

Teachers—Postsecondary

(All information, except UB degree program information, is from the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics 2004-2005 Occupational Outlook Handbook.)

- **Significant Points**
- **Employment, Job Outlook & Earnings**
- **Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement**
- **UB Graduate Programs:**
 - [PhD](#)
- **UB Undergraduate Programs:**
 - [BA or BS in the area which you hope to teach \(Art, English, Geological Science, History, or Math\)](#)
 - [Minor- Education](#)

Significant Points

- Opportunities for college and university teaching jobs are expected to improve, but many new openings will be for part-time or non-tenure-track positions.
- Prospects for teaching jobs will continue to be better in academic fields that offer attractive alternative nonacademic job opportunities—health specialties, business, and computer science, for example—which attract fewer applicants for academic positions.
- Educational qualifications for postsecondary teacher jobs range from expertise in a particular field to a Ph.D, depending on the subject being taught and the type of educational institution.
- One out of eight postsecondary teachers is a graduate teaching assistant—and one out of ten is a vocational or career and technical education teacher.

Employment

Postsecondary teachers held nearly 1.6 million jobs in 2002. Most were employed in public and private 4-year colleges and universities and in 2-year community colleges. Postsecondary career and technical education teachers also are employed by schools and institutes that specialize in training people in a specific field, such as technology centers or culinary schools. Some career and technical education teachers work for State and local governments and job training facilities. The following tabulation shows postsecondary teaching jobs in specialties having 20,000 or more jobs in 2002:

Graduate teaching assistants	128,000
Vocational education teachers	119,000
Health specialties teachers	86,000
Business teachers	67,000
Art, drama, and music teachers	58,000
English language and literature teachers	55,000
Education teachers	42,000
Biological science teachers	47,000
Mathematical science teachers	41,000
Nursing instructors and teachers	37,000
Computer science teachers	33,000
Engineering teachers	29,000
Psychology teachers	26,000

Job Outlook

Overall, employment of postsecondary teachers is expected to [grow much faster than the average](#) for all occupations through 2012. A significant proportion of these new jobs will be part-time positions. Good job opportunities are expected as retirements of current postsecondary teachers and continued increases in student enrollments create numerous openings for teachers at all types of postsecondary institutions.

Projected growth in college and university enrollment over the next decade stems largely from the expected increase in the population of 18- to 24-year-olds. Adults returning to college and an increase in foreign-born students also will add to the number of students, particularly in the fastest growing States of California, Texas, Florida, New York, and Arizona. In addition, workers' growing need to regularly update their skills will continue to create new opportunities for postsecondary teachers, particularly at community colleges and for-profit institutions that cater to working adults. However, many postsecondary educational institutions receive a significant portion of their funding from State and local governments, and, over the early years of the projection period, tight State and local budgets will limit the ability of many schools to expand. Nevertheless, a significant number of openings also is expected to arise due to the need to replace the large numbers of postsecondary teachers who are likely to retire over the next decade. Many postsecondary teachers were hired in the late 1960s and 1970s to teach the baby boomers, and they are expected to retire in growing numbers in the years ahead.

Postsecondary institutions are a major employer of workers holding doctoral degrees, and opportunities for Ph.D. recipients seeking jobs as postsecondary teachers are expected to be somewhat better than in previous decades. The number of earned doctorate degrees is projected to rise by only 4 percent over the 2002-12 period, sharply lower than the 10-percent increase over the previous decade. In spite of this positive trend, competition will remain tight for those seeking tenure-track positions at 4-year colleges and universities,

as many of the job openings are expected to be either part-time or renewable, term appointments.

Opportunities for graduate teaching assistants are expected to be very good. Graduate enrollments over the 2002-12 period are projected to increase at a rate that is somewhat slower than that of the previous decade, while total undergraduate enrollments in degree-granting institutions are expected to increase at nearly twice the rate of the preceding decade, creating many teaching opportunities. Constituting more than 12 percent of all postsecondary teachers, graduate teaching assistants play an integral role in the postsecondary education system, and they are expected to continue to do so in the future.

Because one of the main reasons why students attend postsecondary institutions is to obtain a job, the best job prospects for postsecondary teachers are likely to be in fields where job growth is expected to be strong over the next decade. These will include fields such as business, health specialties, nursing, and computer and biological sciences. Community colleges and other institutions offering career and technical education have been among the most rapidly growing, and these institutions are expected to offer some of the best opportunities for postsecondary teachers.

Earnings

Median annual earnings of all postsecondary teachers in 2002 were \$49,040. The middle 50 percent earned between \$34,310 and \$69,580. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$23,080, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$92,430.

Earnings for college faculty vary according to rank and type of institution, geographic area, and field. According to a 2002-03 survey by the American Association of University Professors, salaries for full-time faculty averaged \$64,455. By rank, the average was \$86,437 for professors, \$61,732 for associate professors, \$51,545 for assistant professors, \$37,737 for instructors, and \$43,914 for lecturers. Faculty in 4-year institutions earn higher salaries, on average, than do those in 2-year schools. In 2002-03, average faculty salaries in public institutions—\$63,974—were lower than those in private independent institutions—\$74,359—but higher than those in religiously affiliated private colleges and universities—\$57,564. In fields with high-paying nonacademic alternatives—medicine, law, engineering, and business, among others—earnings exceed these averages. In others—such as the humanities and education—they are lower.

Many faculty members have significant earnings, in addition to their base salary, from consulting, teaching additional courses, research, writing for publication, or other employment. In addition, many college and university faculty enjoy some unique benefits, including access to campus facilities, tuition waivers for dependents, housing and travel allowances, and paid sabbatical leaves. Part-time faculty usually have fewer benefits than do full-time faculty.

Earnings for postsecondary career and technical education teachers vary widely by subject, academic credentials, experience, and region of the country. Part-time instructors usually receive few benefits.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

The education and training required of postsecondary teachers varies widely, depending on the subject taught and educational institution employing them. Educational requirements for teachers are generally the highest at 4-year research universities but, at career and technical institutes, experience and expertise in a related occupation is the most valuable qualification.

Postsecondary teachers should communicate and relate well with students, enjoy working with them, and be able to motivate them. They should have inquiring and analytical minds, and a strong desire to pursue and disseminate knowledge. Additionally, they must be self-motivated and able to work in an environment in which they receive little direct supervision.

Training requirements for postsecondary career and technical education teachers vary by State and by subject. In general, teachers need a bachelor's or higher degree, plus work or other experience in their field. In some fields, a license or certificate that demonstrates one's qualifications may be all that is required. Teachers update their skills through continuing education, in order to maintain certification. They must also maintain ongoing dialogue with businesses to determine the most current skills needed in the workplace.

Four-year colleges and universities usually consider doctoral degree holders for full-time, tenure-track positions, but may hire master's degree holders or doctoral candidates for certain disciplines, such as the arts, or for part-time and temporary jobs. Most college and university faculty are in four academic ranks—professor, associate professor, assistant professor, and instructor. These positions usually are considered to be tenure-track positions. Most faculty members are hired as instructors or assistant professors. A smaller number of additional faculty members, called lecturers, are usually employed on contracts for a single academic term and are not on the tenure track.

In 2-year colleges, master's degree holders fill most full-time positions. However, with increasing competition for available jobs, institutions can be more selective in their hiring practices. Many 2-year institutions increasingly prefer job applicants to have some teaching experience or experience with distance learning. Preference also may be given to those holding dual master's degrees, because they can teach more subjects. In addition, with greater competition for jobs, master's degree holders may find it increasingly difficult to obtain employment as they are passed over in favor of candidates holding a Ph.D.

Doctoral programs take an average of 6 to 8 years of full-time study beyond the bachelor's degree, including time spent completing a master's degree and a dissertation. Some programs, such as those in the humanities, take longer to complete; others, such as those in engineering, usually are shorter. Candidates specialize in a subfield of a discipline—for example, organic chemistry, counseling psychology, or European history—but also take courses covering the entire discipline. Programs include 20 or more increasingly specialized courses and seminars plus comprehensive examinations on all major areas of the field. Candidates also must complete a dissertation—a written report on original research in the candidate's major field of study. The dissertation sets forth an original hypothesis or proposes a model and tests it. Students in the natural sciences and engineering usually do laboratory work; in the humanities, they study original documents and other published material. The dissertation is done under the guidance of one or more faculty advisors and usually takes 1 or 2 years of full-time work.

In some fields, particularly the natural sciences, some students spend an additional 2 years on postdoctoral research and study before taking a faculty position. Some Ph.D.s extend postdoctoral appointments, or take new ones, if they are unable to find a faculty job. Most of these appointments offer a nominal salary.

Obtaining a position as a graduate teaching assistant is a good way to gain college teaching experience. To qualify, candidates must be enrolled in a graduate school program. In addition, some colleges and universities require teaching assistants to attend classes or take some training prior to being given responsibility for a course.

Although graduate teaching assistants usually work at the institution and in the department where they are earning their degree, teaching or internship positions for graduate students at institutions that do not grant a graduate degree have become more common in recent years. For example, a program called Preparing Future Faculty, administered by the Association of American Colleges and Universities and the Council of Graduate Schools, has led to the creation of many now-independent programs that offer graduate students at research universities the opportunity to work as teaching assistants at other types of institutions, such as liberal arts or community colleges. Working with a mentor, the graduate students teach classes and learn how to improve their teaching techniques. They may attend faculty and committee meetings, develop a curriculum, and learn how to balance the teaching, research, and administrative roles that faculty play. These programs provide valuable learning opportunities for graduate students interested in teaching at the postsecondary level, and also help to make these students aware of the differences among the various types of institutions at which they may someday work.

For faculty, a major step in the traditional academic career is attaining tenure. New tenure-track faculty usually are hired as instructors or assistant professors, and must serve a period—usually 7 years—under term contracts. At the end of the period, their record of teaching, research, and overall contribution to the institution is reviewed; tenure is granted if the review is favorable. Those denied tenure usually must leave the institution. Tenured professors cannot be fired without just cause and due process. Tenure protects

the faculty's academic freedom—the ability to teach and conduct research without fear of being fired for advocating unpopular ideas. It also gives both faculty and institutions the stability needed for effective research and teaching, and provides financial security for faculty. Some institutions have adopted post-tenure review policies to encourage ongoing evaluation of tenured faculty.

The number of tenure-track positions is expected to decline as institutions seek flexibility in dealing with financial matters and changing student interests. Institutions will rely more heavily on limited term contracts and part-time, or adjunct, faculty, thus shrinking the total pool of tenured faculty. In a trend that is expected to continue, some institutions now offer limited-term contracts to prospective faculty—typically 2-, 3-, or 5-year, full-time contracts. These contracts may be terminated or extended when they expire. Institutions are not obligated to grant tenure to the contract holders. In addition, some institutions have limited the percentage of faculty who can be tenured.

For most postsecondary teachers, advancement involves a move into administrative and managerial positions, such as departmental chairperson, dean, and president. At 4-year institutions, such advancement requires a doctoral degree. At 2-year colleges, a doctorate is helpful but not usually required, except for advancement to some top administrative positions. (Deans and departmental chairpersons are covered in the *Handbook* statement on [education administrators](#), while college presidents are included in the *Handbook* statement on [top executives](#).)