

Amazon Is Hiring Ph.D.s — Hundreds This Year

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Research universities take years to complete hiring sprees of Amazonian scale.

With the academic job market in full swing, people are applying to multiple positions, in hopes of landing a faculty job somewhere, anywhere.

For those who don't make the shortlist — or who may have decided that a professorship isn't for them after all — a big market for people with Ph.D.s has emerged at Amazon, the retail behemoth.

The retail behemoth has hired nearly 500 Ph.D.s, former professors among them, since the beginning of this year to work in its applied-science and research-science units, according to company figures. The pace and scale of that hiring are far greater than those of any college or university in the country.

In academe, hiring sprees take place at a slower clip, often over several years. Here are some recent large-scale hiring efforts at colleges, and how close they are to their goals:

Nearly four years ago, the University of California at Riverside announced that it would hire 300 new professors by 2020. The process has caused some strain on the campus, [made apparent](#) in a survey finding that faculty members were unhappy with how the hiring strategy was put into effect. Riverside has hired more than 250 faculty members since then.

In 2011, the University of Connecticut at Storrs announced that it would hire nearly 300 new faculty members. In current job ads, for positions to begin in the 2018-19 academic year, it says it has hired 450 new faculty members, at all ranks, over the past few years.

The University of Florida hires 300 to 400 faculty members annually, chiefly to replace those who've retired or left for other jobs. In June the university [announced plans](#) to hire 500 faculty members in addition to those replacements. The plan is to start by hiring 200 new faculty members to begin work next academic year, a university spokesman said. The effort is intended to help Florida bolster its status in national rankings and improve its student-to-faculty ratio.

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Of course, public universities usually have good reasons for the pace, fast or slow, at which they hire. Bulking up the faculty takes some combination of fund raising, reallocating resources internally, and winning the support of lawmakers in a tough budget climate.

Let's just say that for a cash-rich company like Amazon, any plan to hire hundreds isn't likely to be slowed by financial constraints.

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