

Table 31**Median years to doctorate, by major field of study: Selected years, 1970–2020**

(Median years)

Field and time to degree	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
All fields											
Since bachelor's	8.0	8.7	9.3	10.3	10.6	10.9	10.3	9.9	9.3	8.7	8.7
Since starting graduate school	6.7	7.5	7.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.5	8.2	7.7	7.3	7.5
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.7	5.8
Life sciences^b											
Since bachelor's	6.7	7.2	7.5	8.5	9.2	9.5	9.1	8.7	8.6	8.2	8.3
Since starting graduate school	5.7	6.2	6.3	7.2	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.1	6.8	6.7	6.9
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.7	5.5
Agricultural sciences and natural resources											
Since bachelor's	7.3	8.2	8.3	9.1	10.4	11.1	11.2	10.0	9.8	9.1	8.8
Since starting graduate school	5.7	6.7	6.7	7.2	8.0	8.3	8.7	7.9	7.9	7.3	7.3
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.2	5.0
Biological and biomedical sciences											
Since bachelor's	6.3	6.9	7.0	8.0	8.3	8.6	8.3	8.0	8.0	7.7	7.9
Since starting graduate school	5.7	6.0	6.2	6.7	7.2	7.2	6.9	6.7	6.6	6.5	6.7
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.7	5.8
Health sciences											
Since bachelor's	8.9	9.0	9.5	12.0	13.3	14.0	14.3	12.5	11.3	11.7	10.9
Since starting graduate school	7.1	7.2	8.0	9.7	11.2	11.2	11.2	9.7	9.0	9.2	8.8
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.3	5.0
Physical sciences and earth sciences											
Since bachelor's	6.0	6.7	6.9	7.1	7.5	8.1	7.6	7.5	7.3	7.0	7.0
Since starting graduate school	5.7	5.9	5.9	6.2	6.7	6.9	6.7	6.6	6.5	6.2	6.3
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.7	5.5
Chemistry											
Since bachelor's	5.6	6.2	6.0	6.5	6.8	7.5	7.0	6.9	6.7	6.3	6.3
Since starting graduate school	5.0	5.4	5.2	5.7	5.7	6.2	5.9	6.0	5.9	5.7	5.8
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.3	5.3
Geosciences, atmospheric sciences, and ocean sciences											
Since bachelor's	7.7	7.9	8.0	8.7	9.0	10.7	9.9	9.0	8.7	8.0	7.7
Since starting graduate school	6.7	7.2	7.0	7.4	7.7	8.9	8.3	7.8	7.3	7.0	6.8
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.6	5.3
Physics and astronomy											
Since bachelor's	6.5	7.2	7.3	7.5	7.7	8.0	7.7	7.6	7.3	7.1	7.2
Since starting graduate school	5.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.9	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.3	6.7
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.9	6.0
Mathematics and computer sciences											
Since bachelor's	6.0	7.0	7.2	8.2	8.3	9.0	8.7	8.3	8.0	7.8	7.9
Since starting graduate school	5.7	6.2	6.2	6.9	7.2	7.7	7.2	7.2	7.0	6.7	7.0
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.7	5.6
Computer and information sciences											
Since bachelor's	-	-	7.3	9.1	8.9	9.5	9.9	9.0	9.0	8.6	8.6
Since starting graduate school	-	-	6.5	7.4	7.2	8.1	8.2	7.7	7.6	7.6	7.7
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.9	5.8
Mathematics and statistics											
Since bachelor's	6.0	7.0	7.1	8.0	8.0	8.6	7.7	7.9	7.2	6.9	7.0
Since starting graduate school	5.7	6.2	6.2	6.7	6.9	7.2	6.9	6.8	6.3	6.0	6.3
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.3	5.3

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(Median years)

Field and time to degree	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Psychology and social sciences											
Since bachelor's	7.3	7.9	8.8	10.1	10.8	10.6	9.9	10.0	9.5	9.3	9.3
Since starting graduate school	6.5	6.9	7.5	8.7	8.9	8.7	7.9	8.2	7.7	7.7	7.9
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	6.0	6.0
Psychology											
Since bachelor's	6.3	6.9	8.0	9.5	10.2	9.8	9.0	9.0	8.4	8.3	8.3
Since starting graduate school	5.7	5.9	6.7	7.9	8.5	7.9	7.2	7.3	6.9	7.0	7.0
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	6.0	5.9
Anthropology											
Since bachelor's	8.3	8.3	9.7	12.0	13.1	12.9	12.2	11.9	11.9	11.7	11.2
Since starting graduate school	7.7	7.2	8.5	10.2	11.4	10.4	9.9	10.0	10.0	9.4	9.1
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	7.7	7.2
Economics											
Since bachelor's	7.3	7.8	8.3	8.9	9.3	9.6	8.9	8.7	8.5	8.1	8.4
Since starting graduate school	6.3	6.9	7.2	7.7	7.7	8.2	7.4	7.3	7.0	6.7	7.7
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.7	5.8
Political science and government											
Since bachelor's	8.2	9.1	9.6	10.5	10.7	10.7	10.3	11.1	10.0	10.0	10.0
Since starting graduate school	7.1	8.1	8.2	9.2	9.3	8.7	8.5	9.3	8.2	8.2	8.7
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	6.3	6.0
Sociology											
Since bachelor's	8.8	8.7	10.0	11.3	12.3	11.9	11.0	11.2	10.7	11.0	11.0
Since starting graduate school	7.7	7.7	8.7	9.7	10.7	9.8	8.9	9.0	8.9	9.0	9.0
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	7.0	6.8
Other social sciences											
Since bachelor's	8.8	9.4	10.2	11.7	12.6	12.4	12.1	12.5	12.0	11.3	11.3
Since starting graduate school	7.6	8.2	8.7	9.7	10.1	10.3	9.7	10.2	9.3	9.0	9.5
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	6.0	6.0
Engineering											
Since bachelor's	7.0	7.6	7.7	8.2	8.3	9.2	8.7	8.3	7.8	7.3	7.5
Since starting graduate school	5.7	6.5	6.4	6.7	6.7	7.3	7.2	7.3	6.9	6.7	6.8
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.2	5.3
Aerospace, aeronautical, and astronautical engineering											
Since bachelor's	7.0	8.2	8.6	8.5	8.6	8.3	8.3	7.9	7.0	7.0	7.1
Since starting graduate school	5.7	7.2	6.9	7.3	6.7	7.2	7.7	7.0	6.6	6.7	6.6
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.6	5.3
Bioengineering and biomedical engineering											
Since bachelor's	8.0	7.2	7.8	8.0	8.0	8.3	8.4	7.4	7.1	6.8	7.0
Since starting graduate school	6.7	5.9	6.7	6.7	6.7	7.2	7.2	6.5	6.3	6.0	6.3
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.3	5.3
Chemical engineering											
Since bachelor's	6.3	6.9	6.6	6.9	6.9	7.5	6.5	6.6	6.7	6.1	6.2
Since starting graduate school	5.2	5.7	5.6	5.7	5.8	6.2	5.7	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.7
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.0	5.0
Civil engineering											
Since bachelor's	7.0	8.7	8.3	8.7	9.6	10.2	9.8	9.0	9.4	8.1	8.6
Since starting graduate school	5.7	7.1	6.7	6.9	7.2	8.1	7.7	7.8	7.9	7.2	7.7
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	4.9	5.0

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(Median years)

Field and time to degree	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Electrical, electronics, and communications engineering											
Since bachelor's	-	-	-	8.0	8.0	8.6	8.7	8.6	8.0	7.8	7.9
Since starting graduate school	-	-	-	6.7	6.7	7.2	7.2	7.7	7.0	6.9	7.3
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.3	5.4
Industrial and manufacturing engineering											
Since bachelor's	7.6	8.9	9.2	9.4	10.2	10.4	10.4	9.8	9.0	8.3	8.6
Since starting graduate school	5.9	6.9	7.7	7.2	7.7	7.7	8.7	8.2	7.7	7.2	7.8
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.2	5.0
Materials science engineering											
Since bachelor's	6.6	7.7	7.0	7.2	8.0	8.7	8.0	7.8	7.5	6.6	6.8
Since starting graduate school	5.7	6.5	5.7	6.3	6.2	7.2	7.1	6.7	6.5	6.0	6.1
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.0	5.0
Mechanical engineering											
Since bachelor's	7.2	8.0	7.9	8.1	8.5	9.5	9.0	8.7	7.9	7.4	7.3
Since starting graduate school	5.9	6.7	6.4	6.3	6.9	7.7	7.7	7.7	6.8	6.7	6.8
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.2	5.3
Other engineering											
Since bachelor's	7.0	7.5	7.9	9.0	8.9	10.0	9.7	8.7	8.4	8.0	8.2
Since starting graduate school	5.7	6.5	6.7	6.9	7.2	7.7	7.7	7.6	7.3	7.1	7.3
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.2	5.0
Education											
Since bachelor's	12.8	12.6	13.2	15.2	18.0	19.9	19.4	17.4	16.2	14.8	15.0
Since starting graduate school	10.2	9.9	10.7	12.7	14.7	15.7	14.2	13.0	12.5	11.7	12.0
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	6.0	5.8
Education administration											
Since bachelor's	15.0	14.6	15.0	16.9	19.6	22.1	23.2	20.6	19.4	18.6	18.2
Since starting graduate school	11.7	11.7	12.2	14.2	16.3	18.7	18.0	15.0	15.1	15.2	14.8
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	6.7	5.8
Education research											
Since bachelor's	11.2	11.3	12.7	14.6	17.2	18.5	17.1	15.3	14.6	13.3	14.0
Since starting graduate school	8.9	9.2	10.2	11.9	13.9	14.4	12.7	12.0	11.6	10.9	11.3
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	6.0	5.8
Teacher education											
Since bachelor's	13.9	14.3	13.4	15.3	18.7	20.9	22.0	19.3	17.9	17.0	16.0
Since starting graduate school	10.9	10.9	10.9	12.9	14.3	15.9	14.9	13.7	13.1	13.4	12.9
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	6.2	5.8
Teaching fields											
Since bachelor's	12.3	12.2	12.3	13.8	15.6	16.7	16.3	15.8	15.0	14.3	14.0
Since starting graduate school	9.9	9.9	10.2	11.2	12.2	12.9	12.2	11.7	11.1	11.3	11.5
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.9	5.5
Other education											
Since bachelor's	13.5	13.9	14.3	15.4	18.3	19.8	18.0	17.0	16.3	15.7	15.0
Since starting graduate school	10.7	10.7	11.1	12.5	15.2	15.7	13.2	12.3	12.1	12.3	11.8
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	6.3	5.8
Humanities and arts											
Since bachelor's	9.0	9.9	10.9	11.9	12.3	12.1	11.6	12.0	11.6	11.0	11.1
Since starting graduate school	7.9	8.7	9.7	10.2	10.7	10.1	9.7	9.9	9.5	9.2	9.6
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	6.9	6.8

Table 31**Median years to doctorate, by major field of study: Selected years, 1970–2020**

(Median years)

Field and time to degree	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Foreign languages and literature											
Since bachelor's	9.0	10.0	11.0	11.9	11.6	11.2	11.2	11.0	11.4	10.7	10.8
Since starting graduate school	7.7	8.7	9.7	10.2	9.7	8.9	8.9	9.3	9.1	8.9	9.0
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	6.9	6.7
History											
Since bachelor's	9.0	9.5	10.7	11.9	12.7	12.2	11.3	11.7	11.3	10.9	11.0
Since starting graduate school	7.9	8.7	9.7	10.7	10.7	9.7	9.2	10.0	9.4	9.0	9.3
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	7.0	7.0
Letters											
Since bachelor's	9.0	9.2	10.6	11.8	12.0	11.6	10.9	11.7	11.2	10.3	10.8
Since starting graduate school	7.7	8.2	9.7	9.9	10.0	9.7	9.2	9.7	9.0	8.9	9.0
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	6.7	6.3
Other humanities and arts											
Since bachelor's	10.0	10.6	11.0	12.0	12.6	12.9	12.6	12.3	12.0	11.8	11.6
Since starting graduate school	8.7	9.7	9.9	10.3	11.0	11.1	10.7	10.3	9.7	9.9	9.9
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	7.1	6.8
Other ^c											
Since bachelor's	10.0	10.1	11.0	13.0	13.2	13.2	13.6	13.0	12.1	11.2	11.3
Since starting graduate school	7.9	8.6	9.2	10.7	10.2	10.3	10.2	10.3	9.3	8.9	9.3
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.3	5.3
Business management and administration											
Since bachelor's	9.1	9.5	10.4	11.9	12.0	12.2	13.0	12.4	11.5	10.7	10.6
Since starting graduate school	7.0	7.9	8.7	9.6	9.0	9.7	9.9	9.8	8.9	8.7	8.9
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.0	5.0
Communication											
Since bachelor's	10.0	9.1	9.9	12.0	12.2	11.6	12.0	12.0	11.3	10.3	10.3
Since starting graduate school	7.3	7.9	7.7	9.9	9.7	9.5	9.2	9.3	8.7	8.0	8.7
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	5.3	5.3
Non-S&E fields nec											
Since bachelor's	13.0	13.4	13.3	15.5	15.9	16.9	16.0	15.0	14.5	13.0	13.0
Since starting graduate school	9.9	11.2	10.7	12.7	13.1	13.9	12.7	12.7	11.0	10.7	10.8
Since starting doctoral program ^a	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	6.0	5.8

na = not applicable; not available prior to 2014.

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

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