

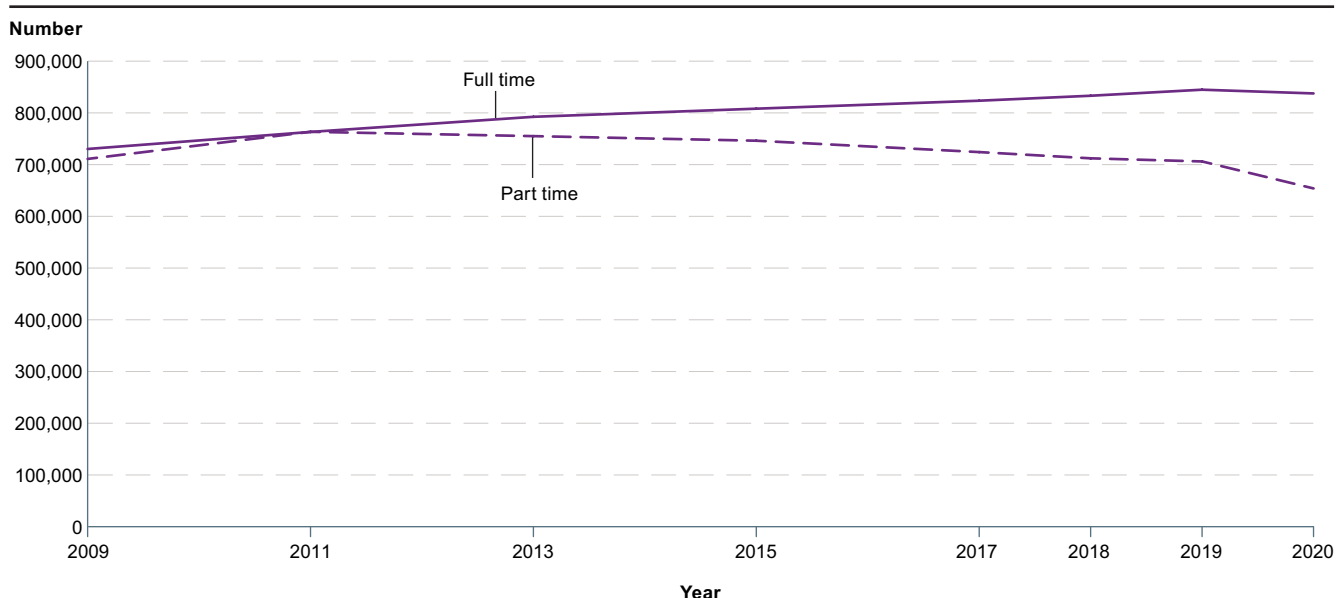
Characteristics of Postsecondary Faculty

The total number of faculty at degree-granting postsecondary institutions was 3 percent higher in fall 2020 than in fall 2009 (1.5 vs. 1.4 million). The number of full-time faculty was 15 percent higher in fall 2020 than in fall 2009. Over the same period, the number of part-time faculty jumped from 709,900 in 2009 to a peak of 762,400 in 2011 and then decreased by 14 percent to 652,800 in 2020.

Between fall 2009 and fall 2020, the total number of faculty at degree-granting postsecondary institutions fluctuated between 1.4 and 1.6 million. There were 1.5 million faculty in 2020, which was 3 percent higher

than the 1.4 million faculty in 2009. Faculty include professors, associate professors, assistant professors, instructors, lecturers, assisting professors, adjunct professors, and interim professors.

Figure 1. Number of faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by employment status: Selected years, fall 2009 through fall 2020



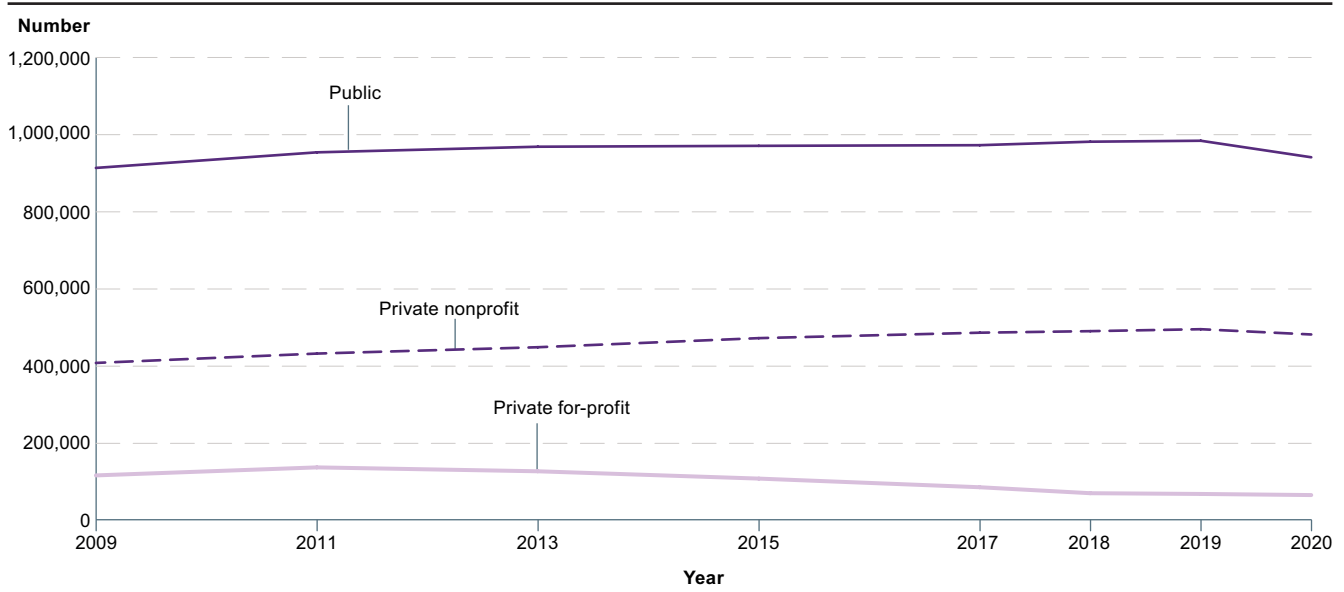
NOTE: Data represent the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Data include faculty members with the title of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, lecturer, assisting professor, adjunct professor, or interim professor (or the equivalent). Data exclude graduate students with titles such as graduate or teaching fellow who assist senior faculty. Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), IPEDS Winter 2009–10 through Winter 2011–12 and Spring 2014 through Spring 2021, Human Resources component, Fall Staff section. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 315.10.

In fall 2020, of the 1.5 million faculty at degree-granting postsecondary institutions, 56 percent were full time and 44 percent were part time. Between fall 2009 and fall 2020, the number of full-time faculty increased by 15 percent (from 729,200 to 836,600). In contrast, the number of part-time faculty peaked at 762,400 in fall 2011 before decreasing 14 percent to 652,800 in fall 2020. About half of this decline occurred between fall 2019 and fall 2020, which was the beginning of the first full academic year impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. With these changes in the number of faculty, the

percentage of all faculty who were part time decreased from 49 to 44 percent between 2009 and 2020.

Among all faculty at degree-granting institutions, the number who were female increased between fall 2009 and fall 2020 (678,100 vs. 754,800). The number who were male fluctuated over the same period, peaking at 792,000 in 2013 and falling to its lowest point at 734,600 in 2020. Between 2009 and 2020, the percentage of faculty who were female increased from 47 to 51 percent.

Figure 2. Number of faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by control of institution: Selected years, fall 2009 through fall 2020



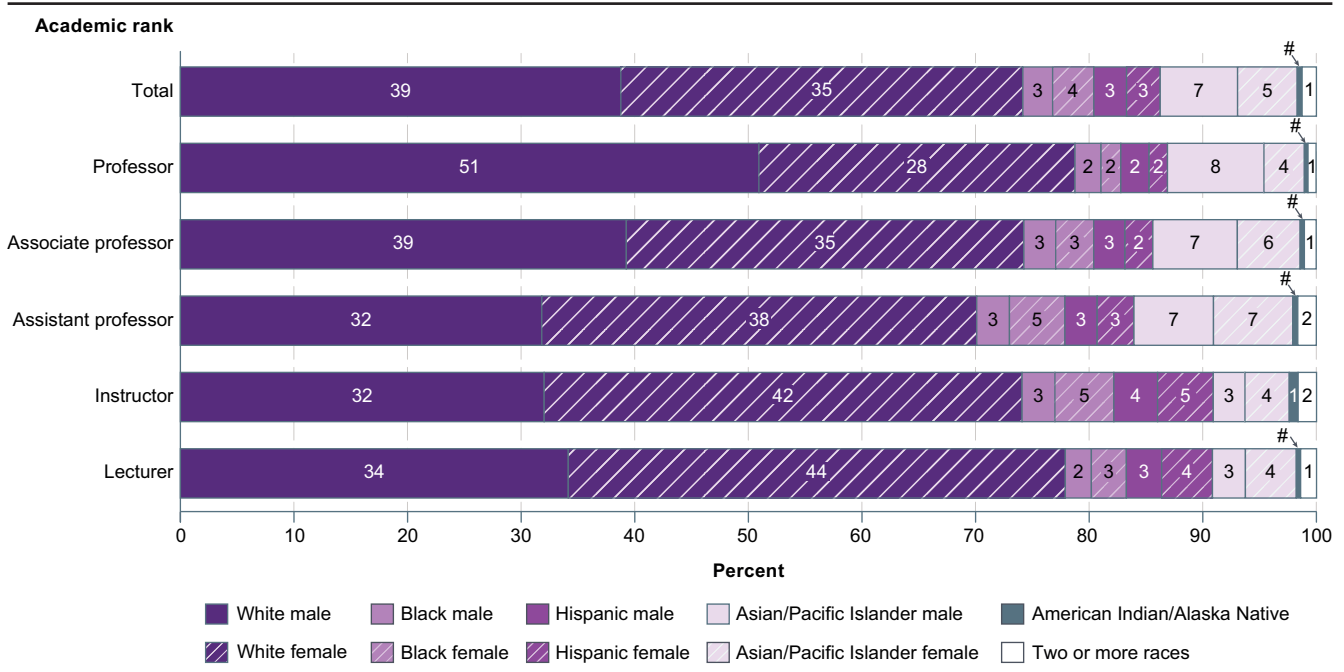
NOTE: Data represent the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Data include faculty members with the title of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, lecturer, assisting professor, adjunct professor, or interim professor (or the equivalent). Data exclude graduate students with titles such as graduate or teaching fellow who assist senior faculty. Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), IPEDS Winter 2009–10 through Winter 2011–12 and Spring 2014 through Spring 2021, Human Resources component, Fall Staff section. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 315.10.

Between fall 2009 and fall 2020, the number of faculty at degree-granting postsecondary institutions varied by control of institution (public, private nonprofit, or private for-profit). The percentage changes in the number of faculty were much smaller at public institutions and private nonprofit institutions than at private for-profit institutions. Compared with 2019, the number of faculty was about 3 to 4 percent lower in 2020 at public institutions (984,200 vs. 941,400), private nonprofit institutions (495,800 vs. 482,100), and private for-profit institutions (68,800 vs. 65,900). Over a longer period, the number of faculty in 2020 compared with 2009 was 3 percent higher at public institutions (941,400 vs. 913,800), 18 percent higher at private nonprofit institutions (482,100 vs. 408,400), and 44 percent lower at private for-profit institutions (65,900 vs. 116,900). In

2020, only 4 percent of all faculty were employed by private for-profit institutions, while 63 percent were employed by public institutions and 32 percent by private nonprofit institutions.

The ratio of full-time-equivalent (FTE) students to FTE faculty at degree-granting postsecondary institutions was 14:1 in fall 2020, a lower ratio than in fall 2009 (16:1).¹ The FTE student-to-faculty ratios in 2020 were higher at private for-profit institutions (24:1) and public 2-year institutions (18:1) than at public 4-year institutions (14:1) and private nonprofit 4-year institutions (10:1). For more information about how student enrollments have changed over time, see the indicators [Undergraduate Enrollment](#) and [Postbaccalaureate Enrollment](#).

Figure 3. For each academic rank, percentage distribution of full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity and sex: Fall 2020



Rounds to zero.

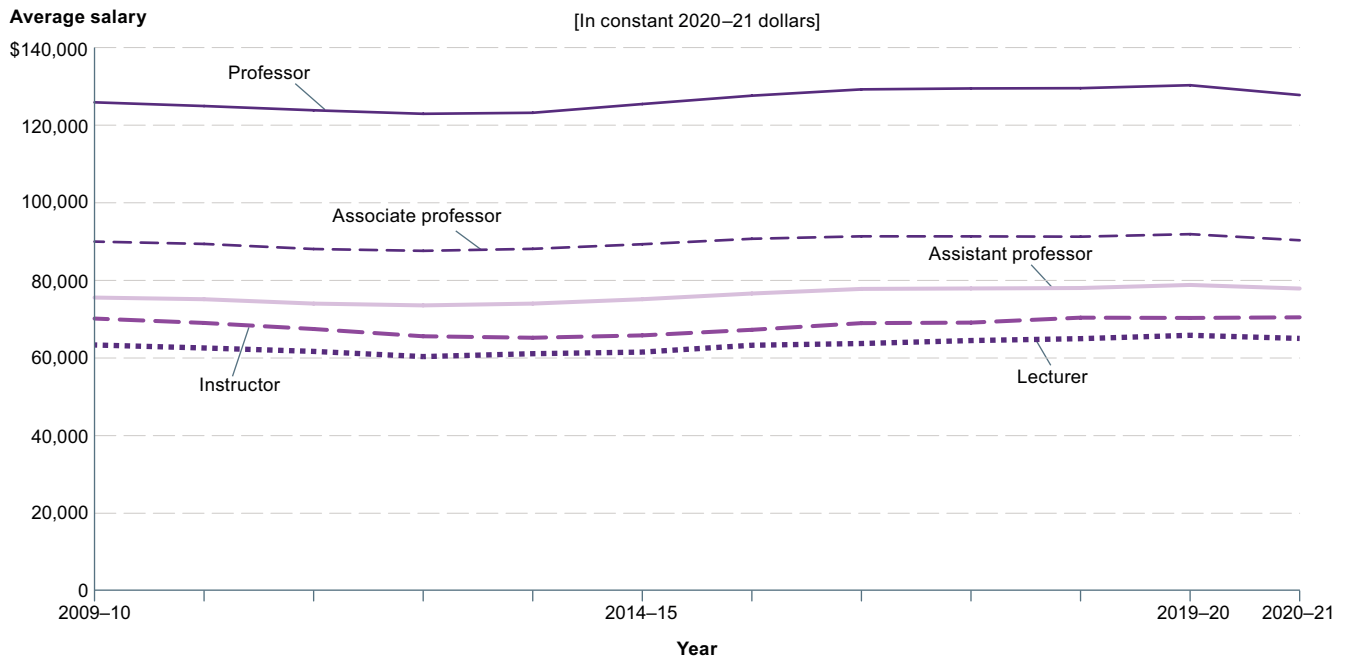
NOTE: Data represent the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Only instructional faculty were classified by academic rank. Sex breakouts are excluded for faculty who were American Indian/Alaska Native and of Two or more races because the percentages were 1 percent or less. Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Percentages are based on full-time faculty whose race/ethnicity was known. Detail may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), IPEDS Spring 2021, Human Resources component, Fall Staff section. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 315.20.

Considering full-time faculty only, in fall 2020, nearly three-quarters of faculty were White. Specifically, 39 percent were White males and 35 percent were White females. The next largest racial/ethnic group was Asian/Pacific Islander faculty: 7 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander males and 5 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander females. Four percent of full-time faculty were Black females, and 3 percent each were Black males, Hispanic males, and Hispanic females.² American Indian/Alaska Native individuals and individuals of Two or more races each made up 1 percent or less of full-time faculty.

The racial/ethnic and sex distribution of full-time faculty varied by academic rank at degree-granting postsecondary institutions in fall 2020. Professor and associate professor are higher academic ranks, which are usually tenured. Assistant professor is typically an entry-level position, which can lead to higher ranks. Instructors and lecturers are typically lower ranks with no potential for tenure. White male and Asian/Pacific Islander male

faculty made up higher percentages of the higher ranks than of the lower ranks. For example, among full-time professors, 51 percent were White males and 8 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander males, while among full-time assistant professors, these percentages were 32 percent and 7 percent, respectively. Among full-time professors, another 28 percent were White females, 4 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander females and 2 percent each were Black males, Black females, Hispanic males, and Hispanic females, which were lower than their shares of full-time assistant professors. Specifically, among full-time assistant professors, 38 percent were White females, 7 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander females, 5 percent were Black females and 3 percent each were Black males, Hispanic males, and Hispanic females. Individuals of Two or more races made up 1 percent of full-time professors, and 2 percent of full-time assistant professors, while American Indian/Alaska Native individuals made up less than 1 percent each of full-time professors and assistant professors.

Figure 4. Average salary of full-time instructional faculty on 9-month contracts in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by academic rank: Selected years, 2009–10 through 2020–21

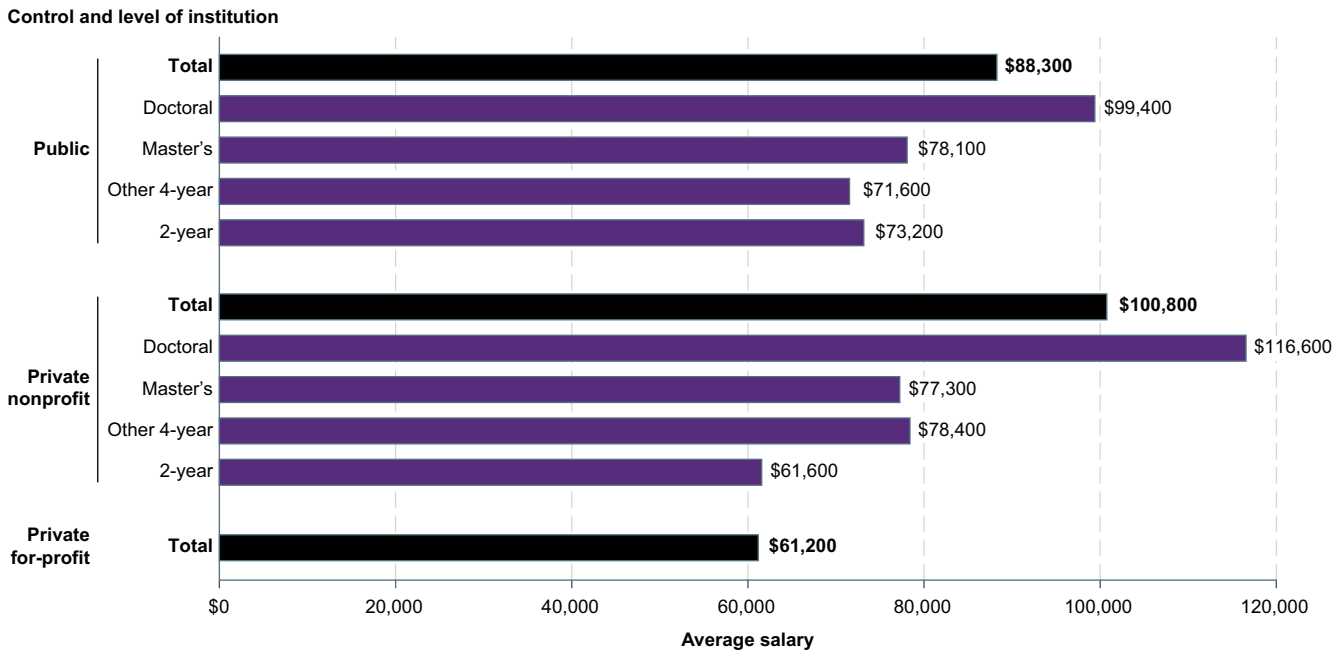


NOTE: Data represent the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Data exclude instructional faculty at medical schools. Data include imputations for nonrespondent institutions. Salaries are reported in constant 2020–21 dollars, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Some data have been revised from previously published figures.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), IPEDS Winter 2009–10 through Winter 2011–12 and Spring 2013 through Spring 2021, Human Resources component, Salaries section. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 316.10.

In academic year 2020-21, the average salary (in constant 2020-21 dollars) for full-time instructional faculty on 9-month contracts at degree-granting postsecondary institutions was \$91,900. Average salaries ranged from \$65,000 for lecturers to \$127,800 for professors. The average salary for all full-time instructional faculty increased by 1 percent between 2009-10 and 2020-21 (from \$90,600 to \$91,900). The increase in average salary between 2009-10 and 2020-21 was 1 percent for professors (from \$125,900 to \$127,800), less than 1 percent for associate professors (from \$90,000 to \$90,300), 3 percent for assistant professors (from \$75,600 to \$77,900), and 3 percent for lecturers (from \$63,400 to \$65,000). For each of these ranks, salaries decreased between 2009-10 and 2012-13 and then increased between 2012-13 and 2020-21. However, salaries were lower in 2020-21 than in 2019-20. For instructors, the pattern was different. Salaries for instructors were roughly the same in 2020-21 as they were in both 2009-10 and 2019-20, differing by less than one-half of one percent across these years.

Average faculty salaries also varied by sex. The average salary (in constant 2020-21 dollars) for all full-time instructional faculty at degree-granting postsecondary institutions was higher for males than for females in every academic year from 2009-10 to 2020-21. In 2020-21, the average salary was \$99,800 for males and \$83,200 for females. In 2020-21, the male-female salary gap ranged from \$3,300 for instructors to \$19,900 for professors. The male-female salary gap was 6 percent higher in 2020-21 than in 2009-10 for professors (\$19,900 vs. \$18,700) and 32 percent higher for assistant professors (\$7,100 vs. \$5,400). In contrast, this gap was 23 percent lower for instructors (\$3,300 vs. \$4,300) and 14 percent lower for lecturers (\$5,200 vs. \$6,100) over the same period. The male-female salary gap for associate professors was essentially the same in both 2009-10 and 2020-21 (\$6,500 in both years).

Figure 5. Average salary of full-time instructional faculty on 9-month contracts in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by control and level of institution: 2020–21



NOTE: Data represent the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Doctoral institutions include institutions that awarded 20 or more doctor's degrees during the previous academic year. Master's institutions include institutions that awarded 20 or more master's degrees, but less than 20 doctor's degrees, during the previous academic year. Data exclude instructional faculty at medical schools. Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Salaries are reported in constant 2020–21 dollars, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), IPEDS Spring 2021, Human Resources component, Salaries section. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 316.20.

Faculty salaries also varied according to control (i.e., public, private nonprofit, or private for-profit) and level (i.e., 2-year or 4-year) of degree-granting postsecondary institutions. In academic year 2020-21, the average salary (in constant 2020-21 dollars) for full-time instructional faculty on 9-month contracts at private nonprofit institutions (\$100,800) was higher than the average salaries at public institutions (\$88,300) and at private for-profit institutions (\$61,200). Among the specific types of private nonprofit institutions and public institutions, average salaries for instructional faculty were highest at private nonprofit doctoral institutions (\$116,600) and public doctoral institutions (\$99,400). Average salaries were lowest for instructional faculty at private nonprofit 2-year institutions (\$61,600) and public 4-year institutions other than doctoral and master's degree-granting institutions (\$71,600). Average salaries for instructional faculty were 1 percent higher in 2020-21 than in 2009-10 at public institutions (\$88,300 vs. \$87,600) and 3 percent higher at private nonprofit institutions (\$100,800 vs. \$97,800). Meanwhile, average salaries were 8 percent lower at private for-profit institutions (\$61,200 vs. \$66,600).

In academic year 2020-21, approximately 57 percent of degree-granting postsecondary institutions had tenure systems. A tenure system guarantees that, after completing a probationary period, a professor will not be terminated without just cause. The percentage of institutions with tenure systems ranged from 1 percent at private for-profit institutions to 99 percent at public doctoral institutions. Of full-time faculty at institutions with tenure systems, 48 percent had tenure in 2020-21, down from 49 percent in 2009-10. Between 2009-10 and 2020-21, the percentage of full-time faculty with tenure decreased by about 1 percentage point (from 51 to 49 percent) at public institutions and by 41 percentage points at private for-profit institutions (from 51 to 10 percent). At private nonprofit institutions, 44 percent of faculty had tenure in both 2009-10 and 2020-21. At institutions with tenure systems, the percentage of full-time instructional faculty with tenure in 2020-21 was higher for males than for females (54 vs. 41 percent).

Endnotes:

¹ The ratios are calculated by dividing the number of FTE undergraduate and graduate students by the number of FTE faculty (full-time faculty plus the full-time equivalent of the part-time faculty, including instructional, research, and public service faculty).

² Percentages are based on full-time faculty whose race/ethnicity was known. Race/ethnicity was not collected for nonresident aliens.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, tables 314.10, 314.50, 314.60, 315.10, 315.20, 316.10, 316.20, and 316.80

Related indicators and resources: [Characteristics of Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions](#); [Characteristics of Postsecondary Students](#); [Undergraduate Enrollment](#)

Glossary: Constant dollars; Control of institutions; Degree-granting institutions; Doctor's degree; Gap; Postsecondary education; Postsecondary institutions (basic classification by level); Private institution; Public school or institution; Racial/ethnic group; Salary