Table 1-15. Postdoctoral appointees in science broad fields: 1979–2025

(Number)

Year	Total	Agricultural and veterinary sciences[a,b]	Biological and biomedical sciences[a]	Communication[a,c,d]	Computer and information sciences	Family and consumer sciences and human sciences[a,c,d]	Geosciences, atmospheric, and ocean sciences	Mathematics and statistics	Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary sciences[a,d]	Natural resources and conservation[a]	Neurobiology and neuroscience[a,d]	Physical sciences[a]	Psychology[b,e]	Social sciences[a,b]
1979	12,519	228	6,866	ne	38	ne	315	162	ne	NA	NA	4,056	454	400
1980	13,042	259	7,083	ne	43	ne	312	162	ne	NA	NA	4,279	475	429
1981	13,731	292	7,678	ne	35	ne	346	113	ne	NA	NA	4,477	471	319
1982	13,698	302	7,713	ne	47	ne	340	194	ne	NA	NA	4,298	520	284
1983	14,562	318	8,337	ne	80	ne	420	170	ne	NA	NA	4,458	437	342
1984	14,979	384	8,683	ne	59	ne	493	203	ne	NA	NA	4,408	423	326
1985	15,576	374	9,128	ne	70	ne	379	226	ne	NA	NA	4,539	510	350
1986	16,512	421	9,692	ne	75	ne	420	201	ne	NA	NA	4,860	521	322
1987	17,369	453	10,353	ne	103	ne	424	229	ne	NA	NA	4,968	460	379
1988	18,024	476	10,653	ne	96	ne	496	284	ne	NA	NA	5,201	498	320
1989	18,978	522	11,425	ne	84	ne	453	225	ne	NA	NA	5,366	536	367
1990	19,853	536	11,909	ne	71	ne	594	249	ne	NA	NA	5,592	464	438
1991	20,595	580	12,455	ne	120	ne	625	206	ne	NA	NA	5,722	508	379
1992	21,514	640	13,158	ne	145	ne	692	201	ne	NA	NA	5,792	525	361
1993	22,219	720	13,778	ne	164	ne	765	224	ne	NA	NA	5,669	521	378
1994	23,181	729	14,379	ne	185	ne	824	239	ne	NA	NA	5,884	551	390
1995	23,512	724	14,659	ne	213	ne	845	262	ne	NA	NA	5,851	582	376
1996	23,892	699	14,890	ne	250	ne	861	326	ne	NA	NA	5,828	594	444
1997	24,293	724	15,082	ne	322	ne	942	308	ne	NA	NA	5,968	586	361
1998	25,023	695	15,761	ne	374	ne	902	279	ne	NA	NA	6,004	617	391
1999	25,784	750	16,097	ne	334	ne	925	351	ne	NA	NA	6,157	716	454
2000	26,911	822	16,734	ne	344	ne	1,155	385	ne	NA	NA	6,270	730	471
2001	27,044	833	17,032	ne	336	ne	1,049	353	ne	NA	NA	6,223	809	409
2002	28,371	963	17,640	ne	356	ne	1,129	395	ne	NA	NA	6,619	815	454
2003	29,856	1,054	18,625	ne	355	ne	1,182	449	ne	NA	NA	6,829	960	402
2004	30,116	959	18,716	ne	384	ne	1,263	468	ne	NA	NA	7,059	902	365
2005	30,290	1,007	18,747	ne	406	ne	1,364	500	ne	NA	NA	7,011	884	371
2006	30,245	927	18,807	ne	467	ne	1,495	579	ne	NA	NA	6,703	873	394
2007old[d]	30,986	948	19,218	ne	516	ne	1,322	621	ne	NA	NA	6,760	1,106	495
2007new[d]	31,281	985	19,109	30	456	8	1,250	624	244	NA	285	6,719	1,088	483
2008	32,741	1,147	19,827	32	493	19	1,339	723	348	NA	343	6,885	1,077	508
2009	34,388	1,083	20,159	38	594	22	1,424	737	459	NA	645	7,447	1,219	561
2010[f,g]	37,351	1,190	21,726	62	763	30	1,740	791	785	NA	838	7,583	1,132	711
2011[g]	37,335	1,256	21,107	67	759	52	1,774	830	704	NA	1,398	7,490	1,124	774
2012	36,738	1,290	20,086	58	760	58	1,956	902	742	NA	1,525	7,430	1,132	799
2013	36,289	1,319	19,330	76	765	90	2,032	932	891	NA	1,696	7,197	1,023	938

Table 1-15. Postdoctoral appointees in science broad fields: 1979–2025

(Number)

Year	Total	Agricultural and veterinary sciences[a,b]	Biological and biomedical sciences[a]	Communication[a,c,d]	Computer and information sciences	Family and consumer sciences and human sciences[a,c,d]	Geosciences, atmospheric, and ocean sciences	Mathematics and statistics	Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary sciences[a,d]	Natural resources and conservation[a]	Neurobiology and neuroscience[a,d]	Physical sciences[a]	Psychology[b,e]	Social sciences[a,b]
2014old[h]	36,184	1,395	18,749	75	833	93	2,059	956	1,045	NA	1,778	7,089	1,062	1,050
2014new[h]	37,316	1,402	19,554	75	834	114	2,061	959	1,045	NA	1,878	7,277	1,066	1,051
2015	37,639	1,525	19,304	83	888	103	2,129	1,011	972	NA	1,957	7,358	1,130	1,179
2016	37,941	1,484	19,427	86	914	116	2,104	1,005	1,095	NA	2,071	7,269	1,177	1,193
2017old[a]	37,816	1,620	19,506	89	856	163	2,136	966	1,126	NA	2,109	6,946	1,072	1,227
2017new[a]	38,241	1,024	21,781	ne	854	ne	2,089	991	1,131	731	NA	7,211	1,082	1,347
2018	37,564	1,072	21,533	ne	879	ne	1,726	982	980	764	NA	6,976	1,145	1,507
2019	38,503	1,079	21,847	ne	878	ne	1,778	1,070	972	806	NA	7,159	1,152	1,762
2020	38,741	1,678	21,902	ne	823	ne	1,790	1,076	832	845	NA	6,937	1,312	1,546
2021	37,189	1,595	20,245	ne	880	ne	1,797	1,112	878	889	NA	6,823	1,325	1,645
2022	36,673	1,705	19,585	ne	859	ne	1,787	1,110	840	936	NA	6,877	1,308	1,666
2023	37,982	1,993	19,520	ne	987	ne	1,919	1,220	988	937	NA	7,220	1,344	1,854
2024	39,702	2,177	20,234	ne	1,042	ne	2,043	1,238	1,061	969	NA	7,570	1,392	1,976
2025	39,233	2,067	20,467	ne	1,006	ne	2,060	1,243	1,018	1,000	NA	7,343	1,184	1,845

NA = not available; these fields were collected as part of other fields in other years (see footnotes a and d). ne = not eligible; the fields collected have changed over time.

[a] As part of the 2017 Survey of Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering (GSS) redesign, the GSS taxonomy was changed to align with the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) Taxonomy of Disciplines (TOD), thus increasing comparability with other NCSES surveys. As a result, some eligible fields were reclassified and a small number of fields became fully or partially ineligible. Comparisons to prior years should use the 2017old estimates and should be limited to broad areas of study—detailed field comparisons are not recommended. Redesign includes the following: natural resources splitting from agricultural sciences; neurosciences being reported under biological and biomedical sciences; human development being reported under social sciences; physical sciences adding materials sciences; social sciences no longer including public administration (no longer collected); multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary sciences no longer including nanoscience (which was moved to engineering); and communication as well as family and consumer sciences were removed.

[b] In 2020, for better alignment to the NCSES TOD and Classification of Instructional Programs, human development was moved from social sciences to psychology, and veterinary biomedical and clinical sciences was moved to agricultural sciences. The broad field of agricultural sciences was renamed to agricultural and veterinary sciences to reflect this change.

[c] The field communication and the field family and consumer sciences and human sciences were added as part of the 2007 field eligibility changes. These fields were dropped in 2017 to align the GSS with other NCSES surveys.

[d] In 2007, eligible fields were reclassified, newly eligible fields were added, and the survey was redesigned to improve coverage and coding of eligible units. "2007new" presents data as collected in 2007; "2007old" shows data as they would have been collected in prior years. The science field communication and the science field family and consumer sciences and human sciences were newly eligible in 2007; data for these two fields begin in 2007new. The science field multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary studies was also added to the GSS code list in 2007 (and changed from "studies" to "sciences" in 2022); some data reported in this field were reported under other fields before 2007 and are included in those fields in 2007old; neuroscience is reported as a separate field of science in 2007new; data were reported under health field neurology in 2007old and previous years. See appendix A in https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/nsf10307/ for more detail.

[e] Beginning in 2008, more rigorous follow-up was done with institutions regarding the exclusion of practitioner-oriented graduate degree programs in psychology. This change may affect interpretation of trends in this field. This follow-up was discontinued in 2017.

[f] In 2010, the postdoctoral appointee (postdoc) and doctorate-holding nonfaculty researcher (NFR) section of the survey was expanded and significant effort was made to ensure that appropriate personnel were providing postdoc and NFR data. Thus, it is unclear how much of the increases in 2010 and later years over 2009 and prior years are from growth in postdocs and NFRs and how much are from improved data collection. More information on the changes to the data collection is available at https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/infbrief/nsf13334/.

[g] Postdoc and NFR data from 2010 and 2011 were reimputed following the 2012 data collection; these data supersede those contained in previous reports.

[h] In 2014, the survey frame was updated following a comprehensive frame evaluation study. The study identified potentially eligible but not previously surveyed academic institutions in the United States with master's- or doctorate-granting programs in science, engineering, and health. A total of 151 newly eligible institutions were added, and 2 private for-profit institutions offering mostly practitioner-based graduate degrees were determined to be ineligible. For more information, see https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/2016/nsf16314.

Note(s):
For postdocs, "field" refers to the field of the unit that reports information on this group to the GSS. Sum of the broad fields may not add to total because of rounding. For more information on the mapping of GSS fields and codes, see table A-6.

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