

Table 2-1

Postgraduation commitment of research doctorate recipients, by historical broad field of doctorate: Selected years, 1991–2021

(Number and percent)

Commitment status and year	All fields	Science and engineering						Non-science and engineering			
		Total	Life sciences ^a	Physical sciences and earth sciences	Mathematics and computer sciences	Psychology and social sciences	Engineering	Total	Education	Humanities and arts	Other ^b
All doctorate recipients (number)											
1991	37,530	24,894	6,967	4,406	1,838	6,470	5,213	12,636	6,454	4,053	2,129
1996	42,437	28,405	8,337	4,550	2,042	7,167	6,309	14,032	6,785	4,982	2,265
2001	40,744	26,896	8,369	4,024	1,840	7,151	5,512	13,848	6,356	5,430	2,062
2006	45,620	31,584	9,703	4,686	2,778	7,231	7,186	14,036	6,122	5,332	2,582
2011	48,909	36,331	11,535	5,271	3,273	8,220	8,032	12,578	4,670	5,225	2,683
2016	54,809	41,240	12,539	6,251	3,954	9,037	9,459	13,569	5,146	5,482	2,941
2021	52,250	40,859	11,814	5,757	4,373	8,675	10,240	11,391	4,252	4,137	3,002
All postgraduation commitments											
1991	34,350	22,684	6,481	4,048	1,684	5,874	4,597	11,666	5,976	3,774	1,916
1996	38,634	25,986	7,690	4,180	1,861	6,508	5,747	12,648	6,054	4,576	2,018
2001	37,127	24,632	7,719	3,727	1,673	6,487	5,026	12,495	5,670	4,982	1,843
2006	42,069	29,209	9,030	4,376	2,599	6,613	6,591	12,860	5,645	4,904	2,311
2011	44,703	33,247	10,674	4,898	3,000	7,353	7,322	11,456	4,246	4,805	2,405
2016	49,818	37,648	11,655	5,759	3,588	8,085	8,561	12,170	4,619	4,951	2,600
2021	47,433	37,352	10,899	5,363	3,991	7,695	9,404	10,081	3,798	3,677	2,606
Definite commitment for employment or postdoctoral training (%) ^c											
1991	70.5	69.6	74.0	72.4	65.4	69.6	62.5	72.2	74.7	65.2	78.3
1996	67.5	67.0	70.7	68.0	66.6	65.1	63.6	68.6	74.1	59.2	73.1
2001	72.9	73.5	72.9	77.1	75.3	72.5	72.5	71.6	74.3	65.9	78.5
2006	71.6	71.2	71.7	72.0	74.2	74.1	66.0	72.3	74.9	66.7	77.8
2011	65.5	66.0	62.6	69.0	69.8	69.0	64.1	64.3	68.1	57.3	71.5
2016	61.8	62.2	59.6	62.0	67.4	67.4	58.6	60.5	64.8	52.1	69.0
2021	70.0	70.9	69.8	71.1	75.4	73.8	67.8	66.8	71.1	59.0	71.5
No definite commitment for employment or postdoctoral training (%) ^{c,d}											
1991	29.5	30.4	26.0	27.6	34.6	30.4	37.5	27.8	25.3	34.8	21.7
1996	32.5	33.0	29.3	32.0	33.4	34.9	36.4	31.4	25.9	40.8	26.9
2001	27.1	26.5	27.1	22.9	24.7	27.5	27.5	28.4	25.7	34.1	21.5
2006	28.4	28.8	28.3	28.0	25.8	25.9	34.0	27.7	25.1	33.3	22.2
2011	34.5	34.0	37.4	31.0	30.2	31.0	35.9	35.7	31.9	42.7	28.5
2016	38.2	37.8	40.4	38.0	32.6	32.6	41.4	39.5	35.2	47.9	31.0
2021	30.0	29.1	30.2	28.9	24.6	26.2	32.2	33.2	28.9	41.0	28.5

^a Includes agricultural sciences and natural resources, biological and biomedical sciences, and health sciences.^b Includes other non-science and engineering fields not shown separately.^c Percentages based on number responding to the survey item on postgraduation commitment.^d Includes respondents who indicated "other" in all years, respondents who indicated "do not plan to work or study" in 2004 and later years, and respondents who indicated definite plans for "other full-time degree program" in 2007 and later years.

Note(s):

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100. Beginning in 2021, a modified version of the 2020 Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes was used in the survey data collection; the historical fields were constructed using the SED-CIP code crosswalk in table A-6. Therefore, the field of doctorate data in 2021 may not be comparable to prior years; see the "Technical Notes" for more information, table A-4 for a summary of SED-CIP codes in the new SED field taxonomy, and table A-5 for a full list of SED-CIP codes in the new field taxonomy.

Source(s):

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