

JOB SEARCH DICTIONARY

- **ABD:** Acronym for All But Dissertation. A graduate student who has completed all of the requirements of the degree except for defending the dissertation and is expected to graduate by the end of the academic year.
- **Adjunct:** This most commonly refers to a predominantly teaching job that is not stable in terms of consistent teaching loads and service expectations and employee benefits, and generally has no research or service obligations.
- **Apportionment:** A formal breakdown of what percentage of the evaluation of the job will be based on research, teaching, service (or perhaps something else or other words for the same). If a job apportionment exists, it is fixed by contract and/or departmental or university bylaws.
- **Assistant Professor:** Bottom standard job rank/title for a tenure-track faculty member in the US. Generally corresponds to pre-tenure tenure track position. Importantly, many variations of this title like “visiting assistant professor” or “research assistant professor” are *not* tenure-track positions; see elsewhere for variations of assistant professor with adjectives.
- **Assistant Professor of Practice:** Bottom standard job rank/title for a faculty member on the Professor of Practice scale.
- **Associate Professor:** Medium standard job rank/title for a tenure-track faculty member in the US. Generally corresponds to a tenured position.
- **Associate Professor of Practice:** Medium standard job rank/title for a faculty member on the Professor of Practice scale.
- **Board of Regents/Trustees:** The top governing body of a university. For a public university, this is a political position either elected by voters or appointed by elected politicians; for a private university this varies. The board has the final vote on tenuring a faculty member though generally does not vote on hires.
- **Broader Impacts:** A component of an NSF proposal. In math this does *not* mean the impact your research has on society at large; it means service to the profession and outreach.
- **Chancellor:** In some universities, the top academic governing leader of the university; essentially the equivalent of a provost (with minor technical differences). Generally has the last say on a tenure vote before the Board of Regents/Trustees.
- **Contact hours:** Total number of hours spent actually in the classroom teaching for classes (generally rounded up, so a class that runs 50 minutes MWF is three contact hours). This does not account for office hours or class prep time.
- **Convener:** Person who coordinates multiple sections of a course; synonym for coordinator.
- **Data Scientist:** Vague nonacademic job title. Often means the same as Product Data Scientist, but can also mean analytics, or a range of other roles.
- **Dean:** The top academic governing leader of a college. Generally the person who approves the start of a faculty hiring search and who has final approval over a faculty hire. May meet candidates individually at smaller schools, while Associate Deans more commonly meet candidates at larger schools.
- **DEI:** Acronym for diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **EDI:** Acronym for equity, diversity, and inclusion.

- **Fixed-term:** Synonym for limited-term.
- **H-1B:** A visa class for US employees that is sometimes offered to US nonresidents. This is tied to a particular employer (i.e., contingent on the sponsoring employer).
- **HBCU:** Historically Black College or University. This is a US Department of Education official designation held by 107 colleges (as of 2021).
- **HSI:** Hispanic Serving Institution. This is an official designation by federal law for accredited, degree-granting, public or private nonprofit institution of higher education with 25% or more total undergraduate Hispanic or Latino full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment.
- **Instructor:** Job title in the US that means essentially the same as Lecturer. Outside of job context, synonym of teacher.
- **Instructor of record:** The teacher with the final say in charge of a course (i.e., who assigns the grades). If a course has lecture sections and recitation sections, this means the teacher of the lecture sections.
- **J-1:** A visa class for US employees that is sometimes offered to US nonresident postdocs. This is tied to a particular employer (i.e., contingent on the sponsoring employer). This visa has a requirement that, after the end of the visa, the employee must return to their home country for a fixed time period before obtaining another work visa in the US; some countries waive this requirement and others do not.
- **Lecturer:** Vague term for a range of academic positions. In the US, this most commonly refers to a predominantly teaching job that is not stable in terms of consistent teaching loads and service expectations and employee benefits, and generally has no research or service obligations; this is roughly the same as an adjunct position. In some places in the US, this may also refer to a position more similar to a Professor of Practice. In the UK, a Lecturer position can also refer to the equivalent of an Assistant Professor or Associate Professor in the US.
- **Levelling:** Nonacademic analogue of rank. Often includes a numerical component which varies somewhat between different companies. Typically, entry level data science jobs are L4–L5; Senior Data Scientist is L6; and some large companies have more technical senior roles in the L7–L9 range.
- **Limited-term:** A position that ends and is not renewable after a certain time period. In particular, a position that is not tenure-track.
- **Longlist:** Informal term for an initial list of candidates for a position that the hiring committee or department will examine in more detail and/or hold a pre-interview with before forming a shortlist.
- **Mediumlist:** Synonym for longlist.
- **ML:** Acronym for Machine Learning.
- **ML Engineer:** Nonacademic job generally with the goal of taking models and scaling them into production, powering products (e.g. search, copilots, etc). Typically involves as much software/data engineering as it does ML models.
- **ML Scientist:** Nonacademic job typically the same as Scientist, but focused on ML modeling, whereas the scientist role might also work on experiments, experimental design, and other statistical problems.
- **OPT:** A visa class for US employees that is sometimes offered to US nonresidents. This is only obtainable as an extension of an F-1 visa. This is not tied to a particular employer, though is limited to three years.
- **Outreach:** Activities that popularize mathematics or science with people other than university students.
- **POP:** Acronym for Professor of Practice.

- **Product Data Scientist:** Nonacademic job title for a job centered around advancing a product (e.g., checkout, storefront, news feed, search). Typical work ranges from quick analytics to designing, running and analyzing experiments, to writing complicated queries to find the answer to a key product question, to writing models to explain user behavior. Job performance is typically assessed in impact to product development.
- **Professor:** (without “Assistant” or “Associate”) Top standard job rank/title for a tenure-track faculty member in the US. Generally corresponds to a tenured position. Sometimes one says Full Professor to distinguish from Asst. and Assoc. Professor. The word Professor without adjectives is often commonly used to describe the set of jobs Asst. Prof., Assoc. Prof., and Full Prof. together.
- **Professor of Practice:** A predominantly teaching job that does not lead to tenure but is stable in terms of consistent teaching loads and service expectations and employee benefits. Generally has service obligations and some voting rights on faculty matters, but generally less than regular faculty. May or may not have a small research apportionment. Like with usual professorships, there generally are ranks (Asst., Assoc., and Full) and the term refers broadly to the set.
- **Promotion:** Change of rank from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor or Associate Professor to Professor, or the equivalents for Professors of Practice. Generally comes with a raise (which may or may not be negotiable) and an increase in expectations of service to the department/college/university (even if the apportionment doesn’t change). Promotion to Associate may or may not be associated with tenure.
- **Preceptor:** A limited-term predominately teaching position, generally at Ivy League colleges.
- **Preps:** The number of distinct courses taught in the same semester: e.g., three sections of Calc 1 and one section of Calc 3 is two preps.
- **Provost:** In some universities, the top academic governing leader of the university; essentially the equivalent of a chancellor (with minor technical differences). Generally has the last say on a tenure vote before the Board of Regents/Trustees.
- **PUI:** Primarily Undergraduate Institution. This is an NSF official designation for universities that award Associate’s degrees, Bachelor’s degrees, and/or Master’s degrees in NSF-supported fields, but have awarded 20 or fewer Ph.D./D.Sci. degrees in all NSF-supported fields during the combined previous two academic years.
- **R1:** Shorthand for the Carnegie Classification of “R1: Doctoral Universities—Very high research activity.” These are (as of 2021) 146 US universities with doctoral programs and substantial research investment.
- **R2:** Shorthand for the Carnegie Classification of “R2: Doctoral Universities—High research activity.” These are the (as of 2021) next 133 US universities with doctoral programs and substantial research investment, though less so than R1s as judged by the Carnegie foundation.
- **Rank:** Synonym for job title in academia. Most often used for Assistant/Associate/Full in the context of tenure-track or POP positions.
- **Reader:** A job title in the UK that roughly corresponds to Full Professor.
- **Research Assistant Professor:** A job title that usually means postdoc. This is typically not an Assistant Professor position.
- **Research position:** Informal term for an academic (or perhaps nonacademic position) for which the main hiring criterion is the candidate’s research and for which research is a main component of the job (generally close to half or more than half of the apportionment). Such a position almost always also has significant teaching and/or service duties.
- **RSU:** Acronym for Restricted Stock Units. Form of compensation consisting of company stock.

- **Scientist:** Nonacademic job title most common in Financial Tech (fin tech) companies and very large companies (e.g. Microsoft, Google, Apple); among nonacademic jobs, is the closest to being an academic. Typically develop new models and research solutions to problems (including needs not directly related to a particular product). Job performance often assessed in papers, much like an academic.
- **Service:** Job duties that fall outside of research and teaching. This includes both departmental/college/university service and service to the profession. The former largely consists of committee work, organization of departmental/college/university events and functions, and participation in departmental/college/university events. The latter includes work for mathematical professional organizations, organization of mathematical events, serving as a referee or editor, writing letters of reference, and outreach.
- **Service course:** A course generally taken by majors in areas other than mathematics.
- **Shortlist:** A list of candidates, often around 3–5 for one position, that are interviewed for the position. Often a shortlist has to be approved by a dean or associate dean before interviews begin.
- **SLAC:** Acronym either for the highly broad “Small Liberal Arts Colleges” or the highly specific “Selective Liberal Arts Consortium.” The latter is a collection of seven liberal arts colleges that have low acceptance rates and generally rate highly on US News and World Report.
- **Startup:** A fund given at the start of a tenure track faculty position that is funded by the department and/or other units at the university, which may include summer salary, moving expenses, travel funds, and/or other miscellaneous research or teaching related expenses. This is generally negotiated at hiring, and startups often need to be spent within a fixed amount of time.
- **Teaching Assistant Professor:** A job title that generally means postdoc. This is not an Assistant Professor position.
- **Teaching load:** A description of how much teaching a job entails in a typical year. This is sometimes described in credit hours, or in terms of number of courses per semester or quarter; e.g., a 2-1 teaching load entails teaching two classes one semester (usually the Fall) and one class the other (usually the Spring), or a 2-2-2 teaching load would describe a job in the quarter system teaching two classes each quarter.
- **Teaching portfolio:** A curated collection of teaching-related materials intended to exhibit quality teaching.
- **Teaching position:** Informal term for an academic (or perhaps nonacademic position) for which the main hiring criterion is the candidate’s teaching and for which teaching is a more significant component of the job than research (generally more than half of the apportionment). Such a position may also have some research expectation and often has a significant service expectation.
- **Tenure:** A job attribute with protections for the employee making dismissal harder (but not impossible). Also refers to the evaluation process by which the employer decides whether to award tenure (or, if not, dismissal).
- **Tenure-track:** A job that, after a fixed time period and after an evaluation process, leads to tenure (or dismissal if tenure is not awarded). Can be used to refer to pre-tenure faculty, or to all faculty *on* the tenure-track, including those who already got tenure.
- **TT:** Acronym for tenure-track.
- **Visiting Assistant Professor:** A job title that generally means postdoc. This is not an Assistant Professor position.