



2014 – 2015 APSA
DEPARTMENTAL SURVEY
DEPARTMENT FACULTY SIZE

October 31, 2016

Introduction

This report describes the average faculty sizes, defined as the number of full-time faculty, in departments of political science and government in the United States. It also describes the relative distribution of different types of faculty, including tenure-track and non-tenure track, and faculty rank; and it describes the relative differences in faculty size and distribution according to department type. We also report responses on the number of non-full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, and faculty who are jointly appointed in their departments.

Why so much attention to the different types of faculty and the kinds of departments they are located in? One of the enduring questions for scholars and faculty today – across all disciplines – is the changing nature of employment in higher education. In particular, concerns about the growth of adjunct, contingent, part-time, or any type of employment other than a traditional, tenure-track position are longstanding in discussions of the discipline and higher education.

Across all disciplines, using federal IPEDS data, the AAUP has tracked the decline in tenured and tenure-track positions, and concurrent growth in non-tenure track and part-time positions. However, most of this data is focused on reports from the individual level, and does not provide an overall picture of the composition of the department, including those faculty who are not tenured or on the tenure track. This report aims to complement these data and provide insight on department composition in particular.

In this report, department faculty are defined as individuals employed for the purpose of teaching courses or conducting research within a department offering courses in political science and government. Full-time faculty include tenure-track and tenured faculty and full-time non-tenure-track faculty such as contract faculty, visiting professors, or post-doctoral fellows. The average department size is calculated by the total number of full-time faculty reported by like departments – in this case, the highest degree offered by the department, and the type of institution (public or private) the department is located in.

Part-time faculty are defined as non-tenure-track faculty employed by the department who do not teach a full course load, and can be further divided among adjunct faculty (defined as those who teach course per semester, or one course per year) and part-time, non-tenure-track faculty (defined as those who teach more than one course per semester). We are not able to make conclusive statements about the differences between public and private institutions, though our data indicate trends among private PhD-granting departments to hire more adjunct faculty on average, and that public MA- and PhD-granting departments more frequently hire part-time non-tenure-track faculty. All other areas, however, show little variation between public and private institutions.

Faculty sizes vary according to the highest degree offered, PhD-granting departments employing a greater number of faculty than MA-granting departments, and so on. The faculty composition of departments varies by both the department type, and the type of institution the department is housed

by. Departments offering a MA or PhD as their highest degree granted reported a greater proportion of tenured faculty at the associate or full professor level, and proportionally fewer tenure-track assistant professors than smaller, BA-granting departments (including stand-alone departments of political science and government, and departments combining political science and at least one other field). BA-granting departments reported a greater proportion of tenure-track faculty in their departments, and employed smaller numbers of faculty overall, including full-time and part-time non-tenure-track faculty.

While a greater number of full-time, non-tenure-track faculty were reported on average in PhD- and MA-granting departments than in smaller, BA-granting departments, these faculty composed a slightly smaller proportion of the total full-time faculty at PhD-granting departments than MA and BA-granting departments of all types. Few, if any, BA-granting departments reported that they employ post-doctoral fellows (either research or teaching fellows).

About the Survey

The 2014-15 APSA Departmental Survey was administered to 1,302 departments at 4-year colleges and universities offering degrees and courses in Political Science and Government in the United States. 334 departments responded to the survey for an overall response rate of 25.7%. Departments of social science had a response rate of 5.5% (n = 12); BA departments combining political science with at least one other field had a response rate of 15.2% (n = 42); BA departments of political science or government had a response rate of 30.0% (n = 150); MA-granting departments had a response rate of 33.5% (n = 56); and PhD granting departments had a response rate of 52.9% (n = 74).

We encourage you to read the report carefully, and we welcome your questions, suggestions, and ideas. Please contact us with any specific questions about the findings. You can find more reports and materials on the American Political Science Association website, www.apsanet.org. You can also contact us at surveys@apsanet.org, or by calling the main APSA office at 202-483-2512.

Key Findings

Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty (Tables 1-3)

- The proportion of faculty who were either tenured or on the tenure track was greater than 80% across all department types, including by highest degree offered and whether they were public or private institutions.
- Departments offering MA or PhD degrees frequently employ a greater number of faculty than their BA counterparts, and total faculty size also varied by public or private status.
- PhD-granting departments reported that only 20.4% of their faculty were assistant professors. 24.5% of faculty at MA-granting departments were assistant professors, 21% at BA departments of political science, and 27.3% at BA-granting departments combining political science with at least one other field.
- Among PhD- and BA-granting institutions, the majority proportion of full-time faculty were tenured full professors. Full professors composed 37.9% of faculty at PhD departments and 34.8% of faculty at BA-granting departments, 28.1% at MA departments, 26.2% at combined BA departments, and only 19.2% of social science departments.

Full-Time Non-Tenure-Track Faculty (Tables 1-3)

- Full-time faculty not on the tenure track were reported most frequently by PhD- and MA-granting departments, but composed a greater proportion of faculty at MA departments (10.6% of full-time faculty), followed by BA-granting departments of all kinds, than at PhD-granting departments, where they composed 6.7% of total full-time faculty.
- Post-doctoral fellows were most likely to be reported by PhD- and MA-granting departments, with nearly all on the survey reported by these department types. On average, however, they were reported by fewer than one in two departments of these types.

Part-Time Faculty (Table 4)

- Part-time faculty of all types were reported in greater frequency by PhD- and MA-granting departments at public institutions, but the proportion of full-time to part-time faculty was higher at smaller, BA-granting departments.
- 52% of PhD-granting departments, 61.8% of MA-granting departments, and 49.7% of BA-granting departments of political science reported adjunct faculty in their department. 57.6% of all public institutions reported adjunct faculty members, compared to 42.9% of private institutions.
- Private PhD-granting institutions reported a higher average number of adjuncts employed by their departments (an average of 8.3), and these faculty composed a higher relative proportion to full-time faculty overall (24.4% of full-time faculty).

Joint Appointments (Table 5)

- Jointly-appointed faculty were most likely to be reported by BA-granting departments than by MA- or PhD-granting departments at either public or private institutions.
- Faculty holding joint appointments in other departments were most likely to hold additional appointments in departments of International Studies (35%), Gender Studies (13.3%), Science/Technology (12.5%), Law (9.2%), Policy Studies (5.8%) or Public Affairs/Administration (5%).

Table 1. Full-Time Faculty – All Departments

	PhD		MA		BA		BA Comb		Social Sciences	
# Responding Departments	75		55		151		42		12	
	mean	% of total	mean	% of total	mean	% of total	mean	% of total	mean	% of total
Tenured Full Professor	10.5	37.9%	4.5	28.1%	3.0	34.8%	2.1	26.2%	1.6	19.2%
Tenured Associate Professor	8.3	29.9%	5.2	32.3%	2.7	30.5%	2.5	31.1%	2.6	30.4%
Tenure Track Assistant Professor	5.7	20.4%	4.0	24.5%	1.8	21.0%	2.2	27.3%	3.1	37.2%
Full-Time Non-Tenure-Track Faculty	1.8	6.7%	1.7	10.6%	0.8	8.9%	0.8	9.2%	0.7	8.4%
Visiting Professor	.7	2.4%	0.5	3.4%	0.4	4.5%	0.4	4.7%	0.4	4.7%
Post-Doctoral Fellows – Research	.4	1.6%	0.1	0.6%	0.0	0.1%	0.0	0.5%	0.0	0.0%
Post-Doctoral Fellows – Teaching	.4	1.3%	0.1	0.6%	0.0	0.3%	0.1	1.0%	0.0	0.0%
Average Faculty Size	27.8	100.0%	16.2	100.0%	8.7	100.0%	8.2	100.0%	8.5	100.0%
Average Tenured/Tenured Track	24.5	88.2%	13.7	84.9%	7.5	86.3%	6.9	84.7%	7.3	86.8%

Table 2. Full-Time Faculty - Public

	PhD		MA		BA		BA Comb		Social Sciences	
# Responding Departments	53		41		52		16		3	
	mean	% of total	mean	% of total	mean	% of total	mean	% of total	mean	% of total
Tenured Full Professor	9.4	36.1%	4.9	28.2%	3.4	32.2%	2.6	25.0%	3.5	17.9%
Tenured Associate Professor	8.0	30.7%	5.3	29.9%	3.1	29.1%	2.7	26.1%	5.0	25.6%
Tenure Track Assistant Professor	5.6	21.5%	4.7	26.7%	2.3	22.1%	3.1	29.8%	9.0	46.2%
Full-Time Non-Tenure-Track Faculty	1.8	7.0%	1.9	10.7%	1.2	11.0%	1.3	12.3%	2.0	10.3%
Visiting Professor	0.6	2.4%	0.6	3.2%	0.6	5.6%	0.4	4.3%	0.0	0.0%
Post-Doctoral Fellows – Research	0.4	1.4%	0.1	0.7%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
Post-Doctoral Fellows – Teaching	0.3	1.0%	0.1	0.5%	0.0	0.0%	0.3	2.4%	0.0	0.0%
Average Faculty Size	25.9	100.0%	17.6	100.0%	10.5	100.0%	10.3	100.0%	19.5	100.0%
Average Tenured/Tenure-Track	22.9	88.2%	14.9	84.8%	8.8	83.4%	8.4	80.9%	17.5	89.7%

Table 3. Full Time Faculty - Private										
	PhD		MA		BA		BA Comb		Social Sciences	
# Responding Departments	22		14		99		26		9	
	mean	% of total	mean	% of total	mean	% of total	mean	% of total	mean	% of total
Tenured Full Professor	14.3	41.9%	3.5	28.1%	2.8	36.8%	1.9	27.7%	1.0	25.0%
Tenured Associate Professor	9.6	28.1%	5.1	41.3%	2.4	31.6%	2.4	35.5%	1.6	40.0%
Tenure Track Assistant Professor	5.9	17.4%	1.9	15.4%	1.5	20.0%	1.7	24.9%	0.8	20.0%
Full-Time Non-Tenure-Track Faculty	2.0	5.9%	1.3	10.5%	0.5	7.1%	0.4	6.0%	0.2	5.0%
Visiting Professor	0.7	2.1%	0.5	4.0%	0.3	3.8%	0.4	5.1%	0.4	10.0%
Post-Doctoral Fellows – Research	0.8	2.2%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.2%	0.1	0.9%	0.0	0.0%
Post-Doctoral Fellows – Teaching	0.8	2.3%	0.1	0.7%	0.0	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
Average Faculty Size	34.0	100.0%	12.5	100.0%	7.7	100.0%	6.9	100.0%	4.0	100.0%
Average Tenured/Tenure-Track	29.8	87.5%	10.6	84.8%	6.8	88.4%	6.1	88.0%	3.4	85.0%

Table 4. Non-Tenure-Track Faculty in Departments of Political Science/Government, Averages and Average Proportion of Full-Time Faculty										
All										
	n	%*	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
	PhD		MA		BA		BA Combined		Social Sciences	
Part-Time Non-Tenure-Track Faculty (>1 course/semester)	1.16	4.2%	1.92	11.9%	0.89	10.2%	1.89	23.1%	0.8	9.5%
Adjunct Faculty (≤1 course/semester)	4.8	17.3%	4.72	29.2%	2.1	24%	1.83	22.4%	1.2	14.2%
Public										
	PhD		MA		BA		BA Combined		Social Sciences	
Part-Time Non-Tenure-Track Faculty (>1 course/semester)	1.07	4.1%	2.52	14.4%	1.76	16.7%	1.89	18.3%	3	15.4%
Adjunct Faculty (≤1 course/semester)	3.61	13.9%	5.06	28.8%	2.56	24.3%	3.70	35.9%	1	5.1%
Private										
	PhD		MA		BA		BA Combined		Social Sciences	
Part-Time Non-Tenure-Track Faculty (>1 course/semester)	1.55	4.5%	0.45	3.6%	0.41	5.4%	1.89	27.5%	0.25	6.3%
Adjunct Faculty (≤1 course/semester)	8.31	24.4%	3.73	29.9%	1.79	23.3%	0.9	13.1%	1.25	31.3%

*Percents in this table reflect the relative proportion of part-time faculty to full-time faculty at the same department type.

Table 5. Average Number of Jointly Appointed Faculty by Highest Degree Offered and Institution Type

PhD		MA		BA		BA Comb		Social Sciences	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
All									
1.54	5.5%	2.40	14.8%	2.29	26.3%	2.75	33.6%	3.13	37%
Public									
1.55	6%	2.31	13.1%	2.17	20.6%	2.43	23.5%	1.50	7.7%
Private									
1.50	4.4%	2.64	21.2%	2.36	30.7%	2.95	42.9%	3.67	91.7%