



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

Proportion of Tenured/ Tenure-Track Positions in the Academic Psychology Workforce Continues to Decrease

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
CENTER FOR WORKFORCE STUDIES

MARCH 2020

KEY FINDINGS

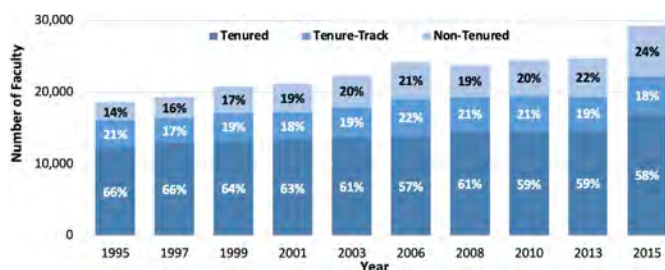
- Approximately **76 percent** of the academic psychology workforce held **tenured/tenure-track positions** and 24 percent held non-tenured positions.
- The proportion of **tenured/tenure-track** positions **decreased** from 86 to 76 percent between 1995 and 2015, while the proportion of non-tenured positions increased from 14 to 24 percent.
- The percentage of tenured/tenure-track positions was highest within **research-oriented subfields** such as social psychology and industrial/organizational psychology.
- Most faculty become tenured **4-9 years** after they earned their doctorates

In 2015, approximately 29,300 psychology research doctorates worked as faculty (assistant, associate, or full professor). Approximately 76 percent held tenured/tenure-track positions and 24 percent held non-tenured positions.¹

¹ All data are from National Science Foundation, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics. (1995-2015). Survey of Doctorate Recipients Restricted-Use Microdata File, Codebook, and Technical Notes. The use of NSF data does not imply NSF endorsement of the research, research methods, or conclusions contained in this report. Non-tenured positions include (1) positions that are not on tenure track, and (2) positions that are not applicable to tenure system.

FIGURE 1.

THE ACADEMIC PSYCHOLOGY WORKFORCE BY TENURE STATUS, 1995-2015



Source: 1995-2015 Survey of Doctorate Recipients, National Science Foundation.

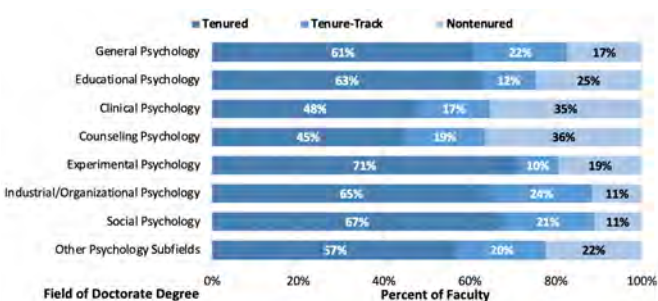
Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Over the last two decades, the number of faculty in tenured/tenure-track positions increased by 39 percent, whereas the number of faculty in non-tenured positions increased by 179 percent. However, the proportion of tenured/tenure-track positions decreased from 86 to 76 percent, and the proportion of non-tenured positions increased from 14 to 24 percent.

The percentage of tenured/tenure-track positions was highest for faculty with research doctorates in research-oriented subfields such as social psychology (89 percent) and industrial/organizational psychology (89 percent). The percentage of tenured/tenure track positions was lowest for faculty with research doctorates in health service psychology subfields such as clinical psychology (48 percent) and counseling psychology (45 percent).

FIGURE 2.

THE ACADEMIC PSYCHOLOGY WORKFORCE BY FIELD OF DOCTORATE AND TENURE STATUS, 2015

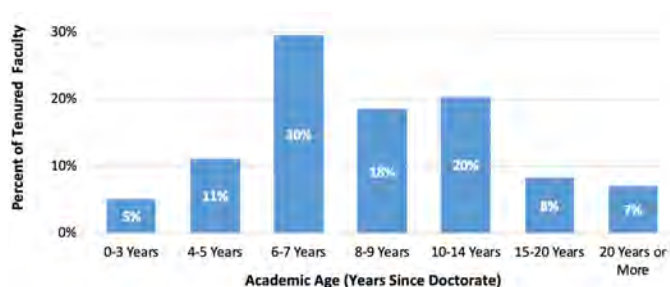


Source: 2015 Survey of Doctorate Recipients, National Science Foundation.

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

FIGURE 3.

ACADEMIC AGE AT TENURE WITHIN THE ACADEMIC PSYCHOLOGY WORKFORCE, 2015



Source: 2015 Survey of Doctorate Recipients, National Science Foundation.

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Among tenured faculty, most (59 percent) become tenured 4-9 years after they earned their doctorates. About five percent of faculty were tenured within three years of earning their doctorates, and about a third (35 percent) were tenured ten or more years after earning doctorates.

For more information about the academic psychology workforce, please refer to the report: American Psychological Association. (2019). *The Academic Psychology Workforce: Characteristics of Psychology Research Doctorates in Faculty Positions (1995-2015)*. www.apa.org/workforce/publications/academic-psychology

SUGGESTED CITATION

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Factsheet: Proportion of Tenured/Tenure-Track Positions within the Academic Psychology Workforce Continue to Decrease*. www.apa.org/workforce/publications/academic-psychology/tenure