

FIRST UNIVERSITY DEGREES IN SCIENCE

Key Findings: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, United States

Eleven percent of first university degrees were awarded in science in the United States in 1999—placing the United States fifth among the countries presented. The percentage of first university degrees awarded in science in the United States was lower than the percentages in the United Kingdom (16 percent), France (15 percent), Germany (12 percent), and Canada (12 percent), but higher than the percentages in Japan (4 percent) and Italy (9 percent) (figure 26a).

Over one half of first university degrees in science awarded in the United States in 1999 were in the area of life sciences (53 percent). Life sciences was also the largest content area in three of the other four countries reporting data—Canada (53 percent), Italy (40 percent), and the United Kingdom (32 percent). In Germany, in contrast, 21 percent of first university science degrees were awarded in life sciences (figure 26b).

The second-highest proportion of first university science degrees awarded in the United States in 1999 was in computing (22 percent). The proportion of science degrees awarded in computing was lower in the United States than in the United Kingdom

(28 percent) and Germany (27 percent), but higher than in Italy (14 percent) and Canada (21 percent) (figure 26b).

Ten percent of all first university science degrees awarded in the United States in 1999 were in mathematics and statistics—the lowest percentage of the five countries reporting data. The proportion of first university science degrees awarded in mathematics and statistics was lower in the United States than in Italy (22 percent), Germany (17 percent), Canada (12 percent), and the United Kingdom (11 percent) (figure 26b).

The proportion of first university science degrees awarded in the physical sciences in 1999 was also relatively low in the United States (16 percent), compared to three of the four other countries reporting data. The percentage of science degrees in the physical sciences was less than one half the percentage in Germany, where 36 percent of first university science degrees were awarded in the physical sciences, and below the figures in the United Kingdom (29 percent) and Italy (24 percent). Only Canada awarded a lower proportion of science degrees in the physical sciences (15 percent) than the United States in 1999 (figure 26b).

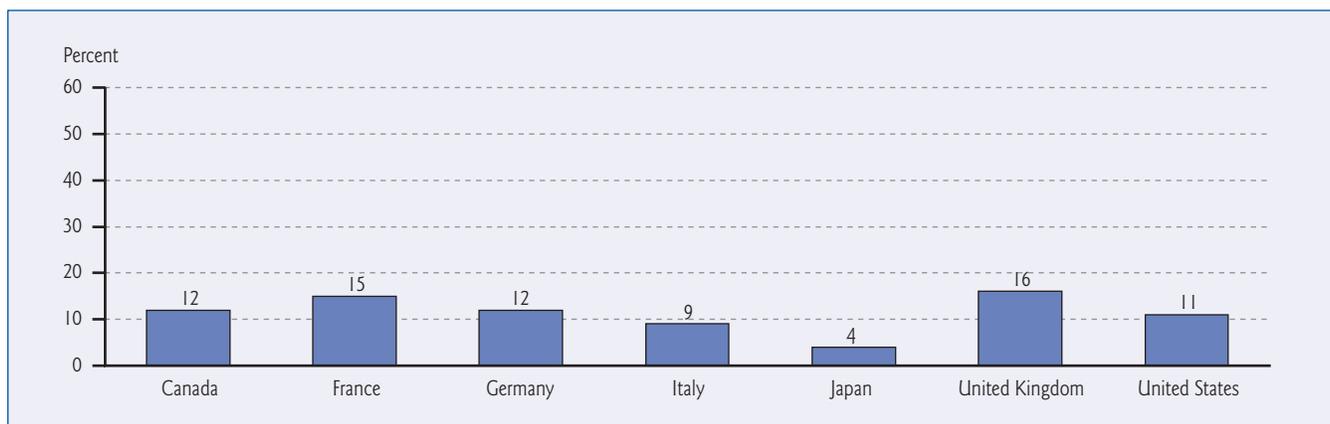
Definition and Methodology

The percent of first university degrees awarded in science is the share of first degrees awarded in the four science content areas relative to all first degrees awarded in all fields for a given year. The percent of first university degrees awarded by science content area is the percent distribution of first degrees awarded in a specific science content area relative to all first degrees awarded in the four science content areas for a given year.

Countries organize higher academic studies differently. In some countries, such as the United States, there is a clear distinction between first and second university degrees (i.e., undergraduate and graduate programs). First university degrees in these coun-

tries—a bachelor's degree in the United States—are typically of medium length (3 to 5 years duration in the international classification). In other countries, such as Germany and Italy, there is no distinction between first and second degree programs. The first university degree—the *Diplom* in Germany and the *Laurea* in Italy—is generally a long degree (5 to 6 years in the international classification.) Program types are categorized as academic programs that prepare students for advanced research degrees and highly qualified professions (Type A in the international classification) and vocational/technical programs that prepare students for direct entry into the labor market (Type B programs).

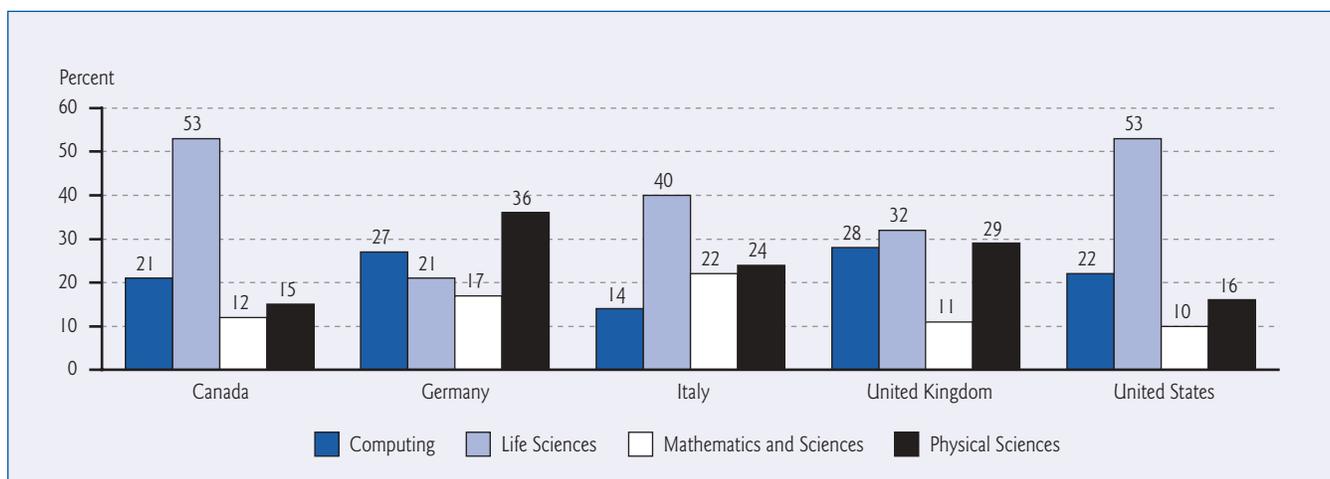
Figure 26a. Percentage of first university degrees awarded in science, by country: 1999



NOTE: The United Kingdom includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. First university degrees vary in duration in different countries in different programs of study. In the United States, the first university degree corresponds to a bachelor's degree; it excludes associate's degrees.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Education Database, 2001.

Figure 26b. Percentage distribution of first university science degrees awarded, by science content area and country: 1999



NOTE: The United Kingdom includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Percentages may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding. First university degrees vary in duration in different countries in different programs of study. In the United States, the first university degree corresponds to a bachelor's degree; it excludes associate's degrees.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Education Database, 2001.

First University Degrees in Science – Data Tables

Table A-26a. Percentage of first university degrees awarded, in science by country:
1999

Country	Science
Canada	12
France	15
Germany	12
Italy	9
Japan	4
United Kingdom	16
United States	11

NOTE: The United Kingdom includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. First university degrees vary in duration in different countries in different programs of study. In the United States, the first university degree corresponds to a bachelor's degree; it excludes associate's degrees.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Education Database, 2001.

Table A-26b. Percentage distribution of first university science degrees awarded, by science content area and country: 1999

Country	Science content area				
	All science fields	Computing	Life science	Mathematics and statistics	Physical science
Canada	100.0	20.9	52.5	11.9	14.7
Germany	100.0	26.5	20.5	16.7	36.3
Italy	100.0	13.8	39.7	22.2	24.3
United Kingdom	100.0	28.2	31.7	11.3	28.9
United States	100.0	21.6	52.9	9.9	15.6

NOTE: The United Kingdom includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

Percentages may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding. First university degrees vary in duration in different countries in different programs of study. In the United States, the first university degree corresponds to a bachelor's degree; it excludes associate's degrees.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Education Database, 2001.