

NCA

NATIONAL COMMUNICATION  
ASSOCIATION

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2014 ACADEMIC JOB LISTINGS  
IN COMMUNICATION REPORT

WASHINGTON, DC 2015

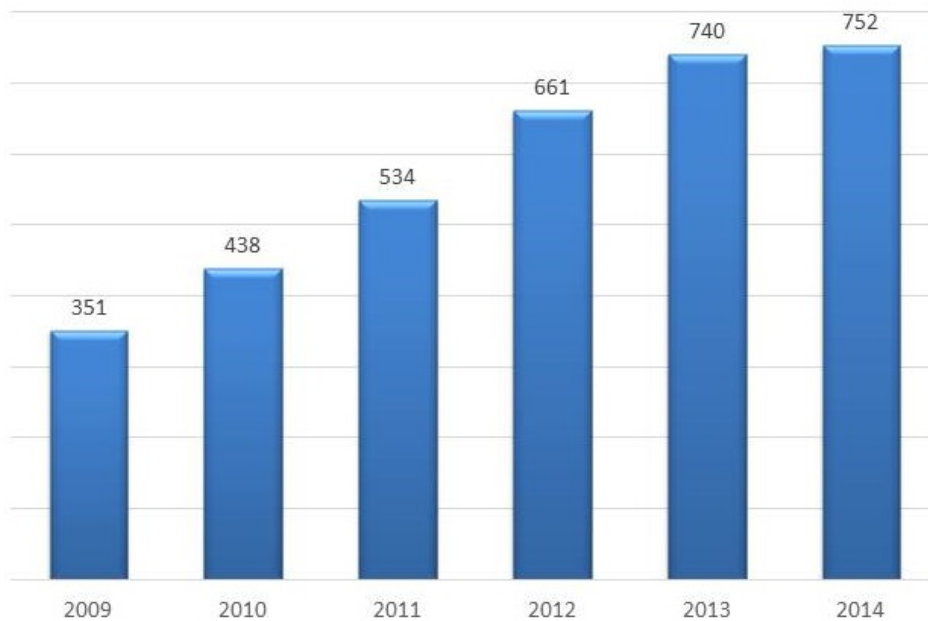
The National Communication Association (NCA) performs an annual analysis of college and university searches to fill academic positions in Communication. We collect job postings from three different outlets: the NCA Career Center, CRTNET, and *Spectra*. CRTNET is a disciplinary listserv where employers may post position announcements. *Spectra* is the NCA magazine. If a job was posted in more than one outlet, it was counted only once.

In the following report, we provide a descriptive account of the Communication job market over the last six years and a comparative analysis with other disciplines. We also offer a more detailed assessment of available jobs posted in 2014 with respect to areas of research and teaching specialty and rank or type of position.

### Multi-Year Trends

The current job market for academic positions in Communication is quite healthy. The total number of positions in Communication advertised by institutions of higher education has more than doubled from 2009 to 2014. Figure 1 reveals that there were 351 jobs advertised in 2009, followed by a steady increase over time to 752 in 2014. While these data do not allow us to identify all of the reasons for this increase, it is worth noting that 2009 was during a recessionary period in the United States.

**Figure 1. Number of Advertisements for Academic Positions in Communication**



### *Alignment of Ph.D. Production and Job Openings in Communication*

Much attention has been paid in recent years to the seeming over-production of Ph.D.s relative to the evolving academic job market, and indeed this is a meaningful concern when examining the

overall health of a discipline. To explore this question for Communication, we used the National Science Foundation’s *Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED)*. Results from the 2014 *SED* are not yet available, and not every advertised position is available or relevant to every Ph.D. recipient. The *SED* reports that 626 doctorates in Communication were conferred in 2009, 637 in 2010, 651 in 2011, 597 in 2012, and 649 in 2013.

### *Communication in Comparison*

Particularly in the humanities, considerable discussion occurs in the higher education news media about 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.”<sup>1</sup>

Figure 2 compares Communication academic job postings with other similar disciplines. Not all of the other disciplines have released their job postings data for 2014. The data reported are as currently available from the other learned societies.

**Figure 2. Number of Job Postings in History, English, Philosophy, Sociology, and Communication, 2009-2014.**  
**Sources: American Historical Association, Modern Language Association, American Philosophical Association, and American Sociological Association**



<sup>1</sup> 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 recent working paper version is available at [http://jeffreagroen.weebly.com/uploads/4/2/9/0/42906623/groen\\_ttd\\_oct2014.pdf](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

Given that not all jobs in Communication have requirements that align with the backgrounds of all Communication Ph.D.s, the breakdown of advertised jobs by sub-field or specialty is also of critical concern to job seekers and employers. Specialties are presented below in Table 1. More than one specialty may appear in any given job posting.

Many postings advertise for individuals possessing more than one specialty, so here we present both primary and secondary specialties. With 197 postings for generalists, Table 1 indicates that generalists are being recruited more than candidates with any particular area of specialty. The most common research/teaching specialties sought for in position postings are digital/emerging/new media and public relations, with 112 and 110 mentions, respectively. Those are followed by mass communication/media studies (93), health (84), rhetoric/public address (81), interpersonal/small group (80), and organizational (77).

**Table 1. Primary and Secondary Research/Teaching Specialties Requested in Job Advertisements, 2014**

|                                    | Primary | Secondary | Total      | Total (2013) |
|------------------------------------|---------|-----------|------------|--------------|
| <b>Generalist</b>                  | 197     | 0         | <b>197</b> | 156          |
| <b>Specialty</b>                   |         |           |            |              |
| <b>Digital/Emerging/New Media</b>  | 56      | 56        | <b>112</b> | 66           |
| <b>Public Relations</b>            | 83      | 27        | <b>110</b> | 81           |
| <b>Mass Communication/Media</b>    | 67      | 26        | <b>93</b>  | 87           |
| <b>Health</b>                      | 48      | 36        | <b>84</b>  | 47           |
| <b>Rhetoric/Public Address</b>     | 56      | 25        | <b>81</b>  | 49           |
| <b>Interpersonal/Small Group</b>   | 45      | 35        | <b>80</b>  | 37           |
| <b>Organizational</b>              | 54      | 23        | <b>77</b>  | 57           |
| <b>Journalism</b>                  | 44      | 26        | <b>70</b>  | 67           |
| <b>Intercultural/International</b> | 29      | 30        | <b>59</b>  | 35           |
| <b>Advertising</b>                 | 32      | 18        | <b>50</b>  | 28           |
| <b>Strategic</b>                   | 36      | 12        | <b>48</b>  | 22           |
| <b>Political</b>                   | 15      | 21        | <b>36</b>  | 18           |
| <b>Debate/Forensics</b>            | 24      | 10        | <b>34</b>  | 25           |
| <b>Public Speaking</b>             | 12      | 4         | <b>16</b>  | 12           |
| <b>Communication Theory</b>        | 6       | 9         | <b>15</b>  | 14           |
| <b>Persuasion</b>                  | 6       | 8         | <b>14</b>  | 9            |
| <b>Visual</b>                      | 4       | 8         | <b>12</b>  | 11           |
| <b>Basic Course</b>                | 6       | 2         | <b>8</b>   | 8            |
| <b>Environmental</b>               | 5       | 3         | <b>8</b>   | 7            |
| <b>Film/Cinema</b>                 | 5       | 2         | <b>7</b>   | 14           |
| <b>Performance Studies/Theater</b> | 5       | 1         | <b>6</b>   | 5            |
| <b>Applied</b>                     | 0       | 6         | <b>6</b>   | 4            |
| <b>Communication Education</b>     | 0       | 2         | <b>2</b>   | 3            |
| <b>Legal</b>                       | 0       | 2         | <b>2</b>   | 3            |

### Job Advertisements by Rank or Type of Position

In addition to substantive alignment, job seekers' career trajectories need to be aligned with advertised rank or type of position. Figure 3 shows that 494 of the 2014 job postings (66 percent) sought individuals for tenured or tenure-track positions, with 325 of those postings seeking an assistant professor. Non tenure-track positions (Instructor and Visiting/Temporary) accounted for another 202 (27 percent) of the job postings in 2014. Forty-six (7 percent) of the postings sought individuals for administrative positions, with 16 postings seeking a department chair.

**Figure 3. Number of Job Postings by Rank or Type of Position, 2014**

