

A decorative background consisting of a grid of colored squares. The top row has a blue square on the left and a green square on the right. The middle row has a blue square on the left and a grey rectangle on the right containing the title. The bottom row has a grey square on the left and two blue squares on the right. The bottom-most row has a green square on the left and the APSA logo on the right.

2020-2021 APSA eJobs Report:

Political Science and the Job Market



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About the Report

The beginning of August 2020 marked the start of hybrid and in-person learning for many colleges and universities throughout the US. During this time, APSA launched APSA Educate, an online portal for teaching and learning resources, as part of a solution to help members with this transition to virtual teaching and learning. 99% of political science or government departments overall reported moving classes exclusively online in Spring 2020 in the 2019-2020 APSA Departmental Survey, with exceptions from departments of social science or “other” department types, where just 5-6% had a hybrid or other arrangement.

We have noted that while positions for the three major fields – Comparative Politics, American Government and Politics, International Relations- continue to decline, the proportion of “Other” and “Open” positions advertised has increased, and now make up 21% of all positions.

The total number of job advertisements during August 2020 and July 2021 was lower than the previous year. As it was observed in the previous report, the 2020-2021 *eJobs* Report shows that job postings have declined across the country, with the sharpest downturns in April and May. Nonetheless, the analysis shows an increase of job postings during the months of June and July which could mark the beginning of an upward trend.

For 2020-2021 most (48.2%) job postings were Non-Tenure Track positions, which has been a prevalent theme in APSA reports showing that: more and more, new graduates with doctoral degrees in political science are prudent to consider pursuing alternative careers to academics due to a decreasing proportion of political science PhDs being placed immediately in tenure-track academic positions.

We encourage you to read the report carefully, and we welcome your questions, suggestions, or ideas. Please contact us with any specific questions about the findings at surveys@apsanet.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

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Key Findings for the 2019-2020 Academic Year

Volume and Timing of Position Openings in Political Science

For the 2020-2021 academic year, 952 job advertisements were posted on APSA's *eJobs* site. There has been a consistent downward trend since the COVID-19 pandemic started, with 967 job advertisements seen in 2019-2020, compared to 1184 the year before.

When analyzed by month, unlike the previous 2019-2020 academic year which showed a continuous decrease in postings, the 2020-2021 academic year showed a more upward trend, with the greatest decrease occurring in May 2021 (-50%). Nonetheless, when compared to the 2018-2019 academic year, it continues to be evident that job postings overall have decreased across the country.

Geography of Political Science Positions

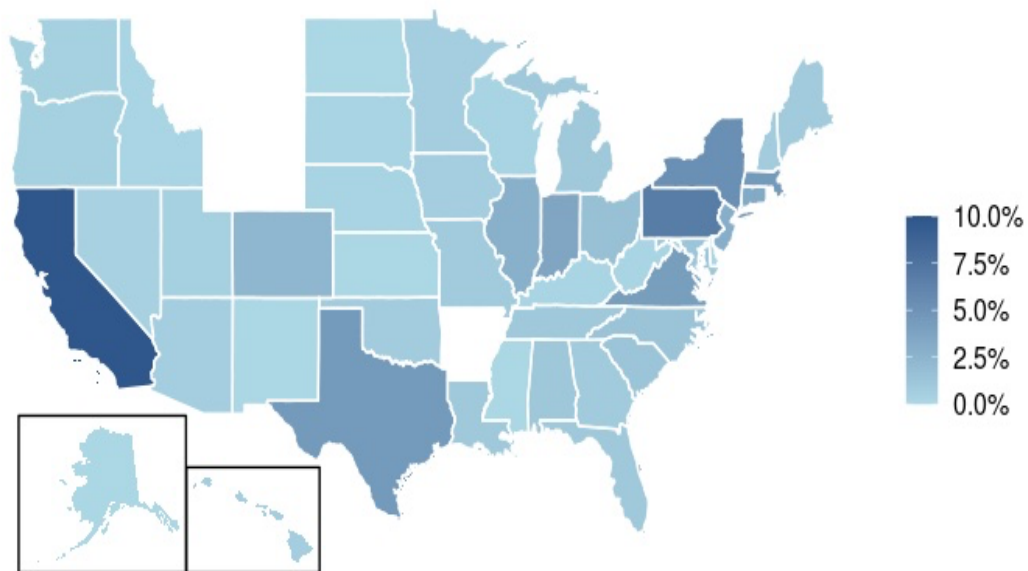


Figure 1. *eJobs* Postings by State 2020-2021

As seen in Figure 1 above, colleges and universities in California, New York, Massachusetts, Texas, Virginia, and Pennsylvania supplied the highest number of

job postings. Together, postings in these states comprised 44.6% of all postings, an increase of about 3% from 2019-2020. The most advertisements for jobs in the US continue to be for positions in the Northeast (37.9%), followed by the West (17.8%), the Midwest (16.9%), and the Southeast (13.1%).

Compared to the previous academic year, postings for international jobs outside of the US made up 20.8% of all postings from August 2020 to July 2021. This proportion is 3.5% higher than in 2019-2020, and 5% higher than in 2018-2019, indicating an increase in the proportion of international job postings throughout the past three academic years. Half of the international postings were in Europe (50%), followed by Asia (22.1%) and Canada (13%).

Job Postings by Political Science Subfield

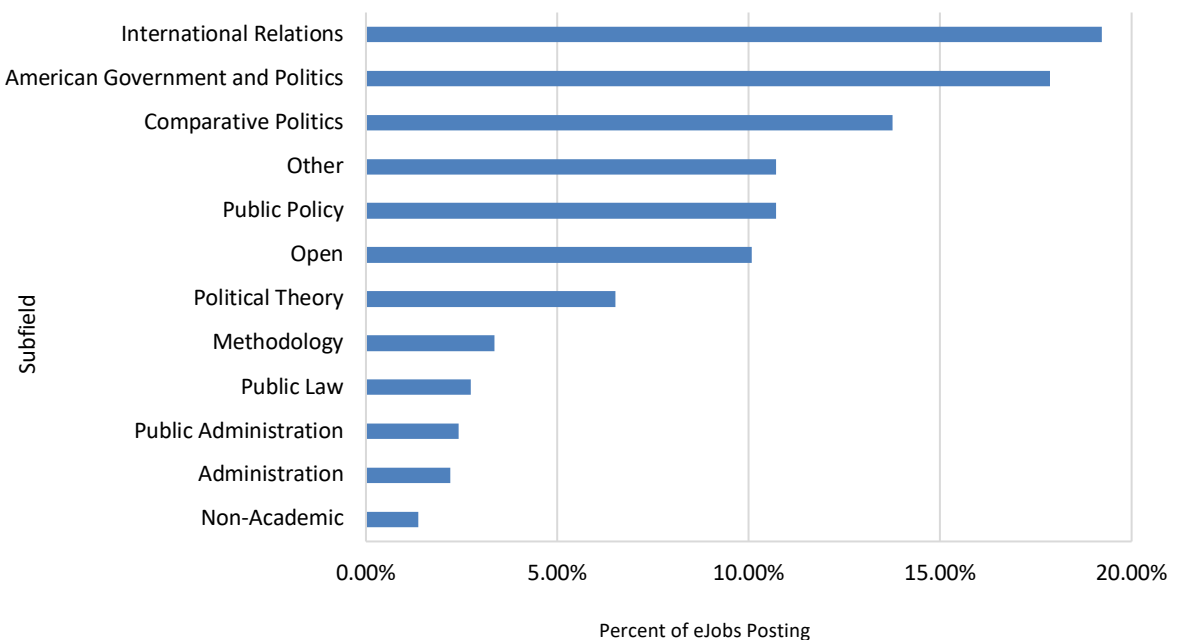


Figure 2. Job Postings per Subfield 2020-2021

The subfield category with the highest number of postings was International Relations (see Figure 2 above), which offered 19.22 % of jobs. American Government and Politics had the next highest proportion of postings, with 17.86%. followed by Comparative Politics at 13.7 %. The “Other” category—one often used for specific research areas like those defined in post-doctoral positions— as well as Public Policy and “Open” supplied around 32% of positions advertised.

As it was seen in previous years, the subfields of Methodology, Public Law, Public Administration, Administration, and the category Non-Academic each offered less than 4% of job postings. Political Theory supplied around 7% of the positions advertised.

While the categories International Relations, American Government and Politics, Comparative Politics, and “Other” continue to supply most of the postings, there has been a drop in their share of the job market when compared to previous years. This proportion has dropped from 72.13% in 2018-2019, to 63.81% in 2019-2020, and to 61.48% for this academic year. This difference could be attributed to the hiring postponements or hiring freezes seen throughout the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years.

What eJobs Tells Us About the 2020-2021 Job Market

1. The number of positions posted within the last two years, during the pandemic (2019-2020 and 2020-2021), has significantly declined.

A total of 952 job advertisements were posted on APSA’s *eJobs* site for the 2020-2021 academic year (Figure 3 below). Compared to 2018-2019 (pre-COVID), this marks a significant drop in job postings, however, it is consistent with the overall downward trend observed in 2019-2020.

Overall, a downward trend has been observed within the last two years, which may be attributable to the economic recession and hiring freezes brought forward by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, the last two months (June and July) for which information was gathered for this report showed an upward trend. We do not know whether the changes observed this year will be permanent, or just an after-effect of the pandemic.

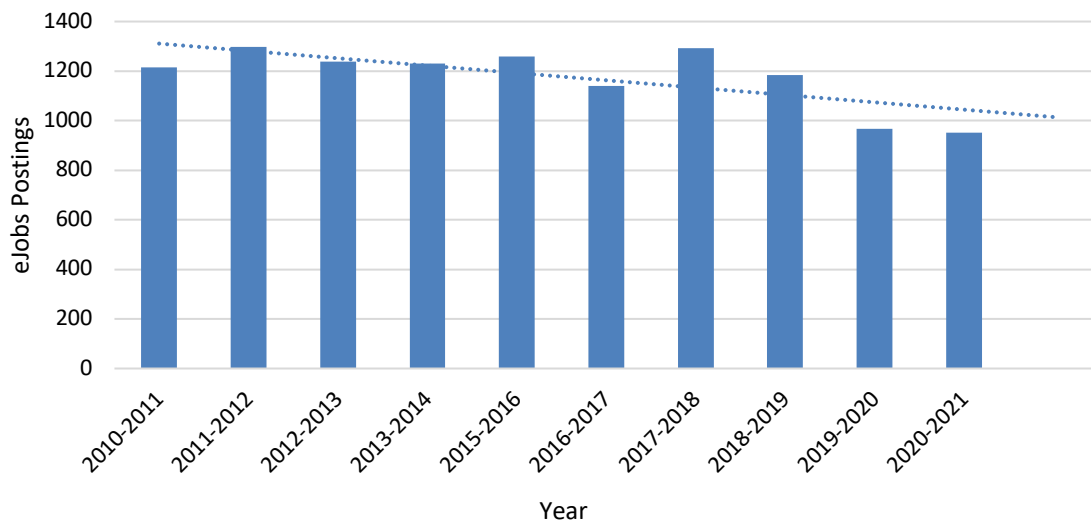


Figure 3. Yearly Total *eJobs* Postings, 2010-2011 to 2020-2021

2. Monthly Analysis. Compared to the previous year, a more positive trend was reflected through a month-to-month analysis.

As seen in Figures 4 and 5 below, except for November, January, April, and May, which are generally considered to be non-peak months for the job market, there was an increase in the monthly positions posted in 2020-2021 when compared to 2019-2020.

A similar trend to the previous year was observed in the 2020-2021 academic year, with a 50% drop in the number of job postings for the month of April. However, more jobs were posted in June and July, which reflects a positive, upward, trend as the job market reopens.

While there was a drop in job postings towards the end of Spring, this could be attributed to the uncertainty that reemerged in the U.S. with the appearance of the Delta variant in the U.S. Moreover, there were more job postings during June and July of 2021, with job posting numbers increasing by 70% in June. Given that the job market opens in late July, it is possible that an upward trend continues onto the next year.

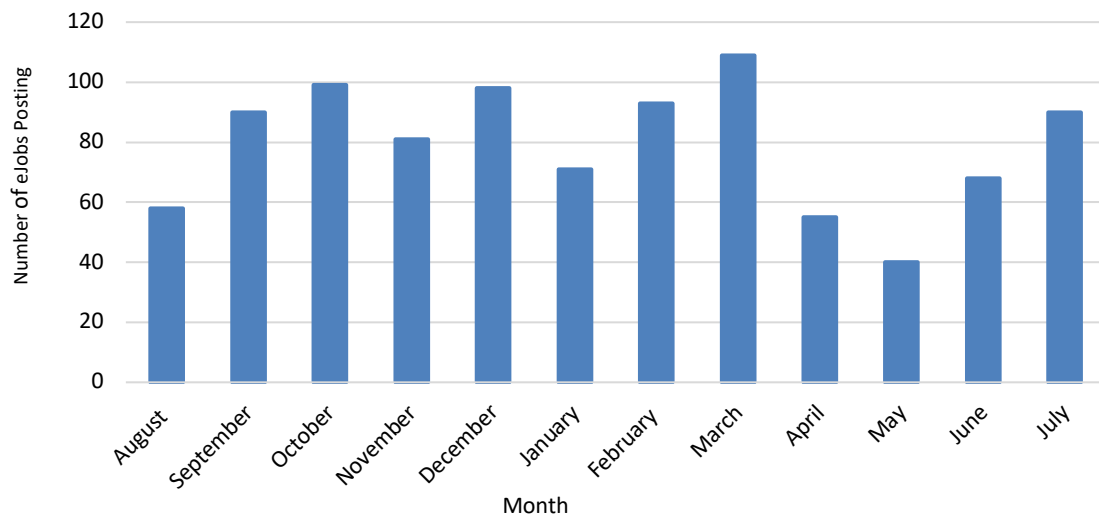


Figure 4. Total *eJobs* Postings by Month for 2020-2021

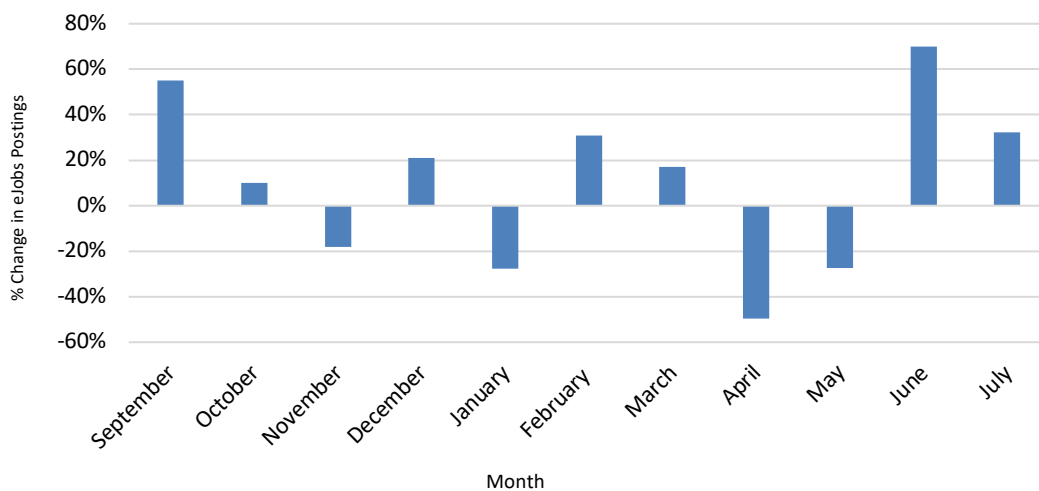


Figure 5. Monthly % Change in *eJobs* Postings 2020-2021

3. **By Subfield.** The 2020-2021 academic year followed the same trend as previously observed in 2019-2020, with three of four largest subfield categories decreasing in proportions of the market, while subfields/ categories with a smaller proportion of job postings increased in the number of positions they advertised.

Like the previous academic year, some subfields were more affected by the drop in job postings during the months of April and May. The greatest decline in postings occurred in April for positions in International Relations, which dropped 13.9% compared to the previous month.

In 2020-2021, as well as in both 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, four subfield categories—American Government and Politics, International Relations, Comparative Politics, and “Other”—continued to supply the majority positions advertised. Nonetheless, similarly to the prior year, these four categories’ combined share of the job market decreased. There was an increase in positions advertised as “Open,” which went from 0.8% in 2018, 7.45% in 2019, to 10% in 2020.

4. **By Rank/ Duration.** Junior Non-Tenure Track positions made up the majority (48.2%) of the positions advertised for the 2020-2021 academic year.

For example, during April, job advertisements dropped by 7.5%, including for tenure-track assistant professors (by 9%), and for (senior) lecturers (by 11%). The only academic positions that showed a notable increase in postings were those for instructors (by 9%) and visiting professors (by 13.5%).

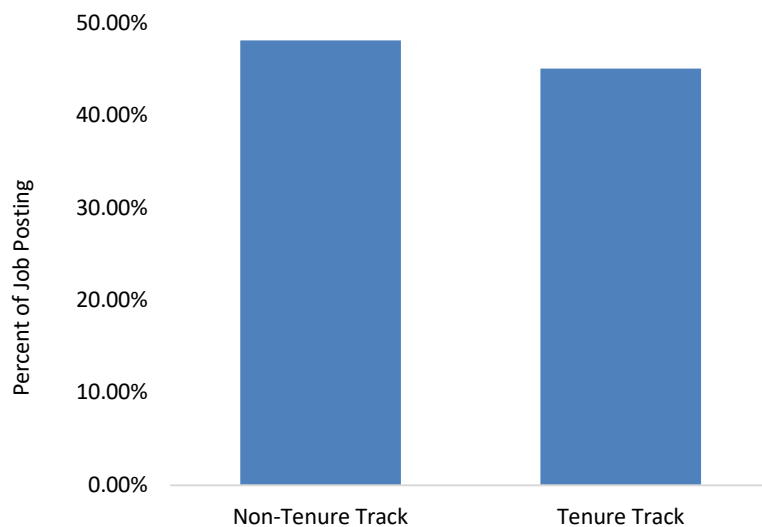


Figure 6. Junior Faculty Positions Advertised by TT/ NTT

In 2020-2021, Junior Non-Tenure Track (NTT) positions made up 48.2% of *eJobs* postings compared to 30.8% on the previous academic year., as shown in Figure 6. Junior Tenure-Track positions decreased by 11%, which could still be an impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the hiring freezes that took place throughout the country. Overall, as shown in our 2019-2020 [Graduate Placement Report](#), there are more academic graduates than academic positions, meaning non-academic (and therefore NTT) positions will continue to increase.

5. **By Geography.** While US positions advertised continued a steady decrease, international job postings increased compared to the previous academic year.

Finally, as shown in Figure 7 below, when analyzed by country, the proportion of international postings has increased to about 20%, with half of all those job postings located in Europe.

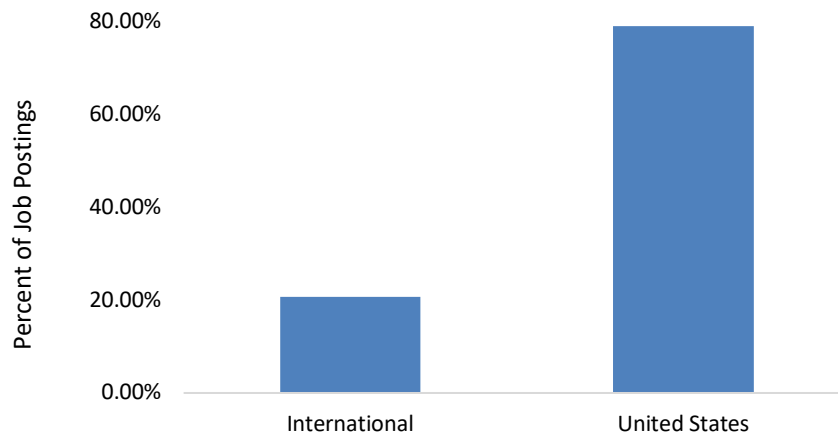


Figure 7. *eJobs* Posting U.S vs International

Geographically, the decrease in job postings in April and May – the monthly trend mentioned above – was seen in half of US regions. The largest declines occurred in the North, Northwest, and Southwest. However, it is also important to note that in some cases we are looking at quite small populations. During this period, the West, Northeast, and South saw growth compared to the other regions.