

the condition of education 2004



INDICATOR 20

Degrees Earned by Women

The indicator and corresponding tables are taken directly from *The Condition of Education 2004*. Therefore, the page numbers may not be sequential.

Additional information about the survey data and supplementary notes can be found in the full report. For a copy of *The Condition of Education 2004* visit the NCES web site (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2004077>) or contact ED PUBs at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

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Completions

Degrees Earned by Women

Women have earned more than half of all bachelor's degrees every year since 1981–82. They still trail men in certain fields but have made substantial gains since 1970–71.

Women earn a greater number and proportion of bachelor's degrees than they did 30 years ago. Between 1970–71 and 2001–02, the number of bachelor's degrees that women earned more than doubled, from 364,100 to 742,100 (see supplemental table 20-1). Women earned 43 percent of all bachelor's degrees in 1970–71, but every year since 1981–82, they earned at least half of all bachelor's degrees awarded (NCES 2003–060, table 246). In 2001–02, women were awarded 57 percent of all bachelor's degrees.

Some traditionally female-dominated fields remain so. Women earned a majority of the bachelor's degrees awarded in health professions and related sciences, education, English language and literature/letters, and visual and performing arts in both 1970–71 and 2001–02. In each field, the percentage of degrees awarded to women either increased or remained about the same.

In other fields (psychology, social sciences and history, communications, biological sciences/life sciences, and business), women earned less than half of the bachelor's degrees awarded in 1970–71 but earned at least half by 2001–02. The greatest gains generally occurred between 1970–71 and 1984–85, particularly in business, but the propor-

tion of degrees awarded to women continued to grow between 1984–85 and 2001–02.

In 2001–02, women earned less than half of the bachelor's degrees in the traditionally male-dominated fields of mathematics (47 percent), agriculture and natural resources (46 percent), physical sciences (42 percent), computer and information sciences (28 percent), and engineering (21 percent). Nonetheless, women have made substantial gains in all these fields since 1970–71, particularly between 1970–71 and 1984–85.

Women have also made gains at the graduate level. In 2001–02, women earned 59 percent of master's degrees, compared with 50 percent in 1984–85 and 40 percent in 1970–71. At the doctoral level, women earned 46 percent of all degrees in 2001–02, up from 34 percent in 1984–85 and 14 percent in 1970–71. Women earned less than half of master's and doctoral degrees in agriculture and natural resources, mathematics, business, physical sciences, computer and information sciences, and engineering but have made substantial gains in all of those fields over the past 30 years (see supplemental tables 20-2 and 20-3).

¹Includes other fields not shown separately.

NOTE: Based on data from all degree-granting institutions. See *supplemental note 10* for more detail.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES. (2003). *Digest of Education Statistics 2002* (NCES 2003–060), tables 246, 276–297 and (forthcoming) *Digest of Education Statistics 2003* (NCES 2004–024), tables 265, 268, and 271. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 1969–86 Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), “Degrees and Other Formal Awards Conferred” and 1987–2002 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, “Completions Survey” (IPEDS-C:87–02), fall 2002.

BACHELOR'S DEGREES: Percentage of bachelor's degrees earned by women and change in the percentage earned by women from 1970–71 to 2001–02, by field of study: 1970–71, 1984–85, and 2001–02

Field of study	1970–71	1984–85	2001–02	Change in percentage points		
				1970–71 to 1984–85	1984–85 to 2001–02	1970–71 to 2001–02
Total¹	43.4	50.7	57.4	7.4	6.7	14.1
Health professions and related sciences	77.1	84.9	85.5	7.8	0.6	8.4
Education	74.5	75.9	77.4	1.3	1.5	2.9
English language and literature/letters	65.6	65.9	68.6	0.3	2.7	3.0
Visual and performing arts	59.7	62.1	59.4	2.4	-2.7	-0.3
Psychology	44.4	68.2	77.5	23.7	9.3	33.1
Social sciences and history	36.8	44.1	51.7	7.3	7.6	14.9
Communications	35.3	59.1	63.5	23.8	4.4	28.2
Biological sciences/life sciences	29.1	47.8	60.8	18.7	13.0	31.7
Business	9.1	45.1	50.0	36.0	4.9	40.9
Mathematics	37.9	46.2	46.7	8.3	0.5	8.8
Physical sciences	13.8	28.0	42.2	14.2	14.2	28.4
Computer and information sciences	13.6	36.8	27.6	23.2	-9.2	14.0
Agriculture and natural resources	4.2	31.1	45.9	26.9	14.8	41.6
Engineering	0.8	13.1	20.7	12.3	7.6	19.9



FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Supplemental Notes 3, 10
Supplemental Tables 20-1,
20-2, 20-3

Degrees Earned by Women

Table 20-1. Number of bachelor's degrees earned by women, by field of study: 1970–71, 1984–85, and 2001–02

Field of study	1970–71	1984–85	2001–02
Total¹	364,100	496,900	742,100
Business	10,500	105,000	140,800
Education	131,400	66,800	82,300
Social sciences and history	57,200	40,300	68,700
Health professions and related sciences	19,400	54,700	60,300
Psychology	17,000	27,200	59,400
Communications	3,800	24,800	39,900
Visual and performing arts	18,100	23,700	39,600
Biological sciences/life sciences	10,400	18,400	36,600
English language and literature/letters	42,200	21,900	36,500
Computer and information sciences	300	14,300	13,100
Engineering	400	12,600	12,300
Agriculture and natural resources	500	5,600	10,700
Physical sciences	3,000	6,600	7,500
Mathematics	9,400	7,300	5,800

¹Includes other fields not shown separately.

NOTE: See *supplemental note 10* for more information on fields of study. Data based on all degree-granting institutions. Number of bachelor's degrees earned has been rounded.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES. (2003). *Digest of Education Statistics 2002* (NCES 2003–060), tables 246, 276–297 and (forthcoming) *Digest of Education Statistics 2003* (NCES 2004–024), table 265. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 1969–86 Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), “Degrees and Other Formal Awards Conferred” and 1987–2002 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, “Completions Survey” (IPEDS-C:87–02), fall 2002.

Degrees Earned by Women

Table 20-2. Percentage of master's and doctoral degrees earned by women and change in the percentage earned by women from 1970–71 to 2001–02, by field of study: 1970–71, 1984–85, and 2001–02

Field of study	1970–71	1984–85	2001–02	Change in percentage points		
				1970–71 to 1984–85	1984–85 to 2001–02	1970–71 to 2001–02
Master's degrees						
Total¹	40.1	49.9	58.7	9.8	8.8	18.6
Health professions and related sciences	55.3	76.3	77.6	21.0	1.2	22.2
Education	56.2	72.5	76.4	16.3	4.0	20.2
English language and literature/letters	60.6	65.6	68.0	5.0	2.4	7.4
Psychology	40.6	65.1	76.4	24.5	11.3	35.8
Communications	34.6	57.0	65.4	22.5	8.4	30.8
Biological sciences/life sciences	33.6	47.7	57.8	14.1	10.2	24.3
Visual and performing arts	47.4	55.3	57.6	7.9	2.3	10.2
Social sciences and history	28.5	38.4	50.8	9.9	12.5	22.4
Agriculture and natural resources	5.9	27.5	48.1	21.7	20.6	42.2
Mathematics	27.1	32.9	42.4	5.8	9.5	15.2
Business	3.9	31.0	41.1	27.1	10.1	37.2
Physical sciences	13.3	23.2	37.6	9.9	14.4	24.3
Computer and information sciences	10.3	28.7	33.3	18.4	4.6	22.9
Engineering	1.1	10.7	21.2	9.6	10.4	20.0
Doctoral degrees						
Total¹	14.3	34.1	46.3	19.9	12.2	32.1
Psychology	24.0	49.6	68.2	25.5	18.7	44.2
Education	21.0	52.0	66.5	31.0	14.5	45.5
Health professions and related sciences	16.5	52.9	63.3	36.4	10.4	46.8
English language and literature/letters	28.8	54.9	58.5	26.1	3.7	29.7
Visual and performing arts	22.2	41.5	56.0	19.3	14.5	33.8
Communications	13.1	38.9	55.1	25.8	16.2	42.0
Biological sciences/life sciences	16.3	32.8	44.3	16.5	11.5	28.0
Social sciences and history	13.9	32.2	43.1	18.3	10.9	29.3
Business	2.8	17.2	35.4	14.4	18.2	32.6
Agriculture and natural resources	2.9	14.6	33.5	11.7	18.9	30.7
Mathematics	7.6	15.5	29.0	7.9	13.5	21.4
Physical sciences	5.6	16.2	28.0	10.6	11.7	22.3
Computer and information sciences	2.3	10.1	22.8	7.7	12.7	20.5
Engineering	0.6	6.4	17.2	5.8	10.8	16.6

¹Includes other fields not shown separately.

NOTE: See *supplemental note 10* for more information on fields of study. Data based on all degree-granting institutions.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, (2003). *Digest of Education Statistics 2002* (NCES 2003–060), tables 246, 276–297 and (forthcoming) *Digest of Education Statistics 2003* (NCES 2004–024), tables 268 and 271. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 1969–86 Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), “Degrees and Other Formal Awards Conferred” and 1987–2002 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, “Completions Survey” (IPEDS-C:87–02), fall 2002.

Degrees Earned by Women

Table 20-3. Number of master's and doctoral degrees earned by women, by field of study: 1970–71, 1984–85, and 2001–02

Field of study	1970–71	1984–85	2001–02
		Master's degrees	
Total¹	92,400	142,900	283,000
Education	49,300	54,100	104,400
Business management and administrative services	1,000	20,800	49,600
Health professions and related sciences	3,200	13,300	33,800
Psychology	2,300	6,400	11,400
Social sciences and history	4,700	4,000	7,200
Visual and performing arts	3,200	4,800	6,700
Engineering	200	2,300	5,500
Computer and information sciences	200	2,000	5,400
English language and literature/letters	6,500	3,400	4,900
Communications	600	2,100	3,600
Biological/life sciences	1,900	2,400	3,600
Agriculture and natural resources	100	1,100	2,200
Physical sciences	800	1,300	1,900
Mathematics	1,500	1,100	1,500
		Doctoral degrees	
Total¹	4,600	11,200	20,500
Education	1,300	3,400	4,600
Psychology	500	1,700	3,000
Health professions and related sciences	100	600	2,200
Biological/life sciences	600	1,100	2,000
Social sciences and history	500	900	1,700
Physical sciences	200	600	1,100
Engineering	#	200	900
English language and literature/letters	500	600	800
Visual and performing arts	100	300	600
Business management and administrative services	#	100	400
Agriculture and natural resources	#	200	400
Mathematics	100	100	300
Communications	#	100	200
Computer and information sciences	#	#	200

#Rounds to zero.

¹Includes other fields not shown separately.

NOTE: See *supplemental note 10* for more information on fields of study. Data based on all degree-granting institutions. Number of master's and doctoral degrees earned has been rounded.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES. (2003). *Digest of Education Statistics 2002* (NCES 2003–060), tables 246, 276–297 and (forthcoming) *Digest of Education Statistics 2003* (NCES 2004–024), tables 268 and 271. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 1969–86 Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), "Degrees and Other Formal Awards Conferred" and 1987–2002 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, "Completions Survey" (IPEDS-C:87–02), fall 2002.