Table 1-3. Distribution of doctoral students across science, engineering, and health fields: 2017–25

(Number)

Detailed field	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
All fields	270,525	277,096	281,889	283,335	293,543	297,223	307,229	312,148	315,098
Science	186,399	190,928	193,896	196,742	203,988	206,183	212,969	216,898	219,611
Agricultural and veterinary sciences[a]	3,744	3,880	3,889	4,313	4,443	4,647	4,854	5,044	5,068
Agricultural sciences	3,744	3,880	3,889	3,791	3,906	4,145	4,354	4,522	4,575
Veterinary biomedical and clinical sciences[b]	na	na	na	522	537	502	500	522	493
Biological and biomedical sciences[a]	51,291	52,627	53,915	54,905	58,155	59,638	60,863	62,357	62,284
Biochemistry	4,550	4,554	4,534	4,648	4,828	4,994	4,985	5,021	4,983
Biology	7,020	7,054	7,166	7,268	7,400	7,600	7,543	7,776	7,805
Biomedical sciences	3,412	4,030	4,579	4,514	4,826	5,155	5,415	5,685	5,750
Biophysics	843	830	890	860	973	887	943	958	985
Biostatistics and bioinformatics	2,679	2,946	3,192	3,339	3,591	3,799	4,043	4,183	4,289
Biotechnology	91	109	98	101	128	105	123	171	169
Botany and plant biology	1,312	1,317	1,295	1,255	1,269	1,301	1,299	1,312	1,250
Cell, cellular biology, and anatomical sciences	4,786	4,990	4,975	5,008	5,290	5,374	5,447	5,591	5,585
Ecology and population biology	2,566	2,620	2,571	2,725	2,790	2,808	2,798	2,767	2,801
Epidemiology	1,640	1,768	1,916	2,032	2,162	2,213	2,301	2,296	2,176
Genetics	2,021	2,105	2,082	2,182	2,449	2,584	2,494	2,538	2,491
Microbiological sciences and immunology	3,974	3,914	3,937	4,124	4,371	4,466	4,654	4,710	4,616
Molecular biology	1,135	1,128	1,153	1,240	1,265	1,231	1,280	1,282	1,222
Neurobiology and neuroscience	4,871	5,046	5,138	5,275	5,758	5,933	6,100	6,233	6,293
Nutrition science	988	967	948	989	993	1,050	1,109	1,116	1,049
Pathology and experimental pathology	911	880	843	753	849	917	963	1,049	1,036
Pharmacology and toxicology	2,244	2,237	2,151	2,174	2,374	2,409	2,460	2,445	2,410
Physiology	2,627	2,631	2,703	2,758	3,041	3,021	3,150	3,286	3,462
Zoology and animal biology	1,195	1,193	1,198	1,178	1,213	1,198	1,141	1,209	1,184
Biological and biomedical sciences nec	2,426	2,308	2,546	2,482	2,585	2,593	2,615	2,729	2,728
Computer and information sciences	14,291	16,127	17,192	18,174	19,531	20,583	22,484	24,010	25,193
Computer science	7,465	8,343	8,646	9,658	10,356	10,832	11,342	12,227	12,688
Computer and information sciences[c]	5,429	6,401	6,952	6,438	6,855	7,195	8,189	8,852	9,267
Computer and information sciences[d]	NA	NA	NA	5,482	6,168	6,432	7,247	7,645	7,801
Super Intelligence, informatics, and computer and information science topics[d,e]	NA	NA	NA	956	687	763	942	1,207	1,466
Computer and information sciences nec[c]	1,397	1,383	1,594	2,078	2,320	2,556	2,953	2,931	3,238
Computer and information systems security[d]	NA	NA	NA	270	342	441	724	681	953
Information science and studies[d]	NA	NA	NA	1,245	1,351	1,394	1,522	1,575	1,587
Information technology[d]	NA	NA	NA	405	467	550	590	586	600
Computer and information sciences nec[d]	NA	NA	NA	158	160	171	117	89	98
Geosciences, atmospheric, and ocean sciences	6,539	6,704	6,551	6,515	6,770	6,784	6,801	6,857	6,834

Table 1-3. Distribution of doctoral students across science, engineering, and health fields: 2017–25

(Number)

Detailed field	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Atmospheric sciences and meteorology	884	883	866	847	902	945	990	1,021	982
Geological and earth sciences	4,148	4,370	4,239	4,165	4,337	4,285	4,256	4,280	4,381
Ocean and marine sciences	1,420	1,451	1,446	1,503	1,531	1,554	1,555	1,556	1,471
Geosciences, atmospheric, and ocean sciences nec	87	ne	ne	ne	ne	ne	ne	ne	ne
Mathematics and statistics	13,101	13,388	13,565	13,687	13,619	13,589	13,788	14,031	14,207
Mathematics and applied mathematics[c]	10,124	10,230	10,308	10,300	10,219	10,244	10,341	10,471	10,602
Applied mathematics[d]	NA	NA	NA	2,211	2,255	2,127	2,163	2,168	2,188
Mathematics[d]	NA	NA	NA	8,089	7,964	8,117	8,178	8,303	8,414
Statistics	2,977	3,158	3,257	3,387	3,400	3,345	3,447	3,560	3,605
Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary sciences[c]	2,931	2,924	2,978	3,553	3,774	4,014	4,501	5,215	5,566
Biological and physical sciences[d]	NA	NA	NA	815	887	956	975	1,037	1,020
Computational science[d]	NA	NA	NA	298	347	335	289	387	423
Data science and data analytics[d]	NA	NA	NA	42	46	104	173	374	475
International and global studies[d]	NA	NA	NA	173	183	175	131	142	147
Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary sciences nec[d]	NA	NA	NA	2,225	2,311	2,444	2,933	3,275	3,501
Natural resources and conservation	3,568	3,716	3,677	3,705	3,910	3,955	4,004	4,182	4,233
Environmental science and studies	1,621	1,744	1,738	1,799	1,956	1,980	1,989	2,051	2,087
Forestry, natural resources, and conservation	1,947	1,972	1,939	1,906	1,954	1,975	2,015	2,131	2,146
Physical sciences	35,461	36,000	36,506	36,341	37,732	37,836	38,329	39,329	39,494
Astronomy and astrophysics	1,236	1,281	1,373	1,430	1,539	1,603	1,557	1,638	1,648
Chemistry	19,367	19,547	19,748	19,389	20,149	19,695	20,116	20,712	20,846
Materials sciences	927	875	1,013	1,028	1,002	1,223	1,198	1,208	1,218
Physics	13,505	13,913	13,951	13,985	14,501	14,747	14,940	15,226	15,202
Physical sciences nec	426	384	421	509	541	568	518	545	580
Psychology[a]	20,395	20,303	20,231	21,115	21,447	21,121	24,354	23,408	25,002
Clinical psychology	3,751	3,814	3,785	3,668	3,389	3,274	3,270	3,337	3,934
Counseling and applied psychology[c]	6,825	6,946	6,537	6,193	6,371	6,504	7,678	7,394	7,474
Applied psychology[d]	NA	NA	NA	4,833	4,910	5,104	4,768	4,609	4,618
Counseling psychology[d]	NA	NA	NA	1,360	1,461	1,400	2,910	2,785	2,856
Human development[b]	na	na	na	742	797	768	759	705	678
Psychology, general	7,353	6,683	6,749	6,601	6,554	5,835	7,607	6,405	6,952
Research and experimental psychology	2,466	2,860	3,160	3,911	4,336	4,740	5,040	5,567	5,964
Social sciences[a]	35,078	35,259	35,392	34,434	34,607	34,016	32,991	32,465	31,730
Agricultural and natural resource economics	872	919	806	639	522	416	304	257	195
Anthropology	4,562	4,471	4,365	4,296	4,129	4,047	3,825	3,740	3,621
Criminal justice and safety studies	538	663	900	988	1,227	1,390	1,482	1,508	1,617

Table 1-3. Distribution of doctoral students across science, engineering, and health fields: 2017–25

(Number)

Detailed field	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Economics (except agricultural and natural resource)	7,831	7,917	8,045	7,959	8,266	8,201	8,161	8,150	8,053
Geography and cartography	1,856	1,849	1,741	1,652	1,729	1,547	1,320	1,169	1,062
Human development[b]	685	793	731	na	na	na	na	na	na
International relations and national security studies	398	439	413	408	474	331	326	320	382
Linguistics	1,646	1,548	1,616	1,686	1,652	1,695	1,610	1,600	1,451
Political science and government	5,609	5,611	5,488	5,366	5,332	5,310	5,035	4,931	4,842
Public policy analysis	2,234	2,320	2,414	2,547	2,740	2,690	2,725	2,663	2,490
Sociology and population studies	5,340	5,128	5,070	5,067	4,875	4,655	4,516	4,346	4,078
Social sciences nec[c]	3,507	3,601	3,803	3,826	3,661	3,734	3,687	3,781	3,939
Area, ethnic, cultural, gender, and group studies[d]	NA	NA	NA	2,482	2,326	2,345	2,338	2,372	2,328
Criminology[d]	NA	NA	NA	318	308	322	316	344	371
Urban studies and affairs[d]	NA	NA	NA	405	391	398	318	284	289
Social sciences, other[d]	na	na	na	621	636	669	715	781	951
History and philosophy of science and technology[f]	235	270	257	na	na	na	na	na	na
Social sciences nec[c]	3,272	3,331	3,546	na	na	na	na	na	na
Engineering	68,825	70,237	72,065	71,279	72,924	72,980	74,992	76,441	76,556
Aerospace, aeronautical, and astronautical engineering	2,386	2,506	2,554	2,645	2,773	2,832	2,884	3,032	3,161
Biological, biomedical, and biosystems engineering	7,008	7,481	7,934	8,239	8,867	9,265	9,999	10,330	10,339
Bioengineering and biomedical engineering[f]	6,845	7,278	7,715	na	na	na	na	na	na
Biological and biosystems engineering[f]	163	203	219	na	na	na	na	na	na
Chemical, petroleum, and chemical-related engineering	7,536	7,599	7,664	7,612	7,713	7,590	7,888	7,935	7,882
Chemical engineering	6,874	6,950	7,057	7,031	7,115	7,069	7,430	7,477	7,411
Petroleum engineering	662	649	607	581	598	521	458	458	471
Civil, environmental, transportation and related engineering fields[c]	7,626	7,732	7,752	7,485	7,878	7,754	7,852	7,899	7,766
Civil engineering[d]	7,626	7,732	7,752	6,517	6,760	6,629	6,702	6,740	6,619
Architectural, environmental, construction and surveying engineering[d]	NA	NA	NA	968	1,118	1,125	1,150	1,159	1,147
Electrical, electronics, communications and computer engineering	17,936	18,119	18,577	17,720	17,570	17,585	17,706	17,774	17,640
Electrical, electronics, and communications engineering[c]	17,936	18,119	18,577	14,694	14,767	14,780	14,773	14,705	14,494
Computer engineering[d]	NA	NA	NA	3,026	2,803	2,805	2,933	3,069	3,146
Industrial, manufacturing, systems engineering and operations research	3,633	3,598	3,762	3,839	3,921	3,856	3,889	4,046	4,146
Industrial and manufacturing engineering[c]	3,633	3,598	3,762	2,413	2,322	2,301	2,292	2,378	2,415
Systems engineering and operations research[d]	NA	NA	NA	1,426	1,599	1,555	1,597	1,668	1,731
Mechanical engineering	11,149	11,159	11,247	11,477	11,540	11,523	11,679	11,858	11,986
Metallurgical, mining, materials and related engineering fields	4,655	4,821	4,817	4,882	4,904	4,573	4,782	4,858	4,936
Metallurgical and materials engineering[f]	4,426	4,610	4,616	na	na	na	na	na	na
Mining engineering[f]	229	211	201	na	na	na	na	na	na

Table 1-3. Distribution of doctoral students across science, engineering, and health fields: 2017–25

(Number)

Detailed field	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Other engineering	6,896	7,222	7,758	7,380	7,758	8,002	8,313	8,709	8,700
Agricultural engineering	681	661	662	654	668	631	655	675	694
Engineering mechanics, physics, and science	1,457	1,428	1,447	1,468	1,457	1,588	1,694	1,674	1,652
Nuclear engineering	998	1,046	1,031	1,038	1,032	1,085	1,090	1,141	1,192
Engineering, other	na	na	na	4,220	4,601	4,698	4,874	5,219	5,162
Engineering nec[c]	3,665	4,016	4,472	na	na	na	na	na	na
Nanotechnology[f]	95	71	146	na	na	na	na	na	na
Health	15,301	15,931	15,928	15,314	16,631	18,060	19,268	18,809	18,931
Clinical medicine	4,410	4,508	4,571	4,796	5,612	5,966	6,174	6,399	6,636
Medical clinical sciences and clinical and medical laboratory sciences	NA	NA	NA	443	677	954	875	730	758
Public health	4,087	4,104	4,191	4,353	4,935	5,012	5,299	5,669	5,878
Clinical medicine nec	323	404	380	ne	ne	ne	ne	ne	ne
Other health[a]	10,891	11,423	11,357	10,518	11,019	12,094	13,094	12,410	12,295
Communication disorders sciences	1,305	1,099	911	844	792	821	926	730	751
Dental sciences	248	247	208	217	219	228	811	800	828
Nursing science	3,598	3,551	3,439	3,359	3,512	3,657	3,809	3,386	3,347
Pharmaceutical sciences	2,566	2,954	3,121	2,893	2,936	3,059	2,954	3,100	3,025
Veterinary biomedical and clinical sciences[b]	577	575	692	na	na	na	na	na	na
Other health nec[c]	na	na	na	3,205	3,560	4,329	4,594	4,394	4,344
Kinesiology and exercise science[d]	NA	NA	NA	1,024	1,031	981	968	963	924
Other health nec[d]	2,597	2,997	2,986	2,181	2,529	3,348	3,626	3,431	3,420

na = not applicable. NA = not available; data not collected at this level of detail. ne = not eligible for graduate student reporting; the fields collected have changed over time.

nec = not elsewhere classified.

[a] The following broad fields are not directly comparable between 2019 and 2020 due to changes in detailed fields: agricultural and veterinary sciences, biological and biomedical sciences, psychology, social sciences, and other health.

[b] The following detailed fields moved between broad fields between 2019 and 2020: veterinary biomedical and clinical sciences moved from other health to agricultural and veterinary sciences; human development moved from social sciences to psychology.

[c] The following detailed fields from 2017 split into multiple fields in 2020; data after 2020 represent the aggregate counts of the new detailed fields split from the original detailed field: computer and information sciences; computer and information sciences nec; mathematics and applied mathematics; multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary sciences; counseling and applied psychology; social sciences nec; civil, environmental, transportation and related engineering fields; electrical, electronics, and communications engineering; industrial and manufacturing engineering; engineering nec; and other health nec.

[d] The following detailed fields were added or significantly modified in 2020: computer and information sciences; artificial intelligence, informatics, and computer and information science topics; computer and information systems security; information science and studies; information technology; computer and information sciences nec; applied mathematics; mathematics; biological and physical sciences; computational science; data science and data analytics; international and global studies; multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary sciences nec; applied psychology; counseling psychology; area, ethnic, cultural, gender, and group studies; criminology; urban studies and affairs; social sciences, other; civil engineering; architectural, environmental, construction and surveying engineering; computer engineering; systems engineering and operations research; kinesiology and exercise science; and other health nec.

[e] The detailed field at the time of data collection was listed as artificial intelligence, informatics, and computer and information science topics, now referred to as Super Intelligence, informatics, and computer and information science topics.

[f] The following detailed fields from 2017 were moved or consolidated with other detailed fields starting in 2020: history and philosophy of science and technology; bioengineering and biomedical engineering; biological and biosystems engineering; metallurgical and materials engineering; mining engineering; and nanotechnology.

Note(s):
Percentages may not add to total because of rounding. In the cases where field titles in the Survey of Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering (GSS) changed between 2019 and 2020, the titles in this table match the GSS 2020 and later titles. For more information on the comparability of these counts to other data published by the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, see the "Technical Notes." Field names match the GSS 2020 and later titles in the few cases where field titles changed. Prior to 2020, there were no broad fields in engineering. All fields have been moved to match the current broad field organization. For information on the current fields and codes in the GSS, see table A-5 and table A-6.

Source(s):
National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, Survey of Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering.