

# Job Advertisement Data 2021–24

## Society of Biblical Literature and American Academy of Religion

### Executive Summary

As expected, the number of positions advertised through the [AAR-SBL Employment Services](#) changed drastically in the years around the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the 2024 numbers appear to be in line with the declines seen in pre-pandemic data, potentially indicating a larger trend disrupted between 2020 and 2022.

The key findings for these years are below, followed by more complete data analysis. When reviewing this report, note that the data in it represent only the jobs posted with AAR and SBL. While it is a representative sample of the job market, the data does not necessarily reflect all positions in the field, in particular positions outside of North America as well as adjunct positions, which may be locally advertised.

### Key Findings

- The number of all positions advertised decreased drastically in AY20 and AY21, as expected due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with AY21 listing the lowest number of postings in our record keeping since 2003. However, the AY22 listings rebounded, setting a seven year high. The total number of positions decreased in AY23 and AY24, with AY23 on par with expectations from pre-COVID-19 years and AY24 with a larger decrease.
- Regarding faculty positions:
  - Tenure-track or tenured positions decreased from 75.4% of faculty postings in AY20 to 71.1% of postings in AY24, compared to a record low of 60% of postings in AY21. On average, between AY21–24, 63.6% of faculty positions were listed as tenure-track or tenured positions.
  - Faculty positions increased after a negative spike in AY21 at only 73.6% of positions posted to 77.7% of positions in AY24.
    - Entry-level positions decreased 25.3% from AY19 to AY24.
    - Mid-level and Upper-level positions remained the same in AY20 and AY24, despite variations in the years between.
  - In AY24, 58.3% of entry-level faculty positions were tenure-track or tenured.
- Only 2.1% of the jobs listed between AY21–24 were less than full-time.

- Out of the 1061 jobs listed between AY21–24, only 11.0% of jobs were listed as visiting appointments. AY21 had the highest percentage of positions listed as visiting positions with 15.0%.

## Data Analysis

After remaining steady in AY18 and AY19 at a historic low of 403 postings, the number of postings continued to decrease through AY20 and AY21 reaching a new historic low, followed by a spike reminiscent of AY16 levels in AY22 ([Table 1](#)). The number of discrete institutions changed at a similar rate to that of the total number of postings, just over 30% between AY20 and AY24 (Figure 1). The number of positions at public institutions increased 86.6% over the same period, reaching record highs, while the number of positions at private not-for-profit institutions decreased 18.7% ([Table 2](#)).

Figure 1. Number of Positions and Number of Discrete Institutions AY17–24

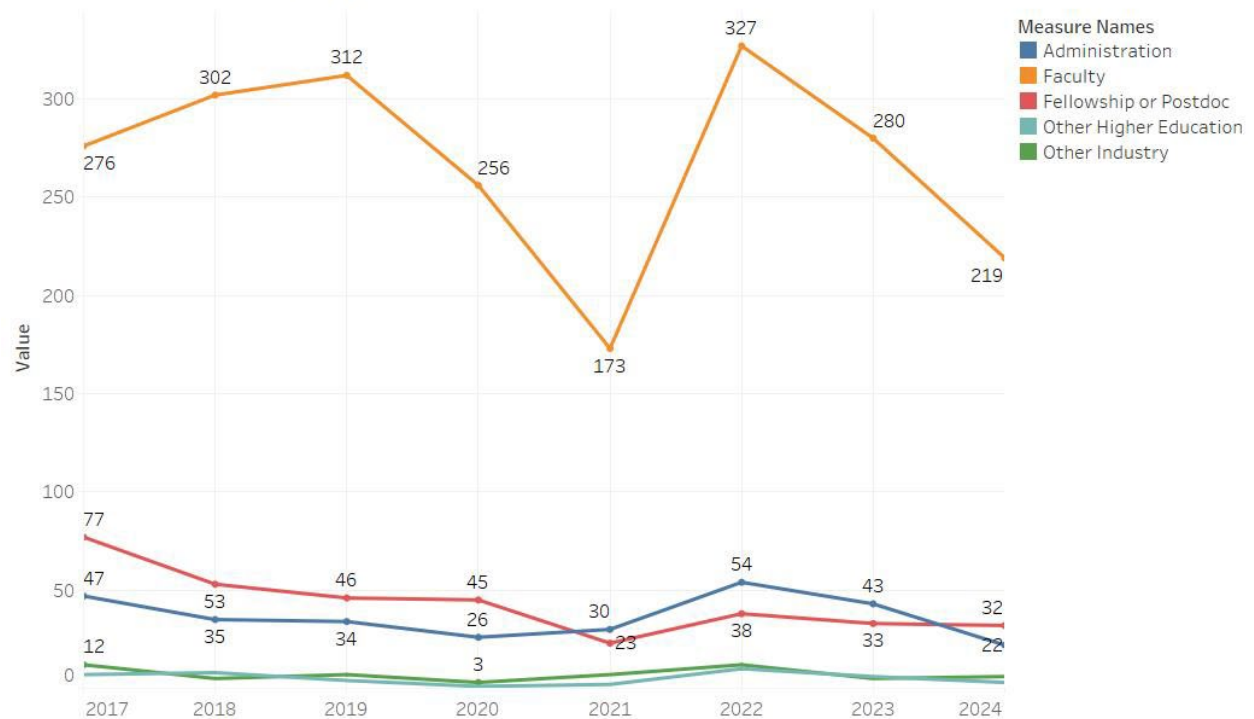


The concentration of positions at Baccalaureate institutions increased from 13% to 18% between AY22 and AY24, while the concentration of Master's institutions remained stable. The concentration of Research institutions increased from 48% to 53%, and Special Focus institutions decreased from 26% to 15%. Positions at special focus institutions reached a ten-year low in 2024, with only 39 postings ([Table 3](#)).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For more information on these classifications, see the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education at [http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/classification\\_descriptions/basic.php](http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/classification_descriptions/basic.php).

After a steady decline from 2008–2017, faculty positions followed the trajectory of overall positions from 2019–2024. While faculty and fellowship/postdoc positions decreased, Administration, Other Higher Education (e.g., Librarian, Non-faculty Researcher), and Other Industry positions (e.g., K-12 and Publishing) categories saw increases in AY21 ([Table 4](#), Figure 2).

Figure 2. Position Types, AY17–24



Entry-level and mid-level faculty positions saw a marked decrease since 2019, disregarding the bounce-back in 2022. Upper-level positions were constant in 2020 and 2024, despite historic lows in AY21, notable in comparison to entry-level positions, which decreased 15.2% from 2020 to 2024. ([Table 5](#)).

Non-tenure track faculty positions increased from 55 positions in AY20 to 59 positions in AY24. Tenure-track positions rebounded to AY17 levels in AY23, then continued to decrease into AY24 ([Table 6](#)).

Figure 3. Annual Course Load (Faculty)



The annual course load distribution was also drastically affected by COVID-19 (Figure 3). A course load of five to six continues to be the highest; however, there was a decrease of 12.1% in AY24. A course load of three to four increased in AY24 (36.3%), rebounding to a similar proportion of classes as in AY22 ([Table 7](#), [8](#)).

When reviewing data from Tables 9, 10, and 11, it is important to note that this information is not required for employers to list when posting a job. Several employers leave these fields empty.

Fittingly, positions that required or desired Online Course Instruction Experience increased 82.4% during the pandemic but returned to pre-pandemic levels by AY24. The percentage of postings that desired or required a PhD reached a 10 year low at 72.6%. Additionally, the percentage of employers who desire or require Ordination and Religious Affiliation/Commitment decreased ([Table 9](#)). A PhD continues to be the most desired and required qualification across position levels. Preferences or requirements for Published Book(s) and/or Monograph(s), Published Journal Article(s), and Interdisciplinary Teaching or Research all increase as the position level increases ([Table 10](#)).

While some qualifications are consistently desired or required across institution type, there are significant differences for certain qualifications. The percentage of jobs that

either desire or require the following qualifications is significantly for higher special focus institutions: administrative experience, online course experience, ordination, published books and/or monographs, published journal articles, and religious affiliation ([Table 11](#)).

[Table 12](#) shows fields of expertise for positions listed with AAR-SBL Employment Services. Employers are allowed to select multiple fields for each posting.

After falling alongside the number of postings in AY21, the number of countries represented in job postings bounced back to prepandemic levels. In AY24, sixteen countries were represented, compared to thirteen in AY20 (Figure 7). In the years represented in figures 4 –7, The United States had the greatest number of positions listed at 1,131 with Canada and Great Britain following with ninety-two and twenty positions, respectively.

Figure 4. Positions by Country AY21

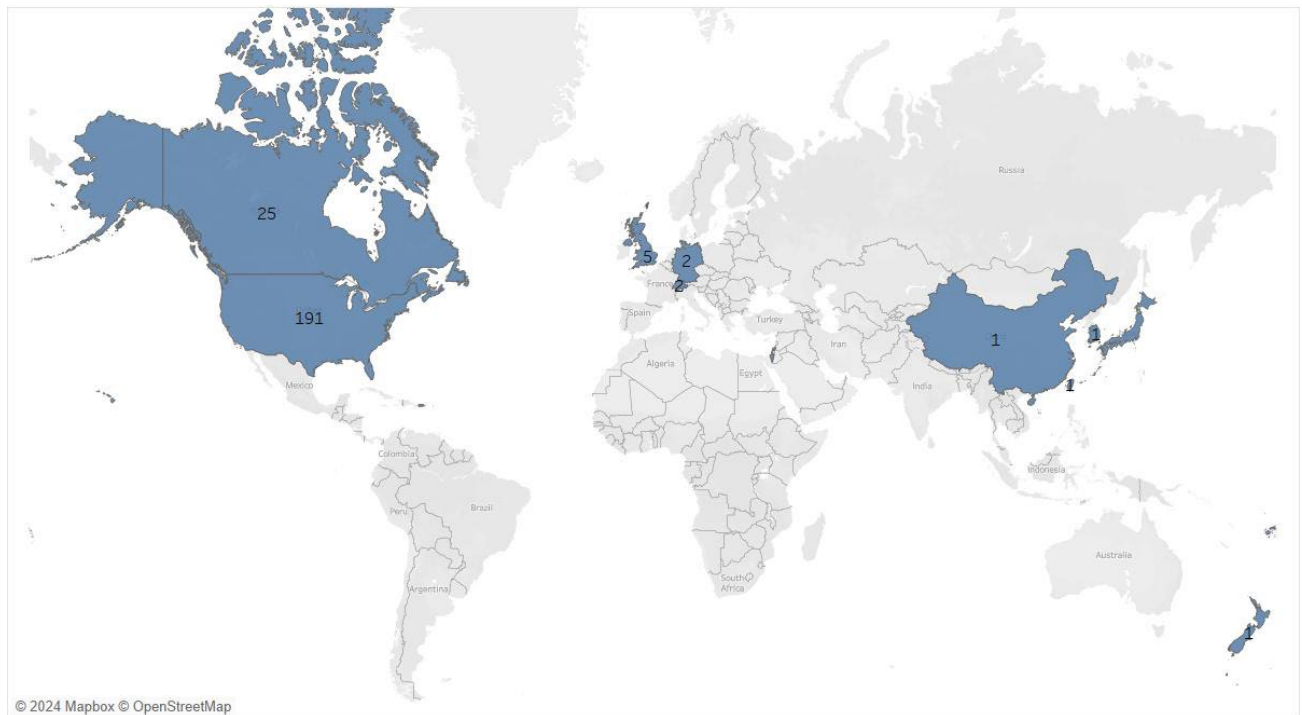


Figure 5. Positions by Country AY22

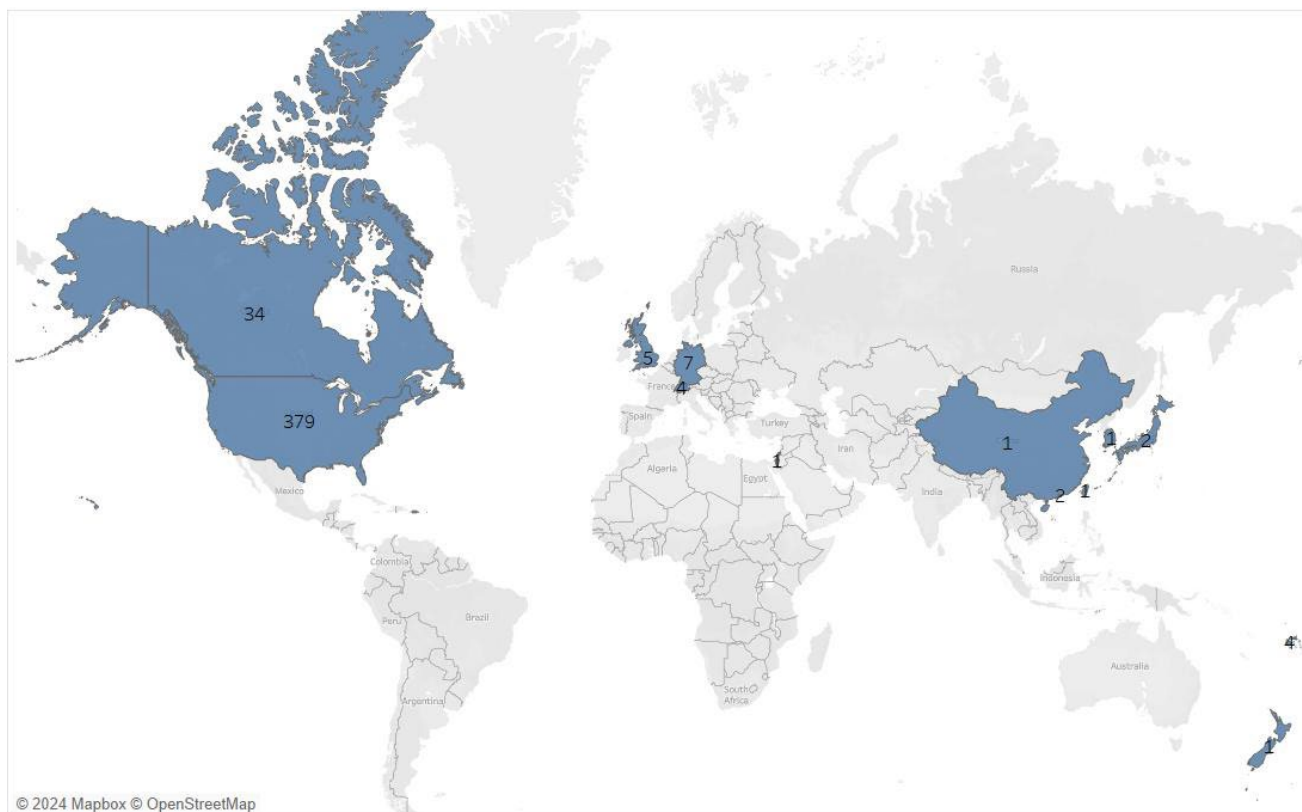


Figure 6. Positions by Country AY23

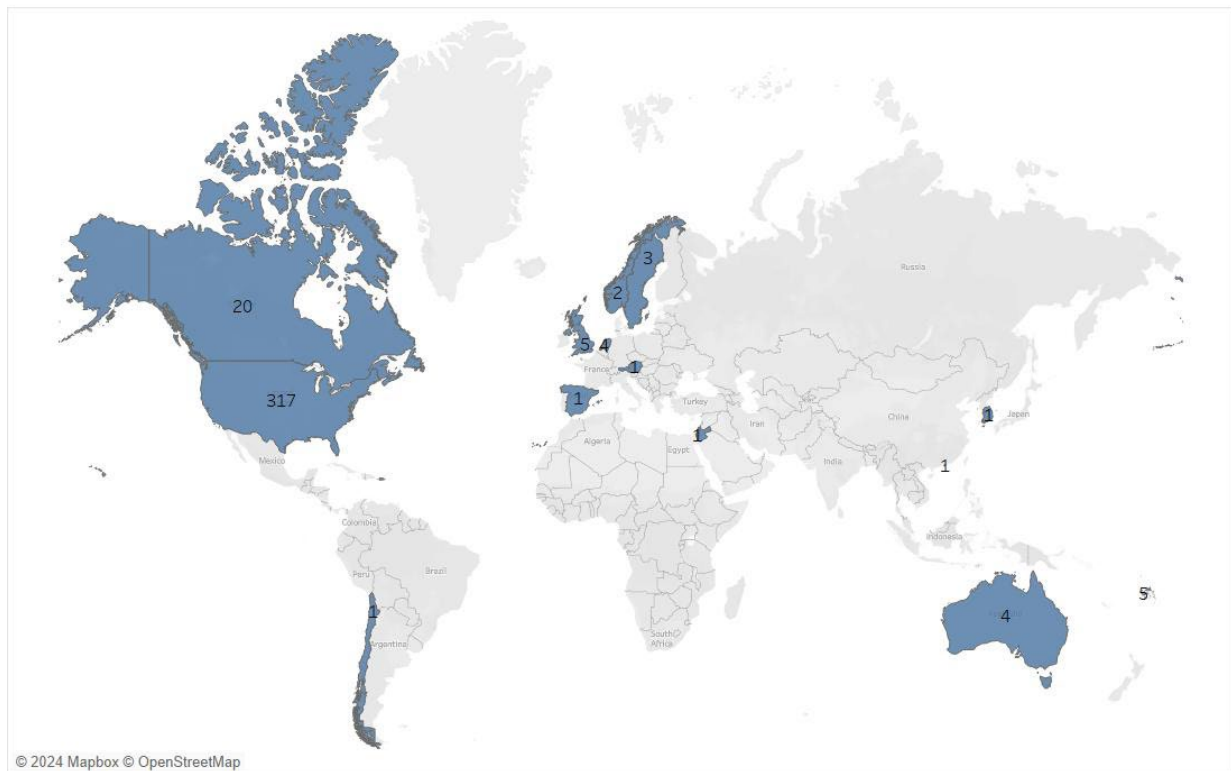


Figure 7. Positions by Country AY24

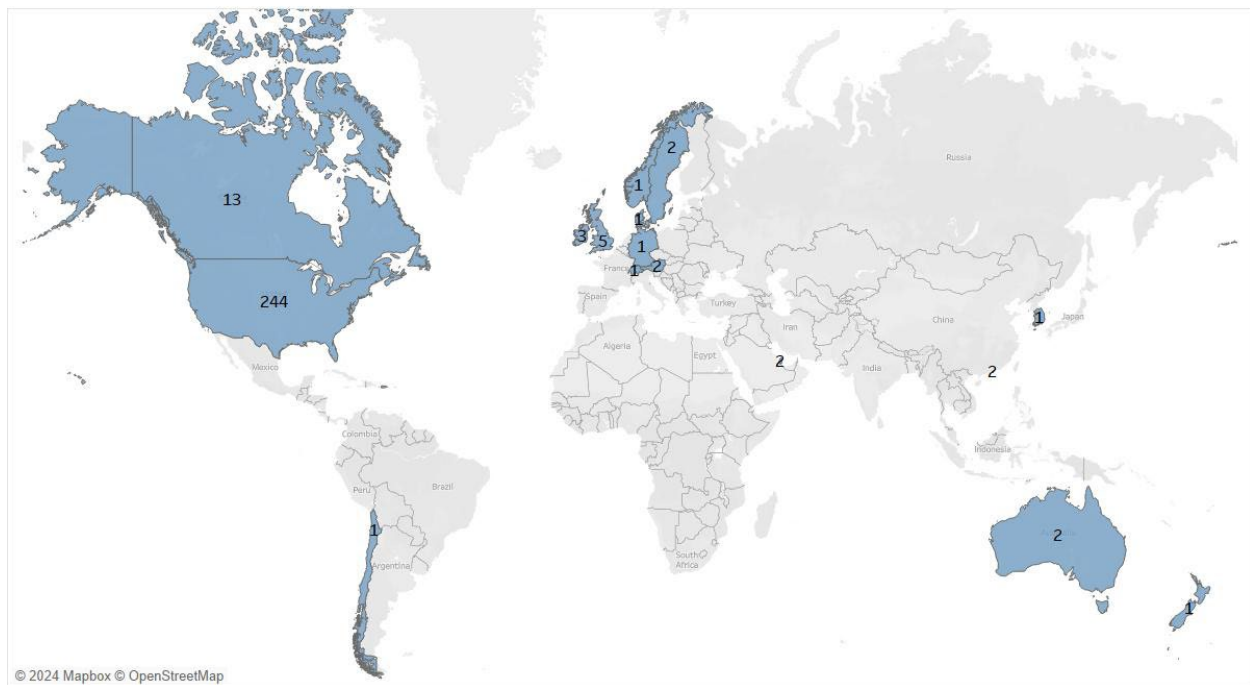




Table 1. History of Positions

	AY 17	AY 18	AY 19	AY 20	AY 21	AY22	AY23	AY24
Number of Positions	420	403	403	331	235	442	367	282
Year over year growth/decline (pct)	4.0	-6.3	0.0	-17.9	-29.0	88.0	-17.0	-23.2

Table 2. Institution Control

	AY 17	AY 18	AY 19	AY 20	AY 21	AY 22	AY 23	AY 24
Private for-profit				2		1	1	1
Private not-for-profit	267	278	282	219	144	293	240	178
Public	56	66	63	45	25	80	86	84
Total	323	344	345	266	169	374	327	263
Missing or not applicable (n)	97	59	58	65	66	67	40	19
Grand Total	2882							

Table 3. Institution Type

	AY17	AY 18	AY 19	AY 20	AY 21	AY 22	AY 23	AY 24
Associate		1					1	
Baccalaureate	82	73	59	51	36	52	52	49
Master's	63	67	60	47	27	59	51	39
Research	123	141	164	118	62	197	168	141
Special Focus	55	59	61	59	44	106	79	39
Total	323	341	344	275	169	414	351	268
Missing or not applicable (n)	97	62	59	66	66	27	16	14
Grand Total	2882							



Table 4. Position Type (n)

	AY17	AY18	AY 19	AY 20	AY 21	AY22	AY23	AY24
Administration	47	35	34	26	30	54	43	22
Faculty	276	302	312	256	173	327	280	219
Fellowship or Postdoc	77	53	46	45	23	38	33	32
Other Higher Education (e.g., Librarian, Non- faculty Researcher)	7	8	4	1	2	10	6	5
Other Industry (e.g., K- 12, Nonprofit, Publishing)	12	5	7	3	7	12	5	6
Total	419	403	403	331	235	441	367	282

Table 5. Position Level of Seniority (n, Faculty)

	AY17	AY18	AY 19	AY 20	AY 21	AY22	AY23	AY24
Entry-level	205	214	225	198	128	254	199	168
Mid-level	29	34	38	23	16	36	30	23
Upper-level	11	10	10	12	4	9	13	12
Open or unspecified	31	44	39	23	25	28	37	16
Total	276	302	312	256	173	327	279	219
Grand Total	2144							

Table 6. Position Tenure Status (n, Faculty)

	AY17	AY18	AY19	AY 20	AY 21	AY22	AY23	AY24
Non-tenure track or term-limited	70	66	77	55	64	81	73	59
Tenure-track or tenured	175	207	211	169	96	218	175	145
Total	245	273	288	224	160	299	248	204
Missing or not applicable	31	29	24	32	13	28	31	15

Table 7. Total Annual Number of Courses (n, faculty)

	AY17	AY18	AY 19	AY 20	AY 21	AY22	AY23	AY24
One to two	2	9	11	4	4	2	9	6
Three to four	43	60	62	50	41	99	59	62
Five to six	85	79	76	69	41	112	102	72
Seven to eight	23	34	33	29	17	45	40	30
Nine or more	1	2	4	5	2	3	3	1
Total	154	184	186	157	105	261	213	171
Missing or not applicable	122	118	126	99	68	66	66	48
Grand Total	2144							

Table 8. Total Annual Number of Courses (pct, Faculty)

	AY17	AY18	AY 19	AY 20	AY 21	AY22	AY23	AY24
One to two	1.3	4.9	5.9	2.5	3.8	0.8	4.2	3.5
Three to four	27.9	32.6	33.3	31.8	39.0	37.9	27.7	36.3
Five to six	55.2	42.9	40.9	43.9	39.0	42.9	47.9	42.1
Seven to eight	14.9	18.5	17.7	18.4	16.2	17.2	18.8	17.5
Nine or more	0.6	1.1	2.2	3.2	1.9	1.1	1.4	0.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Missing or not applicable (n)	122	118	126	99	68	66	66	48

Table 9. Qualifications Desired/Required by Employers (pct, Faculty, AY17–AY24)

	Type	AY17	AY18	AY 19	AY 20	AY 21	AY22	AY23	AY24
Administrative Experience	Desired	4.5	3.3	5.8	9.0	6.9	6.7	7.2	4.6
	Required	3.6	3.6	5.1	3.5	2.9	4.9	6.1	3.7
	Total	8.2	7.0	10.9	12.5	9.8	11.6	13.3	8.2
Affirmative Action Eligibility	Desired	6.8	5.3	4.8	6.3	8.1	6.7	3.6	5.0
	Required	0.9	1.7	1.3	0.8	0.6	0.0	3.6	1.8
	Total	7.7	7.0	6.1	7.0	8.7	6.7	7.2	6.8
Interdisciplinary Teaching or Research	Desired	14.5	13.6	10.9	16.8	15.0	16.5	12.9	14.2
	Required	11.8	13.6	9.3	11.7	8.1	10.4	12.2	9.1
	Total	26.4	27.2	20.2	28.5	23.1	26.9	25.1	23.3
Online Course Instruction Experience	Desired	14.1	13.2	10.6	13.7	16.8	15.6	13.6	10.5
	Required	1.8	3.6	2.6	3.1	6.4	8.3	6.5	5.0
	Total	15.9	16.9	13.1	16.8	23.1	23.9	20.1	15.5
Ordination	Desired	5.5	3.6	2.9	5.1	6.9	5.2	2.2	1.8
	Required	1.4	0.7	1.0	0.4	1.2	1.8	2.5	1.4
	Total	6.8	4.3	3.8	5.5	8.1	7.0	4.7	3.2
PhD	Desired	16.4	13.2	13.5	14.5	18.5	18.3	10.8	12.3
	Required	80.9	64.2	62.2	64.8	67.1	66.1	64.2	60.3
	Total	97.3	77.5	75.6	79.3	85.5	84.4	74.9	72.6
Published Book(s) and/or Monograph(s)	Desired	17.7	17.2	11.5	16.0	14.5	13.8	12.5	11.0
	Required	7.3	5.0	4.2	7.0	4.0	0.0	7.9	6.8
	Total	25.0	22.2	15.7	23.0	18.5	13.8	20.4	17.8
Published Journal Article(s)	Desired	23.6	21.2	16.7	16.8	16.2	19.3	17.6	12.8
	Required	9.1	8.9	6.7	11.7	9.2	4.0	10.4	10.0
	Total	32.7	30.1	23.4	28.5	25.4	23.3	28.0	22.8
Religious Affiliation/Commitment (bona fide occupational qualification) <sup>2</sup>	Desired	5.0	4.0	2.9	7.0	6.9	4.0	2.5	0.9
	Required	13.2	8.9	11.2	9.4	12.7	14.7	11.1	10.0
	Total	18.2	12.9	14.1	16.4	19.7	18.7	13.6	11.0
Student Services Experience	Desired	1.8	1.0	1.0	3.5	1.2	2.4	3.2	2.3
	Required	0.5	0.7	1.0	1.2	0.0	0.9	1.8	0.9
	Total	2.3	1.7	1.9	4.7	1.2	3.4	5.0	3.2
Teaching Experience	Desired	27.3	22.2	21.2	16.0	22.0	24.8	17.6	21.9
	Required	44.5	24.5	36.5	40.6	44.5	41.0	37.3	33.8
	Total	71.8	46.7	57.7	56.6	66.5	65.7	54.8	55.7
U.S. Citizenship	Desired	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.4	1.2	0.6	0.7	0.5
	Required	0.0	0.7	1.6	2.0	0.6	2.4	1.4	2.3
	Total	0.4	1.0	1.6	2.3	1.7	3.1	2.2	2.7

<sup>2</sup> Employers are required to provide details of religious affiliation.

Table 10. Selected Qualifications Desired/Required by Employers by Level (pct, Faculty, AY20–AY24)

Qualification	Type	Entry-level	Mid-level	Upper-level
Interdisciplinary Teaching or Research	Desired	16.1	13.3	26.3
	Required	11.4	14.8	28.9
	Total	27.5	28.1	55.3
Online Course Instruction Experience	Desired	14.8	14.1	13.2
	Required	5.8	10.9	7.9
	Total	20.6	25.0	21.1
PhD	Desired	16.8	10.9	2.6
	Required	51.6	54.7	68.4
	Total	68.4	65.6	71.1
Published Book(s) and/or Monograph(s)	Desired	14.5	12.5	10.5
	Required	3.9	24.2	39.5
	Total	18.4	36.7	50.0
Published Journal Article(s)	Desired	18.9	10.2	7.9
	Required	9.4	25.8	36.8
	Total	28.3	35.9	44.7
Teaching Experience	Desired	24.0	8.6	13.2
	Required	32.1	43.8	52.6
	Total	56.1	52.3	65.8

Table 11. Qualifications Desired/Required by Institution Type (pct, Faculty, AY20–AY24)

	Type	Baccalaureate	Master's	Research	Special Focus
Administrative Experience	Desired	4.6	3.1	3.6	10.4
	Required	5.4	3.1	2.0	5.5
	Total	10.0	6.3	5.7	15.9
Affirmative Action Eligibility	Desired	3.8	6.7	3.5	5.5
	Required	2.1	4.5	2.0	3.4
	Total	5.8	10.8	5.5	8.9
Interdisciplinary Teaching or Research	Desired	11.7	13.9	10.1	13.5
	Required	11.3	6.7	6.6	11.6
	Total	22.9	20.6	16.6	25.1
Online Course Instruction Experience	Desired	5.4	11.7	6.6	22.6
	Required	7.5	4.9	2.5	9.8
	Total	9.2	16.6	9.0	32.4
Ordination	Desired	1.3	1.8	0.9	9.2
	Required	1.3	3.6	0.7	3.4
	Total	2.5	5.4	1.6	12.5
PhD	Desired	15.8	12.1	7.3	16.8
	Required	41.3	39.9	36.4	39.4
	Total	57.1	52.0	43.7	56.3
Published Book(s) and/or Monograph(s)	Desired	8.3	10.3	8.2	17.4
	Required	2.5	4.0	4.4	8.3
	Total	10.8	14.3	12.5	25.7
Published Journal Article(s)	Desired	8.3	14.3	12.1	15.9
	Required	2.5	8.1	7.1	12.5
	Total	10.8	22.4	19.2	28.4
Religious Affiliation/Commitment (bona fide occupational qualification) <sup>3</sup>	Desired	12.5	1.8	1.0	7.6
	Required	4.6	3.1	5.0	12.5
	Total	17.1	4.9	6.0	20.2
Student Services Experience	Desired	1.3	2.7	1.5	4.3
	Required	0.8	0.9	0.6	2.1
	Total	2.1	3.1	2.0	6.4
Teaching Experience	Desired	15.0	16.1	14.7	21.4
	Required	25.8	22.4	22.2	26.6
	Total	40.8	38.6	36.9	48.6
U.S. Citizenship	Desired	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.9
	Required	2.1	1.3	0.6	1.5
	Total	2.1	2.7	0.6	2.4

<sup>3</sup> Employers are required to provide details of religious affiliation.

Table 12. Position Fields of Expertise (n, Faculty)

	AY 17	AY18	AY 19	AY 20	AY 21	AY 22	AY 23	AY 24	Total
Administration and Support Services	53	45	38	32	35	2	10	5	220
Ancient Near Eastern Languages	8	17	11	3	4	2	4	3	52
Archaeology - Ancient Near East	6	24	9	5	3	1	3	2	53
Archaeology - Greco-Roman	4	12	5	5	4	0	4	2	36
Arts, Literature, and Religion	27	37	38	28	12	3	19	6	170
Asian Religions (general or not listed separately)	34	33	28	23	23	13	23	15	192
Biblical Languages	17	34	20	15	16	7	10	17	136
Buddhism	23	21	20	19	16	5	23	16	143
Catholic Studies	13	17	23	14	8	5	20	10	110
Catholic Theology (all areas)	24	29	35	25	19	13	22	13	180
Christian Ethics	25	33	27	21	14	12	28	15	175
Christian Studies	34	18	25	22	13	9	37	13	171
Christian Theology (general or not listed separately)	42	30	34	35	27	24	39	19	250
Christian Theology: Practical/Praxis	23	21	22	19	10	15	24	7	141
Christian Theology: Systematic/Constructive	25	19	19	12	14	18	24	12	143
Classics	12	18	18	11	5	2	7	5	78
Comparative Religions	42	37	26	25	22	10	22	16	200
Critical Studies/Theory/Methods in Religion	23	29	15	13	11	6	12	9	118
Early Christianity/Church History	33	34	22	21	11	10	24	13	168
Early Judaism	12	28	23	10	11	6	17	5	112
East Asian Religions (general or not listed separately)	17	18	15	10	13	10	15	13	111

Editorial/Journalism/Media	3		1	4	3				11
Epigraphy	4	12	2	1	1		1		21
Gay/Lesbian Studies in Religion	13	8	22	8	5	2	13	5	76
Hebrew Bible/Old Testament	35	62	58	36	24	22	30	33	300
Hinduism	23	17	17	13	9	5	13	9	106
History of Christianity/Church History	31	37	30	24	12	20	29	21	204
History of Religion (general)	26	38	27	19	15	11	25	14	175
Indigenous/Native/Traditional Religions	16	26	25	17	13	11	23	12	143
Interreligious Studies				17	4	14	14	10	59
Introduction to Religion	18	20	10	12	7	7	10	17	101
Islam/Islamic Studies	42	56	35	34	12	14	33	18	244
Judaism/Jewish Studies	34	47	41	25	23	25	37	16	248
Library	8	4	5	2	1				20
Missiology	4	5	1	6	5	4	7	0	32
New Religious Movements	13	4	7	6	3	5	6	2	46
New Testament	41	53	53	43	31	31	29	27	308
North American Religions	22	28	24	16	10	6	17	5	128
Pastoral Care	19	10	12	17	9	12	10	3	92
Philosophy of Religion	22	33	27	17	13	10	20	15	157
Practical/Praxis Theology						0	1	1	2
Preaching/Ministry/Liturgical Studies	15	16	11	11	10	8	9	7	87
Rabbinic Judaism	10	17	16	6	6	2	12	5	74
Racial/Ethnic Minority Studies in Religion	27	39	36	20	28	19	24	17	210
Religion and Science	17	18	19	7	8	6	13	7	95



Religion/Theology: Two or More Subfields	39	40	36	35	23	30	27	33	263
Religions of Africa and/or Religions of the African Diaspora	18	25	33	14	14	17	18	12	151
Religions of Oceania	6	7	8	6	6	2	8	1	44
Religious Ethics	25	26	24	18	17	13	24	20	167
Second Temple Judaism	8	22	12	6	6	4	6	4	68
Septuagint	6	14	3	2	2	3	2	2	34
Social Sciences and Religion	27	66	45	37	18	17	21	18	249
South and Central American and Caribbean Religions	10	17	19	11	8	6	12	4	87
South Asian Religions (general or not listed separately)	19	20	22	18	14	11	18	11	133
Women's Studies in Religion	25	40	31	13	12	10	17	16	164
World Religions	39	42	28	18	14	14	19	15	189