



APSA Graduate Placement Report:
Analysis of Political Science Placements for 2018-2020



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Abstract

The Graduate Placement Report details findings on political science placements for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years, preceding and during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, when higher education institutions responded by moving to virtual teaching and learning models. Some postponed or rescinded offers, and many paused admissions. However, the data may not reflect the true impacts, as trends from 2018-2019 continued into 2019-2020, though the response rate for the latter year was much lower than normal. More candidates found first placements in contingent academic positions, still indicating an alteration to the most desirable placement path, with a post-doc or research position immediately after receipt of a PhD. Those from top National Research Council (NRC)-ranked institutions are more likely to take a post-doc or full-time non-tenure track position. Having a PhD in-hand, rather than being All-But-Dissertation (ABD) and beginning with full funding continues to be a strong determinant of higher placement rates. ABD students were three times more likely than those with PhDs to not find placement in 2018-2019. Most students on the job market for both years were male, as well as non-Under-Represented Minorities (URMs), while women only constituted around one-third of candidates on the market. Compared to previous years, men and non-URMs continue to take post-docs and full-time positions as their first placements. There were more URMs in tenure-track positions in 2019-2020 than in 2018-2019. Similarly, women took more tenure-track positions as their first placement in both years than did men. There was an overall increase in the number of candidates who did not find placement during the 2019-2020 academic year, which can most likely be attributed to impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, including the ensuing economic recession.

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 (please see our Incoming Students reports on APSA's Data on the Profession page). The Graduate Placement Report details findings on graduates' placements in political science for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years, 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, the last two years included. Again, the proportion of candidates placed in post-doc positions increased in 2018-2019, however there was a drop in the percentage of graduate students placed in 2019-2020, which may be attributable to, for example, postponement or rescinding of those offers due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 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 (NRC), 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 last two academic years 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, 74% of pool, had PhDs in 2019). Similarly, 82% of the candidates placed in 2020 had a PhD, and 72% were on the market. Candidates in both years received similar funding at the start of a program, which as previous reports have shown is a strong indicator of higher placement rates.

Gender and Under-Represented Minority (URM) status had mixed impacts, particularly when considering the type of placement. Women and URMs opted out of academia in larger proportions in 2018-2019; however, more men than women were placed in non-academic positions in 2019-2020. There were more URMs in tenure-track positions in 2019-2020 (40%) than in 2018-2019 (25%). Similarly, women took more tenure-track positions as their first placement in

both years. While more secure in the short-term, these placements have higher teaching and service commitments straight out of graduate school than a post-doc or non-tenure track position.

The 2019-2020 academic year continues to follow the same trend as previously observed, in where 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* (15%, 23%, 20%, respectively). These are also the top three subfields for all candidates on the job market (27%, 27%, and 21%, respectively). However, in comparing these subfields, the proportion of Comparativists on the market again 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 our [website here](#). 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.

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American Political Science Association
October 2021 | Washington, DC

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, 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.

2018-2020 Graduate Placement Survey: Response Rates. The survey was administered online to 155 graduate program directors in 2018-2019 and 123 in 2019-2020 at colleges and universities offering doctoral degrees in Political Science and Government in the United States. 66% responded in 2018-2019 and 36% in 2019-2020, attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic occurring at that time. Directors from 102 institutions responded to the survey in 2018-2019 providing individual level information for about 555 candidates and 44 responded in 2019-2020 providing information for 151 candidates, who were actively seeking placements in political science. We capture nearly 80% of students on the market when comparing to the number of doctorates earned in this period (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 aggregated into quintiles, we also utilize the [National Science Foundation Survey of Earned Doctorates](#) (NSF SED). For 2018-2020, 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 2018-2019, and 2019-2020, APSA collected data on cohorts of incoming doctoral students. 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 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 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, and then are listed as 3+ 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 impacting 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)

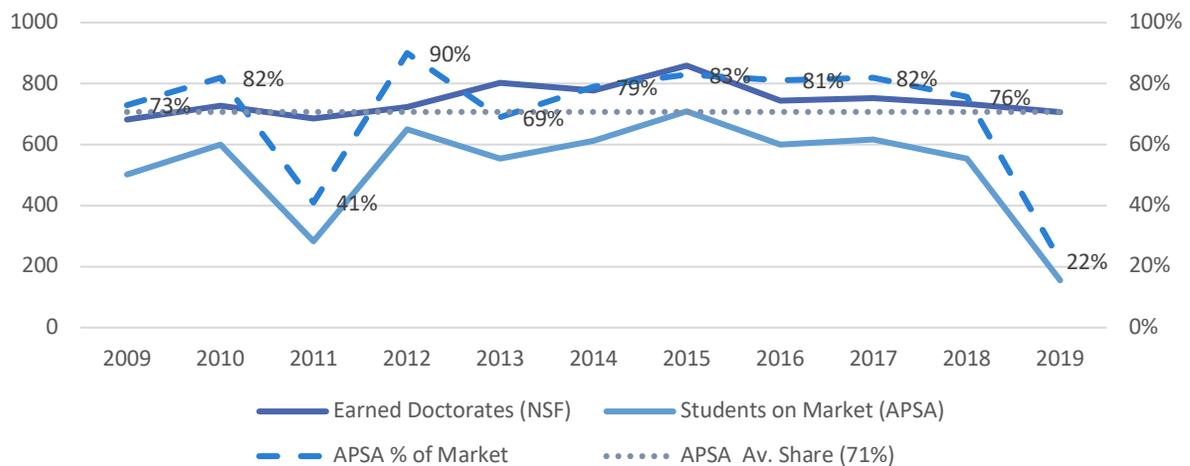


Figure 1 shows the annual and average coverage rates of the Graduate Placement Survey as compared to the number of doctorates awarded, showing that the Survey has captured an average

¹ See “Survey of Earned Doctorates: 5. Survey Quality Measures,” Accessed 18 August 2021. Available at: <https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/srvydoctorates/#qs&sd&tabs-1>.

of 71% 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 ABD candidates that go on the market prior to having their PhDs in-hand. Only 26% of candidates in 2018-2019, and 27% in 2019-2020 were ABD.

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, between 20% and 27% 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

The 2018-2019 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.³ This is demonstrated in Figure 2 below. 119 out of 151 (78.8%) candidates found a placement, compared to 83.9% of candidates in 2018-2019, 80.5% in 2018-2017, 77.9% in 2016-2017 and 78.2% in 2015-2016. Only 14.7% of candidates in 2018-2019 were unsuccessful in finding a placement, slightly more than the 14.3% reported in 2017-2019, but less those reported for 2019-2020 (20%). 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 2018-2019's and 2019-2020's proportions are not exceptional.⁴

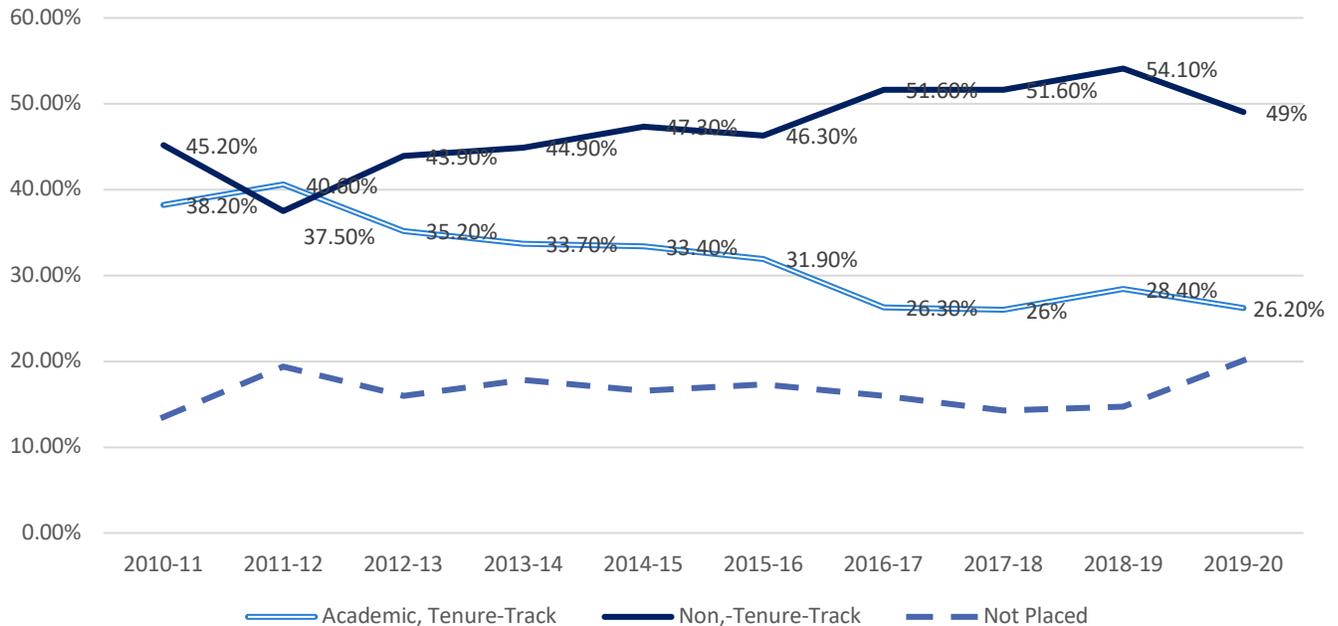
Again, trends continued for the number of placements on the tenure-track for the overall population. In 2018-2019 was the second academic year, together, these positions accounted for more than half of all first-time placements (54.1%), however, the opposite was observed in 2019-2020, when these positions were short of reaching half of all first-time placements (49%). Again, it is unknown how postponements, cancellations, or other results of the COVID-19 pandemic affected these offers. Regardless, about half of those who received their 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 When removing 2019, the average is 75%. Fewer departments filled out the survey in 2019-2020, which we attribute to the COVID-19 pandemic, which started alongside our data collection efforts in March 2020.

³ The analysis for the 2019-2020 candidates on the job market shows a downward trend, with the overall rate of placement for candidates decreasing, and an increase of candidates who did not find placement. We also attribute to the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁴ In 2019-2020, 28% were second year candidates, about 9% above the 9-year average with a standard deviation of 3.5, and 3.30% were third-year candidates, about 1% below the 9-year average, with a standard deviation of 1.5, which indicates a moderate dispersion. Similar results were observed for the candidates of 2018-2019.

Figure 2. Tenure and Non-Tenure Placement Overall, 2010-2020

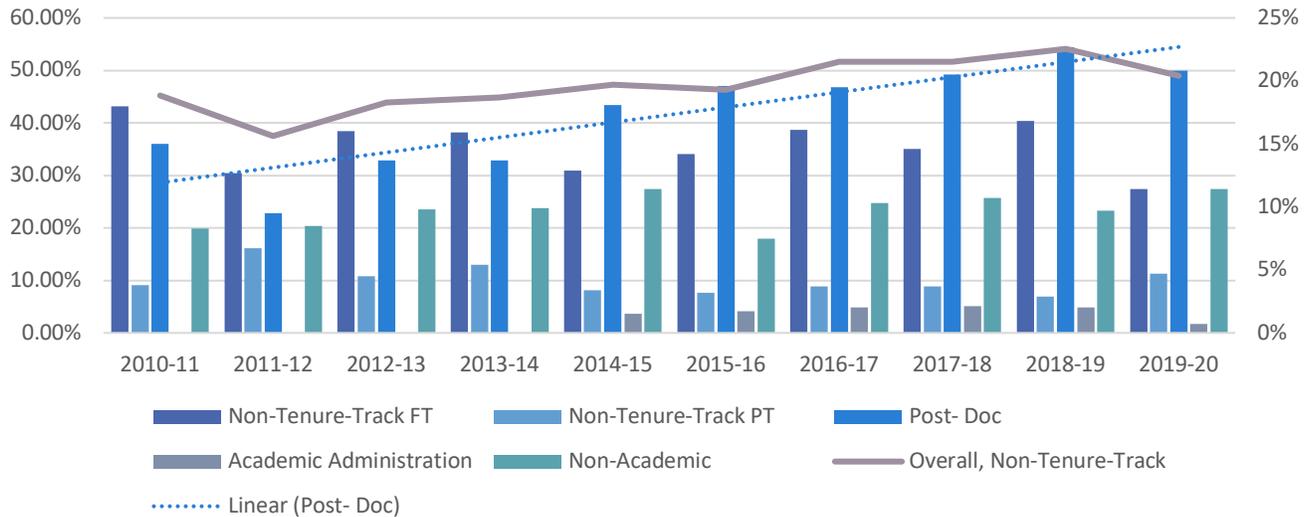


The 2018-2019 academic year followed the same trend as previously observed during the 2017-2018 academic year. 28.40% of all candidates place in a tenure-track position, nearly 5 points lower than the 11-year average of 31.99%. 54.10% of candidates placed in a non-tenure track position, seven points above the average of 47.14%. Just 2% of those positions were academic administration, while almost 10% were non-academic placements. The overall proportion of candidates whose first placements after receiving their doctoral degrees were as post-docs (23%), in non-tenure-track academic positions (23%), in non-academic positions (11%), and in academic administration (3%) is increasing relative to those whose first placement is on the tenure-track. For the 2019-2020 academic year, placements for both tenure-track positions and non-tenure-track positions were below average.

Trends in Types of Placements

As with previous years, the data shows a steady increase in the number of *post-doc positions* accepted as first placements, for both academic years, 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 slightly over one-fifth of all placements in both 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. Furthermore, post-doctoral positions were the second largest aggregate category of full-time employment for first-year graduate placements in political science in 2018-2019, while in 2019-2020 both non-tenure-track positions and post-docs positions made up the second largest category.

Figure 3. Non-Tenure-Track Placements and Post-Doctoral Positions, 2010-2020



Of all placement types, post-docs and non-academic first placements show a general upward trend, 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. This trend warrants more effort in capturing details of these positions and whether those who place transition back to academia.

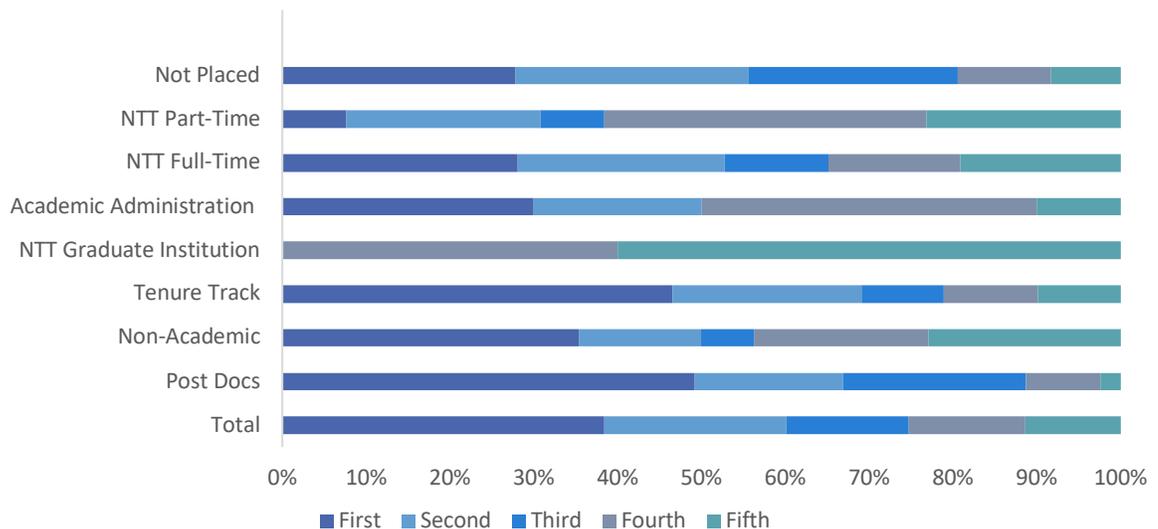
	Type of Placement		Type of Placement %	
	2018-2019	2019-2020	2018-2019	2019-2020
Academic, Tenure-Track	155	39	27.90%	25.80%
Tenure Track	155	39	27.90%	25.80%
Post Doc	124	31	22.3	20.50%
Post Doc	124	31	22.30%	20.50%
Academic, Non-tenure-track	114	30	20.60%	19.90%
Non-tenure-track, Part-Time	16	7	2.90%	4.60%
Non-tenure-track, Full-Time	92	17	16.60%	11.30%
Non-tenure-track, Graduate Institution	6	6	1.10%	4%
Admin/Non-academic	64	18	12%	12.00%
Academic Administration	11	1	2%	0.70%
Non-Academic	53	17	9.50%	11.30%
Not Placed/Unknown/NA	98	33	17.60%	21.90%
Not Placed	80	30	14.40%	19.90%
Unknown	9	1	1.60%	0.70%
NA	9	2	1.60%	1.30%

Table 1. Count and Percentage of Types of Placement Outcomes, 2018-2020

We also assessed placement types by quintile ranking of the institutions granting job market candidates their doctoral degree. Given that not all institutions are included in the NRC’s rankings, not all candidates were 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 in 2018-2019, and second quintile-ranked institutions in 2019-2020.

Nearly 50% of candidates in first quintile institution took post-doctoral positions for their first placements in 2018-2019. 18% of second quintile candidates, 22% of third quintile, 9% of fourth, and 3% 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. The data for 2019-2020 shows a decline with approximately 20% of candidates in first quintile institutions taking post-doctoral positions as first placements. 55% of second quintile candidates, 0% of third quintile, 16% of fourth, and 7% of fifth quintile candidates took post-doctoral positions.

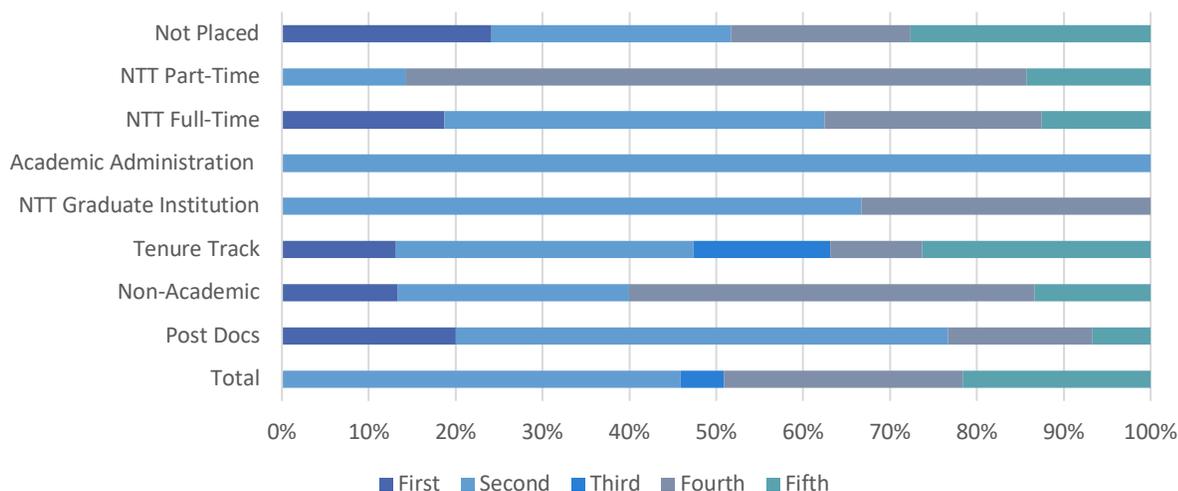
Figure 4. % of Candidates from NRC Rankings Quintiles Within Job Placement Type 2018-2019



Tenure track, non-academic, and non-tenure track (part-time, full-time, and graduate institution positions combined) follow a different trend than that observed for the post-doc category, which has maintained a downward trend, except for the second quintile in 2019-2020. 43% first, 20% of second, 9% of third, 10% of fourth, and 9% of fifth quintile candidates took first positions on the tenure track in 2018-2019. A curvilinear trend was observed in 2019-2020 where 13% of first, 33% of second, 15% of third, 10% of fourth, and 26% of fifth quintile candidates took tenure track positions.

In 2018-2019, 6.4% first quintile candidates, 12.8% third quintile candidates and 7% first quintile candidates were more likely to have taken a *post-doc* than a *tenure track* position, as well as in 21.5% second quintile and 5.7% fourth quintile in 2019-2020. On the other hand, 2.9% second quintile candidates, 1.4% fourth quintile, 6.6% fifth quintile candidates in 2018-19 and 15% third quintile and 19.5% fifth quintile candidates in 2019-20 were more likely to take a tenure-track rather than a post-doc positions.

Figure 5. % of Candidates from NRC Rankings Quintiles Within Job Placement Type 2019-2020



As stated in our previous reports, it is important to mention that the “leaky pipeline”⁵ phenomenon continues to be a part in the process of hiring post-doctoral positions. Women, minorities, and people with disabilities are less likely to be offered post-doctoral positions. Researchers acknowledge they are less likely to post open post-doctoral positions even publicly, 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), under-

⁵ 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 [this link](#). “How the Opaque Way We Hire Postdocs Contributes to Science’s Diversity Problem” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 17 June 2019, available at [this link](#).

represented minority status,⁶ academic subfields,⁷ 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,⁸ academic subfields,⁹ and years on the market (1, 2, 3, or don't know.)

Degree Status. Candidates who placed in 2018-2019 were almost 5% more likely to have a PhD (79% PhD, 21% ABD) than all candidates who were on the job market in the same academic year (75% PhD, 26% ABD). The gap grew in 2019-2020, with candidates placed being nearly 10% more likely to have a PhD (82 %PhD, 18% ABD) compared to those in the market (73% PhD, 27% ABD) Having a PhD in hand remains as important as it has been over the last decade.

Funding. We only have been collecting data on funding for the last few years. The data collected in 2018-2019 continues to show that candidates who have full funding are more likely to continue to the job market (92%), than those with even partial funding (2%) or no funding (3%). The proportions of candidates who placed had nearly identical proportions in each funding category to the proportions of the entire candidate pool in each funding category. Similar numbers were observed in 2019-2020, with 93% of those who continue to the job market having full funding, compared to those who have partial (2%) or no funding (3%).

Gender. Women and men candidates who placed in positions (37% women, 63% men) were nearly identical in proportion to candidates on the market (36% women, 63% men). During 2018-2019 women were slightly less likely (3%) to be on the job market, and men slightly more likely (3%) to be on the job market than the average number over the last 10 years. The opposite was observed in 2019-20, with women being slightly more likely (6%) to be on the job market, and men less likely (6%) to be on the job market than the average number over the last decade. Women make up 37% of APSA's membership, while men make up 63%. In comparison, there are more women placing (45%) in 2019-20 than there are in, at least, APSA's membership.

⁶ 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

⁷ Categories included: Comparative Politics, American Politics, International Relations, Methods, Political Philosophy, Public Administration, Public Law, Public Policy, Other, Don't Know, and Not Reported.

⁸ 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

⁹ Categories included: Comparative Politics, American Politics, International Relations, Methods, Political Philosophy, Public Administration, Public Law, Public Policy, Other, Don't Know, and Not Reported.

2018-2019	Candidates Placed n = 466	Candidate Pool n = 555	Pool vs. Placement	Difference 11 Yr. Average
Degree Status				
PhD	79.40%	74.50%	4.90%	2%
ABD	20.60%	25.50%	-4.90%	-1%
DK/Not Reported	0%	0.5%	--	-1%
Major Field				
American Politics	20.20%	19.50%	0.70%	-3%
Comparative Politics	38.80%	37%	1.80%	7%
International Politics	23.20%	23.90%	-0.70%	-1%
Methods	1.50%	1.50%	0.00%	1%
Political Philosophy	12%	13.70%	-1.70%	1%
Public Administration	0.40%	0.70%	-0.30%	-1%
Public Law	1.90%	1.80%	0.10%	0%
Public Policy	1.70%	1.60%	0.10%	-1%
Other	0.20%	0.40%	-0.20%	-2%
Don't Know	--	--	--	--
Not Reported	--	--	--	--
Funding Status				
Full Funding	91.40%	91.50%	-0.10%	8%
Partial Funding	2.60%	2.30%	0.30%	-6%
No Funding	2.60%	2.70%	-0.10%	-1%
Don't Know	3.40%	3.40%	0%	-1%
Gender				
Female	36.90%	36.40%	0.50%	-3%
Male	62.70%	63.20%	-0.50%	3%
Other	0.40%	0.40%	0%	0%
Not Reported	--	--	--	--
Race/Ethnicity				
African American/Black	2.90%	3%	-0.10%	0%
Native Am./AK Native	0.70%	0.70%	0%	0%
White/Euro American	64.80%	66.40%	-1.60%	6%
Hispanic/Latino/a	6.80%	6.60%	0.20%	3%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	--	--	--	--
East Asian/Asian Am.	12.50%	11.40%	1.10%	6%
South Asian/Indian Am.	1.30%	1.10%	0.20%	0%
Middle Eastern/Arab Am.	4%	4%	-0.10%	2%
Two or More Races	0.40%	0.40%	0%	0%
Other	3.30%	3%	0.30%	2%
DK/Not Reported	3.30%	3.30%	0%	-1%
Ethnicity				
Hispanic or Latino/a	9.20%	8.70%	0.50%	--
Not Hispanic or Latino/a	90.80%	91.30%	-0.50%	--
DK/Not Reported	--	--	--	--
Years on Market				
1	71.10%	70.80%	0.30%	1%
2	18.60%	19.80%	-1.20%	1%
3	6%	5.60%	0.80%	1%
DK/Not Reported	4%	3.70%	0.20%	-2%

Table 2. Characteristics of Candidate Pool and Candidates with Graduate Placements, 2018-2019

Underrepresented Minority Status. The difference between underrepresented minority status in the candidate pool and those who placed was minimal. When comparing the proportions to APSA membership, the results were mixed, especially when comparing candidates for both years. Some minorities had slightly greater proportions placing than in APSA membership for the 2018-19 candidate placements: 12.50% of placements were East Asians (7.34% of membership); 4% of placements were Middle Eastern/ Arab American (2% of membership); 7% of placements were Hispanic/ Latino/a (slightly less than 6% of membership). On the other hand, for 2019-2020 there were slightly greater proportions in APSA membership for certain groups than candidate placements, including African American/ Black candidates, Hispanic/ Latino/a candidates, and Middle Eastern/ Arab American candidates.

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 larger percentage of scholars who identified as Comparativists (7%) in 2018-2019 were on the market compared to the average from the last 11 years. For 2019-2020, a slightly larger percentage of American politics' scholars (4%) were on the market compared to the average from the last decade.

Years in Program. Candidates who placed in 2018-2019 were similar in proportion to candidates in the pool regarding the number of years they had been seeking placement on the job market (71% for one year, 19-20% for two years, 6% for 3 years, and 4% not reported). There were slight differences in the proportions of those placed in 2019-2020 and candidates in the pool (66-69% for one year, 31-28% for two years, 3% for 3 years). Compared to the 11-year average, it seems to be 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.

Whether or not a candidate receives a full funding package continues to heavily influence success in placement. Candidates' successful defense of a dissertation is also a strong determinant of placement. Demographics (gender, underrepresented minority status) also play an important role in determining pathways before and after placement in acceptance to programs or promotions. As noted in previous reports, decision-making by department heads also influences how candidates will fare on the job market.

2019-2020	Candidates Placed n = 119	Candidate Pool n = 151	Pool vs. Placement	Difference 11 Yr. Average
Degree Status				
PhD	82.40%	72.80%	9.60%	0%
ABD	17.60%	27.20%	-9.60%	1%
DK/Not Reported	0%	0.5%	--	-1%
Major Field				
American Politics	26.90%	26.50%	0.40%	4%
Comparative Politics	25.20%	27.20%	-2%	-3%
International Politics	18.50%	20.50%	-2%	-5%
Methods	--	--	--	--
Political Philosophy	12.60%	11.90%	0.70%	-1%
Public Administration	4.20%	3.30%	0.90%	2%
Public Law	4.20%	3.30%	0.90%	2%
Public Policy	3.40%	2.60%	0.80%	0%
Other	5%	4.60%	0.40%	2%
Don't Know	--	--	--	--
Not Reported	--	--	--	--
Funding Status				
Full Funding	93.30%	93.40%	-0.10%	10%
Partial Funding	2.50%	2%	0.50%	-7%
No Funding	4.20%	3.30%	0.90%	0%
Don't Know	--	1.30%	--	-3%
Gender				
Female	45.40%	45%	0.40%	6%
Male	53.80%	54.30%	-0.50%	-6%
Transgender	0.80%	0.70%	0.10%	--
Other	--	--	--	--
Not Reported	--	--	--	--
Race/Ethnicity				
African American/Black	5%	4%	1%	1%
Native American/AK Native	--	--	--	--
White/Euro American	74.80%	75.50%	-0.70%	16%
Hispanic/Latino/a	1.70%	1.30%	0.40%	-2%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	--	0.70%	--	0%
East Asian/Asian American	6.70%	7.90%	-1.20%	3%
South Asian/Indian American	2.50%	3.30%	-0.80%	2%
Middle Eastern/Arab American	4.20%	3.30%	0.90%	1%
Two or More Races	0.80%	0.70%	0.10%	0%
Other	3.40%	2.60%	0.80%	2%
DK/Not Reported	0.80%	0.70%	0.10%	-3%
Ethnicity				
Hispanic or Latino/a	3.70%	3.60%	0.10%	--
Not Hispanic or Latino/a	96.30%	96.40%	-0.10%	--
DK/Not Reported	--	--	--	--
Years on Market				
1	66.40%	68.70%	-2.30%	-1%
2	31.10%	28%	3.10%	9%
3	2.50%	3.30%	-0.80%	-1%
DK/Not Reported	--	--	--	--

Table 3. Characteristics of Candidate Pool and Candidates with Graduate Placements, 2019-2020

Characteristics by Placement Type

We concluded with several noteworthy findings after disaggregating candidates' characteristics by placement type.

Characteristics	Graduate Placement Types							
	Overall n=555	Post Doc n=124	TT n=155	NTT, FT n=92	NTT, PT n=16	Non- Academic n=53	Academic Administration n=11	Not Placed n=80
Gender								
Female	36.4%	37.1%	43.2%	29.3%	43.8%	30.2%	27.3%	32.5%
Male	63.2%	62.1%	56.1%	70.7%	56.2%	69.8%	72.7%	67.5%
Other	0.4%	0.8%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Race/Ethnicity								
URM	10.8%	17.7%	19.4%	25.0%	6.2%	20.8%	9.1%	15.0%
Non-URM	86.3%	73.4%	76.8%	70.7%	81.8%	75.5%	90.9%	81.2%
Race								
African American/Black	3.0%	3.2%	2.6%	2.2%	0.0%	3.8%	9.1%	3.8%
East Asian/Asian American	11.4%	15.3%	14.2%	8.7%	12.5%	9.4%	0.0%	6.2%
Hispanic/Latino/a	6.6%	6.5%	7.1%	8.7%	6.2%	5.7%	0.0%	5.0%
Middle Eastern/Arab American	4.1%	2.4%	5.8%	5.4%	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	3.8%
Native American/AK Native	0.7%	0.0%	0.6%	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Other	3.0%	3.2%	2.6%	4.3%	0.0%	5.7%	0.0%	1.2%
South Asian/Indian American	1.10%	1.6%	0.6%	1.1%	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Two or More Races	0.40%	0.8%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
White/Euro American	66.4%	58.1%	62.2%	62.0%	68.8%	66.0%	90.9%	75.0%
Ethnicity								
Hispanic/Latino/a	8.70%	9.7%	9%	7.6%	6.2%	7.5%	0.0%	3.8%
Not Hispanic/Latino/a	91.3%	79.0%	80.6%	79.3%	81.2%	75.5%	100%	83.8%

*Totals may not add up to 100% as the table does not include missing values

Table 4. % of Candidates' with Characteristics Within Job Placement Type, 2018-2019

For both 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 women and minorities were more likely than their overall average to be placed in tenure-track positions. Women made up 36% of the placed candidates, and 43% of the tenure track placements in 2018-2019, and 45% of the placed candidates in 2019-2020, compared to 59% of the tenure track placements. URM's made up 11% of placed candidates overall and 19% of tenure track in 2018-2019, compared to 16% of placed candidates overall in 2019-2020, and 26% tenure track placements. The East Asian/ Asian American, Middle Eastern/Arab American, and Hispanic/ Latino/a categories minority groups accounted for the increase in tenure track positions in 2018-2019 and in 2019-2020, except for Hispanic/Latino/a in the latter year.

Characteristics	Graduate Placement Types							
	Overall n=151	Post Doc n=31	TT n=39	NTT, FT n=17	NTT, PT n =7	Non- Academic n=17	Academic Administration n=1	Not Placed n=30
Gender								
Female	45.0%	32.3%	59.0%	41.2%	42.9%	41.2%	100%	43.3%
Male	54.3%	64.5%	41.0%	58.8%	57.1%	58.8%	0.0%	57.1%
Transgender	0.7%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Race/Ethnicity								
URM	15.9%	16.1%	25.6%	11.8%	14.3%	5.9%	0.0%	6.7%
Non-URM	83.4%	83.9%	74.4%	82.4%	85.7%	94.1%	100%	93.3%
Race								
African American/Black	4.0%	0.0%	7.7%	0.0%	14.3%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%
East Asian/Asian Am.	7.9%	0.0%	17.9%	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	0.0%	13.3%
Hispanic/Latino/a	1.3%	3.2%	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Middle Eastern/Arab Am.	3.3%	0.0%	7.7%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Native Am./AK Native	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%
Other	2.6%	3.2%	5.1%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
South Asian/Indian Am.	3.3%	6.5%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%
Two or More Races	0.7%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
White/Euro American	75.5%	83.9%	56.4%	82.4%	85.7%	88.2%	100%	80.0%
Ethnicity								
Hispanic/Latino/a	3.6%	6.5%	5.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%
Not Hispanic/Latino/a	96.4%	87.1%	89.7%	94.1%	85.7%	94.1%	0.0%	93.3%

*Totals may not add up to 100% as the table does not include missing values

Table 5. % of Candidates' with Characteristics Within Job Placement Type, 2019-2020

On the other hand, non-URMs (86.3% of placed candidates overall) and men (63.2% of placed candidates overall) were more likely to be placed in post-docs (62.1% men, 73.4% non-URMs) or non-tenure-track, full-time (70.7% men and non-URMs) and part-time positions (56.2% men, 81.2% non-URMs) in 2018-2019. Men and non-URMs had similar proportions in these categories in 2019-2020. Contrary to the previous academic year; however, 3.2% of African American students placed into a post-doc position for the 2018-2019 academic year. This group's highest placements continue to be 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 = 555 in 2018-2019 and n=151 in 2019-2020) to the subfields of the candidates who placed (n=466 in 2018-2019 and n=119 in 2019-2020) we observe similar proportions for both academic years.

Graduate Placement Data by Subfield			
Subfield	% Who Placed In Academics	% of Candidate Pool on the Market	Diff. from 11 Yr. Average
<i>American Politics</i>	20.20%	19.50%	-3.0%
<i>Comparative Politics</i>	38.80%	37.00%	7.0%
<i>International Politics</i>	23.20%	23.90%	-1.0%
<i>Methods</i>	1.50%	1.50%	1.0 %
<i>Political Philosophy</i>	12%	13.70%	1.0 %
<i>Public Administration</i>	0.40%	0.70%	-1.0%
<i>Public Law</i>	1.90%	1.80%	0.0%
<i>Public Policy</i>	1.70%	1.60%	-1.0%
<i>Other</i>	0.20%	0.40%	-2.0%
<i>Don't Know</i>	--	--	
<i>Not Reported</i>	--	--	

Table 6. Candidates on the Job Market by Subfield and Average Change, 2018-2019

Graduate Placement Data by Subfield			
Subfield	% Who Placed In Academics	% of Candidate Pool on the Market	Diff. from 11 Yr. Average
<i>American Politics</i>	26.90%	26.50%	4.0%
<i>Comparative Politics</i>	25.20%	27.20%	-3.0%
<i>International Politics</i>	18.50%	20.50%	-5.0%
<i>Methods</i>	--	--	--
<i>Political Philosophy</i>	12.60%	11.90%	-1.0 %
<i>Public Administration</i>	4.20%	3.30%	2.0%
<i>Public Law</i>	4.20%	3.30%	2.0%
<i>Public Policy</i>	3.40%	2.60%	0.0%
<i>Other</i>	5.0%	4.60%	2.0%
<i>Don't Know</i>	--	--	
<i>Not Reported</i>	--	--	

Table 7. Candidates on the Job Market by Subfield and Average Change, 2019-2020

Comparing the placement data and the job advertisement data shows us 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, than positions designated for other subfields.

eJobs Job Advertisement Data by Subfield and Tenure Status			
Subfield	Jr Faculty Positions	% Tenure Track, Jr Faculty Positions	% Non-Tenure Track, Jr Faculty Positions
Comparative Politics	14.5%	16.1%	12.2%
American Politics	25.2%	22.5%	29%
International Relations	20.3%	20.7%	19.7%
Political Theory	7.2%	5.2%	10.1%
Public Policy	7.4%	7%	8%
Public Law	3.1	4.2%	1.4%
Public Administration	4.4%	6.7%	1.1%
Methods	3.8%	4.1%	3.5%
Other	14.1%	13.5%	15%
Not Reported	--	--	--
Don't Know	--	--	--

*Junior Faculty Tenure Track includes Academic Positions: All, Assistant Professor, and Assistant/ Associate Professor; Multiple Ranks, and Open. Junior Faculty Non-Tenure Track includes Academic Positions: Instructor, Lecturer, Other, and Visiting Professor; Fellowships/Post-docs: Pre-doctoral, Post-doctoral, Other, and All; and Other. Not included: Academic Positions: Associate and Full Professors.

Table 8. eJobs Junior Faculty Job Advertisements by Subfield and Tenure Status, 2018-2019

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 continues to 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.

More specifically, Americanists make up 20% of the candidate pool in 2018-2019 and 27% in 2019-2020 and are competing for 22% of the junior faculty positions on the market in 2018-2019, and 25% in 2019-2020. 22% of the jobs they are competing for are on the tenure track. International Relations scholars compose 23% of the candidate pool in 2018-2019 and 21 % in 2019-2020, are competing for around 20% of the junior faculty positions on the market in both 2018 and 2019. 21% of these positions they are trying to place in are tenure-track in 2018-2019 and 18% in 2019-2020.

On the other hand, Comparativists make up 37% of the candidate pool in 2018-2019 and nearly 28% in 2019-2020 and are competing for half that number, or 15%, of the positions on the market, of which only around 16% 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.

eJobs Job Advertisement Data by Subfield and Tenure Status			
Subfield	Jr Faculty Positions	% Tenure Track, Jr Faculty Positions	% Non-Tenure Track, Jr Faculty Positions
Comparative Politics	14.4%	16.8%	10.4%
American Politics	22.7%	22.4%	23.3%
International Relations	19.9%	17.9%	23.3%
Political Theory	8.1%	6.2%	11.4%
Public Policy	11.1%	10.9%	11.4%
Public Law	2.8%	4.4%	--
Public Administration	3.3%	4.4%	1.5%
Methods	4.6%	4.7%	4.5%
Other	11.9%	12.4%	14.4%
Not Reported	--	--	--
Don't Know	--	--	--

*Junior Faculty Tenure Track includes Academic Positions: All, Assistant Professor, and Assistant/ Associate Professor; Multiple Ranks, and Open. Junior Faculty Non-Tenure Track includes Academic Positions: Instructor, Lecturer, Other, and Visiting Professor; Fellowships/Post-docs: Pre-doctoral, Post-doctoral, Other, and All; and Other. Not included: Academic Positions: Associate and Full Professors.

Table 9. eJobs Junior Faculty Job Advertisements by Subfield and Tenure Status, 2019-2020

Other remarkable features of analyzing subfields are the open positions in the “Other” category composing between 11% and 13% of the open market positions. American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Other, continue to be the main subfields providing most of the positions advertised, except for Public Policy which provided around 11% of the positions in 2019-2020.

The Political Science Job Market in 2018-2020: Conclusions

The Graduate Placement Survey continues to play an important role in understanding characteristics of candidates on the job market. 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.

We anticipate that adding the uncertainty of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the stability of openings, offers, and acceptances to these factors produces a difficult job market for the next few years.

As with the previous year, we have found that while tenure-track positions continue to be highly sought after, candidates also choose non-tenure track positions as first placements. Of those placements, the number of post- doctoral positions is still high, while tenure-track positions continue a steady decline. Less than a third of candidates placed tenure track in 2019-2020, compared to 2018-2019.

As noted in our New Hire Salaries Report(s), 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 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.