

TABLE 31

Median years to doctorate, by broad field of study: Selected years, 1992–2017

(Median years)

Field of study and time to degree	1992	1997	2002	2007	2012	2017
All fields						
Since bachelor's	10.6	10.6	10.3	9.5	9.0	8.8
Since starting graduate school	8.7	8.7	8.6	7.9	7.7	7.5
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	5.8
Life sciences ^b						
Since bachelor's	9.5	9.4	9.0	8.6	8.5	8.3
Since starting graduate school	7.9	7.7	7.4	7.0	6.9	6.8
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	5.8
Physical sciences and earth sciences						
Since bachelor's	7.8	7.8	7.5	7.5	7.3	6.9
Since starting graduate school	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.5	6.4	6.2
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	5.7
Mathematics and computer sciences						
Since bachelor's	9.0	9.2	8.4	8.3	8.0	7.9
Since starting graduate school	7.7	7.8	7.3	7.0	7.0	7.0
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	5.7
Psychology and social sciences						
Since bachelor's	10.9	10.2	10.0	9.7	9.5	9.3
Since starting graduate school	8.7	8.2	8.2	8.0	7.7	7.8
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	6.0
Engineering						
Since bachelor's	8.9	8.9	8.6	8.0	7.6	7.3
Since starting graduate school	7.2	7.2	7.2	6.7	6.7	6.7
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	5.3
Education						
Since bachelor's	19.0	20.0	19.0	16.6	15.0	15.0
Since starting graduate school	15.6	15.7	14.1	12.6	11.9	12.0
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	6.3
Humanities and arts						
Since bachelor's	12.3	12.0	11.7	11.5	11.0	11.0
Since starting graduate school	10.5	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.2	9.4
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	7.1
Other ^c						
Since bachelor's	13.2	13.4	13.0	12.2	11.5	11.4
Since starting graduate school	10.7	10.2	10.2	9.4	8.9	9.3
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	5.8

na = not applicable; not available prior to 2015.

^a Time to doctorate from doctoral program start is based on master's degree entry if the master's degree was at the doctoral institution in the same fine field of study or was a prerequisite to the doctorate; otherwise, it is based on doctoral program entry.

^b Includes agricultural sciences and natural resources; biological and biomedical sciences; and health sciences.

^c Includes other non-science and engineering fields not shown separately.

Source(s)

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