

2017-2018

ACADEMIC JOB LISTINGS IN COMMUNICATION REPORT



NATIONAL
COMMUNICATION
ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON, DC 2018

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 nine 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, 2017 through August 31, 2018 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 highest in the humanities. The total number of advertised academic Communication positions increased each year between 2009 and 2017, before decreasing slightly during the 2017-2018 academic year. 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. During the 2017-2018 academic year, a total of 745 jobs were advertised in the discipline, 80 fewer than advertised the previous year. However, this number is relatively unchanged since 2013, and higher than the number of job advertisements placed between 2009 and 2012.

Figure 1. Number of Advertisements for Academic Positions in Communication

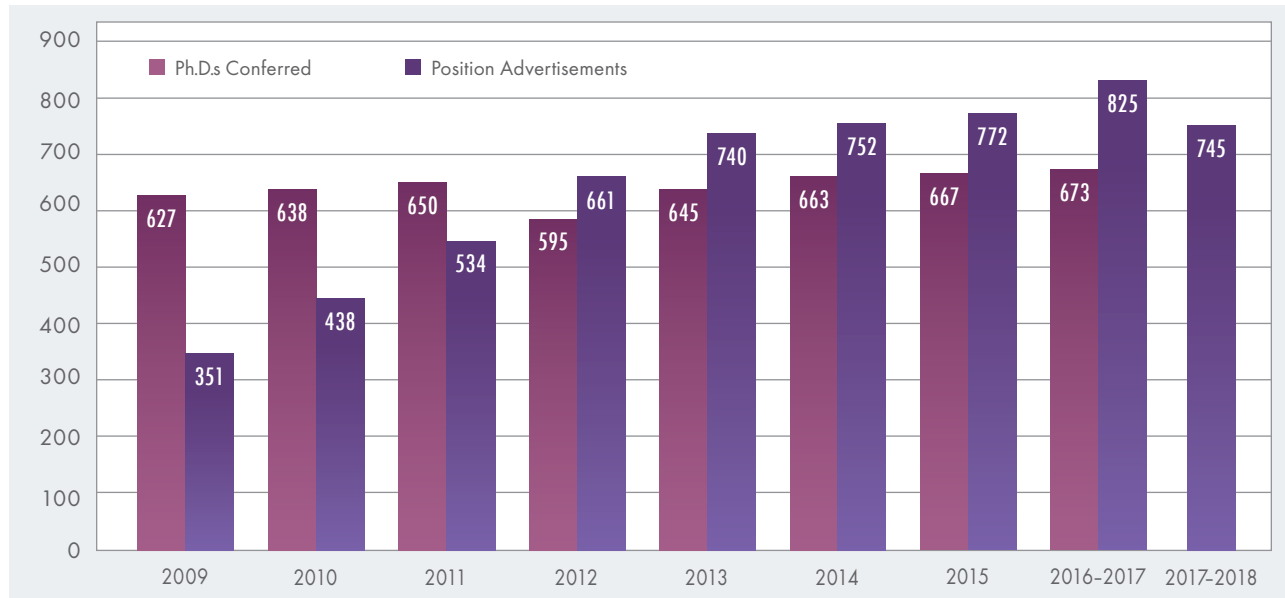


Ph.D. Production and Job Openings in Communication

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)*. Between 2009 and 2016, a high of 673 doctorates were awarded in 2016 and a low of 595 were awarded in 2012, with an average of 645 doctorates conferred per 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 2017-2018



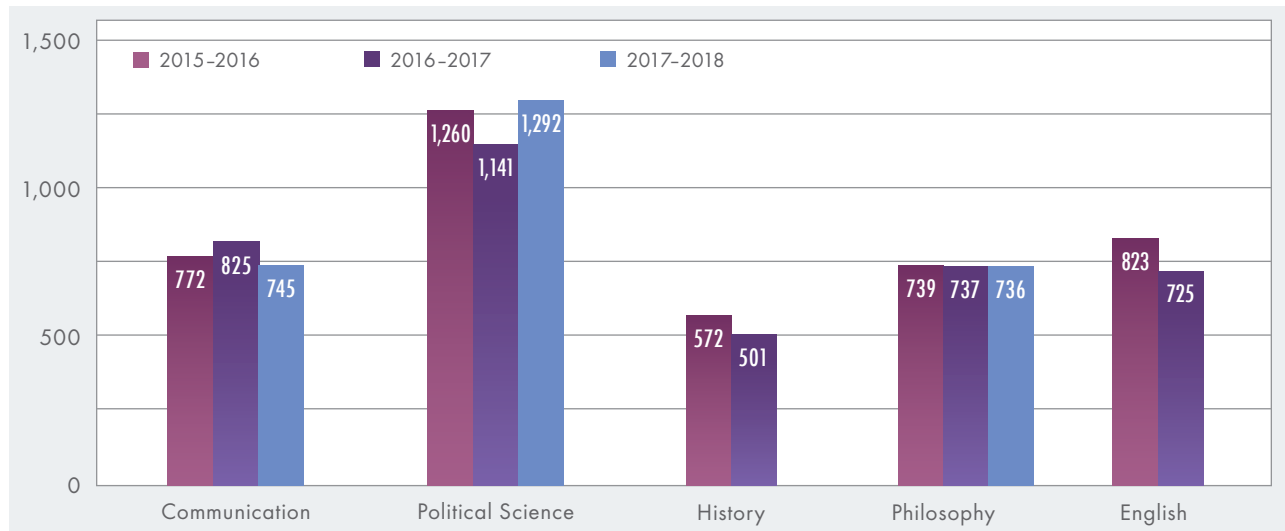
Note that because the SED reports data on a calendar year basis, this figure reflects the total number of 2016 graduates in Communication, as reported in the SED, while positions advertised reflects the total number of advertisements during the 2016-2017 academic year.

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 with the numbers posted by similar disciplines. Not all disciplines have released current 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, 2015-2016 to 2017-2018



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 interest 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 2017-2018, there were 135 postings for generalist positions, only four fewer than the previous year. Specialists in strategic communication/public relations/advertising remained the most sought after, with 131 postings accounting for more than 13 percent of the total number of job postings. The next most sought-after research/teaching specialties in position postings were mass communication/media studies, with 90 mentions, and digital/new media, with 64 mentions. These were followed in frequency by advertisements seeking specialties in journalism (54), organizational communication (42), health communication (39), media production (36), and rhetoric (32). A total of 44 postings did not specify a required specialty.

Table 1. Primary Research/Teaching Specialties Requested in Job Advertisements, 2017-2018

PRIMARY SPECIALTY	NUMBER OF JOBS	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Communication Education	2	0.20%
Family Communication	3	0.30%
Applied Communication	3	0.30%
Political	4	0.40%
Performance Studies/Theatre	7	0.70%
Environmental	6	0.60%
Risk/Crisis/Conflict	7	0.70%
Sports	7	0.70%
Visual	8	0.80%
Communication Theory	10	1.00%
Science	11	1.10%
Basic Course	11	1.10%
Research Methods	12	1.20%
Communication Technology	14	1.40%
Intercultural/International/Global	16	1.60%
Debate/Forensics	23	2.30%
Business/Corporate Communication	25	2.50%
Interpersonal	28	2.79%
Rhetoric	32	3.19%
Media Production	36	3.59%
Health Communication	39	3.89%
Organizational	42	4.19%
None Specified	44	4.39%
Journalism	54	5.39%
Digital/New/Emerging Media	64	6.39%
Mass Communication/Media Studies	90	8.98%
Strategic/Public Relations/Advertising	131	13.07%
General	135	13.47%
Other	138	13.77%

Job Advertisements by Rank or Type of Position

Figures 4 and 5 show that 454 of the 2017-2018 job postings (61 percent) sought individuals for tenured or tenure track positions, with 332 of those postings specifically seeking an assistant professor. The number of tenured or tenure track positions is up slightly from the previous year. Non-tenure track positions decreased slightly from 2016-2017 numbers, accounting for 215 (29 percent) of the 2017-2018 job postings. Forty-nine postings (6.5 percent) sought individuals for administrative positions (some of these positions are tenure-bearing), which included advertised department chair positions. The greatest increase came in the number of advertisements for non-academic positions, which doubled during the 2017-2018 academic year. During the 2017-2018 academic year, 27 non-academic positions were posted (3.6 percent). Figure 5 compares position ranks over the past two years.

Figure 4. Number of Communication Job Postings by Rank or Type of Position, 2017-2018

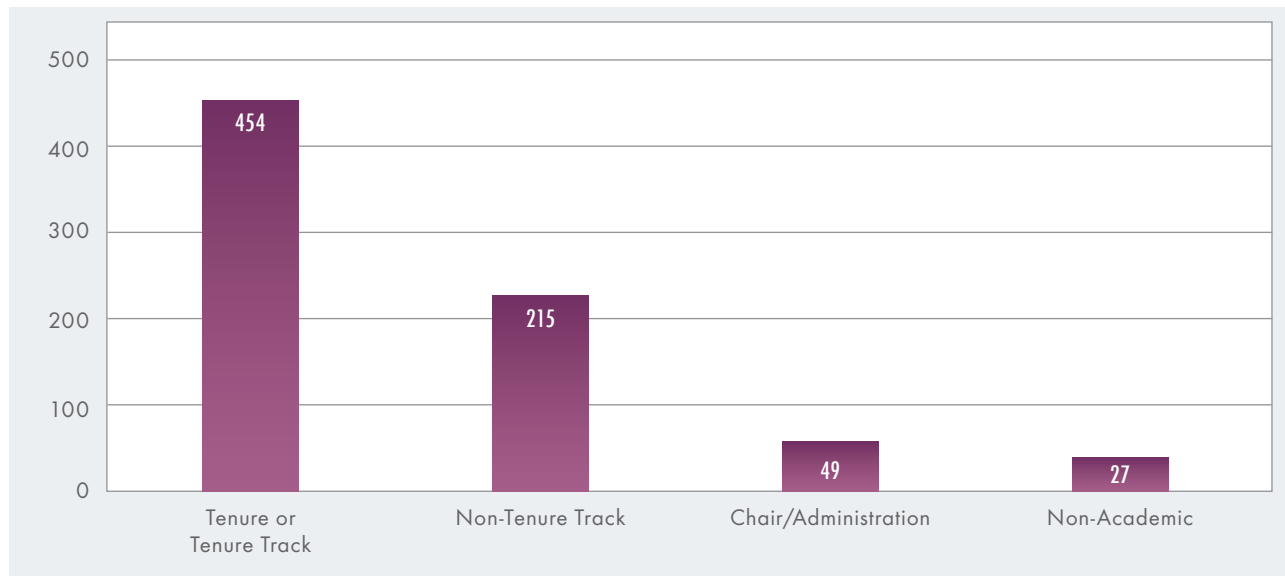


Figure 5. Position Ranks by Year, 2016-2018

