A decorative grid of colored squares surrounds the central text. The grid includes blue squares with abstract patterns, solid green squares, and solid grey squares.

2021-2022

APSA eJobs Report:
the political science job market



American Political Science Association
1527 New Hampshire Ave NW
Washington, DC 20036-1206
(p) (202) 483-2512 • (f) +1 (202) 483-2657



About the Report

During the 2021-2022 academic year in the US, employment predictions across sectors and time periods were difficult to make. After the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, different sectors began recovering at different times, and did so at different rates. The large number of people who left during or did not return to the workforce after the pandemic created a general labor shortage in the US economy, turning favor toward jobseekers.¹

In addition, the higher education sector lost nearly 700,000 jobs from February 2020 to February 2021, making it one of the hardest hit sectors.² Although employment began growing in the sector from 2021-2022, only about half of lost positions have been recovered.³ For those seeking positions in higher education, advantages stemming from a labor shortage would be neutralized by a surplus of new PhDs, who faced a pre-pandemic job market of two graduates to every tenure-track academic job in non-pandemic times of economic growth. Although we saw growth in 2021-2022, higher education had not yet recovered from employment contraction that occurred in 2019-2020.

In International Relations, American Government and Politics, and Comparative Politics, the subfields composing the largest proportion of jobs advertised, the number of positions continued to decline in number, and in their proportion of the market. The proportion of “Other” and “Open” positions advertised increased, making up over 20% of the job market. From June 2021 to July 2022, 947 job postings were advertised on APSA eJobs, 237 fewer than those advertised pre-pandemic (2018-2019), and 210 fewer positions than the 11-year average. For the last three years, we observe a push for a job market earlier in the year, with an increase in jobs posted in June and July.

In 2021-2022, more than half of job postings were non-tenure track positions (53.12%). As in other STEM fields, it is prudent for recent graduates with doctoral degrees in political science to broaden their transferable skills and widen their career outlooks beyond academic jobs. A decreasing proportion of political science PhDs are placed in academic positions simply because there are not enough academic positions for PhDs earned.

We welcome your questions, suggestions, or ideas [here](#).

Ana Diaz and Erin C. McGrath, Ph.D.
American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C.

¹ Casey, Rose. “The Pandemic’s Sexist Consequences: Academe’s Stark Gender Disparities Exacerbated by COVID-19.” March 2021. Accessed 27 April 2023. Available at: https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-pandemics-sexist-consequences?cid2=gen_login_refresh&cid=gen_sign_in.

² Bauman, Dan. “A Brutal Tally: Higher Ed Lost 650,000 Jobs Last Year.” 5 February 2021. Accessed 27 April 2023. Available at: https://www.chronicle.com/article/a-brutal-tally-higher-ed-lost-650-000-jobs-last-year?emailConfirmed=true&supportSignUp=true&supportForgotPassword=true&email=emcgrath%40apsanet.org&success=true&code=success&bc_nonce=rwjrvldqm4ozgco4kdv2hp&cid=gen_sign_in.

³ Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages: Employment and Wages Data Viewer.” Accessed 27 April 2023. Available at: https://data.bls.gov/cew/apps/data_views/data_views.htm#tab=Tables.

I. Volume/ Timing of Positions Posted

In 2021-2022 there has not been a significant correction in the number of job postings for political science positions compared to pre-pandemic job market levels. Overall, the number of postings has declined slightly, a trend carrying across months and subfields, since 2018-2019. This trend also carries across geographic locations and across position ranks.

A Contracted, but Recovering, Job Market. A total of 947 job advertisements were posted on APSA's eJobs site for the 2021-2022 academic year, consistent with the contraction of jobs that occurred in the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴ The higher education sector is recovering slowly. Compared to 2018-2019 (pre-COVID), in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 we observed a slight downward trend in the number of positions. continuing the level of jobs and job postings that has been observed since the 2019-2020 academic year (967 in 2019-2020, 952 in 2020-2021). Despite the decrease in advertisements, other sources indicate employment in the higher sector is recovering.⁵

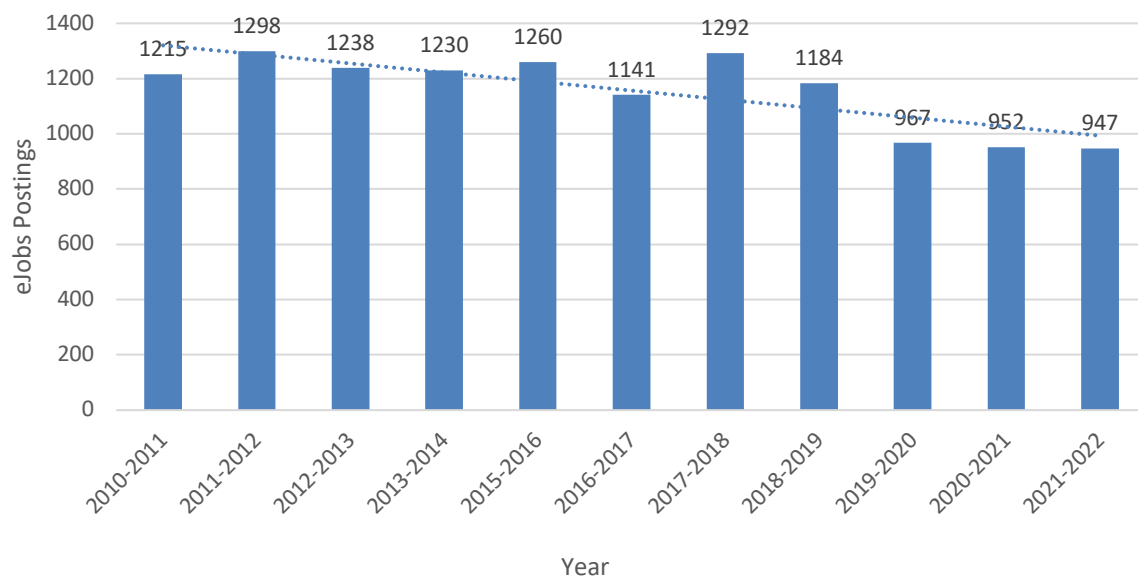


Figure 1. Total eJobs Postings 2010-2022

A Less Active Job Market in the Spring. In addition, when looking at the rate of change from month to month, we see an increase in advertisements during June and July, after the drop observed through April and May, like the 2020-2021 academic year. Job

⁴ US Federal Reserve of St. Louis, "How Severe Was the Contraction in U.S. Employment?" Accessed 3 May 2023. Available at: <https://www.stlouisfed.org/annual-report/2020/how-severe-was-the-contraction-in-us-employment>.

⁵ *Ibid.* Bureau of Labor Statistics.

postings dropped by nearly half during the month of April, like the 50% drop in 2020-2021. The greatest decrease in job postings for the 2021-2022 academic year occurred in April (-48%). Typically, a second-round, smaller job market (of visiting assistant professor, post-doc, and other contingent positions, see Figure 4) will take place in late winter/ spring for those who had not yet placed. Although this decrease in spring postings may point to more matches occurring earlier in the year, or to failed searches that would be renewed the following academic year when new candidates are available, in combination with a decrease in overall job postings it seems more likely that higher education institutions are also decreasing the number of contingent positions offered to reduce expenses in the uncertainty of the US economy.

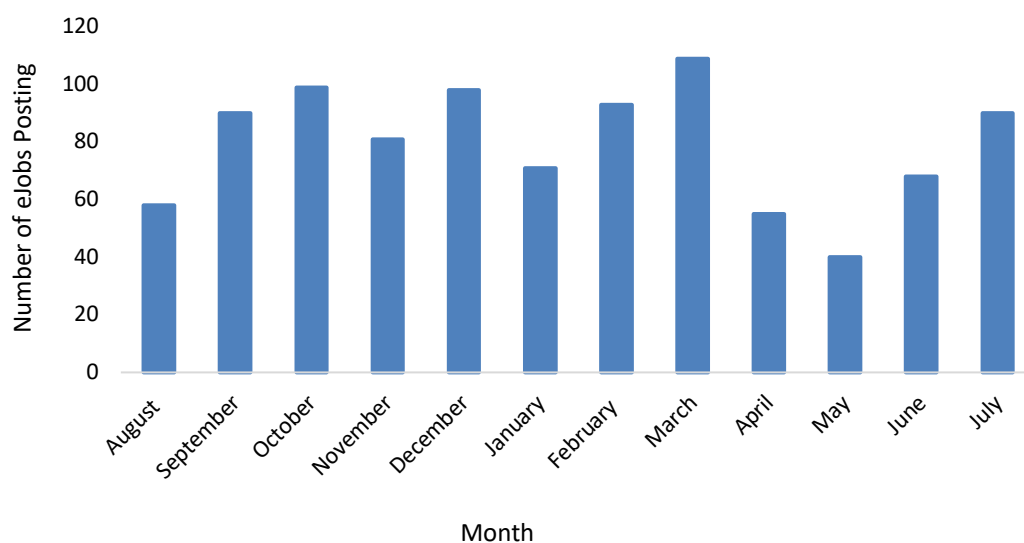


Figure 2. Total eJobs Postings by Month, 2021-2022

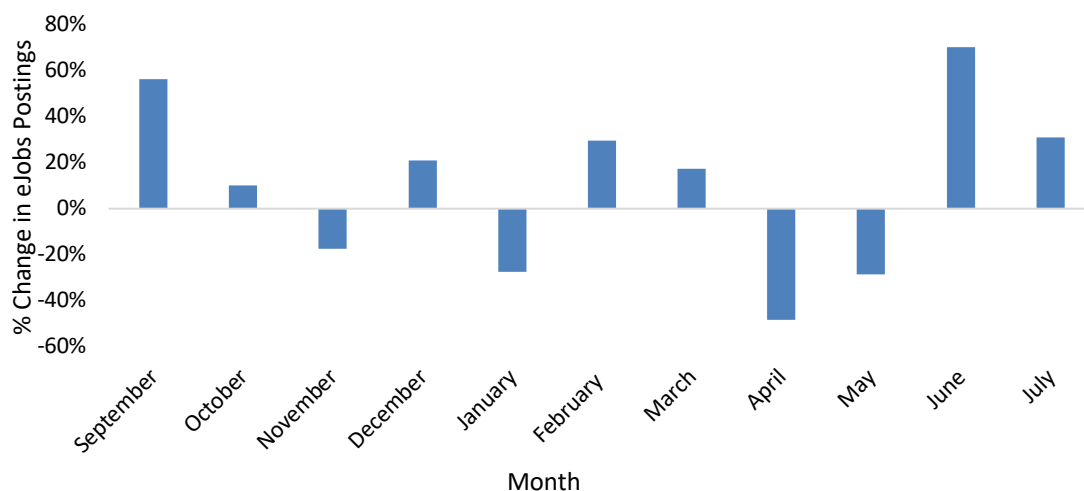


Figure 3. Monthly Change in eJobs Postings 2021-2022

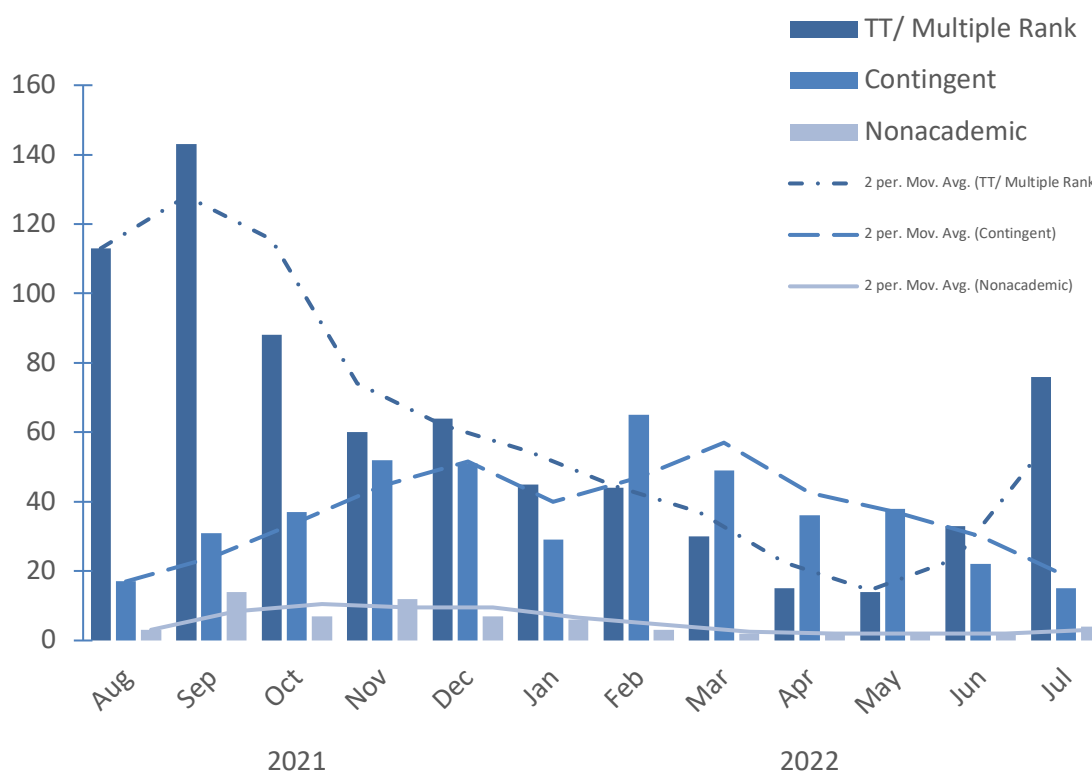


Figure 4. Number and Type of Positions Advertised by Month, 2021-2022

II. Geography of Positions Posted

In 2021-2022, job postings decreased in nearly every US region. The largest decline observed within the U.S. occurred in the Northeast and the Midwest. Along with the Western region, these regions also contain the most jobs.⁶

More Opportunities Abroad in a More Global Job Market. In contrast to domestic positions in the US, advertisements for international positions have increased in the past four years, now composing nearly a quarter (21.75%) of the job market. The proportion of international to domestic jobs has grown over 10% since 2018-2019 (10.5%). This proportion is 4.5% higher than in 2019-2020, and 6% higher than in 2018-2019. Most international postings were in Europe (10.98%), followed by Asia (4.75%) and Canada (2.75%).

⁶ It is important to note that in some cases we are looking at small populations or areas that frequently have small numbers of advertisements.

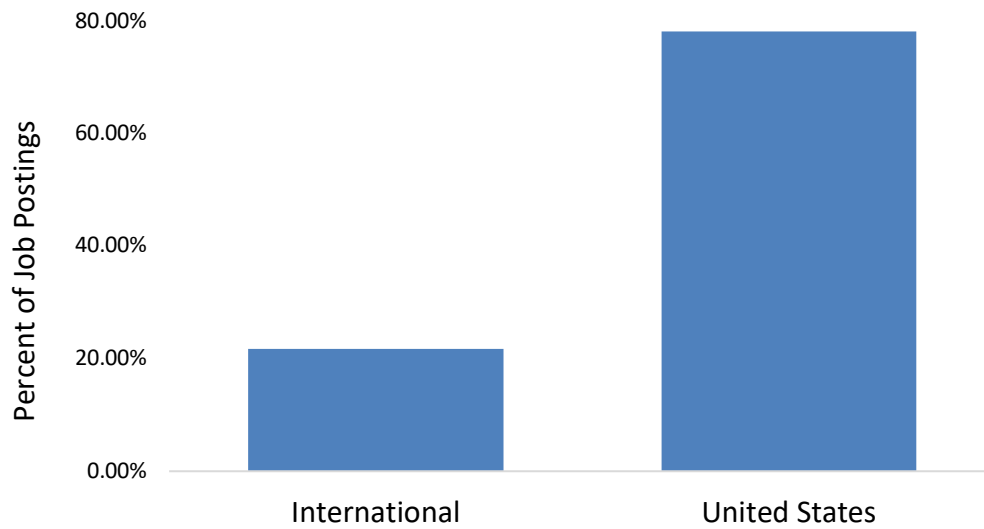


Figure 5. U.S vs International eJobs Advertisement Postings

The Northeast Region Dominates Job Advertisements. Colleges and universities in the Northeast continue to contribute the highest percentage of job postings (23.8%) to the political science job market, followed by the West (11.19%), the Midwest (10.56%), and the Southeast (8.13%).

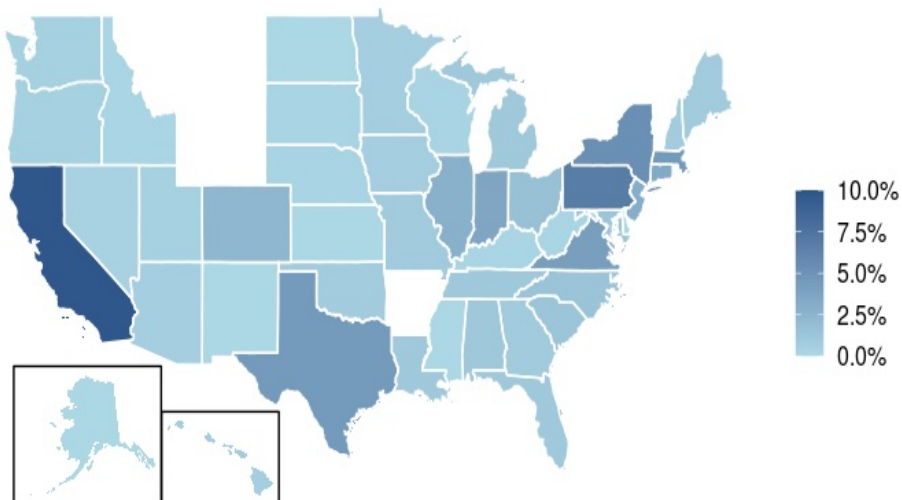


Figure 6. eJobs Advertisements Postings by State 2021-2022

III. Subfields of Positions Posted

The increased breadth and diversity of the subfields designated in job postings may indicate that employers are trying to capture more candidates' attention with broader job descriptions in a tighter labor market. However, this may result in confusion or inefficiencies such as failed and repeated years-long searches due to employers' greater ability to wait for the right candidate than for candidates' ability to wait for the perfect position.

IR Scholars, Americanists, and Comparativists Still Lead, But Less Decisively. International Relations, American Government and Politics, and Comparative Politics, subfields continue to dominate the job postings in political science, maintaining their share of the job market from 2020-21. This proportion dropped from 72.13% in 2018-2019, to around 61% for the last two academic years. This may be due to the contraction of jobs in higher education that has yet to be rectified since the hiring freezes (2019-2020) and then reduction in expenses (2020-2021) seen throughout the last three academic years. International Relations was the subfield with the highest percentage of postings (19.22%). American Government and Politics had the next highest proportion of postings (18.06%) followed by Comparative Politics at (13.8%).

Employers May Broaden Searches to Attract Candidates. 21% of the jobs advertised were for the "Other" subfield category—one often used for specific research areas like those defined in post-doctoral positions— or for the "Open" subfield category. Job advertisements for positions categorized as "Open" and "Other" continue to increase. There were a smaller number of academic positions available on the market, and given the "Great Resignation", there were less candidates than usual to make those placements, therefore employers could have attempted to attract candidates' attention by broadening the parameters of their searches in rank or in subfield specialties. As with previous years, the subfields of Methodology, Public Law, and Public Administration were smaller, each obtained less than 4% of job postings. Around 6% of the positions advertised were for Political Theorists. Subfields with generally fewer job postings increased their percentages of job advertisements (e.g. Political Theory, Public Administration, Public Law). A broader, more diverse job market is indicated by less dominant prevailing subfields and more equitable positions in traditionally smaller subfields.

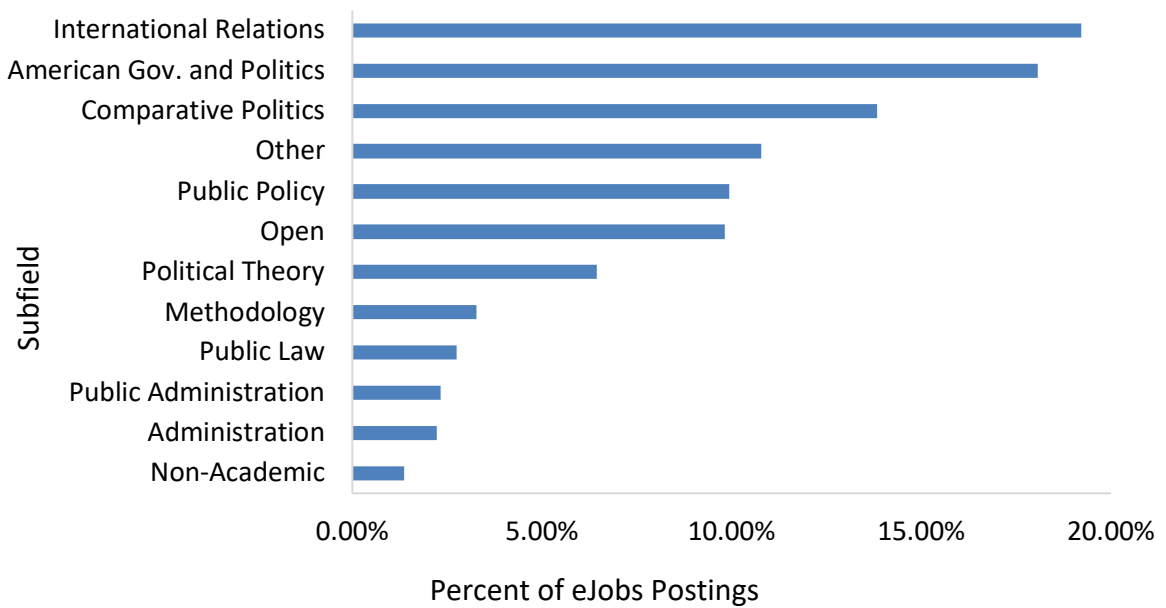


Figure.7 Job Postings per Subfield 2021-2022

IV. Ranks and Durations of Positions Posted

Junior Non-Tenure Track positions continue to make up most of the positions advertised. In 2021-2022, junior non-tenure track (NTT) positions made up 53.12% of eJobs postings compared to 48.2% in the previous academic year.

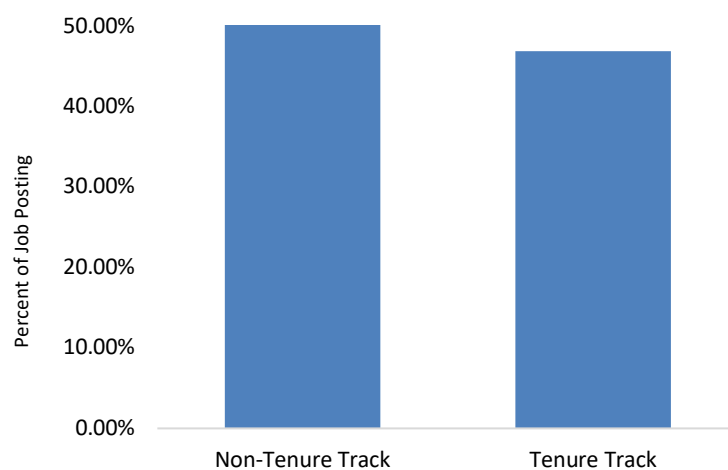


Figure 8. Junior Faculty Positions

As stated earlier, most of the positions advertised for Junior faculty were in International Relations, followed by American Government and Politics. While most domestic positions were non-tenure track, most of the positions advertised outside of the US were tenure-track positions, perhaps to draw candidates abroad.

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, the political science job market has not completely recovered from the job losses it sustained over the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. Job advertisements on APSA's eJobs platform continue to decline slightly each year, despite other indications that the higher education sector is recovering from its contraction during the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, over the last three years job advertisements have continued to decline. The significant drop maintained in the last three academic years could be attributed to several aggregate factors: first hiring freezes, then to the difficult decisions to be made in an economic downturn such as renewing searches the following year or closing unsuccessful searches.

The effects could signify an even tighter job market, in which employers are dropping contingent positions, expanding positions to be broader in terms of subfields and rank to capture more candidates. With a surplus of PhD graduates seeking placement than academic positions offered, more and more graduates from doctoral programs will have to take nonacademic placements. There are simply not enough academic positions for new PhDs. As indicated even before the contraction in the political science job market in the COVID-19 pandemic, and now even more so, academic departments are well-advised in their efforts to train and prepare candidates for non-academic positions.

Appendix: Definitions and Descriptive Statistics of APSA eJobs Advertisements

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APSA's eJobs portal advertises political science positions for members of the Association. The below descriptive statistics support the above analysis and are included as R Markdown output for reference purposes only. For historical context, please refer to our other eJobs reports available in the Reports section of the Data on the Profession section of our website.

Description of dataset

This dataset is of job advertisements from the below *start date*:

```
## [1] "2021-08-01"
```

To the below *end date*:

```
## [1] "2022-07-31"
```

The raw data downloaded had the below *total number* of job postings:

```
## [1] 953
```

The *deduplicated* data for this same time period had the below *total number* of unique entries:

```
## [1] 947
```

Job Positions

The following *types of positions* were advertised in the dataset:

```
## [1] "Academic Positions: All"
## [2] "Academic Positions: Assistant Professor"
## [3] "Academic Positions: Assistant/Associate Professor"
## [4] "Academic Positions: Associate Professor"
## [5] "Academic Positions: Full Professor"
## [6] "Academic Positions: Instructor"
## [7] "Academic Positions: Lecturer"
```

```
## [8] "Academic Positions: Other"
## [9] "Academic Positions: Visiting Professor"
## [10] "Fellowships/Post-docs: All"
## [11] "Fellowships/Post-docs: Other"
## [12] "Fellowships/Post-docs: Post-doctoral"
## [13] "Fellowships/Post-docs: Pre-doctoral"
## [14] "Multiple Ranks"
## [15] "Open"
## [16] "Other"
```

Those positions had the following frequencies:

```
## # A tibble: 1 × 4
##   Position      n percent perc
##   <chr>      <int>   <dbl> <chr>
## 1 ""          947       1 100 %
```

We categorize the below positions as *academic, junior positions*:

```
## [1] "Academic Positions: Instructor"
## [2] "Academic Positions: Assistant Professor"
## [3] "Fellowships/Post-docs: Post-doctoral"
## [4] "Academic Positions: All"
## [5] "Fellowships/Post-docs: All"
## [6] "Academic Positions: Assistant/Associate Professor"
## [7] "Academic Positions: Lecturer"
## [8] "Fellowships/Post-docs: Other"
## [9] "Academic Positions: Visiting Professor"
## [10] "Fellowships/Post-docs: Pre-doctoral"
```

There are the below *total number of academic, junior positions*:

```
## [1] 765
```

We categorize the below positions as *academic, junior, tenure-track positions*:

```
## [1] "Academic Positions: Assistant Professor"
## [2] "Academic Positions: All"
## [3] "Academic Positions: Assistant/Associate Professor"
```

There are the below *total number of academic, junior, tenure-track positions*:

```
## [1] 381
```

We categorize the below as *academic, junior, non-tenure-track positions*:

```
## [1] "Academic Positions: Instructor"
## [2] "Fellowships/Post-docs: Post-doctoral"
## [3] "Fellowships/Post-docs: All"
## [4] "Academic Positions: Lecturer"
## [5] "Fellowships/Post-docs: Other"
## [6] "Academic Positions: Visiting Professor"
## [7] "Fellowships/Post-docs: Pre-doctoral"
```

There are the below *total number of academic, junior, non-tenure-track positions*:

```
## [1] 384
```

We categorize the below as *senior academic positions*:

```
## [1] "Academic Positions: Associate Professor"
## [2] "Academic Positions: Full Professor"
```

There are the below *total number of senior academic positions* in our dataset:

```
## [1] 63
```

We categorize the below as *open academic positions*:

```
## [1] "Open" "Academic Positions: Other"
## [3] "Multiple Ranks"
```

There are the below *total number of open academic positions*:

```
## [1] 76
```

We categorize the below as *non-academic positions*:

```
## [1] "Other"
```

There are the below *total number of non-academic positions*:

```
## [1] 43
```

Specifying positions, durations, and ranks Frequencies of job characteristics

Job positions

Job durations

```
## # A tibble: 2 × 4
##   Duration      n percent perc
##   <chr>    <int>   <dbl> <chr>
## 1 NTT      503   0.531 53.12 %
## 2 TT      444   0.469 46.88 %
```

Job ranks

```
## # A tibble: 3 × 4
##   Rank      n percent perc
##   <chr> <int>   <dbl> <chr>
## 1 junior  838   0.885 88.49 %
## 2 open    46   0.0486 4.86 %
## 3 senior   63   0.0665 6.65 %
```

First subfields

```
## # A tibble: 12 × 4
##   Subfield1      n percent perc
##   <chr>    <int>   <dbl> <chr>
```

##	1	Administration	21	0.0222	2.22 %
##	2	American Government and Politics	171	0.181	18.06 %
##	3	Comparative Politics	131	0.138	13.83 %
##	4	International Relations	182	0.192	19.22 %
##	5	Methodology	31	0.0327	3.27 %
##	6	Non-Academic	13	0.0137	1.37 %
##	7	Open	93	0.0982	9.82 %
##	8	Other	102	0.108	10.77 %
##	9	Political Theory	61	0.0644	6.44 %
##	10	Public Administration	22	0.0232	2.32 %
##	11	Public Law	26	0.0275	2.75 %
##	12	Public Policy	94	0.0993	9.93 %

Cross-tables

Durations and ranks

##	#	A tibble: 4 × 6				
##		Duration	percent	junior	open	senior perc
##		<chr>	<dbl>	<int>	<int>	<int> <chr>
##	1	NTT	0.0486	NA	46	NA 4.86 %
##	2	NTT	0.483	457	NA	NA 48.26 %
##	3	TT	0.0665	NA	NA	63 6.65 %
##	4	TT	0.402	381	NA	NA 40.23 %

Subfields and ranks

##	#	A tibble: 30 × 6				
##		Subfield	percent	junior	open	senior perc
##		<chr>	<dbl>	<int>	<int>	<int> <chr>
##	1	Administration	0.00106	NA	1	NA 0.11 %
##	2	Administration	0.00739	NA	NA	7 0.74 %
##	3	Administration	0.0180	17	NA	NA 1.8 %
##	4	American Government and Politics	0.00845	NA	8	NA 0.84 %
##	5	American Government and Politics	0.0106	NA	NA	10 1.06 %
##	6	American Government and Politics	0.197	187	NA	NA 19.75 %
##	7	Comparative Politics	0.00211	NA	2	NA 0.21 %
##	8	Comparative Politics	0.0137	NA	NA	13 1.37 %
##	9	Comparative Politics	0.154	146	NA	NA 15.42 %
##	10	International Relations	0.00106	NA	1	NA 0.11 %
##	11	International Relations	0.0158	NA	NA	15 1.58 %
##	12	International Relations	0.232	220	NA	NA 23.23 %
##	13	Methodology	0.00422	NA	NA	4 0.42 %
##	14	Methodology	0.0602	57	NA	NA 6.02 %
##	15	Non-Academic	0.0180	17	NA	NA 1.8 %
##	16	Open	0.00845	NA	NA	8 0.84 %
##	17	Open	0.0190	NA	18	NA 1.9 %
##	18	Open	0.111	105	NA	NA 11.09 %
##	19	Other	0.0169	NA	16	16 1.69 %
##	20	Other	0.150	142	NA	NA 14.99 %
##	21	Political Theory	0.00106	NA	1	NA 0.11 %
##	22	Political Theory	0.00422	NA	NA	4 0.42 %
##	23	Political Theory	0.0781	74	NA	NA 7.81 %
##	24	Public Administration	0.00106	NA	1	NA 0.11 %

## 25	Public Administration	0.00739	NA	NA	7	0.74 %
## 26	Public Administration	0.0444	42	NA	NA	4.44 %
## 27	Public Law	0.0422	40	NA	NA	4.22 %
## 28	Public Policy	0.0127	NA	12	NA	1.27 %
## 29	Public Policy	0.0158	NA	NA	15	1.58 %
## 30	Public Policy	0.151	143	NA	NA	15.1 %

Subfields and durations

A tibble: 23 × 5

##	Subfield	percent	NTT	TT	perc
##	<chr>	<dbl>	<int>	<int>	<chr>
## 1	Administration	0.0116	NA	11	1.16 %
## 2	Administration	0.0148	14	NA	1.48 %
## 3	American Government and Politics	0.107	NA	101	10.67 %
## 4	American Government and Politics	0.110	104	NA	10.98 %
## 5	Comparative Politics	0.0803	76	NA	8.03 %
## 6	Comparative Politics	0.0898	NA	85	8.98 %
## 7	International Relations	0.115	109	NA	11.51 %
## 8	International Relations	0.134	NA	127	13.41 %
## 9	Methodology	0.0317	30	NA	3.17 %
## 10	Methodology	0.0327	NA	31	3.27 %
## 11	Non-Academic	0.0180	17	NA	1.8 %
## 12	Open	0.0560	NA	53	5.6 %
## 13	Open	0.0824	78	NA	8.24 %
## 14	Other	0.0655	NA	62	6.55 %
## 15	Other	0.118	112	NA	11.83 %
## 16	Political Theory	0.0380	NA	36	3.8 %
## 17	Political Theory	0.0454	43	NA	4.54 %
## 18	Public Administration	0.0232	22	NA	2.32 %
## 19	Public Administration	0.0296	NA	28	2.96 %
## 20	Public Law	0.0137	13	NA	1.37 %
## 21	Public Law	0.0285	NA	27	2.85 %
## 22	Public Policy	0.0560	NA	53	5.6 %
## 23	Public Policy	0.124	117	NA	12.35 %

Subfields and positions

A tibble: 12 × 4

##	Subfield	percent	V1	perc
##	<chr>	<dbl>	<int>	<chr>
## 1	Administration	0.0264	25	2.64 %
## 2	American Government and Politics	0.216	205	21.65 %
## 3	Comparative Politics	0.170	161	17 %
## 4	International Relations	0.249	236	24.92 %
## 5	Methodology	0.0644	61	6.44 %
## 6	Non-Academic	0.0180	17	1.8 %
## 7	Open	0.138	131	13.83 %
## 8	Other	0.184	174	18.37 %
## 9	Political Theory	0.0834	79	8.34 %
## 10	Public Administration	0.0528	50	5.28 %
## 11	Public Law	0.0422	40	4.22 %
## 12	Public Policy	0.180	170	17.95 %

Categorizing locations

Frequencies of jobs

Domestic and International

```
## # A tibble: 2 × 4
##   location      n percent perc
##   <fct>      <int>   <dbl> <chr>
## 1 International  206    0.218 21.75 %
## 2 US           741    0.782 78.25 %
```

US Regions

```
## # A tibble: 10 × 4
##   Region      n percent perc
##   <fct>    <int>   <dbl> <chr>
## 1 All US Regions  118 0.125 12.46 %
## 2 East           30 0.0317 3.17 %
## 3 Midwest        100 0.106 10.56 %
## 4 North           1 0.00106 0.11 %
## 5 Northeast      225 0.238 23.76 %
## 6 Northwest       13 0.0137 1.37 %
## 7 South           46 0.0486 4.86 %
## 8 Southeast       77 0.0813 8.13 %
## 9 Southwest       25 0.0264 2.64 %
## 10 West          106 0.112 11.19 %
```

International Regions

```
## # A tibble: 8 × 4
##   Region      n percent perc
##   <fct>    <int>   <dbl> <chr>
## 1 Africa           9 0.00950 0.95 %
## 2 Asia            45 0.0475 4.75 %
## 3 Australia / South Pacific  3 0.00317 0.32 %
## 4 Canada           26 0.0275 2.75 %
## 5 Europe          104 0.110 10.98 %
## 6 Mexico / Central America   1 0.00106 0.11 %
## 7 Middle East           14 0.0148 1.48 %
## 8 South America           4 0.00422 0.42 %
```

Job locations and ranks

```
## # A tibble: 6 × 5
##   location Rank      n percent perc
##   <fct>   <chr> <int>   <dbl> <chr>
## 1 International junior  176 0.186 18.59 %
## 2 International open     9 0.00950 0.95 %
## 3 International senior   21 0.0222 2.22 %
## 4 US      junior  662 0.699 69.9 %
## 5 US      open    37 0.0391 3.91 %
## 6 US      senior   42 0.0444 4.44 %
```

Job locations and positions

```
## # A tibble: 2 × 5
##   location Position      n percent perc
```



```
##   <fct>      <chr>    <int>    <dbl> <chr>
## 1 International ""      206    0.218 21.75 %
## 2 US         ""      741    0.782 78.25 %
```

Job locations and durations

```
## # A tibble: 4 × 5
##   location      Duration      n percent perc
##   <fct>      <chr>    <int>    <dbl> <chr>
## 1 International NTT        83  0.0876 8.76 %
## 2 International TT         123  0.130 12.99 %
## 3 US         NTT        420  0.444 44.35 %
## 4 US         TT         321  0.339 33.9 %
```