

2016-2017

ACADEMIC JOB LISTINGS IN COMMUNICATION REPORT



NATIONAL
COMMUNICATION
ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON, DC 2017

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 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 eight years, as well as a comparative analysis with other humanities and social science disciplines. We also provide an assessment of jobs posted during the period of September 1, 2016 through August 31, 2017 with respect to areas of research and teaching specialty as well as rank and type of position.

In past years, NCA has completed this analysis by calendar year. The 2015-2016 report provided both a full picture of the 2015 data as well as some information on the academic year. Beginning with the 2016-2017 report, data are reported that reflect the academic year only.

Multi-Year Trends

Academic employment opportunities for Communication faculty continue to increase. The total number of advertised academic Communication positions have increased by more than 43 percent since 2009. Figure 1 shows that there were 351 jobs advertised in 2009, followed by steady, year-by-year increases to 825 jobs advertised during the 2016-2017 academic year.

Figure 1. Number of Advertisements for Academic Positions in Communication



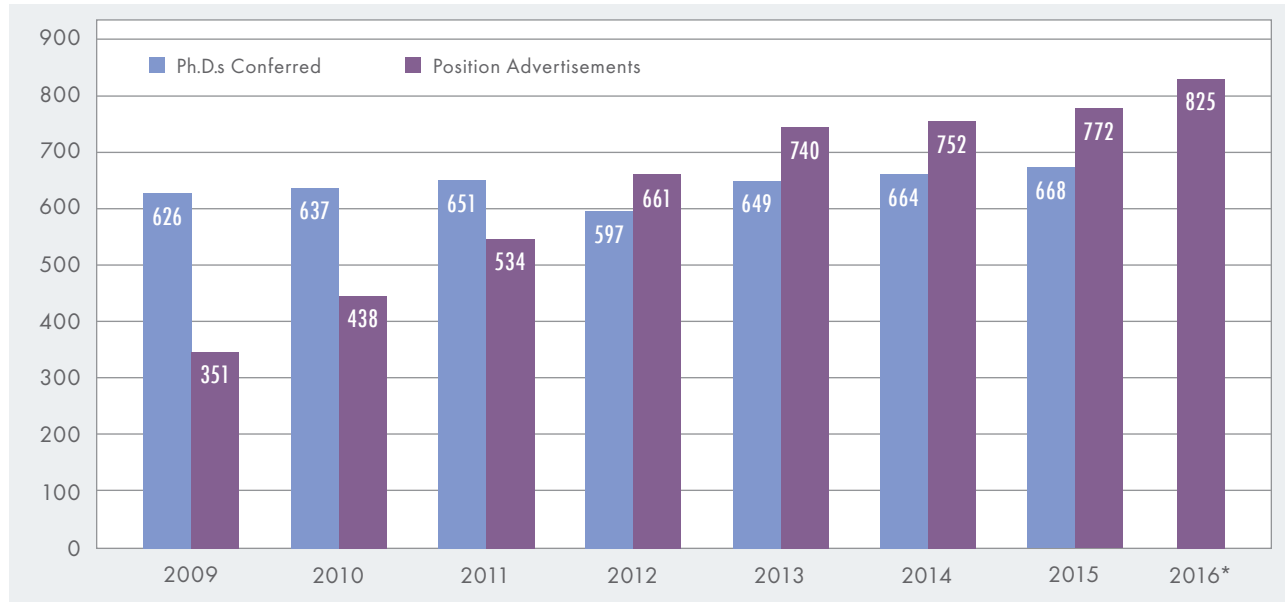
Ph.D. Production and Job Openings in Communication

One method of examining the job market in a discipline 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)*. The *SED* reports that 626 doctorates in Communication were conferred in 2009, 637 in 2010, 651 in 2011, 597 in 2012, 649 in 2013, 664 in 2014, and 668 in 2015.

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 traditional academic positions as advertised in the NCA Career Center, CRTNET, and *Spectra*.

Note that because the *SED* reports data on a calendar year basis, this figure reflects the total number of 2015 graduates in Communication, as reported in the *SED*, while positions advertised reflects the total number of advertisements during the 2015-2016 academic year. *SED* data for conferred Ph.D.s in Communication for 2016 are not yet available.

Figure 2. Number of Advertisements for Academic Positions in Communication and Communication Doctorates Conferred, 2009 through 2016-2017



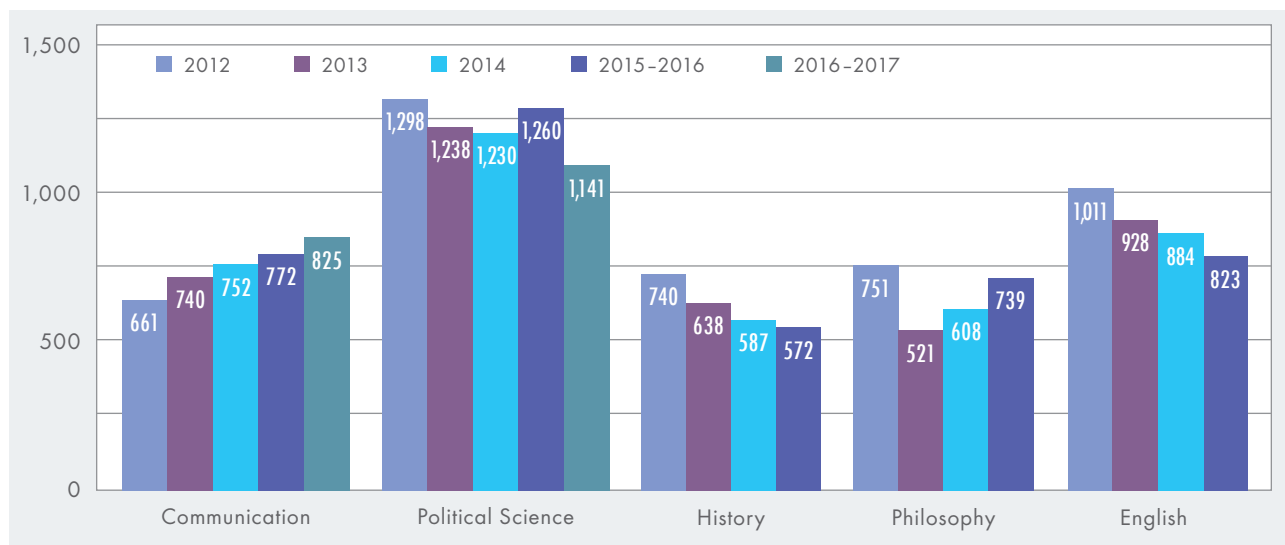
*The Survey of Earned Doctorates, from which the numbers of Communication doctorates conferred is obtained, was not available at the time this report was completed.

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 academic Communication job postings with similar disciplines. Not all disciplines have released 2016-2017 job data. As a result, 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, and English, 2009-2015



Sources: American Historical Association, Modern Language Association, American Philosophical Association, and American Political Science 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 recent 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 critical concern to job seekers and employers. Specialties are presented in Table 1.

More than one specialty may appear in any given job posting. In fact, many postings advertise for individuals who possess more than one specialty. Table 1 indicates that in 2016–2017, there were 139 postings for generalist positions. There were 184 postings for positions in strategic communication/public relations/advertising, accounting for more than 15.6 percent of the total number of postings. The next most common research/teaching specialties sought in position postings were mass communication/media studies, with 125 mentions, and journalism, with 81 mentions. These postings are followed in frequency by advertisements seeking specialties in organizational (73), digital/new/emerging media (71), rhetoric (54), interpersonal (53), health (48), and media production (40).

Table 1. Primary Research/Teaching Specialties Requested in Job Advertisements, 2016–2017

PRIMARY SPECIALTY	NUMBER OF JOBS	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Communication Education	1	0.08
Communication Ethics	2	0.17
Basic Course	3	0.25
Communication Theory	4	0.34
Family Communication	5	0.42
Political	5	0.42
Risk/Crisis/Conflict	5	0.42
Sports	5	0.42
Environmental	6	0.51
Performance Studies/Theatre	6	0.51
Research Methods	7	0.59
Applied Communication	8	0.68
Science	8	0.68
None Specified	10	0.85
Visual	10	0.85
Business/Corporate Communication	15	1.27
Communication Technology	17	1.44
Debate/Forensics	20	1.69
Intercultural/International/Global	27	2.28
Media Production	40	3.38
Health Communication	48	4.06
Interpersonal	53	4.48
Rhetoric	54	4.57
Digital/New/Emerging Media	71	6.01
Organizational	73	6.18
Journalism	81	6.85
Mass Communication/Media Studies	125	10.58
General	139	11.76
Other	150	12.69
Strategic/Public Relations/Advertising	184	15.57

Job Advertisements by Rank or Type of Position

Figure 4 shows that 485 of the 2016-2017 job postings (59 percent) sought individuals for tenured or tenure track positions, with 353 of those postings specifically seeking an assistant professor. Non-tenure track positions accounted for 259 (31 percent) of the 2016-2017 job postings. Sixty-six postings (8 percent) sought individuals for administrative positions (some of these positions are tenure-bearing), which included advertised department chair positions.

Figure 4. Number of Communication Job Postings by Rank or Type of Position, 2016-2017

