

Six Years of Political Science Doctoral Student Placement, 2009- 2014

Source: APSA Graduate Placement Survey, 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14

Summary: After four years of growth in the number of political science job candidates on the market, there has been an abrupt drop in doctoral students on the market in academic year 2013-14. The numbers reported in 2013-14 closely resemble those from 2009-10, possibly indicating a return to normalcy following three years of a high volume of students entering the job market during economic recession. We will continue to observe this trend in coming years, as it is also possible that this indicates a contraction in the number of PhDs entering the market. Average time in program remains steady at 6 years, with a standard deviation of 2 years. Proportions of minorities and women in the profession remain largely the same as in previous years, though we continue to observe a decrease in the proportion of international students on the market, down to 26.5% of job candidates on the market in AY 2013-14 after peaking at 35% in AY 2011-12. International students composed 29.6% of the job field in AY 2009-10. The proportion of American and Comparative Politics majors remains unchanged, and we have observed a rise of about 2.5% in the proportion of International Politics majors on the market.

Placement trends remain largely flat, with no remarkable growth or loss in the proportion of candidates placed. Though we note a 2% increase in the proportion of those not placed, this is accounted for by a small drop in post-doc placements and fewer “Don’t Know” or blank responses to student placements. Academic placements (tenure-track, full- and part-time non-tenure-track) are mostly unchanged, with roughly the same proportion of placements as last year. Tenure-track placements at PhD institutions are down, but there has been a rise in tenure-track placements at MA institutions. Tenure-track placements for women were down 4% to 31% of placements for women, compared to 36% of men. Women were also more likely to be placed in non-tenure-track or post-doc positions than their male counterparts, and less likely to take a non-academic placement. The proportion of men who were not placed was also slightly up (3%), though men were also more likely to be placed in tenure-track or post-doc positions than in AY 2012-13. American Politics major were placed more frequently than last year, with this growth accounted for by raises in non-tenure-track and post-doc placements while maintaining the proportion of tenure-track placements from AY 2012-13. Comparative and International Politics majors experienced drops in the proportion of tenure-track placements, but International Politics majors were more likely than their Comparative counterparts to receive non-tenure-track, post-doc, or non-academic placements and the proportion of Comparative Politics majors who were not placed rose by 10%, with only slight gains in non-academic placements.

We continue to observe the same trends in placement for ABDs and those who have completed their PhD as noted in last year’s placement reports. 30% of ABDs were not placed, compared to 12% of their peers who completed their degrees before going onto the market, and while almost 40% of PhDs on the market were placed in tenure-track academic positions, only 22% of ABDs were placed similarly. ABDs were placed in non-tenure-track positions at a higher proportion (27.7%) than their PhD counterparts (19.5%), and about 13% of both groups were placed in post-doc positions.

About the Data: The data presented here are from the 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 APSA Graduate Placement Surveys. Directors of Graduate Studies provide individual level information about doctoral students in their programs if they (1) competed seriously for academic or non-academic jobs during the academic year, whether or not they were placed; (2) sought their first placement in the academic year, in either academic or nonacademic positions; and/or, (3) were repeat players on the market because they had *not* placed in previous years. In 2009-10, 69 doctoral programs reported 501 students; in 2010 – 2011, 76 programs reported 600 students; in 2011 – 2012, 37 programs reported 283 students; in 2012-13, 80 programs reported 651 students, and in 2013-14, 74 programs reported 555 students. These data are weighted by departmental faculty size, yielding the totals reported in Table 1. With the 2010-11 survey, we changed the measurement for race and ethnicity to distinguish between International (non US citizens) and US citizens of different ethnicity and race. We recoded the 2009-10 data to reflect this change for the purposes of comparison.

Contact us at surveys@apsanet.org.

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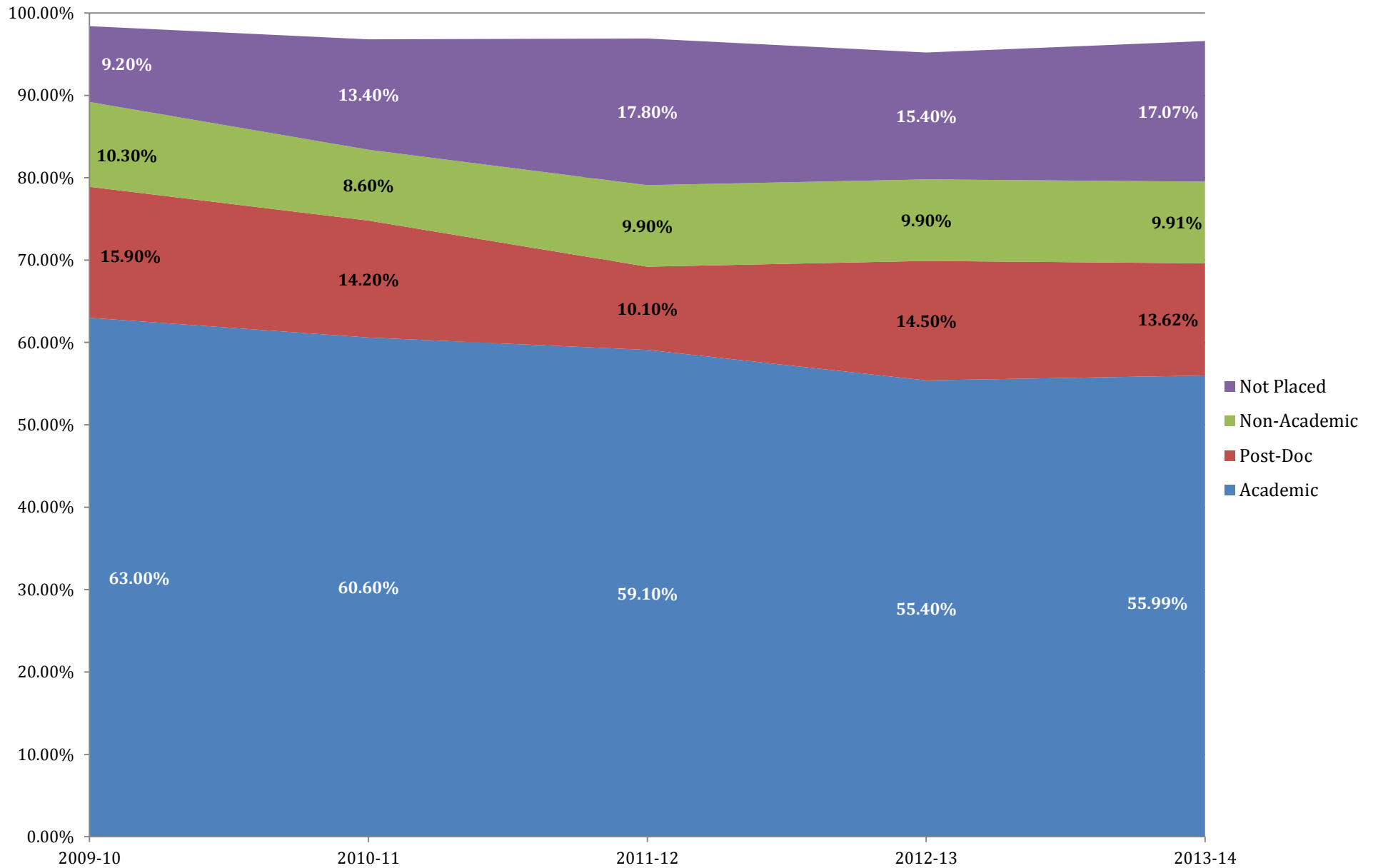
Table 1: Characteristics of Job Market Candidates, 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14

	2009-10 (n = 944)		2010-11 (n = 1025)		2011-12 (n = 1023)		2012-13 (n = 1101)		2013-14 (n = 978)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Gender										
Female	374	39.6	441	43.4	388	37.9	421	38.2	374	38.3
Male	570	60.4	580	56.6	636	62.1	670	60.9	600	61.4
Not Reported	--	--	5	0.5	--	--	10	0.9	3	.3
Race/Ethnicity										
African American	30	3.2	38	3.7	23	2.2	36	3.3	39	4.0
Am. Indian/AK Native	--	--	1	0.1	--	--	2	0.1	2	0.2
Asian/Pacific Islander	27	2.8	23	2.1	39	3.8	53	4.8	26	2.7
Caucasian	538	57.0	568	55.4	581	56.8	612	55.6	573	58.7
Latino/a	26	2.8	24	2.3	11	1.1	25	2.3	23	2.4
International	279	29.6	310	30.2	358	35.0	338	30.7	259	26.5
Two or More Races	--	--	2	0.2	7	0.7	6	0.6	9	0.9
Unknown	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	17	1.7
Other	3	0.3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Not Reported	41	4.3	59	5.7	5	0.4	29	2.7	30	3.0
Major Field										
American Politics	178	18.8	214	20.9	210	20.5	257	23.3	218	22.3
Comparative Politics	290	30.7	341	33.3	276	26.9	275	25.0	239	24.5
International Politics	219	23.2	225	21.9	281	27.5	296	26.9	290	29.6
Methods	16	1.7	4	0.4	9	0.9	12	1.1	7	.7
Political Philosophy	141	15.0	113	11.0	130	12.7	164	14.9	144	14.7
Public Administration	18	1.9	26	2.5	46	4.5	17	1.6	21	2.2
Public Law	7	0.7	27	2.6	24	2.3	8	0.7	16	1.7
Public Policy	30	3.1	30	2.9	19	1.8	32	2.9	16	1.7
Other	24	2.5	30	2.9	22	2.1	22	2.0	13	1.4
Unknown	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	11	1.2
Not Reported	24	2.5	34	3.3	2	0.8	18	1.6	2	.2
Degree Earned										
ABD	89	9.4	267	26.0	319	31.2	303	27.5	272	27.9
PhD	855	90.6	730	71.2	690	67.4	785	71.3	704	72.0
Repeat Candidate										
No	606	64.1	744	72.6	669	65.3	750	68.1	699	71.5
Yes	270	28.6	225	22.0	237	23.2	294	26.7	236	24.2
Unknown	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	40	4.1

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Figure 1. Overall Placement Outcomes, AY 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14



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	Tenure Track		Non-Tenure-Track		Post Doc		Non-Academic		Not Placed	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
TOTAL	334	34.2	213	21.8	133	13.6	97	9.9	167	17.1
Gender										
Female	117	31.3	94	25.1	57	15.2	33	8.8	59	15.8
Male	217	36.2	119	19.8	74	12.3	64	10.7	108	18.0
Race/Ethnicity										
African-American	22	57.9	3	7.9	8	21.1	0	0.0	5	13.2
American Indian/AK Native	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	100.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	5	18.5	2	7.4	7	25.9	3	11.1	8	29.6
Caucasian	181	31.6	134	23.4	69	12.1	67	11.7	101	17.7
Latino/a	7	30.4	3	13.0	5	21.7	3	13.0	5	21.7
International	101	39.0	58	22.4	32	12.4	17	6.4	45	17.3
Two or More Races	2	20.0	2	20.0	2	20.0	4	40.0	0	0.0
Unknown	7	41.2	2	11.8	5	29.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
Major Field										
American Politics	96	44.0	45	20.6	23	10.6	22	10.1	27	12.4
Comparative Politics	64	26.8	45	18.8	42	17.6	20	8.4	55	23.0
International Politics	99	34.1	66	22.8	39	13.4	39	13.4	44	15.2
Methods	5	71.4	0	0.0	2	28.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
Political Philosophy	41	28.3	45	31.0	22	15.2	5	3.4	25	17.2
Public Administration	8	36.4	3	13.6	0	0.0	7	31.8	2	9.1
Public Law	8	47.1	5	29.4	2	11.8	2	11.8	0	0.0
Public Policy	2	11.8	2	11.8	2	11.8	3	17.6	6	35.3
Other	7	50.0	2	14.3	2	14.3	0	0.0	3	21.4
Degree Earned										
ABD	61	22.3	76	27.7	37	13.5	10	3.6	83	30.3
PhD	273	38.8	137	19.5	97	13.8	87	12.4	84	11.9