

The 2007-08 Humanities Departmental Survey

Introduction

The 2007-08 Humanities Departmental Survey examined the Departments or Programs granting degrees in:

- Art History (AH)
- English (EN)
- Foreign Languages (FL)
- History (H)
- History of Science (HoS)
- Linguistics (LN)
- MLA Combined English/Foreign Languages (MLAC)
- Religion (REL)

One of the first elements to be determined was the number of Departments or Programs¹ granting degrees in the fields included in the survey. Several criteria were used to ascertain whether specific departments and programs qualified for the study. Departments had to award degrees in one or more of the seven target fields, and the departments had to be housed in a four-year institution in the United States. The goal was to establish the number of degree-granting departments in each field. The taxonomy for several fields was broad which required further refinement of which departments to include and which to exclude. The project directors and steering committee decided that the survey should focus on scholarly fields. The Indicators Survey intentionally excluded variations of the target fields that were classified as applied.

Initially, membership databases provided a reasonably accurate and complete picture of the population of all degree-granting departments and programs in the target fields. However, several issues emerged: whether or not the information in each of the society's databases was current, accurate, and complete. Data from the US Department of Education was used to verify and supplement the membership files. More details are available in the Methodology section which begins on page 91.

After survey administration was underway, it became apparent that not every department that was initially thought to offer degrees in the field of interest actually did so. This information was used to calculate the best estimate for the number of departments (and programs) granting degrees in a particular field. These estimates and the best estimate for the total number of faculty members as of the Fall 2007 semester are shown in Table 1². Except where noted, the data presented in this report are population estimates based on the data provided by survey respondents. More details about the calculations are included in the Methodology section beginning on page 98.

¹ For the remainder of this report the term "Department" will be used to indicate both departments and programs awarding degrees in the disciplines included in this report. Not every degree-granting unit is a department; however, to make the report easier to read, all will be referred to as departments.

² These estimates were calculated from data supplied by the survey respondents. For more information about the estimation process and for clarification of the criteria used to determine the eligibility of departments, please see the Methodology section (which begins on page 91).

Table 1: Estimated Number of Departments Total Faculty Members³

Field	Estimated Number of Departments	Estimated Total Number of Faculty Members (Full- & Part-Time)	Average Number of Faculty Members
Art History	329	2,800	8.5
English	1,098	30,680	27.9
Foreign Languages	1,389	23,320	16.8
History	929	15,360	16.5
History of Science⁴	19	170	8.9
Linguistics	140	1,630	11.6
MLA Combined English / Foreign Languages	156	3,370	21.6
Religion	544	5,010	9.2

English and Foreign Languages are the largest in terms of the number of degree-granting programs and the number of faculty members employed. English and MLA Combined English & Foreign Language departments are the largest in terms of average number of faculty members per unit with each averaging more than twenty faculty. These figures could reflect a relatively large number of part-time (adjunct) faculty members hired to teach freshman-level courses.

The faculty members within each department (or associated with each program) may be hired into tenured, tenure-track, or non-tenure-track positions on a full-time or part-time basis. Tables 2 and 3 show the distribution of faculty members across the various types of employment; Table 3 also includes a breakdown by gender.

³ Totals given throughout this report are estimates of the population total.

⁴ The estimates for History of Science degree granting programs include only the 19 programs that had offered the largest number of graduate degrees from 2001 to 2005 according to NSF data. History of Science cannot be disaggregated from History of Technology in federal databases, so History of Science in this report encompasses 19 programs in History of Science and History of Technology.

Table 2: Faculty Distribution by Tenure Status

Field	Tenured Faculty	Tenure-Track Faculty (Not Yet Tenured)	Non-Tenure-Track, Full-Time	Non-Tenure-Track, Part-Time
Art History	52%	17%	7%	24%
English	38%	13%	18%	31%
Foreign Languages	39%	13%	22%	26%
History	55%	19%	8%	18%
History of Science	70%	18%	6%	6%
Linguistics	58%	17%	10%	15%
MLA Combined English / Foreign Languages	38%	17%	20%	25%
Religion	46%	18%	11%	25%

English, Foreign Language, and MLA Combined departments have the lowest proportion of tenured faculty. In fact, in English and Foreign Language departments, the proportion of tenured or tenure-track faculty is only slightly above one-half. In contrast, almost nine out of ten faculty members in History of Science are either tenured or in a tenure-track position; the same is true for about three-fourths of the faculty in History and Linguistics.

Table 3: Faculty Distribution by Employment Status and Gender

Field	Full-Time	Part-Time	Men	Women
Art History	74%	26%	39%	61%
English	66%	34%	45%	55%
Foreign Languages	72%	28%	40%	60%
History	78%	22%	65%	35%
History of Science	94%	6%	65%	35%
Linguistics	80%	20%	48%	52%
MLA Combined English / Foreign Languages	74%	26%	44%	56%
Religion	72%	28%	70%	30%

English is the only field in which less than 70% of the faculty members are employed full-time. This is not entirely surprising given the large service load English departments are often required to assume in most universities. In most fields, about three-fourths of the faculty members are

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employed full-time. About seven in ten Religion faculty members are male; Art History and Foreign Language departments and programs employ the largest proportion of females.

Parent institutions grant departments the authority to recruit new faculty and the authority to hire new faculty. However, not every recruiting opportunity comes to fruition as a new hire. Table 4 details faculty recruiting for tenured, tenure-track, or permanent positions for the 2008-09 academic year and hiring for positions that started in the 2007-08 academic year for most disciplines included in this report⁵. It is not clear why the number of faculty recruited exceeds the number of faculty hired in the previous year. It may be that departments are anticipating growth or budget increases, they are trying to fill positions they were unable to fill earlier, or that these trends vary dramatically from year to year.

Table 4: Tenured, Tenure Track, and Permanent Faculty Recruiting & Hiring Activities

	Art History	English	Foreign Languages	History	Linguistics	MLA Combined	Religion
Proportion of Departments with Hiring or Recruiting Activity 2007-08	38%	68%	56%	65%	46%	61%	48%
Number of Tenured, Tenure-Track or Permanent Faculty Members Recruited for 2008-09	155	900	770	660	50	140	290
Number of Tenured, Tenure-Track or Permanent Faculty Members Hired for 2007-08	130	920	1,260	620	65	140	340

The numbers presented in Table 4 reflect the year-to-year variations in hiring activities. When we compare either the number of faculty members recruited for 2008-09 or the number of faculty members hired for 2007-08, we see that the number represents roughly 5 to 7% of the full-time faculty in that discipline.

When we examine tenure decisions in departments whose parent institutions have a tenure system, there are three potential outcomes of the tenure process: faculty members are granted tenure, faculty members are denied tenure, or faculty members leave before coming up for tenure. The figures in Table 5 represent the average of two years' worth of data. Not every department has a tenure decision to make every year; as shown in Table 5 only about one-half to two-thirds of the departments or programs are engaged in tenure activities in any given year⁶. Not surprisingly, departments that tend to be larger on average are more likely to have tenure activities in a given year; the larger number of faculty members presents more possibilities for tenure activities. These data are not presented by Carnegie classification or by highest degree

⁵ Note that the hiring numbers represent the data for one year, while the recruiting numbers represent the data for a different year.

⁶ Tenure activities are defined as granting tenure, denying tenure, or having a tenure-track faculty member leave prior to the tenure decision being made. Typically, one-third to one-half of the departments (whose parent institutions have tenure) will have no tenure activity in a given year.

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because there can be significant variations year-to-year. Table 5 presents these data for most disciplines examined in this report. (These data should not be used to extrapolate a “success rate” for tenure applicants in a particular field. These are descriptive of what happened over this two-year period *only*.)

Table 5: Tenure Activity⁶ over a Two-Year Period

	Art History	English	Foreign Languages	History	Linguistics	MLA Combined	Religion
Proportion of Departments where Institution has Tenure System	98%	93%	98%	96%	98%	92%	90%
Proportion of Departments with Tenure Activity⁶ (during the 2-Year Period)	45%	63%	50%	66%	62%	57%	45%
Average Number of Faculty Granted Tenure Each Year	80	530	400	440	35	75	110
Average Number of Faculty Denied Tenure Each Year	10	60	75	10	1	20	10
Average Number of Faculty Leaving Prior to Tenure Decision Each Year	25	130	180	130	10	20	45

Common measures of faculty performance in tenure decisions include publications, teaching, and service. About 70% of the departments have formal policies specifying publications and other requirements required to earn tenure; there appears to be no difference in whether or not a department has a policy by discipline. For the departments which have such policies in place, there appears to be no difference in the importance of teaching or service by discipline; however, there does appear to be a difference regarding the importance of publications. When compared to other disciplines, Linguistics departments appear to place more importance on publications, while MLA Combined departments seem to place less importance on them. Table 6 presents the findings for each requirement overall, and Table 7 shows the results for publications by discipline.

Table 6: Considerations in Tenure Decisions

	Essential	Very Important	Important	Considered if Relevant	Not Important
Publications*	64%	17%	15%	4%	-
Teaching	78%	19%	3%	-	-
Service	25%	35%	36%	3%	1%

*The relative importance of Publications differs by discipline; see Table 7.

Table 7: Importance of Publications in Tenure Decisions

	Art History	English	Foreign Languages	History	Linguistics	MLA Combined	Religion
Essential	66%	52%	66%	67%	92%	32%	55%
Very Important	21%	19%	13%	18%	6%	20%	18%
Important	11%	24%	17%	14%	2%	28%	16%
Considered if Relevant	1%	5%	4%	1%	-	20%	11%
Not Important	1%	-	-	-	-	-	-

About 85% of the departments examined indicate that there is a maximum length of time a faculty member can be on a tenure track and not receive tenure. The most common length of time is 6 or 7 years. Table 8 shows the data by discipline; it is very consistent. In the three cases where the maximum is ten or more years, it is possible that the respondents are considering exceptional cases. Similarly, in the cases where the minimum is less than five years, it is also possible that the respondents are considering extreme circumstances.

Table 8: Maximum Number of Years Before Tenure Decision Required

	Art History	English	Foreign Languages	History	Linguistics	MLA Combined	Religion
Proportion with a Maximum Length	87%	90%	84%	87%	92%	71%	77%
25th Percentile	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Median	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
75th Percentile	7	7	7	7	7	6.25	7
Minimum	4	3	5	5	5	5	4
Maximum	8	9	12	8	10	7	11

Hiring and tenure decisions represent the start of a tenure-track, tenured, or permanent faculty member's participation in a department; departures, early retirements, retirements, and deaths mark the other end of the journey. Table 9 depicts typical losses per year. Overall, about one in two departments will experience a loss during a two-year period.

Table 9: Number of Tenured, Tenure-Track, or Permanent Faculty Members who Leave, Retire, or Die per Year (Average of Two Academic Years)

	Art History	English	Foreign Languages	History	Linguistics	MLA Combined	Religion
Number who Leave, Retire or Die	75	640	545	430	45	80	145
Number who Retire	35	395	310	260	25	40	70
Proportion of Departments with Departure, Retirement, or Death in a Two-Year Period	33%	68%	53%	55%	51%	70%	46%

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According to respondents (question 33 on the paper form), about 18% of the departments offered early or phased retirement to tenured or permanent full-time faculty or instructional staff members over a two-year period. In most cases, the offer was made to one or two people.

As shown earlier in Table 6, teaching is rated as an essential consideration in the tenure decision by more than three-fourths of all departments. Table 8 shows who is teaching upper-division, undergraduate courses; the same data for graduate courses is presented in Table 9. In some cases, the totals add up to more than 100%; it is possible that multiple faculty members are teaching the same section. In other cases, the total may not reach 100%; in those instances, it is possible that there are instructors who do not fall into one of the classifications shown.

Table 10: Instructors of Record for Upper Division, Undergraduate Courses

	Art History	English	Foreign Languages	History	Linguistics	MLA Combined	Religion
Full-Time, Tenured or Tenure-Track	74%	79%	63%	82%	75%	90%	66%
Full-Time, Non-Tenure-Track	9%	13%	20%	7%	12%	14%	18%
Part-Time Faculty	14%	7%	8%	8%	10%	6%	14%
Graduate Students	*	2%	5%	*	8%	*	*
Other	2%	-	4%	2%	-	-	*
Average Number of Sections, Fall 2007 Term	5.9	16.6	12.7	13.0	6.6	13.6	7.7

Table 11: Instructors of Record for Graduate Courses

	Art History	English	Foreign Languages	History	Linguistics	MLA Combined	Religion
Full-Time, Tenured or Tenure-Track	75%	90%	79%	95%	93%	74%	72%
Full-Time, Non-Tenure-Track	14%	5%	11%	3%	6%	16%	18%
Part-Time Faculty	13%	7%	5%	3%	4%	8%	14%
Other	-	-	5%	-	-	2%	-
Average Number of Sections, Fall 2007 Term	6.4	8.9	5.0	6.8	7.5	3.2	5.4

We are unable to provide tables similar to Tables 10 and 11 for general education and lower-level courses because the questions on the survey resulted in unreliable data. In many cases, respondents gave exactly the same answers for general education and lower-level courses. In other cases, the sum of the sections taught by the various types of instructors listed far exceeds the total number of sections. More details about the problems with these questions are available on page 103.

Finally, we examine students in each discipline. Table 12 shows the number of students having declared a minor or major in each discipline, the number of bachelor degrees completed, the

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number of graduate students, and the number of students participating in interdisciplinary programs that include each discipline⁷.

Table 12: Undergraduate Students with a Major or Minor or Completing Bachelors Degrees, Interdisciplinary Programs and Graduate Students

	Art History	English	Foreign Languages	History	Linguistics	MLA Combined	Religion
Students Completing a Minor, 2006-07	4,030	27,710	51,670	20,930	990	2,240	4,480
Average per Department	12.2	25.2	37.2	22.5	7.1	14.4	8.2
Juniors & Seniors with Declared Major, Fall 2007	13,070	126,930	75,570	107,350	4,610	9,360	13,820
Average per Department	39.7	115.6	54.4	115.6	32.9	60.0	25.4
Bachelors Degrees Completed, 2006-07	5,400	54,690	28,710	38,700	1,720	2,980	5,160
Average per Department	16.4	49.8	20.7	41.7	12.3	19.1	9.5
Graduate Students, Fall 2007 Term	3,920	31,610	17,980	20,060	3,960	1,240	5,400
Average per Department	11.9	28.8	12.9	21.6	28.3	7.9	9.9
Estimated Number of Departments Participating in Interdisciplinary Programs	252 (77%)	891 (81%)	1,031 (74%)	761 (82%)	86 (61%)	731 (53%)	406 (75%)
Total Number of Students Participating in Interdisciplinary Programs⁸	15,070	119,100	71,300	73,780	1,720	52,130	28,640
Average per Department (participating departments only)	59.8	133.7	69.2	97.0	20.0	71.3	70.5

Foreign Languages appears to have the largest number of students completing minors, both in absolute numbers and per department average; History and English also have a relatively high number of minors. English and History departments have the largest number of students declaring a major and completing bachelors degrees. Linguistics and English have the largest number of graduate students per department; English departments total the largest number of graduate students overall. It is interesting that the number of students participating in interdisciplinary programs is roughly equivalent to the number of majors in Art History, English, and History departments; while it is much less in Linguistics, and much more in MLA Combined and Religion departments.

Graduate students may be the instructor of record for courses or lead discussion sections or grade papers for instructors. Table 13 provides an overview of graduate student teaching assistant (GTA) roles in each discipline. English and Foreign Language departments have more GTAs as

⁷ The ways in which minors, majors, bachelors degrees, graduate students, and interdisciplinary students were defined are included in the definitions section.

⁸ Some of these students could be counted multiple times if they are participating in programs that cross multiple departments.

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instructors of record, and History departments have the largest number of GTAs leading discussion sections or grading papers.

Table 13: Graduate Student Teaching Assistants

	Art History	English	Foreign Languages	History	Linguistics	MLA Combined	Religion
Number of GTAs as Instructor of Record	190	8,020	9,560	1,090	380	110	210
Average per Department	0.6	7.3	6.9	1.2	2.7	0.7	0.4
Number of GTAs Leading Discussion Sections / Grading Papers, Fall 2007	950	1,610	1,210	3,770	610	230	840
Average per Department	2.9	1.5	0.9	4.1	4.4	1.5	1.5

Departments were asked about programs to assess overall undergraduate student learning. Table 14 shows the results. About two-thirds of the departments responding are using some method to assess overall undergraduate student learning. Over 40% of the Linguistics and Religion departments responding to this question reported having no assessment in place; three-fourths of the English and Foreign Languages departments were using formal methods to assess overall undergraduate learning.

Table 14: Assessment of Overall Undergraduate Student Learning by Discipline

	Art History	English	Foreign Languages	History	Linguistics	MLA Combined	Religion
A portfolio OR a standardized test	16%	31%	26%	28%	10%	36%	19%
A portfolio AND a standardized test	36%	28%	35%	24%	41%	23%	25%
Other	16%	16%	13%	11%	5%	13%	14%
None	32%	25%	26%	37%	44%	28%	42%

When asked whether or not their department was planning for assessment of undergraduate student learning, one-fourth of the respondents did not answer. Overall, about three-fourths of the departments responded affirmatively to the question. The results in Table 15 are based on those departments that indicated that they had an assessment.

Table 15: Planning for Assessment of Undergraduate Student Learning

	Art History	English	Foreign Languages	History	Linguistics	MLA Combined	Religion
Yes	72%	85%	79%	71%	51%	93%	77%
No	18%	13%	16%	24%	41%	0%	19%
Don't Know	11%	2%	5%	6%	8%	7%	4%
Number of Departments Responding	137	94	118	123	76	29	102

Less than one-third of the respondents reported that their department offered special first-year programs for undergraduates. These results are given, by discipline, in Table 16.

Table 16: Departments Offering Special First-Year Programs for Undergraduates

	Art History	English	Foreign Languages	History	Linguistics	MLA Combined	Religion
Yes	34%	37%	30%	29%	17%	33%	23%
No	66%	63%	70%	71%	83%	68%	77%
Number of Departments Responding	165	138	151	168	81	40	126

About two-thirds of the departments responding require a senior thesis or capstone course for majors. Linguistics and Foreign Language departments are less likely to have this requirement. These data are shown in Table 17.

Table 17: Departments Requiring a Senior Thesis or Capstone Course for Majors

	Art History	English	Foreign Languages	History	Linguistics	MLA Combined	Religion
Yes	73%	74%	48%	79%	38%	79%	70%
No	27%	26%	52%	21%	62%	21%	30%
Number of Departments Responding	166	139	157	169	82	39	125

Almost 90% of the departments reported that courses taught by their department are part of the core distribution requirements for undergraduate students at their institution. The results are presented by discipline in Table 18.

Table 18: Departments Teaching Courses That Are Part of the Core Distribution Requirements for Undergraduate Students

	Art History	English	Foreign Languages	History	Linguistics	MLA Combined	Religion
Yes	89%	92%	84%	91%	73%	95%	88%
No	11%	8%	16%	9%	28%	5%	12%
Number of Departments Responding	166	139	159	166	80	39	126

Over two-thirds of the respondents either indicated that the question regarding financial support for students enrolled in terminal masters programs was not applicable (62%) or did not answer the question at all (6%). Over three-fourths of the respondents indicated that the question regarding financial support for students enrolled in doctoral programs was not applicable (72%) or did not answer (5%). The results for the departments that did respond are shown in Table 19.

Table 19: Proportion of Graduate Students Offered Financial Support

	Students enrolled in Terminal Masters Programs	Students Enrolled in Doctoral Programs
All of the students were offered financial support	14%	39%
More than half of the students were offered financial support	27%	40%
Half of the students were offered financial support	5%	5%
Less than half of the students were offered financial support	35%	11%
None of the students were offered financial support	19%	5%
Number of Departments Responding	303	218

The next section includes some definitions of terms used throughout the report. The remainder of the report is presented by Field. Where possible, we provide estimates of the total number of faculty and students, recruiting and hiring activities, and tenure decisions. Estimates are presented for the entire field and for subgroups identified by the parent institution’s Carnegie classification and the highest degree granted by the department or program where possible. The order of the tables is the same for each field, and the field is indicated by the one- to three-letter abbreviation as shown on page 1. Thus, a reader wishing to compare across fields needs to look only for the corresponding table in each field of interest.