%
International Relations	23%	-2%
Political Theory/ Political Philosophy	11%	-2%
Other	3%	1%
Public Policy	3%	1%
Public Law	2%	1%
Public Administration	1%	-1%
Methods	1%	0%
Don't Know	1%	0%
Not Reported	0%	-1%

Table 4. Candidates on the Job Market by Subfield and Average Change, 2017-2018

Comparing the placement data above, and the job advertisement data below, shows that while candidates who specialize in Comparative Politics commandeer the greatest proportion of placements on the job market, the proportion of open junior faculty positions designated for Comparativists is a smaller proportion of the job market as a whole than the proportion that the positions designated for American Politics and for International Relations compose of the entire market, particularly in comparison to the proportion of candidates.

While the American Politics and International Relations subfields fall in the top three largest for both placements and for job advertisements, the percentage of positions posted for both American Politics and International Relations outnumber those for Comparative Politics. The latter two subfields show a far smaller gap between the percentage of candidates on the market and percentage of open job market positions.

Subfield	eJobs Job Advertisement Data by Subfield and Tenure Status		
	Jr Faculty Positions	% Tenure Track, Jr Faculty Positions	% Non-Tenure Track, Jr Faculty Positions
Comparative Politics	16%	31%	69%
American Politics	20%	42%	58%
International Relations	22%	38%	62%
Political Theory/ Political Philosophy	7%	41%	59%
Other	13%	52%	49%
Public Policy	8%	34%	66%
Public Law	3%	37%	63%
Public Administration	5%	21%	79%
Methods	4%	43%	57%
Don't Know	--	--	--
Not Reported	--	--	--

Table 5. eJobs Junior Faculty Job Advertisements by Subfield and Tenure Status, 2017-2018

More specifically, Americanists make up 24% of the candidate pool, are competing for 20% of the junior faculty positions on the market, and 42% of the jobs they are competing for are on the tenure track. International Relations scholars compose 23% of the candidate pool, are competing for 22% of the junior faculty positions on the market. 38% of these positions they are trying to place in are tenure-track. On the other hand, Comparativists make up 32% of the candidate pool and are competing for half that number, or 16%, of the positions on the market, of which only less than one-third are on the tenure-track. Candidates in Comparative Politics may experience oversaturation, or a higher rate of candidates to positions, in their placement activities, than in other subfields.

Other notable features of analyzing subfields are the open positions in the “Other” category composing a quite large 13% of the open market positions. While just 3% of candidates indicate they specialize in a subfield that does not fall within the 8 traditional categories outlined in Tables 2 and 3 above, many more open positions seem to fall outside those traditional categories than candidates would identify themselves.

This may, however, be more of an artifact of the data, for example, in job positions being more specialized to attract a specific candidate or type of candidate, while candidates take an opposing strategy and try to generalize to qualify for more open positions. The generalizing strategy for placement may need rethinking – as noted above, the rise in post-doctoral positions is substantial, and in those positions, the research needed tends to be specialized and project-based, perhaps more so than the research agenda called for in open faculty positions. As noted, the hiring process in other disciplines, particularly in STEM disciplines, has also been shown to be less transparent.

The Political Science Job Market in 2017-2018: Conclusions

The 2017-2018 Graduate Placement Survey is an important one. It is the first where we found most candidates first placing into non-tenure track positions. Of those placements, the number of post-doctoral positions is on the rise. The path a candidate chooses through the initial years of employment after receiving a doctorate in political science is changing, through contingent employment before landing in a final placement, for an unknown number of years, and therefore costs, due to moving, benefits packages, lower compensation, and the unknown impact of this kind of economic uncertainty on productivity.

As noted in our [New Hire Salaries Report](#), the structure of compensation varies greatly between contingent and tenure track or permanent positions, as does the transparency and equity in hiring. Students and graduate advisors need to educate themselves about how the salaries, benefits, and professional development resources offered in various job packages will likely differ, and how to hedge against such uncertainty.

Professional development programs need evidence about what career paths candidates choose in order to evolve and remain useful. These programs must prepare candidates for success in a broader range of careers than ever before. Approaching the job market knowing that less than one-quarter of students will transition immediately onto the tenure track indicates that if not already doing so, departments and graduate directors prepare their students for these outcomes in graduate placement; for example, in coaching candidates how to get the most out of their post-doc placements, or in negotiating job offers outside academia or off the tenure-track.