

2014-2015 GRADUATE PLACEMENT SURVEY

Preliminary Findings

December 7, 2015

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Foreword

Enclosed please find the preliminary findings on the placement rates for doctoral candidates and graduates in political science searching for their first academic or post-PhD, non-academic employment during the 2014-2015 academic year. Based on the annual APSA Graduate Placement Survey, these results indicate no major changes from the previous annual job market reports, with the continuing trend of growth in the share of reported placements for nonacademic appointments, post-doctoral appointments, and not placed candidates.

As these preliminary findings indicate, there are multiple stories within the profession based on, at least, degree status and subfield. We also note the growth of post-doctoral placement, with emergent questions regarding what happens after a post-doc is completed. While the Graduate Placement Survey alone cannot address these 1 to 3 year career trajectories, over the coming months and in subsequent reports we will explore these job market trends.

The data presented here are from the annual APSA Graduate Placement Survey, providing a continuous, longitudinal view of placement since 2009-10. In the survey, directors of graduate studies provide individual level information about doctoral students in their programs who sought their first placement in the academic year, in either academic or nonacademic positions, and includes those who were not placed in previous years. In 2014-15, the survey was administered to 128 graduate departments. 79 (61.7%) of these responded to the survey. 77 of these programs reported 613 students. These data are weighted by department faculty size, yielding the weighted totals reported in Table 1. To see response rates and numbers from previous years, please find last year's report on the APSA website [here](#).

We encourage you to read the report carefully, and we welcome your questions, suggestions, or ideas. Please contact us with any specific questions about the findings. We will aim to fold in some of the broader questions that members bring to our attention through subsequent reports and materials on the American Political Science Association website, www.apsanet.org. You can contact us at surveys@apsanet.org, or by calling the main APSA office at 202-483-2512.

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December 7, 2015



Key Findings

Candidates

- The Graduate Placement Survey asks graduate directors about candidates in their programs looking for their first job, whether they have completed their doctoral degree, or have completed their doctoral coursework and are all-but-dissertation (ABD) doctoral students. The report includes candidates who may be on the job market for multiple years if they were unsuccessful in being placed during previous years.
- The number of candidates on the market has returned to normal levels, suggesting that the large number of candidates on the market in 2012-13 is anomalous (see Table 1). The proportion of candidates in American politics rose between 2009-10 and 2014-15, while other subfields declined slightly or remain steady.
- Candidates who majored in Comparative politics composed the largest portion of the market (28.9%), followed closely by American politics (26.9%).
- The proportion of international students on the job market declined over the 5-year period, from 29.6% of candidates on the market to 22.6% (Table 1).

Placements

- Overall, approximately 84% of candidates on the 2014-2015 market were placed.
- The proportion of candidates placed in post-doc and nonacademic jobs (as their first placement) rose over the 5-year period we tracked placements, while placement in academic positions (tenure-track and non-tenure-track) declined as an overall share of placements reported, from 63% to 51.3% (Figure 1). 33% of all placements in 2014-15 were in tenure track positions (Table 2).
- Placement rates vary by the degree status of candidates. ABD candidates composed a full third of the job market in 2014-15, but overall do not place as well as their PhD counterparts. Only 9.6% of candidates with their PhD were not placed, compared to 31.6% of ABD candidates who were not placed. Further, candidates who have a PhD place better in all categories except post-doctoral placements. This is consistent with historic placement trends for ABD and PhD candidates (Table 3).
- Comparative politics majors composed the majority of most placement types, except non tenure-track positions which were primarily American politics majors. Notably, comparative politics majors were the majority of post-doctoral placements, followed by international politics majors (34.1% and 23.4% of all post doc placements respectively).

Table 1: Characteristics of Job Market Candidates, 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15

	2009-10 (n = 944)		2010-11 (n = 1025)		2011-12 (n = 1023)		2012-13 (n = 1101)		2013-14 (n = 978)		2014-15 (n = 990)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Gender												
Female	374	39.6	441	43.4	388	37.9	421	38.2	374	38.3	395	40.0
Male	570	60.4	580	56.6	636	62.1	670	60.9	600	61.4	585	59.1
Other	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	0	0.0
Not Reported	--	--	5	0.5	--	--	10	0.9	3	.3	9	0.9
Race/Ethnicity												
African American	30	3.2	38	3.7	23	2.2	36	3.3	39	4.0	18	1.8
Am. Indian/AK Native	--	--	1	0.1	--	--	2	0.1	2	0.2	5	0.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	27	2.8	23	2.1	39	3.8	53	4.8	26	2.7	33	3.4
White	538	57.0	568	55.4	581	56.8	612	55.6	573	58.7	627	63.3
Latino/a	26	2.8	24	2.3	11	1.1	25	2.3	23	2.4	36	3.6
International	279	29.6	310	30.2	358	35.0	338	30.7	259	26.5	224	22.6
Two or More Races	--	--	2	0.2	7	0.7	6	0.6	9	0.9	9	0.9
Unknown	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	17	1.7	17	1.7
Not Reported	41	4.3	59	5.7	5	0.4	29	2.7	30	3.0	21	2.1
Major Field												
American Politics	178	18.8	214	20.9	210	20.5	257	23.3	218	22.3	265	26.8
Comparative Politics	290	30.7	341	33.3	276	26.9	275	25.0	239	24.5	286	28.9
International Politics	219	23.2	225	21.9	281	27.5	296	26.9	290	29.6	217	21.9
Methods	16	1.7	4	0.4	9	0.9	12	1.1	7	.7	7	.7
Political Philosophy	141	15.0	113	11.0	130	12.7	164	14.9	144	14.7	120	12.1
Public Administration	18	1.9	26	2.5	46	4.5	17	1.6	21	2.2	17	1.7
Public Law	7	0.7	27	2.6	24	2.3	8	0.7	16	1.7	13	1.4
Public Policy	30	3.1	30	2.9	19	1.8	32	2.9	16	1.7	29	2.9
Other	24	2.5	30	2.9	22	2.1	22	2.0	13	1.4	26	2.6
Unknown	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	11	1.2	7	0.7
Not Reported	24	2.5	34	3.3	2	0.8	18	1.6	2	.2	3	0.3
Degree Earned												
ABD	89	9.4	267	26.0	319	31.2	303	27.5	272	27.9	327	33.1
PhD	855	90.6	730	71.2	690	67.4	785	71.3	704	72.0	661	66.7
Unknown	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	40	4.1	11	1.2

Figure 1. Overall Placement Outcomes, AY 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15

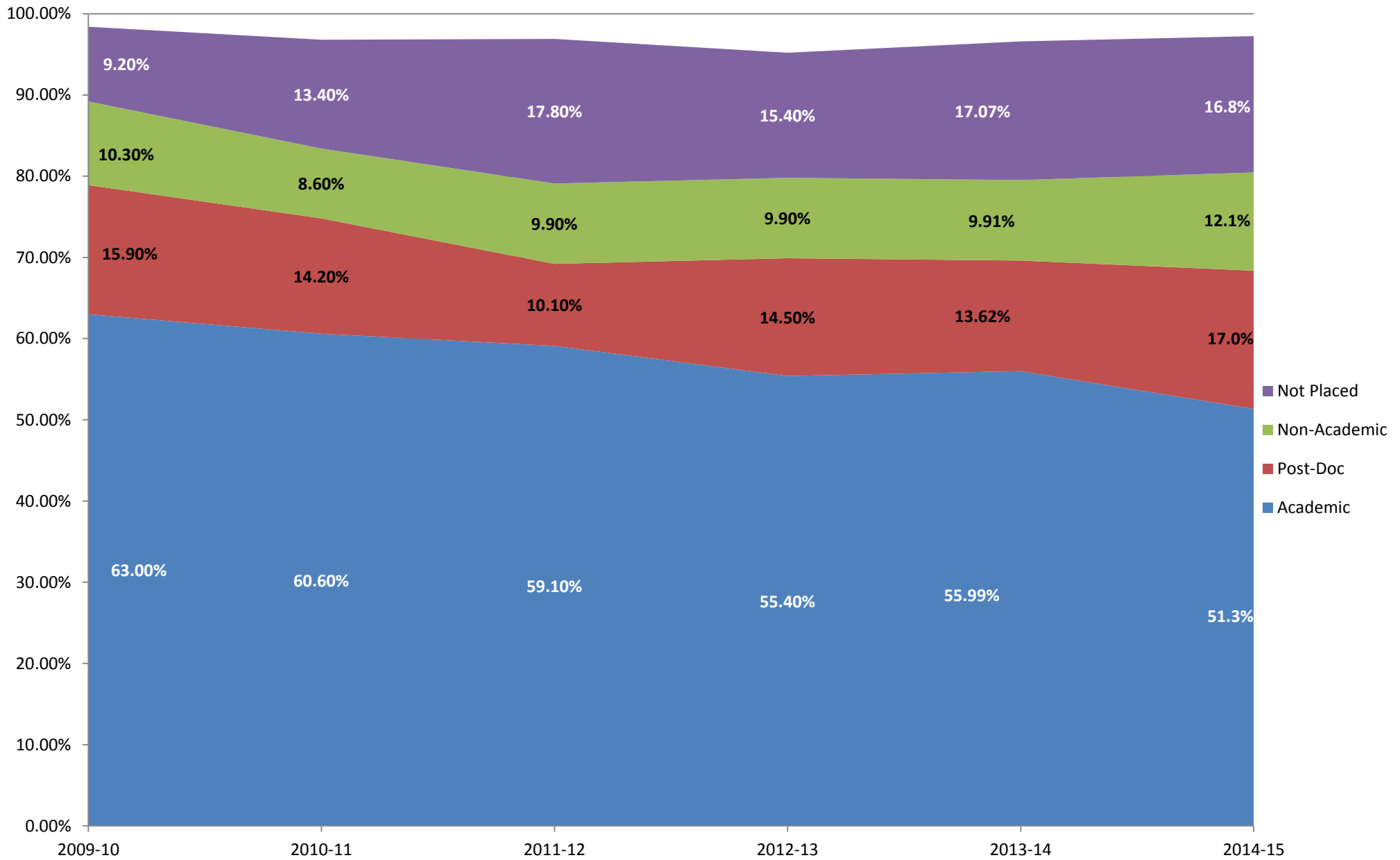


Table 2. Placement by Gender, Race & Ethnicity, Major Field and Degree Status, 2014-15

	Tenure Track		Non-Tenure-Track		Post Doc		Non-Academic		Not Placed	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
TOTAL	328	33.1	180	18.2	168	17.0	120	12.1	166	16.8
Gender										
Female	133	33.8%	77	19.5%	66	16.8%	52	13.2%	61	15.5%
Male	192	33.1%	104	17.9%	103	17.8%	61	10.5%	105	18.1%
Race/Ethnicity										
African-American	4	23.5%	5	29.4%	4	23.5%	1	5.9%	1	5.9%
American Indian/AK Native	2	40.0%	2	40.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	20.0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4	12.1%	11	33.3%	9	27.3%	2	6.1%	7	21.2%
White	207	33.3%	109	17.6%	97	15.6%	85	13.7%	109	17.6%
Latino/a	11	30.6%	4	11.1%	10	27.8%	4	11.1%	7	19.4%
International	84	37.7	45	20.1	39	17.4	16	7.0	34	15.2
Two or More Races	1	11.1%	0	0.0%	3	33.3%	5	55.6%	0	0.0%
Unknown	4	25.0%	3	18.8%	6	37.5%	0	0.0%	3	18.8%
Major Field										
American Politics	93	35.4%	69	26.2%	31	11.8%	27	10.3%	41	15.6%
Comparative Politics	97	34.3%	44	15.5%	57	20.1%	30	10.6%	47	16.6%
International Politics	77	36.2%	31	14.6%	39	18.3%	23	10.8%	39	18.3%
Methods	4	57.1%	2	28.6%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%
Political Philosophy	20	16.8%	22	18.5%	30	25.2%	20	16.8%	23	19.3%
Public Administration	10	58.8%	0	0.0%	1	5.9%	6	35.3%	0	0.0%
Public Law	10	76.9%	2	15.4%	0	0.0%	1	7.7%	0	0.0%
Public Policy	10	34.5%	4	13.8%	3	10.3%	10	34.5%	2	6.9%
Other	3	11.1%	5	18.5%	6	22.2%	2	7.4%	9	33.3%
Degree Earned										
ABD	71	22.0%	50	15.5%	71	22.0%	29	9.0%	102	31.6%
PhD	256	39.0%	130	19.8%	97	14.8%	90	13.7%	63	9.6%

Note: Excluded from this table are placement outcomes not known or not reported by departments. As a result, percentages may not add to 100.

Table 3. Placement by Degree Status, 2009 - 2015

2009-10					
	Tenure-Track	Non-Tenure Track	Post-Doc	Non-Academic	Not Placed
All Candidates	41.8%	21.1%	16.1%	10.3%	9.2%
PhD	43.6%	21.4%	15.6%	11.1%	6.7%
ABD	24.7%	18.0%	21.3%	2.2%	33.7%
2010-11					
All Candidates	37.4%	23.1%	14.2%	8.6%	13.5%
PhD	40.8%	24.5%	13.0%	10.3%	8.6%
ABD	30.0%	19.1%	18.0%	4.9%	26.2%
2011-12					
All Candidates	38.3%	20.8%	10.1%	10.0%	17.8%
PhD	38.5%	21.4%	10.4%	11.1%	14.0%
ABD	38.2%	18.8%	8.5%	7.8%	26.6%
2012-13					
All Candidates	34.7%	20.7%	14.4%	10.0%	15.4%
PhD	40.7%	19.6%	14.5%	11.0%	9.7%
ABD	20.1%	23.7%	14.8%	7.2%	30.9%
2013-14					
All Candidates	34.2%	21.8%	13.6%	9.9%	17.1%
PhD	38.8%	19.5%	13.8%	12.4%	11.9%
ABD	22.3%	27.7%	13.5%	3.6%	30.3%
2014-15					
All Candidates	33.1%	18.2%	17.0%	12.1%	16.8%
PhD	39.0%	19.8%	14.8%	13.7%	9.6%
ABD	22.0%	15.5%	22.0%	9.0%	31.6%