CRA Taulbee Survey: Definition Guide

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CRA
Computing Research Association

CRA Taulbee **Survey**

Background & Compliance Statement

Background

CRA conducts several activities that support its members and the overall computing sector, e.g., providing professional development resources, informing policy makers and the public on matters that foster growth of computing research, and distributing facts and data of interest to the computing research community. The Taulbee Survey, which CRA has performed annually since 1974, has earned prominence as a carefully-structured and reliable source of industry data that is crafted with applicable safeguards. Each year a wide array of respondents choose to reply to the Taulbee survey, knowing that robust data enhances the validity of results and bolsters the survey's value to its full spectrum of users.

Invitation

CRA invites you to contribute to the computing community's valuable common knowledge base by completing the 2026 Taulbee survey form according to your institution's parameters for participation in such initiatives.

Compliance

CRA is committed to complying fully with applicable laws and regulations that protect privacy, equality, competition, and other pertinent standards. CRA seeks to protect the survey's many legitimate purposes by expecting universal commitment to such standards. CRA, a third-party survey administrator, takes due precautions to adhere to laws and ethical principles, such as:

- maintaining strict confidentiality of all submitted data, which shall not be disclosed in raw form to anyone;
- engaging a professional survey service to receive and process all data independently;
- soliciting historical salary data by position; and
- distributing in the Taulbee survey results (and any related report, publication, or presentation) only data that is aggregate, anonymous, and inclusive of numerous respondents in order to preclude identification of any individual data source.

CRA encourages community members to engage actively with your institution's resources, as appropriate, to complete the 2026 Taulbee Survey toward yielding widespread benefits for the global computing community.

Introduction

To ensure the highest level of validity and reliability in the annual Taulbee Survey data reported to the community, we have created this comprehensive definition guide to share with participating Taulbee academic units. This document provides clear, standardized definitions for all of the data we collect, from different professorial ranks, tenured and non-tenured teaching faculty, and other research faculty that work within your academic units. To the best of your ability, please follow the definitions provided in this guide when reporting your data for Taulbee Main and Salary.

Definition of CS/CE/I

Only include data for computer science, computer engineering, and information programs with significant computing technical content. Do not include any data for fields such as electrical engineering. If the title of your program is “Computer Science” (CS) or “Computer Engineering” (CE) or “Information Science” (I) or similar, count students in those categories.

If your program crosses disciplines within computing (e.g. Computer Science and Engineering or Computer and Information Sciences), count students in the appropriate category (CS, CE, or I) as well as you can determine. If your program has a multidisciplinary name such as “Electrical and Computer Engineering” or “Math and Computer Science,” count students only if their training (doctoral dissertation, master’s thesis or project, or required courses for undergraduate major) falls clearly within computer science, computer engineering, or information with significant computing technical content, and then pick the most appropriate category (CS, CE, or I).

Please reach out to **TaulbeeSurvey@cra.org** if you have questions on where your unit should report its data.

Faculty Role Definitions

In this section, we define the faculty roles that we collect salary and other data for in the Taulbee Main and Salary surveys. Faculty counted in this category should be full time at the institution, although they may be part time in your academic unit with a shared appointment somewhere else in the institution. Generally, faculty are divided into two different categories that we collect aggregate and individual-level data for. Those categories include: ***(1) Traditional Tenure-Track or Tenured Faculty***, ***(2) Non-Tenure-Track Faculty***, which are split into Non-Tenure-Track Teaching Faculty and Non-Tenure-Track Research Faculty. Below, we describe the characteristics of the roles that may be considered in each category. Please use these definitions as guides on where to report your faculty. When in doubt, please reach out to **TaulbeeSurvey@cra.org** so that the CRA Taulbee Team can help to provide guidance.

Traditional Tenure-Track or Tenured Faculty

Traditional Tenure-Track or Tenured Faculty include the roles of Assistant Professors, Associate Professors, and Full Professors. These roles require the individual to hold a PhD [1]. The expectations of these roles include teaching, research, and service or governance. Their research expectations make up about 40-60% of their time. They are expected to apply for and receive grant funding for research projects to sustain their academic research within the institution. Research is a part of their performance criteria. They are also expected to advise undergraduate and graduate researchers. Their teaching expectations make up 20-40% of their time, and they are expected to teach at all levels of undergraduate and graduate education. Finally, their service/governance expectations make up the remaining 10-20% of their time. They vote within their academic unit, lead and serve on committees, and serve their external research community. Service is a part of their performance criteria.

	Figure 1. Categorization of Faculty Types		
	Traditional Tenure-Track or Tenured Faculty	**Non-Tenure-Track Faculty**	
		Teaching Faculty	**Research Faculty**
Roles or Titles	Includes Assistant, Associate, and Full Professors.	Includes Teaching Professors or Other Instructors.	Includes Researchers and Postdoctorates.
Qualifications	Requires a PhD [1].	Usually requires a PhD.	Requires a PhD.
Teaching Expectations	Teaches 20-40% of the time at all levels of undergraduate and graduate education. Expected to advise undergraduate & graduate researchers.	Teaches 60-80% of the time in all levels of undergraduate education. May also teach graduate courses. May advise undergraduate researchers.	Little to no teaching expectations, though postdoctorates may engage in some teaching for professional development.
Research Expectations	Research time spans 40-60%. Expected to conduct research, be a PI or co-PI, fund all stakeholders in their research enterprise. Part of performance criteria.	Research time spans 0-40%. May conduct subdisciplinary research. Less likely to have research as part of performance criteria.	Research time spans 60-80%. Expected to conduct research, be a PI or co-PI. Part of performance criteria.
Service or Governance Expectations	Spends 10-20% on service. Votes in the unit, leads and serves on committees. Serves their external research community. Part of performance criteria.	Spends 0-20% on service. May vote in the unit or serve on committees. May have service as part of their performance criteria.	Typically will not vote in the unit or serve on committees. Typically do not have service as part of their performance criteria.
External Visibility	External visibility is part of performance criteria.	External visibility may be part of performance criteria.	External visibility may be part of performance criteria.
Professional Development	More likely to have a sabbatical option.	Less likely to have a sabbatical option.	Unlikely to have a sabbatical option.
Length of Contract	Starts with a conditional contract before tenure review.	Renewable fixed term position, typically between 3-5 years per term.	Typically 1 year fixed term position, but can be renewable. Likely funded by external grants.

Assistant Professors

Taulbee defines **Assistant Professors** as the first rank in the series of tenure-track professorial stages that are typical for traditional tenure-track faculty. **Assistant Professors** are usually hired on a conditional basis for a set number of years, usually anywhere between 5-9 years, before they go up for their tenure review process. As

above, their roles consist traditionally of 40-40-20, meaning 40% of their time is typically dedicated to research, 40% to teaching undergraduate and graduate courses at the institution, and 20% to service and governance within committees and their academic unit, though this ratio may vary.

Years in rank
In the Taulbee Salary survey, we collect salary information on **Assistant Professors** regardless of how many years they are hired in this rank. If you are reporting this information through uploaded individual-level data, you should provide the exact year they were hired at your academic unit into this position. If you are collecting this information in aggregate, simply report any current academic year Assistant Professors in your academic unit within this category.

Associate Professors

Taulbee defines **Associate Professors** as the second rank in the series of professorial stages that are typical for traditional tenured faculty. **Associate Professors** have usually gone through their tenure-review process and have been successfully granted tenure either within their academic unit or were hired as an Associate Professor with transferrable or negotiated transfer tenure status.

Years in rank
In the Taulbee Salary survey, we collect salary information on Associate Professors based on the number of years they have been in that position.

- In rank <8 years
- In rank 8+ years

Full Professors

Finally, Taulbee defines **Full Professors** as the third rank in the series of professorial stages that are typical for traditional tenured faculty. Full Professors are typically the senior-most level of the professoriate. They are typically promoted from Associate Professors based on their performance and achievement, though this promotion process varies from institution to institution.

Years in rank
In the Taulbee Salary survey, we collect salary information on Full Professors based on the number of years they have been in that position.

- In rank <= 7 years
- In rank 8-15 years
- In rank 16+ years

Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

Taulbee defines **Non-Tenure-Track Faculty** as faculty within an academic unit whose primary responsibility is teaching or research, but not both. If their primary responsibility is teaching, they have less research expectations, and vice versa. The service/governance is either lower or not required in their role. Non-Tenure-Track

Faculty roles usually require a PhD. These roles are typically renewable fixed term positions, typically between 1-5 years per term.

Teaching Faculty

Non-Tenure-Track Teaching Faculty, often holding titles like Teaching Professor or Instructor, are academic professionals primarily focused on teaching. While they usually hold a PhD, their roles differ significantly from tenure-track positions. Their contracts are for a renewable fixed term, typically 3-5 years, and do not lead to tenure. Teaching makes up the majority of their time, typically 60-80%, and they are expected to teach at all levels of undergraduate education. They may also teach graduate courses and advise undergraduate researchers. Unlike Tenure-Track Faculty, research is generally not a core expectation and is not a formal part of their performance criteria. They are not typically expected to apply for or secure grant funding for research. They dedicate a smaller portion of their time to service, usually 0-20%. They may have the right to vote within their academic unit and serve on committees, and service may be a part of their performance criteria. Their professional development opportunities, such as sabbaticals, are less common. External visibility may also be a part of their performance criteria, depending on the institution.

Teaching Professors

Taulbee defines **Teaching Professors** as any full-time faculty member within an academic unit whose primary responsibility is teaching. These positions are typically renewable fixed-term positions between 3-5 years in length. The responsibilities of Teaching Professors usually is 60-80% of time spent teaching with some lower degree of research and service/governance responsibilities as a faculty member of the unit.

Years in rank: Please report your Teaching Professors based on the time they have been working in that role in your unit.

- In rank < 3 years
- In rank 3-5 years
- In rank 6-8 years
- In rank 9+ years

Other Instructors

Taulbee defines **Other Instructors** as any full-time faculty member within an academic unit whose primary responsibility is teaching with little to no responsibilities for research and service/governance in the academic unit. Lecturers may also fall under this category. Please do not report part-time adjuncts in this category.

Years in rank: Please report your Other Instructors based on the time they have been working in that role in your unit.

- In rank < 3 years
- In rank 3-5 years
- In rank 6-8 years
- In rank 9+ years

Research Faculty

Taulbee defines **Non-Tenure-Track Research Faculty** as faculty within an academic unit whose primary responsibility is conducting research and associated research activities. These roles require a PhD. In general, these faculty roles are not eligible for tenure and are typically 1 year fixed-term positions, but may be longer and can be renewable. These positions are likely funded by external grants, though may be directly funded by the academic unit. Research spans around 60-80% of their time. They will likely have little to no teaching expectations, though they may engage in some teaching occasionally or for professional development. They also will typically not vote in the unit or serve on committees and will typically not have service/governance as part of their performance criteria. Unlike tenure-track faculty, they are unlikely to have a sabbatical option.

Researchers

Taulbee defines **Researchers** as Ph.D.-holding faculty whose primary role is to conduct research. These positions are typically non-tenure-track, fixed-term, and are often supported by external grants. Some common titles that could fall under **Researchers** include: Research Professor, Research Scientist, Research Scholar, or Principal Investigator (PI), if the role is a non-tenure track, research-only position. Their responsibilities are overwhelmingly focused on research (typically 60-80% of their time). They are generally not involved in academic unit governance, committee work, or academic unit voting.

Postdoctorates

Taulbee defines **Postdoctorates** (or postdocs) as individuals who have recently completed their Ph.D. and are in a temporary, full-time research position for a fixed period. Common titles for **Postdoctorates** may include: Postdoctoral Fellows, Postdoctoral Researchers, Postdoctoral Associates, or Research Fellows. Their primary focus is to gain additional research experience and professional training under the supervision of a senior faculty member. Their work is almost entirely dedicated to research. They are not faculty and usually do not have formal teaching responsibilities, though they may mentor students. They typically have no service obligations and are not involved in academic unit governance. Their external visibility is primarily through their research publications and presentations at conferences.

Doctoral Student Roles Definitions

Taulbee defines a doctoral student as a student matriculated within a doctoral program offered by the academic unit that is responding to the Taulbee survey. Given we collect salary data, we collect this information by the way the student is funded within their doctoral program in the following categories.

Teaching Assistants

Taulbee defines a **Teaching Assistant (TA)** as a doctoral student or candidate matriculated in a unit's doctoral program and supported by a Teaching Assistantship offered by the academic unit or institution. Teaching Assistantships generally require the doctoral candidate to dedicate a minimum of 20 hours per week to TA responsibilities related to teaching undergraduate courses in addition to their own doctoral coursework & dissertation projects, although specific requirements may differ among institutions.

Research Assistants

Taulbee defines a **Research Assistant (RA)** as a doctoral student or candidate matriculated in a unit's doctoral program and supported by a Research Assistantship, typically funded by external grants awarded to a doctoral student's research lab or supporting advisor/PI. Research Assistantships generally require the doctoral candidate to dedicate a minimum of 20 hours per week to RA responsibilities related to supporting grant or other research lab responsibilities in addition to their own doctoral coursework & dissertation projects, although specific time requirements may differ among institutions.

Full-Support Fellows

Taulbee defines a **Full-Support Fellow** as a doctoral student or candidate matriculated in a unit's doctoral program and supported by an external or internal fellowship. Full-Support Fellows may still be part of a research lab and take part in the responsibilities associated with conducting research as a part of the lab, but generally conduct their own research independently under the supervision of an advisor.

Self-Funded

Taulbee defines **Self-Funded** doctoral students as those that are matriculated in a unit's doctoral program and support their tuition independently, typically without the support of a fellowship or an external grant.

Graduate Assistants for Computer Systems Support

Taulbee defines a **Graduate Assistant for Computer Systems Support** as a doctoral student or candidate matriculated in a unit's doctoral program and supported by a Graduate Assistantship offered by the academic unit or institution. The primary responsibilities of these students are focused on supporting the academic unit's computer systems, such as systems administration, user support, and software/hardware maintenance. Their work is generally administrative in function for

the academic unit rather than for research or teaching.

Other Definitions

Taulbee defines a **premajor** as an undergraduate student who has not yet completed foundational coursework to be declared as a major. **Premajors** typically have to complete foundational coursework or meet specific academic criteria in order to be declared.

References

[1] K. H. Wapman, S. Zhang, A. Clauset, and D. B. Larremore, "Quantifying hierarchy and dynamics in US faculty hiring and retention," *Nature*, Sep. 2022, doi: https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-022-05222-x.