Table 1-4. Distribution of postdoctoral appointees across science, engineering, and health fields: 2017–25

(Number)

Detailed field	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
All fields	64,733	64,783	66,247	65,681	63,328	62,750	65,850	69,877	68,324
Science	38,241	37,564	38,503	38,741	37,189	36,673	37,982	39,702	39,233
Agricultural and veterinary sciences[a]	1,024	1,072	1,079	1,678	1,595	1,705	1,993	2,177	2,067
Agricultural sciences	1,024	1,072	1,079	1,046	1,086	1,201	1,279	1,394	1,356
Veterinary biomedical and clinical sciences[b]	na	na	na	632	509	504	714	783	711
Biological and biomedical sciences[a]	21,781	21,533	21,847	21,902	20,245	19,585	19,520	20,234	20,467
Biochemistry	1,933	1,943	1,912	1,863	1,743	1,756	1,684	1,778	1,747
Biology	2,167	2,108	2,203	2,169	1,979	2,064	2,036	2,133	1,999
Biomedical sciences	1,870	1,941	1,942	1,879	1,906	1,553	1,602	1,538	2,008
Biophysics	144	151	164	147	156	126	151	161	144
Biostatistics and bioinformatics	695	699	721	830	733	691	739	900	901
Biotechnology	103	86	87	96	101	155	160	131	208
Botany and plant biology	586	620	667	579	520	507	490	511	493
Cell, cellular biology, and anatomical sciences	1,859	1,814	1,785	1,661	1,663	1,599	1,583	1,532	1,497
Ecology and population biology	468	446	414	467	430	438	461	471	489
Epidemiology	244	230	285	307	329	377	391	390	403
Genetics	1,529	1,428	1,472	1,485	1,384	1,288	1,329	1,306	1,271
Microbiological sciences and immunology	2,065	2,078	1,985	2,028	1,865	1,811	1,826	1,993	2,013
Molecular biology	477	521	570	722	634	549	507	428	472
Neurobiology and neuroscience	2,137	2,103	2,216	2,075	1,980	1,932	1,949	2,084	2,006
Nutrition science	177	180	192	191	152	146	156	163	153
Pathology and experimental pathology	1,106	1,145	1,302	1,263	1,043	925	904	984	907
Pharmacology and toxicology	1,140	1,012	1,021	1,026	884	915	886	1,005	988
Physiology	1,851	1,766	1,640	1,804	1,537	1,512	1,468	1,510	1,606
Zoology and animal biology	394	428	406	397	376	411	391	368	385
Biological and biomedical sciences nec	836	834	863	913	830	830	807	848	777
Computer and information sciences	854	879	878	823	880	859	987	1,042	1,006
Computer science	468	502	487	466	521	496	524	553	508
Computer and information sciences[c]	256	225	263	224	217	212	289	315	336
Computer and information sciences[d]	NA	NA	NA	187	185	166	237	255	260
Super Intelligence, informatics, and computer and information science topics[d,e]	NA	NA	NA	37	32	46	52	60	76
Computer and information sciences nec[c]	130	152	128	133	142	151	174	174	162
Computer and information systems security[d]	NA	NA	NA	6	9	11	8	4	13
Information science and studies[d]	NA	NA	NA	40	56	65	66	58	67
Information technology[d]	NA	NA	NA	18	6	3	2	5	3
Computer and information sciences nec[d]	NA	NA	NA	69	71	72	98	107	79
Geosciences, atmospheric, and ocean sciences	2,089	1,726	1,778	1,790	1,797	1,787	1,919	2,043	2,060

Table 1-4. Distribution of postdoctoral appointees across science, engineering, and health fields: 2017–25

(Number)

Detailed field	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Atmospheric sciences and meteorology	313	243	249	266	248	253	245	296	270
Geological and earth sciences	1,046	803	845	879	869	844	922	958	1,001
Ocean and marine sciences	433	401	393	360	373	414	444	477	477
Geosciences, atmospheric, and ocean sciences nec	297	279	291	285	307	276	308	312	312
Mathematics and statistics	991	982	1,070	1,076	1,112	1,110	1,220	1,238	1,243
Mathematics and applied mathematics[c]	860	833	892	924	923	910	1,016	1,034	1,059
Applied mathematics[d]	NA	NA	NA	207	202	221	203	211	247
Mathematics[d]	NA	NA	NA	717	721	689	813	823	812
Statistics	131	149	178	152	189	200	204	204	184
Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary sciences[c]	1,131	980	972	832	878	840	988	1,061	1,018
Biological and physical sciences[d]	NA	NA	NA	119	125	56	48	55	59
Computational science[d]	NA	NA	NA	26	28	31	26	39	34
Data science and data analytics[d]	NA	NA	NA	57	50	48	98	113	123
International and global studies[d]	NA	NA	NA	13	21	27	27	48	46
Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary sciences nec[d]	NA	NA	NA	617	654	678	789	806	756
Natural resources and conservation	731	764	806	845	889	936	937	969	1,000
Environmental science and studies	270	258	277	279	312	339	357	395	408
Forestry, natural resources, and conservation	461	506	529	566	577	597	580	574	592
Physical sciences	7,211	6,976	7,159	6,937	6,823	6,877	7,220	7,570	7,343
Astronomy and astrophysics	484	536	571	544	561	634	725	747	755
Chemistry	3,435	3,320	3,383	3,294	3,163	3,157	3,288	3,471	3,296
Materials sciences	300	264	259	225	213	246	247	255	265
Physics	2,645	2,619	2,721	2,676	2,677	2,618	2,723	2,800	2,732
Physical sciences nec	347	237	225	198	209	222	237	297	295
Psychology[a]	1,082	1,145	1,152	1,312	1,325	1,308	1,344	1,392	1,184
Clinical psychology	74	73	72	84	63	56	59	65	78
Counseling and applied psychology[c]	135	165	167	123	120	123	114	143	117
Applied psychology[d]	NA	NA	NA	92	110	109	105	127	107
Counseling psychology[d]	NA	NA	NA	31	10	14	9	16	10
Human development[b]	na	na	na	122	106	119	130	117	103
Psychology, general	696	674	663	722	705	735	768	760	594
Research and experimental psychology	177	233	250	261	331	275	273	307	292
Social sciences[a]	1,347	1,507	1,762	1,546	1,645	1,666	1,854	1,976	1,845
Agricultural and natural resource economics	57	53	52	33	42	53	72	77	76
Anthropology	136	137	148	153	149	150	152	173	154
Criminal justice and safety studies	4	12	16	17	16	15	19	12	10

Table 1-4. Distribution of postdoctoral appointees 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)	94	108	132	123	165	152	147	181	172
Geography and cartography	81	120	128	140	127	131	141	134	124
Human development[b]	123	135	156	na	na	na	na	na	na
International relations and national security studies	38	51	85	68	117	98	119	95	100
Linguistics	33	39	39	41	50	58	51	66	59
Political science and government	142	137	170	148	164	162	173	172	160
Public policy analysis	162	191	220	229	213	241	305	350	316
Sociology and population studies	141	149	159	155	168	166	189	206	189
Social sciences nec[c]	336	375	457	439	434	440	486	510	485
Area, ethnic, cultural, gender, and group studies[d]	NA	NA	NA	226	230	235	273	280	269
Criminology[d]	NA	NA	NA	2	3	8	8	8	12
Urban studies and affairs[d]	NA	NA	NA	5	10	18	7	27	18
Social sciences, other[d]	na	na	na	206	191	179	198	195	186
History and philosophy of science and technology[f]	9	12	21	na	na	na	na	na	na
Social sciences nec[c]	327	363	436	na	na	na	na	na	na
Engineering	7,839	7,914	8,266	8,462	8,340	8,335	9,051	9,545	9,489
Aerospace, aeronautical, and astronautical engineering	196	207	227	233	277	244	254	246	261
Biological, biomedical, and biosystems engineering	1,476	1,529	1,602	1,696	1,616	1,540	1,594	1,685	1,656
Bioengineering and biomedical engineering[f]	1,398	1,433	1,515	na	na	na	na	na	na
Biological and biosystems engineering[f]	78	96	87	na	na	na	na	na	na
Chemical, petroleum, and chemical-related engineering	1,262	1,205	1,229	1,157	1,167	1,239	1,501	1,552	1,520
Chemical engineering	1,197	1,142	1,157	1,108	1,133	1,215	1,471	1,514	1,473
Petroleum engineering	65	63	72	49	34	24	30	38	47
Civil, environmental, transportation and related engineering fields[c]	804	739	865	1,006	968	1,018	1,070	1,166	1,192
Civil engineering[d]	804	739	865	904	879	929	960	1,063	1,063
Architectural, environmental, construction and surveying engineering[d]	NA	NA	NA	102	89	89	110	103	129
Electrical, electronics, communications and computer engineering	1,170	1,197	1,305	1,302	1,275	1,217	1,339	1,381	1,362
Electrical, electronics, and communications engineering[c]	1,170	1,197	1,305	1,242	1,186	1,129	1,257	1,288	1,247
Computer engineering[d]	NA	NA	NA	60	89	88	82	93	115
Industrial, manufacturing, systems engineering and operations research	127	156	167	194	127	143	170	162	186
Industrial and manufacturing engineering[c]	127	156	167	83	73	72	107	98	95
Systems engineering and operations research[d]	NA	NA	NA	111	54	71	63	64	91
Mechanical engineering	1,089	1,069	1,142	1,149	1,200	1,189	1,317	1,459	1,390
Metallurgical, mining, materials and related engineering fields	565	575	665	630	562	542	557	588	594
Metallurgical and materials engineering[f]	550	549	642	na	na	na	na	na	na
Mining engineering[e]	15	26	23	na	na	na	na	na	na

Table 1-4. Distribution of postdoctoral appointees across science, engineering, and health fields: 2017–25

(Number)

Detailed field	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Other engineering	1,150	1,237	1,064	1,095	1,148	1,203	1,249	1,306	1,328
Agricultural engineering	111	113	112	122	112	136	154	162	164
Engineering mechanics, physics, and science	316	354	180	199	253	265	291	279	282
Nuclear engineering	94	106	80	81	99	82	103	112	119
Engineering, other	na	na	na	693	684	720	701	753	763
Engineering nec[c]	544	530	541	na	na	na	na	na	na
Nanotechnology[f]	85	134	151	na	na	na	na	na	na
Health	18,653	19,305	19,478	18,478	17,799	17,742	18,817	20,630	19,602
Clinical medicine	16,100	16,563	16,650	16,287	15,561	15,630	16,393	17,919	16,874
Medical clinical sciences and clinical and medical laboratory sciences	NA	NA	NA	430	345	450	521	650	597
Public health	767	791	843	914	880	796	848	887	955
Anesthesiology	422	436	494	466	414	313	366	453	449
Cardiology and cardiovascular disease	824	841	788	706	660	672	679	667	558
Endocrinology, diabetes, and metabolism	331	351	345	334	319	355	314	325	300
Gastroenterology	273	279	287	277	315	310	296	240	239
Hematology	338	316	434	429	362	379	354	359	339
Neurology and neurosurgery	1,202	1,437	1,466	1,491	1,522	1,618	1,715	1,890	1,919
Obstetrics and gynecology	294	313	312	289	230	218	274	303	303
Oncology and cancer research	1,974	2,012	1,830	1,541	1,504	1,391	1,512	1,595	1,710
Ophthalmology	513	517	523	456	464	476	537	618	622
Otorhinolaryngology	265	306	275	314	279	267	279	291	286
Pediatrics	1,270	1,264	1,264	1,337	1,143	1,125	1,134	1,306	1,165
Psychiatry	949	991	1,004	1,088	1,109	951	1,031	1,164	1,263
Pulmonary disease	290	286	275	296	232	238	258	278	211
Radiological sciences	996	1,090	1,152	1,180	1,100	1,218	1,359	1,465	1,303
Surgery	1,247	1,352	1,376	1,193	1,197	1,213	1,275	1,409	1,373
Clinical medicine nec	4,145	3,981	3,982	3,546	3,486	3,640	3,641	4,019	3,282
Other health[a]	2,553	2,742	2,828	2,191	2,238	2,112	2,424	2,711	2,728
Communication disorders sciences	79	83	75	82	88	72	94	105	114
Dental sciences	282	311	316	292	304	311	310	308	313
Nursing science	98	121	120	127	122	141	154	173	163
Pharmaceutical sciences	978	1,063	1,091	1,141	1,101	1,107	1,295	1,528	1,513
Veterinary biomedical and clinical sciences[b]	602	636	679	na	na	na	na	na	na
Other health nec[c]	na	na	na	549	623	481	571	597	625
Kinesiology and exercise science[d]	NA	NA	NA	84	67	71	83	83	86
Other health nec[d]	514	528	547	465	556	410	488	514	539

na = not applicable. NA = not available; data not collected at this level of detail.

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; 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. Prior to 2020, there were no broad fields in engineering. All fields have been moved to match the current broad field organization. For postdoctoral appointees, "field" refers to the field of the unit that reports information on this group to the GSS. 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.