

Job Advertisement Data 2019–2020

Society of Biblical Literature and American Academy of Religion

For previous reports, please see the following links:

- [July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019](#)
- [July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018](#)
- [July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017](#)
- [July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016](#)
- [July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015](#)

Key Findings

- The number of all positions advertised decreased 17.8% between AY19 and AY20.
- Tenure-track or tenured positions decreased 19.9% year over year.
- Faculty positions decreased 17.9% year over year.
- Out of the 331 jobs listed, only 9.7% of jobs were listed as visiting appointments.

Data Analysis

AY20 marked a year of record lows for the Jobs Report since its inception. While the COVID-19 pandemic began in February 2020 and had some effect on this report through June 2020, a majority of its effects on the job market will not be reflected until the AY21 report.

The number of overall postings decreased in AY20 and reached a new historic low ([Table 1](#))¹. The number of discrete institutions and postings also decreased (Figure 1). Although the number of overall postings is down, the distribution between public and private institutions remained approximately the same ([Table 2](#)). The majority of positions continue to be at Research institutions ([Table 3](#))².

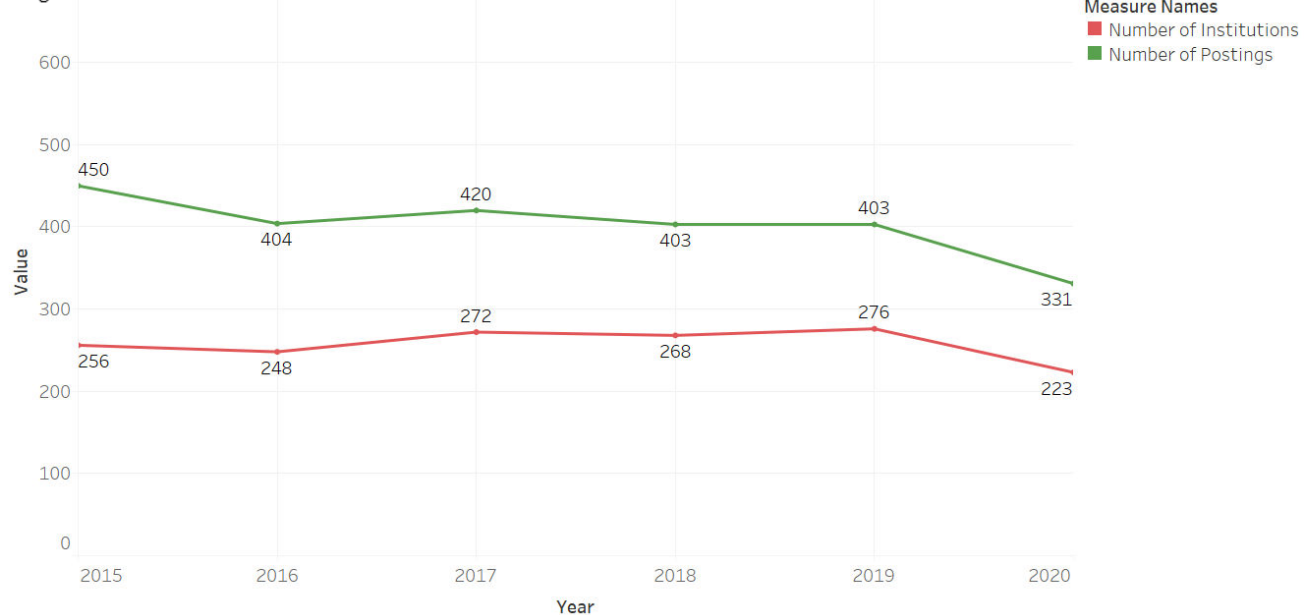
¹ The AY20 report includes the previous five years data. Previous reports displayed data since AY03.

² For more information on these classifications, see the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education at http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/classification_descriptions/basic.php.

Doctoral Universities

Includes institutions that awarded at least 20 research/scholarship doctoral degrees during the update year (this does not include professional practice doctoral-level degrees, such as the JD, MD, PharmD, DPT, etc.). Excludes Special Focus Institutions and Tribal Colleges.

Figure 1. Number of Positions and Number of Discrete Institutions



Master's Colleges and Universities

Generally includes institutions that awarded at least 50 master's degrees and fewer than 20 doctoral degrees during the update year (with occasional exceptions – see Methodology). Excludes Special Focus Institutions and Tribal Colleges.

Baccalaureate Colleges

Includes institutions where baccalaureate or higher degrees represent at least 50 percent of all degrees but where fewer than 50 master's degrees or 20 doctoral degrees were awarded during the update year. (Some institutions above the master's degree threshold are also included; see Methodology.) Excludes Special Focus Institutions and Tribal Colleges.

Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges

Includes four-year colleges (by virtue of having at least one baccalaureate degree program) that conferred more than 50 percent of degrees at the associate's level. Excludes Special Focus Institutions, Tribal Colleges, and institutions that have sufficient master's or doctoral degrees to fall into those categories.

Associate's Colleges

Institutions at which the highest level degree awarded is an associate's degree. The institutions are sorted into nine categories based on the intersection of two factors: disciplinary focus (transfer, career & technical or mixed) and dominant student type (traditional, nontraditional or mixed). Excludes Special Focus Institutions and Tribal Colleges.

Special Focus Institutions

Institutions where a high concentration of degrees is in a single field or set of related fields. Excludes Tribal Colleges.

Tribal Colleges

Colleges and universities that are members of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, as identified in IPEDS Institutional Characteristics.

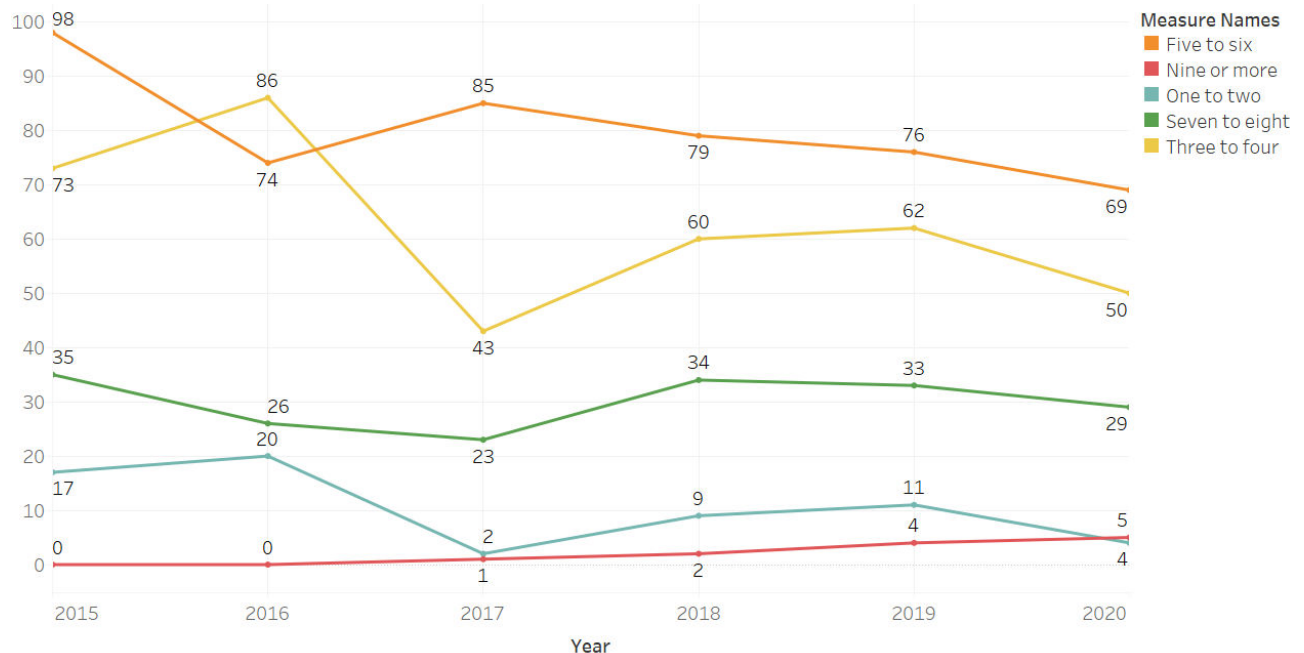
All position types saw decreases year over year except Fellowship or Postdoc positions (Figure 2, [Table 4](#)). Upper-level faculty positions increased 20% year over year ([Table 5](#)).

Figure 2. Position Types



In AY20, the percentage of non-tenure track faculty positions decreased to 21.5% of the faculty positions compared to 24.6% of faculty positions in AY19 ([Table 6](#)). The annual course load distribution remained approximately the same in AY20. There was a slight increase in positions with larger course loads ([Table 7](#), [8](#), Figure 3).

Figure 3. Annual Course Load (Faculty)



One area that saw an increase in AY20 is the qualifications desired or required by employers. All categories increased year over year with the exception of teaching experience. These increases can likely be attributed to more employers completing this field on their job posting ([Table 9](#)). A PhD remains the qualification most desired or required by employers regardless of position level or institution type, with teaching experience being the second most desired or required qualification ([Table 10](#), [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. Positions in Christian Theology (general or not listed separately) are at a three year high. Editorial/Journalism/Media, Introduction to Religion, Missiology, and Pastoral Care also saw increases.

After a significant decline in the number of countries represented in job postings in AY19, the number of countries represented increased from eight countries to thirteen countries in AY20 (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Positions by Country AY20

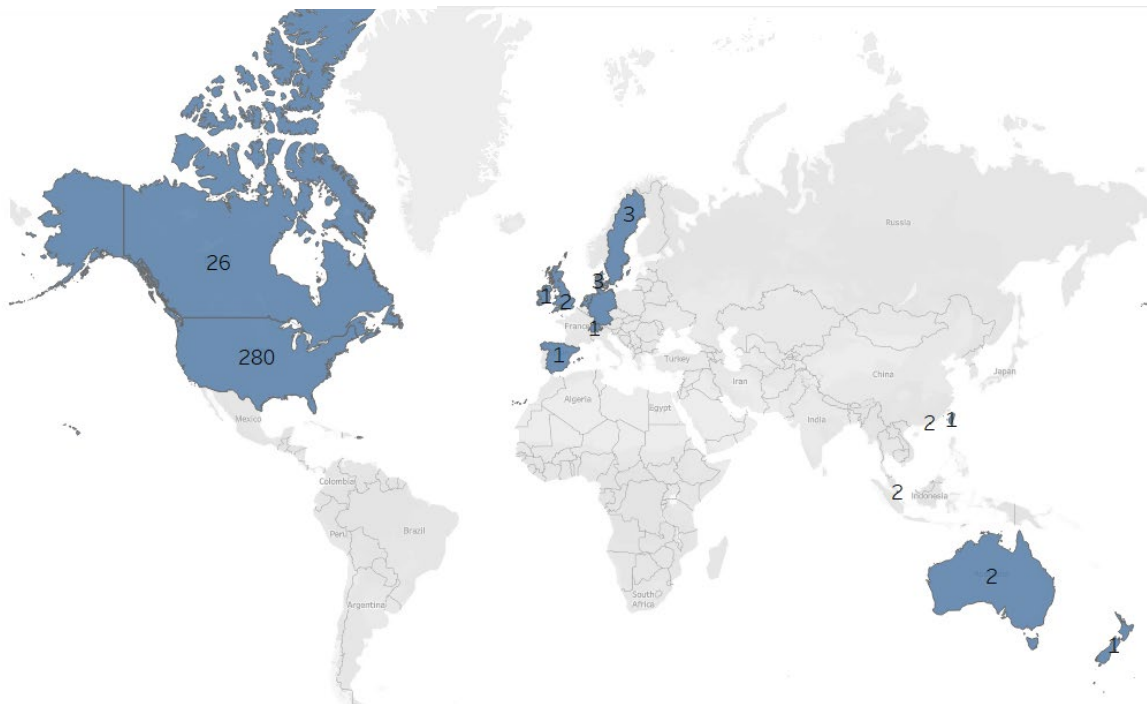


Table 1. History of Positions

	AY15	AY16	AY 17	AY 18	AY 19	AY 20
Number of Positions	450	404	420	403	403	331
Year over year growth/decline (pct)	-0.4	-10.2	4.0	-6.3	0.0	-17.8

Table 2. Institution Control

	AY15	AY16	AY 17	AY 18	AY 19	AY 20
Private for-profit	1	1				2
Private not-for-profit	289	272	267	278	282	219
Public	64	72	56	66	63	45
Total	354	345	323	344	345	266
Missing or not applicable (n)	96	59	97	59	58	65
Grand Total	2411					

Table 3. Institution Type

	AY15	AY16	AY17	AY 18	AY 19	AY 20
Associate	1			1		
Baccalaureate	77	61	82	73	59	51
Master's	67	63	63	67	60	47
Research	148	171	123	141	164	118
Special Focus	61	50	55	59	61	49

Total	354	345	323	341	344	265
Missing or not applicable (n)	96	59	97	62	59	66
Grand Total	2411					

Table 4. Position Type (n)

	AY15	AY16	AY17	AY18	AY 19	AY 20
Administration	13	37	47	35	34	26
Faculty	384	302	276	302	312	256
Fellowship or Postdoc	38	60	78	53	46	45
Other Higher Education (e.g., Librarian, Non-faculty Researcher)	9	11	7	8	4	1
Other Industry (e.g., K-12, Nonprofit, Publishing)	6	3	12	5	7	3
Total	450	404	420	403	403	331
Grand Total	2411					

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

	AY15	AY16	AY17	AY18	AY 19	AY 20
Entry-level	228	184	205	214	225	198
Mid-level	21	20	29	34	38	23
Upper-level	62	28	11	10	10	12
Open or unspecified	73	88	31	44	39	23
Total	384	302	276	302	312	256
Grand Total	1832					

Table 6. Position Tenure Status (n, Faculty)

	AY15	AY16	AY17	AY18	AY 19	AY 20
Non-tenure track or term-limited	61	44	70	66	77	55
Tenure-track or tenured	227	187	175	207	211	169
Total	288	231	245	273	288	224
Missing or not applicable	98	71	31	29	24	32
Grand Total	1832					

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

	AY15	AY16	AY17	AY18	AY 19	AY 20
One to two	17	20	2	9	11	4
Three to four	73	86	43	60	62	50
Five to six	98	74	85	79	76	69
Seven to eight	35	26	23	34	33	29
Nine or more			1	2	4	5
Total	223	206	154	184	186	157
Missing or not applicable	161	96	122	118	126	99
Grand Total	1832					

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

	AY15	AY16	AY17	AY18	AY 19	AY 20
One to two	7.6	9.7	1.3	4.9	5.9	2.5
Three to four	32.7	41.7	27.9	32.6	33.3	31.8
Five to six	43.9	35.9	55.2	42.9	40.9	43.9
Seven to eight	15.7	12.6	14.9	18.5	17.7	18.4
Nine or more			0.6	1.1	2.2	3.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Missing or not applicable (n)	227	198	122	118	126	99
Grand Total	1832					

Table 9. Qualifications Desired/Required by Employers (pct, Faculty, AY15-AY20)

	Type	AY15	AY16	AY17	AY18	AY 19	AY 20
Administrative Experience	Desired	10.6	6.7	4.5	3.3	5.8	9.0
	Required	7.1	7.4	3.6	3.6	5.1	3.5
	Total	17.4	12.6	8.2	7.0	10.9	12.5
Affirmative Action Eligibility	Desired	9.0	4.4	6.8	5.3	4.8	6.3
	Required	1.0	1.1	0.9	1.7	1.3	0.8
	Total	9.7	4.8	7.7	7.0	6.1	7.0
Interdisciplinary Teaching or Research	Desired	24.8	15.6	14.5	13.6	10.9	16.8
	Required	15.5	9.6	11.8	13.6	9.3	11.7
	Total	37.4	23.3	26.4	27.2	20.2	28.5
Online Course Instruction Experience	Desired	10.6	10.0	14.1	13.2	10.6	13.7
	Required	2.9	3.0	1.8	3.6	2.6	3.1
	Total	12.3	13.0	15.9	16.9	13.1	16.8
Ordination	Desired	5.5	4.1	5.5	3.6	2.9	5.1
	Required	3.2	2.2	1.4	0.7	1.0	0.4
	Total	8.7	5.9	6.8	4.3	3.8	5.5
Other	Desired	4.5	4.1	2.3	4.6	2.9	3.9
	Required	4.5	4.8	5.9	4.6	3.8	5.5
	Total	7.7	7.7	8.2	9.3	6.4	9.4
PhD	Desired	20.0	22.6	16.4	13.2	13.5	14.5
	Required	77.1	76.3	80.9	64.2	62.2	64.8
	Total	92.3	93.3	97.3	77.5	75.6	79.3
Published Book(s) and/or Monograph(s)	Desired	19.4	20.0	17.7	17.2	11.5	16.0

	Required	8.4	4.4	7.3	5.0	4.2	7.0
	Total	26.8	23.7	25.0	22.2	15.7	23.0
Published Journal Article(s)	Desired	25.2	23.0	23.6	21.2	16.7	16.8
	Required	13.5	8.5	9.1	8.9	6.7	11.7
	Total	36.1	30.4	32.7	30.1	23.4	28.5
Religious Affiliation/Commitment (bona fide occupational qualification)	Desired	7.4	3.0	5.0	4.0	2.9	7.0
	Required	16.1	12.6	13.2	8.9	11.2	9.4
	Total	21.9	14.4	18.2	12.9	14.1	16.4
Student Services Experience	Desired	3.2	1.5	1.8	1.0	1.0	3.5
	Required	1.3	0.4	0.5	0.7	1.0	1.2
	Total	4.2	1.9	2.3	1.7	1.9	4.7
Teaching Experience	Desired	29.7	31.5	27.3	22.2	21.2	16.0
	Required	51.0	41.5	44.5	24.5	36.5	40.6
	Total	72.9	67.8	71.8	46.7	57.7	56.6
U.S. Citizenship	Desired	1.9	0.7	0.4	0.3		0.4
	Required	2.3	2.2		0.7	1.6	2.0
	Total	3.5	3.0	0.4	1.0	1.6	2.3

Table 10. Qualifications (selected) Desired/Required by Employers by Level (pct, Faculty, AY15-AY20)

Qualification	Type	Entry-level	Mid-level	Upper-level
Interdisciplinary Teaching or Research	Desired	18.3	11.1	14.8
	Required	11.6	24.8	25.9
	Total	29.8	35.9	40.7
Online Course Instruction Experience	Desired	13.2	16.2	4.9
	Required	3.1	2.6	2.5
	Total	16.3	18.8	7.4
PhD	Desired	18.7	6.0	1.2
	Required	77.7	88.0	86.4

Published Book(s) and/or Monograph(s)	Total	96.4	94.0	87.7
	Desired	17.8	19.7	23.5
	Required	2.1	32.5	34.6
	Total	19.9	52.1	58.0
Published Journal Article(s)	Desired	23.3	19.7	18.5
	Required	6.2	38.5	45.7
	Total	29.5	58.1	64.2
Teaching Experience	Desired	28.7	7.7	9.9
	Required	39.8	68.4	71.6
	Total	68.5	76.1	81.5

Table 11. Qualifications Desired/Required by Institution Type (pct, Faculty, AY15-AY20)

	Type	Baccalaureate	Master's	Research	Special Focus
Administrative Experience	Desired	3.5	3.7	5.0	9.9
	Required	1.4	3.3	1.6	8.0
	Total	4.8	7.1	6.6	17.9
Affirmative Action Eligibility	Desired	5.5	8.9	5.8	8.4
	Required	1.0	0.7	1.2	2.3
	Total	6.6	9.7	7.0	10.6
Interdisciplinary Teaching or Research	Desired	16.6	11.9	14.9	20.2
	Required	10.7	12.3	9.6	10.6
	Total	27.3	24.2	24.5	30.8
Online Course Instruction Experience	Desired	2.8	14.5	5.8	32.3

	Required	0.7	3.0	2.0	8.0
	Total	3.5	17.5	7.8	40.3
Ordination	Desired	1.7	1.1	1.0	15.6
	Required	0.7	0.0	0.4	4.6
	Total	2.4	1.1	1.4	20.2
Other	Desired	1.4	3.7	3.2	6.1
	Required	2.8	8.2	4.4	4.6
	Total	4.2	11.9	7.6	10.6
PhD	Desired	26.3	20.4	9.8	16.7
	Required	69.6	71.7	79.3	73.4
	Total	95.8	92.2	89.2	90.1
Published Book(s) and/or Monograph(s)	Desired	13.1	10.4	16.3	29.3
	Required	2.4	2.2	6.2	7.6
	Total	15.6	12.6	22.5	36.9
Published Journal Article(s)	Desired	18.0	17.5	20.9	31.9
	Required	4.2	4.5	9.8	12.5
	Total	22.1	21.9	30.7	44.5
Religious Affiliation/Commitment (bona fide occupational qualification)	Desired	2.1	4.1	2.0	12.9
	Required	5.9	10.8	2.8	31.6

	Total	8.0	14.9	4.8	44.5
Student Services Experience	Desired	1.7	1.1	0.8	3.8
	Required	1.0	1.1	0.0	1.5
	Total	2.8	2.2	0.8	5.3
Teaching Experience	Desired	22.5	31.2	21.5	29.3
	Required	42.9	41.3	38.2	41.8
	Total	65.4	72.5	59.6	71.1
U.S. Citizenship	Desired	0.0	0.7	0.4	0.8
	Required	1.4	3.3	0.4	2.3
	Total	1.4	4.1	0.8	3.0

Table 12. Position Fields of Expertise

	AY 15	AY 16	AY 17	AY18	AY 19	AY 20	Total
Administration and Support Services	40	39	53	45	38	32	247
Ancient Near Eastern Languages	14	17	8	17	11	3	70
Archaeology - Ancient Near East	9	11	6	24	9	5	64
Archaeology - Greco-Roman	11	8	4	12	5	5	45
Arts, Literature, and Religion	26	29	27	37	38	28	185
Asian Religions (general or not listed separately)	37	40	34	33	28	23	195
Biblical Languages	33	25	17	34	20	15	144
Buddhism	33	35	23	21	20	19	151
Catholic Studies	9	21	13	17	23	14	97
Catholic Theology (all areas)	23	30	24	29	35	25	166
Christian Ethics	33	26	25	33	27	21	165
Christian Studies	25	23	34	18	25	22	147
Christian Theology (general or not listed separately)	54	36	42	30	34	35	231
Christian Theology: Practical/Praxis	39	26	23	21	22	19	150
Christian Theology: Systematic/Constructive	32	23	25	19	19	12	130
Classics	17	15	12	18	18	11	91

Comparative Religions	36	37	42	37	26	25	203
Critical Studies/Theory/Methods in Religion	29	27	23	29	15	13	136
Early Christianity/Church History	28	26	33	34	22	21	164
Early Judaism	17	14	12	28	23	10	104
East Asian Religions (general or not listed separately)	24	30	17	18	15	10	114
Editorial/Journalism/Media	4	2	3		1	4	14
Epigraphy	1	5	4	12	2	1	25
Gay/Lesbian Studies in Religion	8	13	13	8	22	8	72
Hebrew Bible/Old Testament	48	44	35	62	58	36	283
Hinduism	24	25	23	17	17	13	119
History of Christianity/Church History	39	36	31	37	30	24	197
History of Religion (general)	26	28	26	38	27	19	164
Indigenous/Native/Traditional Religions	12	19	16	26	25	17	115
Introduction to Religion	16	14	18	20	10	12	90
Interreligious Studies						17	17
Islam/Islamic Studies	37	51	42	56	35	34	255
Judaism/Jewish Studies	39	34	34	47	41	25	220
Library	1	3	8	4	5	2	23
Missiology	14	7	4	5	1	6	37

New Religious Movements	14	10	13	4	7	6	54
New Testament	53	46	41	53	53	43	289
North American Religions	20	27	22	28	24	16	137
Pastoral Care	25	11	19	10	12	17	94
Philosophy of Religion	24	29	22	33	27	17	152
Practical/Praxis Theology							0
Preaching/Ministry/Liturgical Studies	27	22	15	16	11	11	102
Rabbinic Judaism	11	11	10	17	16	6	71
Racial/Ethnic Minority Studies in Religion	26	29	27	39	36	20	177
Religion and Science	15	20	17	18	19	7	96
Religion/Theology: Two or More Subfields	51	47	39	40	36	35	248
Religions of Africa and/or Religions of the African Diaspora	22	19	18	25	33	14	131
Religions of Oceania	7	10	6	7	8	6	44
Religious Ethics	27	30	25	26	24	18	150
Second Temple Judaism	11	11	8	22	12	6	70
Septuagint	2	4	6	14	3	2	31

Social Sciences and Religion	39	52	27	66	45	37	266
South and Central American and Caribbean Religions	17	15	10	17	19	11	89
South Asian Religions (general or not listed separately)	27	32	19	20	22	18	138
Women's Studies in Religion	22	21	25	40	31	13	152
World Religions	34	34	39	42	28	18	195
