

TABLE 12

Doctorate recipients, by major field of study: Selected years, 1987–2017

(Number and percent)

Field of study	1987		1992		1997		2002		2007		2012		2017	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All fields	32,365	100.0	38,886	100.0	42,539	100.0	40,031	100.0	48,132	100.0	50,944	100.0	54,664	100.0
Life sciences	5,783	17.9	7,172	18.4	8,421	19.8	8,478	21.2	10,702	22.2	11,964	23.5	12,592	23.0
Agricultural sciences and natural resources	1,144	3.5	1,261	3.2	1,212	2.8	1,129	2.8	1,321	2.7	1,255	2.5	1,606	2.9
Biological and biomedical sciences	3,839	11.9	4,799	12.3	5,788	13.6	5,695	14.2	7,238	15.0	8,322	16.3	8,477	15.5
Health sciences	800	2.5	1,112	2.9	1,421	3.3	1,654	4.1	2,143	4.5	2,387	4.7	2,509	4.6
Physical sciences and earth sciences	3,811	11.8	4,517	11.6	4,550	10.7	3,875	9.7	4,956	10.3	5,419	10.6	6,081	11.1
Chemistry	1,975	6.1	2,213	5.7	2,148	5.0	1,922	4.8	2,318	4.8	2,416	4.7	2,697	4.9
Geosciences, atmospheric sciences, and ocean sciences	599	1.9	767	2.0	803	1.9	689	1.7	875	1.8	941	1.8	1,165	2.1
Physics and astronomy	1,237	3.8	1,537	4.0	1,599	3.8	1,264	3.2	1,763	3.7	2,062	4.0	2,219	4.0
Mathematics and computer sciences	1,189	3.7	1,927	5.0	2,032	4.8	1,729	4.3	3,042	6.3	3,496	6.9	3,843	7.0
Computer and information sciences	450	1.4	869	2.2	909	2.1	809	2.0	1,654	3.4	1,793	3.5	1,987	3.6
Mathematics and statistics	739	2.3	1,058	2.7	1,123	2.6	920	2.3	1,388	2.9	1,703	3.3	1,856	3.4
Psychology and social sciences	6,063	18.7	6,562	16.9	7,369	17.3	6,925	17.3	7,309	15.2	8,498	16.7	9,079	16.6
Psychology	3,172	9.8	3,262	8.4	3,557	8.4	3,207	8.0	3,276	6.8	3,599	7.1	3,960	7.2
Anthropology	352	1.1	320	0.8	434	1.0	496	1.2	512	1.1	547	1.1	455	0.8
Economics	821	2.5	910	2.3	1,030	2.4	908	2.3	1,004	2.1	1,243	2.4	1,237	2.3
Political science and government	404	1.2	513	1.3	665	1.6	606	1.5	588	1.2	724	1.4	752	1.4
Sociology	423	1.3	495	1.3	577	1.4	547	1.4	576	1.2	633	1.2	689	1.3
Other social sciences	891	2.8	1,062	2.7	1,106	2.6	1,161	2.9	1,353	2.8	1,752	3.4	1,986	3.6
Engineering	3,712	11.5	5,438	14.0	6,114	14.4	5,081	12.7	7,749	16.1	8,469	16.6	9,843	18.0
Aerospace, aeronautical, and astronautical engineering	142	0.4	234	0.6	273	0.6	209	0.5	267	0.6	307	0.6	378	0.7
Bioengineering and biomedical engineering	75	0.2	147	0.4	211	0.5	246	0.6	637	1.3	943	1.9	1,041	1.9
Chemical engineering	527	1.6	607	1.6	662	1.6	607	1.5	817	1.7	840	1.6	936	1.7
Civil engineering	441	1.4	540	1.4	592	1.4	540	1.3	703	1.5	495	1.0	741	1.3
Electrical, electronics, and communications engineering	691	2.1	1,278	3.3	1,460	3.4	1,212	3.0	1,967	4.1	1,938	3.8	1,900	3.5
Industrial and manufacturing engineering	120	0.4	196	0.5	246	0.6	230	0.6	279	0.6	226	0.4	253	0.5

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Field of study	1987		1992		1997		2002		2007		2012		2017	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Materials science engineering	238	0.7	365	0.9	483	1.1	364	0.9	646	1.3	743	1.5	958	
Mechanical engineering	544	1.7	855	2.2	929	2.2	771	1.9	1,071	2.2	1,220	2.4	1,409	
Other engineering	934	2.9	1,216	3.1	1,258	3.0	902	2.3	1,362	2.8	1,757	3.4	2,227	
Education	6,453	19.9	6,677	17.2	6,577	15.5	6,508	16.3	6,448	13.4	4,803	9.4	4,823	
Education administration	1,687	5.2	1,984	5.1	2,050	4.8	2,351	5.9	2,161	4.5	1,057	2.1	1,023	
Education research	2,601	8.0	2,503	6.4	2,695	6.3	2,776	6.9	2,671	5.5	2,569	5.0	2,405	
Teacher education	447	1.4	407	1.0	291	0.7	262	0.7	297	0.6	156	0.3	112	
Teaching fields	1,065	3.3	1,008	2.6	919	2.2	686	1.7	873	1.8	757	1.5	908	
Other education	653	2.0	775	2.0	622	1.5	433	1.1	446	0.9	264	0.5	375	
Humanities and arts	3,478	10.7	4,387	11.3	5,285	12.4	5,297	13.2	5,085	10.6	5,561	10.9	5,290	
Foreign languages and literature	444	1.4	562	1.4	652	1.5	627	1.6	607	1.3	684	1.3	624	
History	585	1.8	724	1.9	965	2.3	1,031	2.6	937	1.9	1,086	2.1	1,066	
Letters	945	2.9	1,278	3.3	1,550	3.6	1,455	3.6	1,340	2.8	1,638	3.2	1,465	
Other humanities and arts	1,504	4.6	1,823	4.7	2,118	5.0	2,184	5.5	2,201	4.6	2,153	4.2	2,135	
Other ^a	1,876	5.8	2,206	5.7	2,191	5.2	2,138	5.3	2,841	5.9	2,734	5.4	3,113	
Business management and administration	981	3.0	1,248	3.2	1,245	2.9	1,113	2.8	1,506	3.1	1,404	2.8	1,522	
Communication	309	1.0	330	0.8	331	0.8	397	1.0	560	1.2	595	1.2	626	
Non-S&E fields nec	586	1.8	628	1.6	614	1.4	628	1.6	772	1.6	735	1.4	965	
Unknown field	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	*	0	0.0	3	*	0	0.0	0	

* = value < 0.05%.

nec = not elsewhere classified; S&E = science and engineering.

^a Includes other non-S&E fields not shown separately.**Note(s)**

See table A-6 in the technical notes for a listing of major fields and their constituent subfields. Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.

Source(s)

National Science Foundation, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, Survey of Earned Doctorates.