

Statistical profile of persons receiving doctor's degrees, by field of study and selected characteristics: 1987-88 and 2008-09

Selected characteristic	Field of study									
	All fields	Educa-tion	Engi-neering	Human-ities	Life sciences	Total	Physical sciences\1\	Mathemat-ics	Social sciences and psychol-ogy	Other fields
Number of doctor's degrees conferred	49,562	6,531	7,634	4,899	11,402	6,777	1,554	7,836	2,929	1,403
1987-88	33,456	8,349	4,190	3,553	5,143	5,309	749	5,769	1,053	1,039
Percent change	48.1	-21.8	82.2	37.9	121.7	27.7	107.5	35.8	178.2	35.0
Sex (percent)\2\										
Male	53.1	33.1	78.7	48.1	45.4	70.4	68.7	41.6	51.5	62.1
1987-88	64.8	44.8	93.2	55.7	63.2	83.4	83.8	55.0	59.6	76.2
Race/ethnicity (percent)\3\										
White	74.6	70.8	69.8	79.2	75.2	78.7	76.8	74.6	72.5	70.5
1987-88	86.1	85.3	77.0	89.1	88.5	86.6	86.2	87.3	83.1	84.2
Black	2008-09	6.9	14.5	4.3	4.3	5.4	3.1	3.2	6.8	9.6
1987-88	3.8	7.5	1.5	3.0	2.2	1.2	0.7	4.3	8.9	2.8
Hispanic	2008-09	5.8	6.9	5.0	6.6	5.0	4.2	4.7	7.1	5.1
1987-88	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.8	2.3	2.2	1.1	3.2	2.3	1.3
Asian.....	2008-09	8.3	3.9	16.3	5.2	10.3	9.9	10.9	6.3	8.9
1987-88	5.0	2.4	15.5	2.3	4.9	6.6	8.6	3.2	4.4	9.4
Median age at doctorate(years).....	2008-09	32.2	40.5	30.5	34.5	31.3	30.2	29.9	32.4	36.1
1987-88	33.8	40.5	31.0	35.4	31.9	30.3	30.9	34.1	37.1	34.8
Percent with bachelor's degree in same field as doctorate.....	2008-09	53.5	29.8	77.1	53.6	49.4	64.6	65.6	51.8	33.3
1987-88	54.7	36.9	76.4	56.7	55.4	67.3	70.4	54.5	23.8	36.9
Median time lapse (years) to doctorate										
Since bachelor's degree completion	2008-09	9.3	16.2	7.9	11.3	8.5	7.5	7.3	9.4	12.4
1987-88	10.5	16.9	8.1	12.2	8.9	7.4	8.0	10.5	14.6	11.6
Since starting graduate school	2008-09	7.7	12.3	6.7	9.5	7.0	6.7	6.7	7.7	9.7
1987-88	6.9	8.1	5.9	8.5	6.5	6.1	6.3	7.4	7.9	6.9
Postdoctoral plans (percent)\5\										
Definite postdoctoral study\6\	2008-09	26.4	4.0	24.2	8.4	44.5	39.7	33.4	23.9	4.6
1987-88	17.3	3.0	11.7	4.1	41.9	33.2	13.6	9.9	1.8	1.7
Definite postdoctoral employment\8\										
Educational institution\9\	2008-09	22.6	34.5	7.4	46.1	11.2	11.7	22.5	31.0	55.8
1987-88	39.2	63.1	24.0	66.1	19.9	20.3	52.9	36.8	50.1	75.6
Primary work activity after doctorate (percent)\10\										
Research and development	2008-09	37.7	9.1	72.9	15.0	42.8	61.4	44.1	36.7	33.7
1987-88	28.3	5.5	64.0	6.6	44.8	61.9	38.0	22.7	11.9	32.0
Teaching	2008-09	36.5	38.9	8.5	72.2	31.5	25.8	47.4	38.3	48.4
1987-88	36.3	35.5	20.6	70.2	28.7	24.7	50.1	29.7	46.5	57.7

---Not available.

†Reporting standards not met (too few cases).

\1\Includes mathematics, computer science, physics and astronomy, chemistry, and earth, atmospheric, and marine sciences.

\2\Distribution based on respondents reporting sex data.

\3\Distribution based on U.S. citizens and permanent residents.

\4\Includes Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders.

\5\Percentages are based on only those doctorate recipients who responded to questions about postdoctoral plans.

\6\Percentages are based on only those doctorate recipients who indicated definite postdoctoral plans for study and who indicated the type of study.

\7\Other for 2008-09 includes respondents who indicated definite postgraduation study plans for traineeship, internship/clinical residency, or other study.

\8\Percentages are based on only those doctorate recipients who indicated definite postdoctoral plans for employment and who indicated the sector of employment.

\9\Includes 2-year, 4-year, and foreign colleges and universities, medical schools, and elementary/secondary schools.

\10\Percentages are based on only those doctorate recipients who indicated definite postdoctoral plans for employment and who indicated their primary work activity.

\11\Percentages are based on only those doctorate recipients who indicated definite postdoctoral plans for employment.

NOTE: The above classification of degrees by field differs somewhat from that in most publications of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). One major difference is that history is included under humanities rather than social sciences.

Includes Ph.D., Ed.D., and comparable degrees at the doctoral level. Includes only graduates of research programs, which typically require the preparation and defense of a dissertation based on original research, or the planning and execution of an original project demonstrating substantial artistic or scholarly achievement. Excludes nonresearch professional practice doctor's degrees (e.g., M.D., D.D.S., and J.D.) that are conferred upon completion of a program providing the knowledge and skills for the recognition, credential, or license required for professional practice in such fields as health and theology. The number of doctor's degrees in this table differs from that reported in the NCES Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), which includes both the research and nonresearch degrees. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: Doctorate Recipients From U.S. Universities: Summary Report 2008-09, Survey of Earned Doctorates, National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Education, National Endowment for the Humanities, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. (This table was prepared July 2011.)