

To: Members of the American Economic Association

From: AEA ad hoc Committee on the Job Market: John Cawley (chair), Matt Gentzkow, Brooke Helppie-McFall, Peter Rousseau, and Wendy Stock

Date: October 13, 2020

Re: JOE job openings by sector, 2020 versus 2019

To continue to monitor how the market for Ph.D. economists is evolving during the COVID-19 epidemic, we compare the cumulative number of job openings in the JOE Network, by week, to those in the same week of 2019 (for the sake of comparison we also show the data for 2018 and 2017). This information differs from that we have released in previous memos, in three ways:

- 1) The number of cumulative openings is shown for each week of the year to date, not just the current month;
- 2) It is shown graphically rather than in tables;
- 3) It is shown by sector, specifically:
 - a. U.S. full-time academic;
 - b. U.S. other academic (e.g. visiting, part-time);
 - c. International, full-time academic;
 - d. International, other academic (e.g. visiting, part-time);
 - e. Full-time non-academic
 - f. Other non-academic (e.g. visiting, part-time).

Some clarifications:

- Week of the year is defined according to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), so the exact days contained in a given numbered week may differ slightly across years. For example, week 1 in 2020 runs from December 30, 2019 to January 5, 2020, whereas week 1 in 2019 is one day later - it runs from December 31, 2018 to January 6, 2019. This minor difference in the specific days included in each numbered week should not generate meaningful differences in the cumulative number of job openings as of October (the last quarter of the year).
- The data cover weeks 1 through 40 of 2020, ending October 4, 2020.
- The counts that are graphed are the number of job *openings*. To clarify, it is not the number of job listings; a listing may include multiple openings.
- For all years, if the employer contacts JOE to say that the search is cancelled, those openings are removed from the count. They are kept in the count if the employer states that the position has been filled. Note that employers may not always contact JOE after a search has been cancelled.
- On each graph, the year-to-date cumulative number of job openings is listed for 2020 and 2019. (For the sake of clarity it is not listed for 2018 or 2017.)

The graphs are shown below, by sector. The decrease in the number of job openings in 2020, compared to 2019, is:

1. U.S. full-time academic: -64.1%
2. U.S. other academic (e.g. visiting, part-time): -30.7%
3. International, full-time academic: -45.4%
4. International, other academic (e.g. visiting, part-time): -47.2%
5. Full-time non-academic: -35.4%

6. Other non-academic (e.g. visiting, part-time): -2.6%
7. Total job openings (all sectors): -43.8%

The decrease in job openings is substantial and striking. For example, last year (2019) at this time, JOE contained 482 job openings for full-time academic positions in the U.S.; this year that number is just 173, down nearly two-thirds (64.1%).

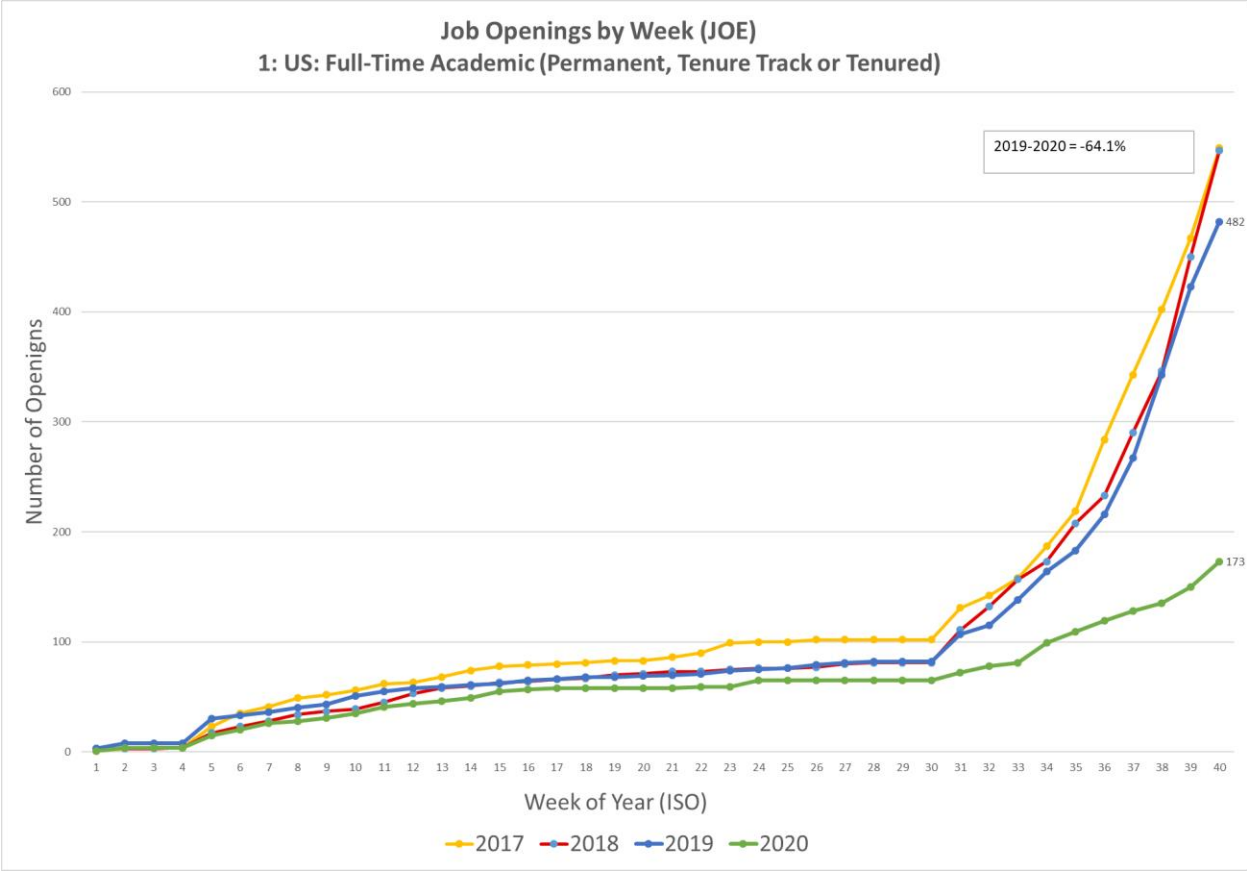
The number of full-time academic job openings is down less for institutions outside the U.S. that advertise on JOE (-45.4%) compared to U.S. academic institutions (-64.1%); however, the decrease is still substantial. In 2019, there were 551 full-time positions listed for international academic institutions; in 2020, the number is 301.

Non-academic positions are the least hard-hit, but are still down more than one-third (-35.4%) in 2020 compared to 2019. At this time in 2019, JOE listed 506 non-academic jobs; this year there are 327.

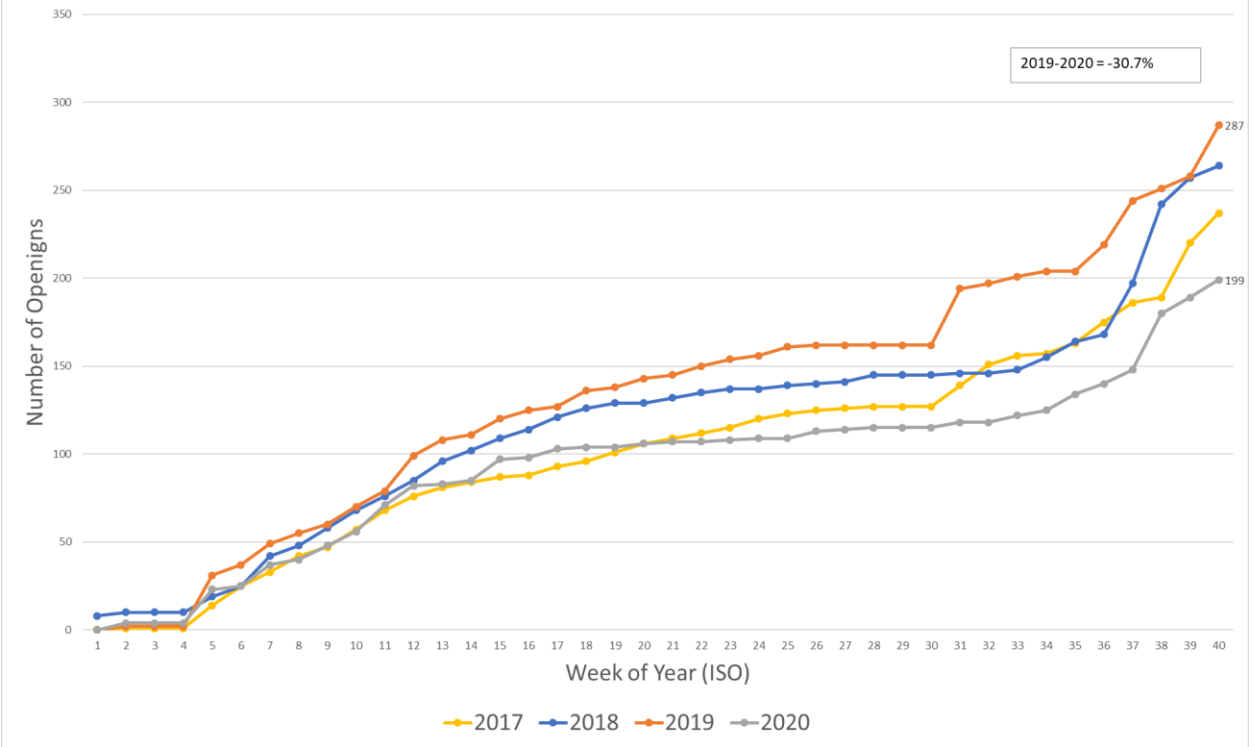
Across all sectors, the total number of job openings on JOE is down 43.8% in 2020 compared to 2019. Specifically, while in 2019 there were 2,066 job openings on JOE at this time, in 2020 there are 1,161.

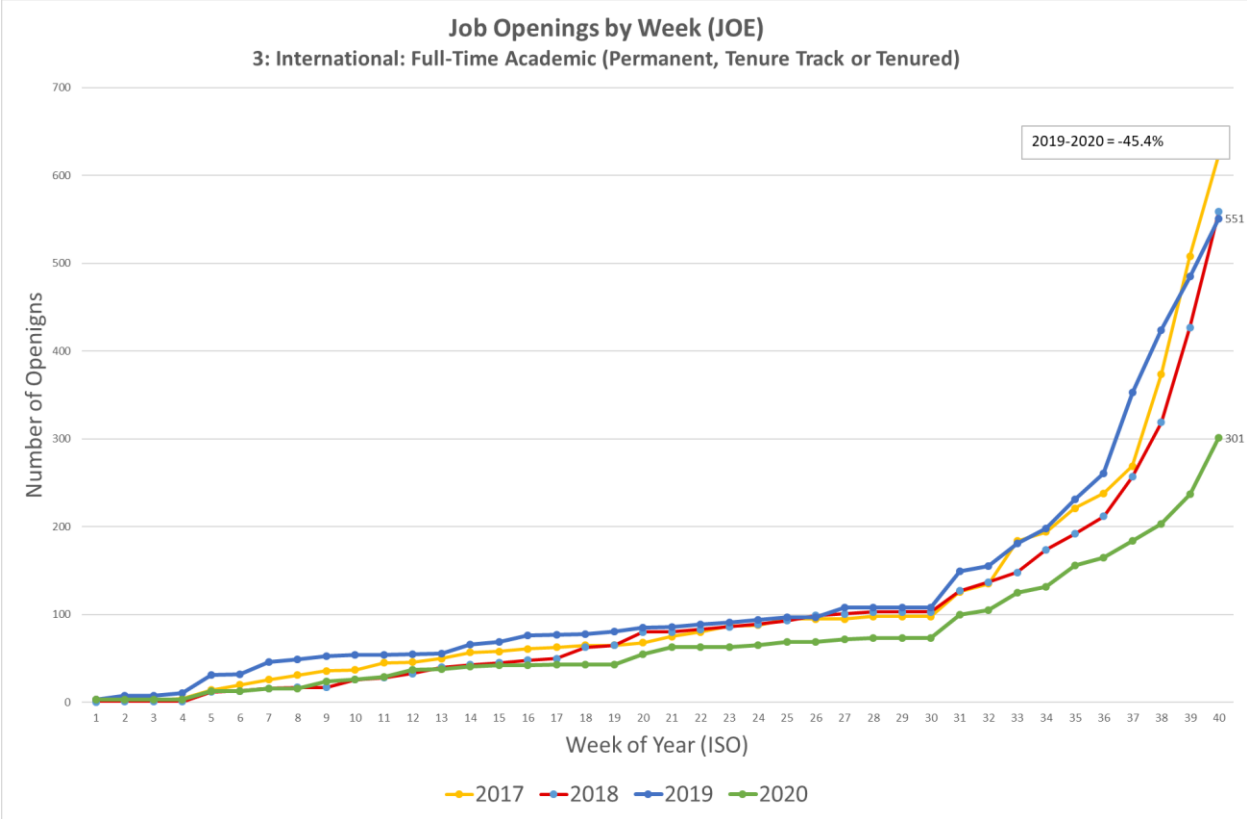
These decreases in the number of job openings in 2020 relative to the same week in 2019 may raise the question of how many more listings are likely to be posted before the end of 2020. Although we don't know the answer with certainty, in recent years (2017-19), 46.6% of the calendar year's job openings were posted by the end of September, and the remainder were posted in: October (31.1%), November (15.0%), and December (7.3%). If that pattern holds, there may still be a large number of listings yet to be posted to JOE before the end of the year.

In light of these substantial and striking decreases in the number of job openings, the committee recommends that Ph.D. programs consider offering ongoing support for Ph.D. candidates who do not find positions in 2020-21.



Job Openings by Week (JOE)
2: US: Other Academic (Visiting , Temporary, Part-time, or Adjunct)





Job Openings by Week (JOE)
4: International: Other Academic (Visiting, Temporary, Part-time, or Adjunct)

