

2018-2019

ACADEMIC JOB LISTINGS IN COMMUNICATION REPORT



NATIONAL
COMMUNICATION
ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON, DC 2019

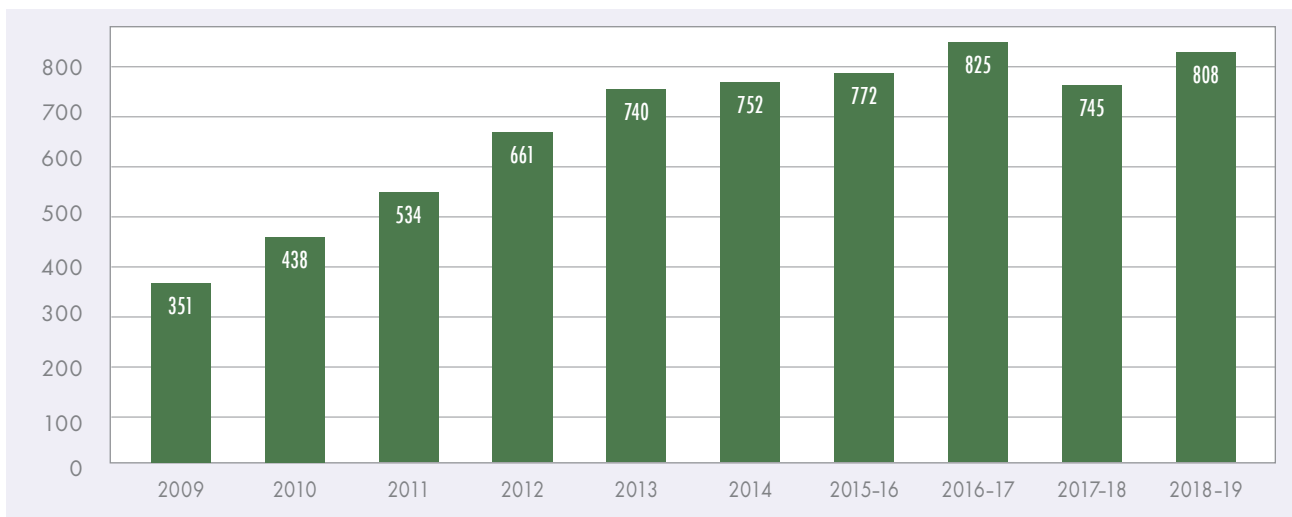
The National Communication Association (NCA) conducts an annual analysis of college and university searches to fill academic positions in Communication. We collect data from job postings in the online NCA Career Center, CRTNET, and *Spectra*. CRTNET is a disciplinary listserv to which employers may post position announcements and *Spectra* is NCA’s quarterly magazine. If a job is posted in more than one outlet, it is counted only once.

This report provides a descriptive account of the academic job market in Communication over the last ten years, as well as a comparative analysis that includes other humanities and social science disciplines. We also provide an assessment of jobs posted during the period of September 1, 2018 through August 31, 2019 with respect to areas of research and teaching specialty as well as rank and type of position.

Multi-Year Trends

Academic employment opportunities for Communication faculty continue to be among the most numerous in the humanities. The total number of advertised academic Communication positions increased by 130 percent from 2009 to 2018-19. Figure 1 shows that there were 351 jobs advertised in 2009, followed by steady, year-by-year increases to 825 jobs advertised during the 2016-17 academic year. While there was a slight decline in job advertisements during the 2017-2018 academic year, those numbers rebounded in the past year. In the 2018-19 academic year, a total of 808 Communication jobs were advertised. This number represents a slight increase in advertisements from the previous year, and positions 2018-19 as one of the strongest years for academic employment in Communication.

Figure 1. Number of Advertisements for Academic Positions in Communication

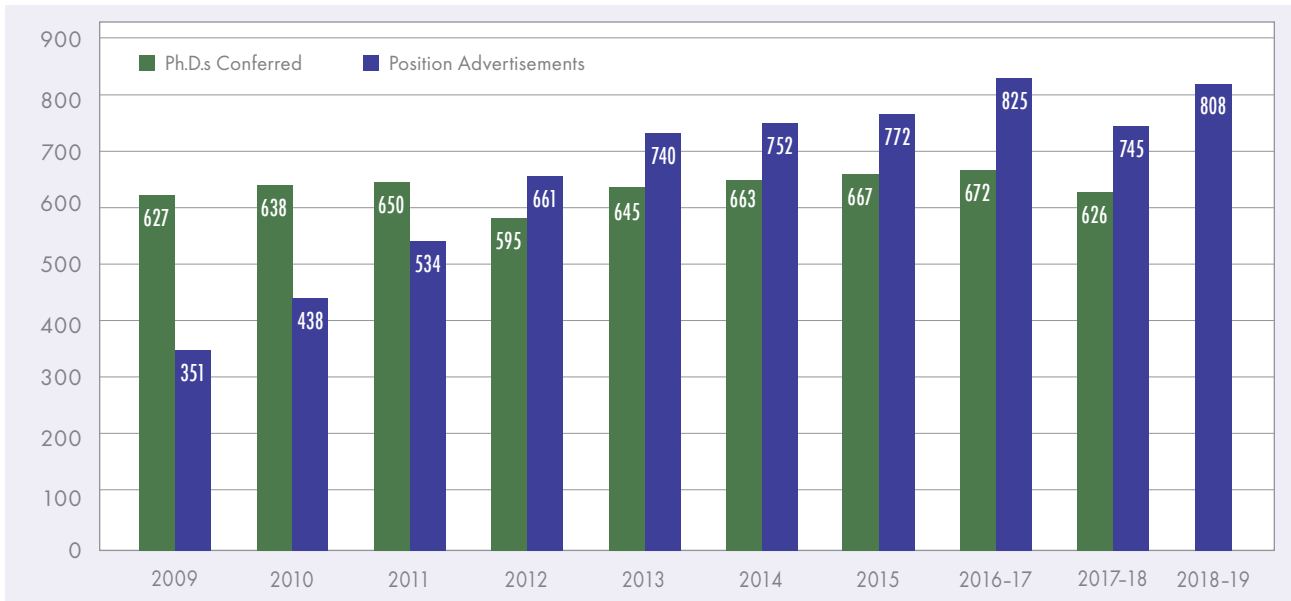


Ph.D. Production and Job Openings in Communication

One method of examining the health of a discipline’s job market is to explore the production of Ph.D.s relative to position availability. Much attention has been paid to the seeming over-production of Ph.D.s relative to the evolving academic job market. To explore this concern, we use the National Science Foundation’s *Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED)*. Between 2009 and 2017, a high of 672 doctorates were awarded in 2016. In that same year, 825 jobs were advertised. In fact, since 2012, Communication job advertisements have outpaced the numbers of Ph.D. graduates each year.

Figure 2 compares the number of advertisements for academic positions in Communication with the number of Ph.D. graduates in Communication. These data reflect only the availability of academic positions as advertised in the NCA Career Center, CRTNET, and *Spectra*.

Figure 2. Number of Advertisements for Academic Positions in Communication and Communication Doctorates Conferred, 2009 through 2018–2019



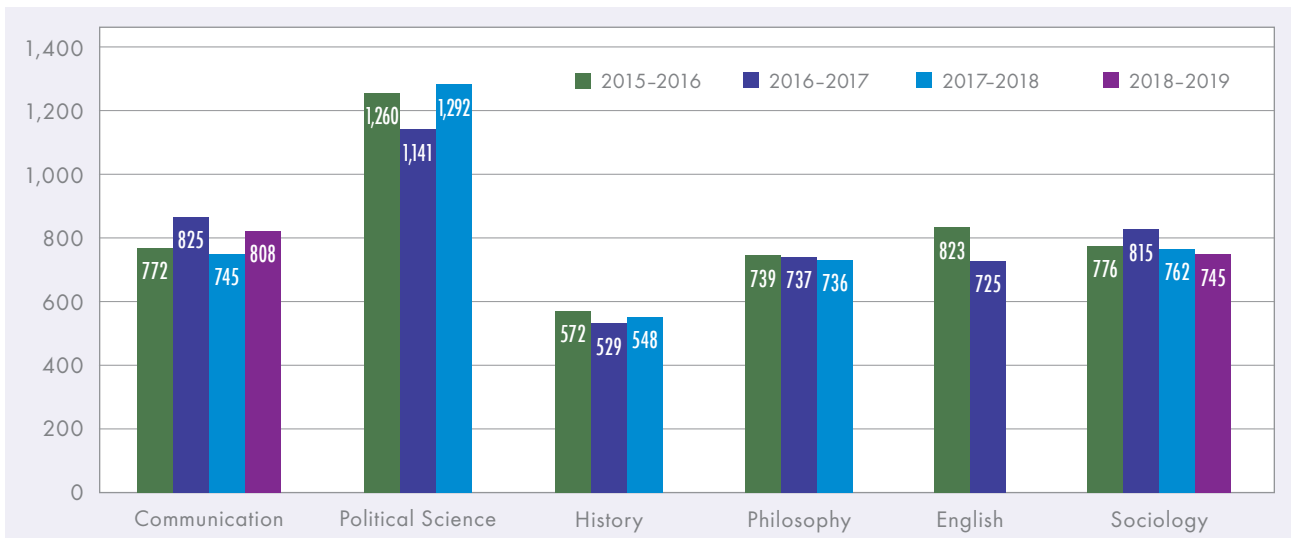
Note: Because the SED reports data on a calendar year basis, this figure reflects the total number of 2017 graduates in Communication, as reported in the SED, while positions advertised reflects the total number of advertisements during the 2017-18 academic year. The 2018 SED report has not yet been released, thus, no data comparing jobs available versus doctorates conferred are available.

Communication in Comparison

Higher education news media regularly cover the annual rate of job growth (or decline) as reported by individual disciplines. Despite concerns about relying on job postings as an exclusive measure of academic job markets, higher education economists and researchers have concluded that such analyses are nonetheless useful and positively correlate with the “set of variables that plausibly should influence the demand for new Ph.D.s.”¹

Figure 3 compares the number of academic Communication job postings to the numbers posted by similar disciplines. Not all disciplines have released current job data; thus, the data reported reflect what is currently available from the other learned societies.

Figure 3. Number of Job Postings in Communication, Political Science, History, Philosophy, English, and Sociology, 2015–2016 to 2018–2019



Note: Both the Philosophy and Sociology job numbers reflect data collected per calendar year rather than academic year.

Sources: American Historical Association, Modern Language Association, American Philosophical Association, American Political Science Association, and American Sociological Association.

¹ See <https://www.amacad.org/content/research/dataForumEssay.aspx?i=21673> and Jeffrey A. Groen, “The Impact of Labor Demand on Time to the Doctorate,” *Education Finance and Policy*, forthcoming. A working paper version is available at http://jeffreagroen.weebly.com/uploads/4/2/9/0/42906623/groen_ttd_oct2014.pdf. See also Ronald G. Ehrenberg, Harriet Zuckerman, Jeffrey A. Groen, and Sharon M. Brucker, *Educating Scholars: Doctoral Education in the Humanities* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

Distribution of Jobs by Research/Teaching Specialties

Not all academic jobs in Communication have requirements that align with the backgrounds of all Communication Ph.D.s. Thus, the number of advertised jobs by sub-field or specialty is also of interest to job seekers and employers. Specialties are presented in Table 1.

More than one specialty may appear in any given job posting; many postings advertise for individuals who possess more than one specialty. Table 1 indicates that in 2018–2019, there were 163 postings for generalist positions. Specialists in Strategic Communication/Public Relations/Advertising remained the most sought after, with 126 postings accounting for more than 13 percent of the total number of postings. The next most common research/teaching specialties sought in position postings were Mass Communication/Media Studies, with 64 mentions, and Digital/New/Emerging Media, with 57 mentions. These were followed in frequency by advertisements seeking specialties in Organizational Communication (39), Journalism (39), Health Communication (36), Rhetoric (31), and Debate/Forensics (30). A total of 46 postings did not specify a required specialty and 105 were classified as “other” specialties.

Table 1. Primary Research/Teaching Specialties Requested in Job Advertisements, 2018–2019

PRIMARY SPECIALTY	NUMBER OF JOBS	PERCENTAGE
Family Communication	1	0.11%
Applied Communication	2	0.22%
Communication Theory	4	0.43%
Basic Course	5	0.54%
Communication Education	5	0.54%
Visual	5	0.54%
Risk/Crisis/Conflict	6	0.65%
Environmental	7	0.76%
Performance Studies/Theatre	7	0.76%
Research Methods	8	0.87%
Communication Technology	10	1.09%
Political	10	1.09%
Sport	11	1.20%
Intercultural/International/Global	12	1.30%
Science	16	1.74%
Interpersonal	20	2.17%
Media Production	27	2.93%
Business/Corporate Communication	28	3.04%
Debate/Forensics	30	3.26%
Rhetoric	31	3.37%
Health Communication	36	3.91%
Journalism	39	4.24%
Organizational Communication	39	4.24%
None Specified	46	5.00%
Digital/New/Emerging Media	57	6.20%
Mass Communication/Media Studies	64	6.96%
Other	105	11.41%
Strategic/Public Relations/Advertising	126	13.70%
General	163	17.72%

Note: None specified may include advertisements for administrators or advertisements that specified teaching need but did not require applicants have a specific specialization. Other includes all specializations not commonly found in job postings.

Job Advertisements by Rank or Type of Position

Figures 4 and 5 show that 467 of the 2018–2019 job postings (58 percent) sought individuals for tenured or tenure track positions, with 373 of those postings specifically seeking an assistant professor. The number of tenured or tenure track positions is down slightly from the previous year. Non-tenure track positions increased slightly from the 2017–18 numbers, accounting for 246 (30 percent) of the 2018–2019 job postings. Fifty postings (6 percent) sought individuals for administrative positions (some of these positions are tenure-bearing), which included advertised department chair positions. During the 2018–19 academic year, 45 non-academic positions were posted (5.6 percent). Figure 5 also compares position ranks over the past two years.

Figure 4. Number of Communication Job Postings by Rank or Type of Position, 2018–2019

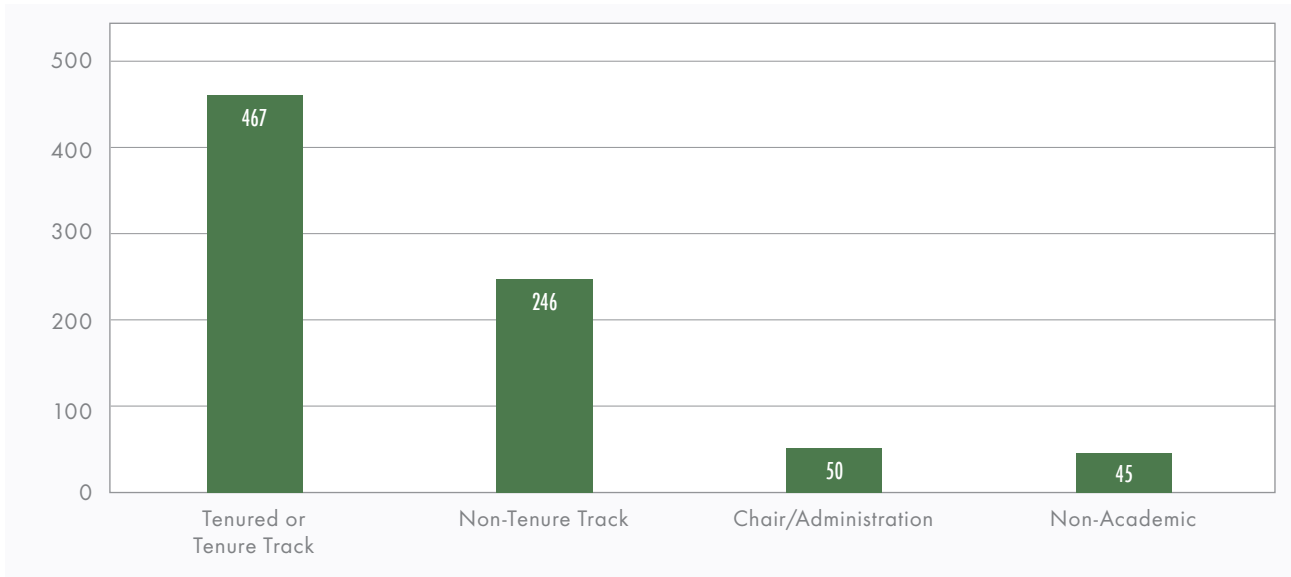


Figure 5. Advertised Position Ranks by Year, 2017–2019

