

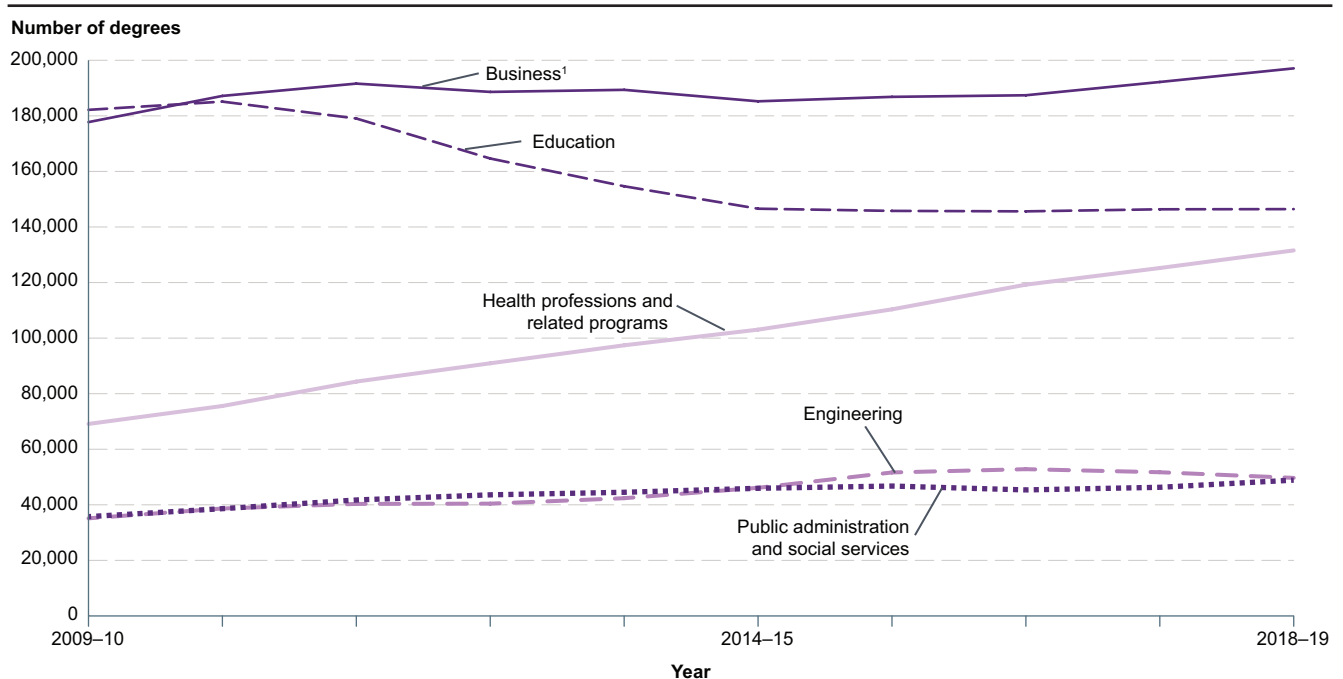
Graduate Degree Fields

In 2018–19, over half of the 833,700 master’s degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions within the United States were concentrated in three fields of study: business (197,100 degrees), education (146,400 degrees), and health professions and related programs (131,600 degrees). Of the 187,600 doctor’s degrees conferred, 63 percent were concentrated in two fields: health professions and related programs (82,900 degrees) and legal professions and studies (34,400 degrees).

In 2018-19, postsecondary institutions within the United States¹ conferred about 1.0 million graduate degrees, an increase of 20 percent since 2009-10. These included 833,700 master’s degrees and 187,600 doctor’s degrees. For the purposes of this analysis, doctor’s degrees include

Ph.D., Ed.D., and comparable degrees at the doctoral level, as well as such degrees as M.D., D.D.S., and J.D. that were previously classified as first-professional degrees.² Health professions and related programs were among the most popular fields of study at both award levels.

Figure 1. Number of master’s degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions in selected fields of study: 2009–10 through 2018–19



¹ In order to be consistent with the definition of “business” for bachelor’s degree data, “business” is defined as business, management, marketing, and related support services, as well as personal and culinary services.
 NOTE: Data are for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The fields shown are the five programs in which the largest numbers of master’s degrees were conferred in 2018–19. Data are for postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Data have been adjusted where necessary to conform to the 2009–10 Classification of Instructional Programs. Some data have been revised from previously published figures.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2010 through Fall 2019, Completions component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 323.10.

In 2018-19, over half of the master’s degrees conferred were concentrated in three fields of study: business (24 percent, or 197,100 degrees), education (18 percent, or 146,400 degrees), and health professions and related programs (16 percent, or 131,600 degrees). The fields

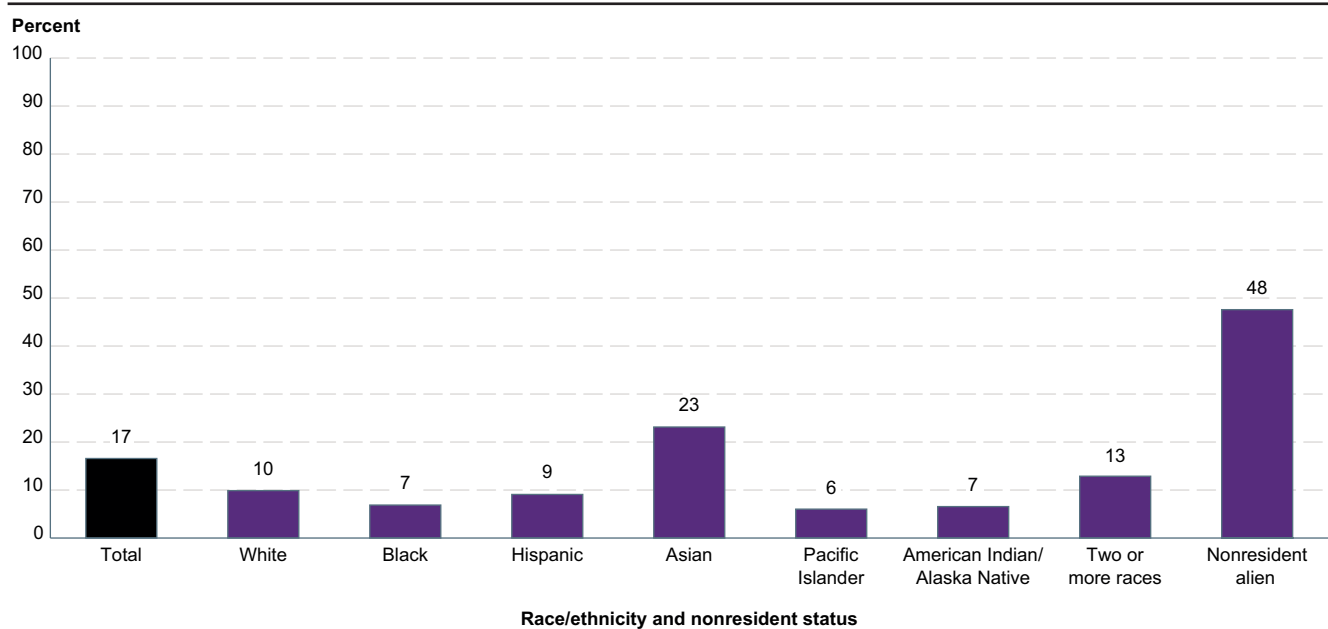
in which the next largest percentages of master’s degrees were conferred were engineering (6 percent, or 49,700 degrees) and public administration and social services (6 percent, or 48,900 degrees).

Between 2009-10 and 2018-19, the total number of master’s degrees conferred increased by 20 percent, from 693,300 to 833,700 degrees. Between 2009-10 and 2018-19, the number of master’s degrees conferred in business rose by 11 percent, from 177,700 to 197,100 degrees. In 2010-11, business surpassed education as the field in which the largest number of master’s degrees were conferred and has remained the largest field in each subsequent year. Between 2009-10 and 2018-19, the number of master’s degrees conferred in education declined by 20 percent, from 182,200 to 146,400 degrees. Over this same time period, the number of master’s degrees conferred increased in each of the three next largest fields: health professions and related programs (from 69,100 to 131,600 degrees, an increase of 90 percent), engineering (from 35,100 to 49,700 degrees, an increase of 41 percent), and public administration and social services (from 35,700 to 48,900 degrees, an increase of 37 percent). Among other fields in which at least 10,000

master’s degrees were conferred in 2018-19, the number of degrees conferred more than doubled between 2009-10 and 2018-19 in computer and information sciences (from 18,000 to 45,700 degrees, an increase of 154 percent) and mathematics and statistics (from 5,600 to 11,400 degrees, an increase of 102 percent).

In 2018-19, the three fields in which the most master’s degrees were conferred—business, education, and health professions and related programs—were the same for all racial/ethnic groups, although the rank order of these fields differed across groups. Business was the top field for all but White and American Indian/Alaska Native students, for whom education was the top field. For nonresident alien³ students, the three fields in which the most master’s degrees were conferred were business, computer and information sciences, and engineering.

Figure 2. Percentage of master’s degrees conferred in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, by race/ethnicity and nonresident status: 2018-19



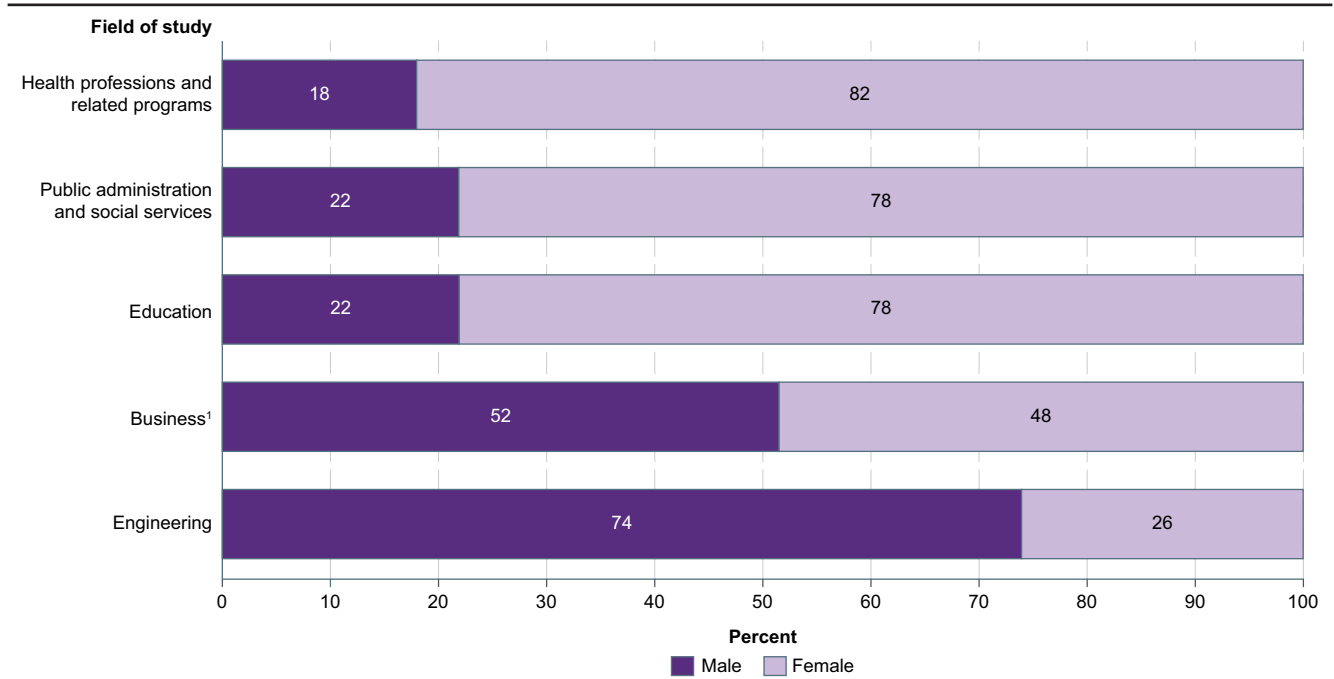
NOTE: Data are for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. STEM fields include biological and biomedical sciences, computer and information sciences, engineering, engineering technologies, mathematics and statistics, and physical sciences and science technologies. Data are for postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Race/ethnicity categories exclude nonresident alien students. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2019, Completions component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, tables 318.45 and 323.30.

Seventeen percent (138,200) of master’s degrees were conferred in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)⁴ fields in 2018-19. The percentage of master’s degrees conferred in a STEM field varied by race/ethnicity. Twenty-three percent of master’s degrees conferred to Asian students were in a STEM field, which

was higher than the percentages for students who were of Two or more races (13 percent), White (10 percent), Hispanic (9 percent), Black (7 percent), American Indian/Alaska Native (7 percent), and Pacific Islander (6 percent). The percentage of master’s degrees conferred in a STEM field was highest for nonresident alien students (48 percent).

Figure 3. Percentage distribution of master's degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions in selected fields of study, by sex: 2018–19

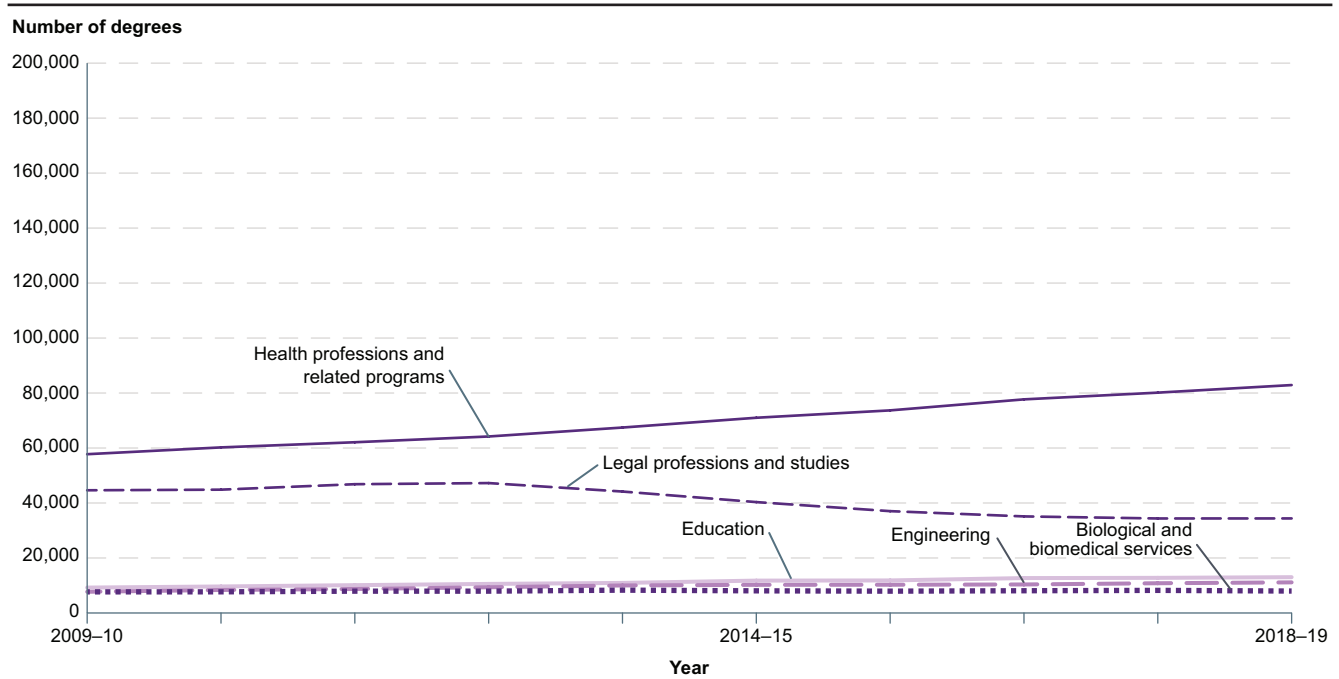


¹ In order to be consistent with the definition of "business" for bachelor's degree data, "business" is defined as business, management, marketing, and related support services, as well as personal and culinary services.
 NOTE: Data are for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The fields shown are the five programs in which the largest numbers of master's degrees were conferred in 2018–19. Data are for postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2019, Completions component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, tables 323.40 and 323.50.

In 2018-19, females earned 61 percent (507,500 degrees) and males earned 39 percent (326,200 degrees) of all master's degrees conferred. Of the five fields in which the most master's degrees were conferred, females earned the majority of degrees in health professions and related

programs (82 percent), public administration and social services (78 percent), and education (78 percent). Males earned the majority of degrees in engineering (74 percent) and business (52 percent).

Figure 4. Number of doctor's degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions in selected fields of study: 2009–10 through 2018–19

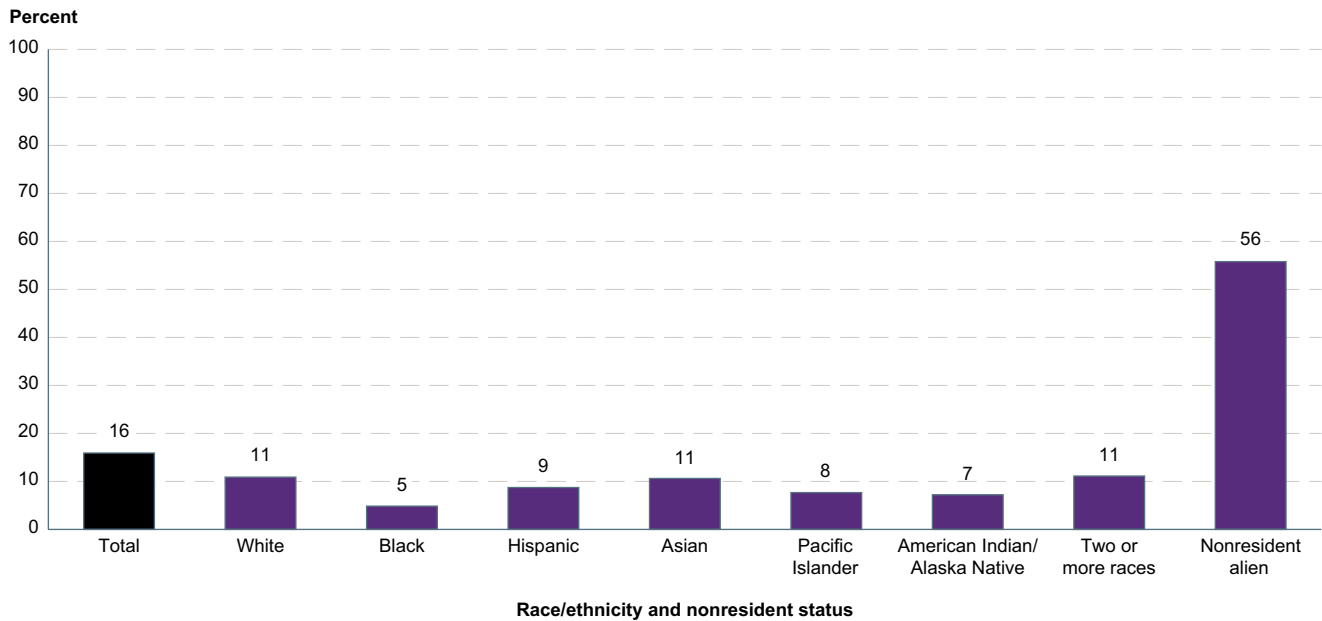


NOTE: Data are for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Doctor's degrees include Ph.D., Ed.D., and comparable degrees at the doctoral level, as well as such degrees as M.D., D.D.S., and J.D. that were formerly classified as first-professional degrees. The year 2010–11 was the last year the classification of first-professional degrees was used. The fields shown are the five programs in which the largest numbers of doctor's degrees were conferred in 2018–19. Data are for postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Data have been adjusted where necessary to conform to the 2009–10 Classification of Instructional Programs. Some data have been revised from previously published figures. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2010 through Fall 2019, Completions component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 324.10.

Between 2009-10 and 2018-19, the total number of doctor's degrees conferred increased by 18 percent, from 158,600 to 187,600 degrees. In 2018-19, two fields accounted for 63 percent of the 187,600 doctor's degrees conferred: health professions and related programs (44 percent, or 82,900 degrees) and legal professions and studies (18 percent, or 34,400 degrees). The three fields in which the next largest percentages of doctor's degrees were conferred were education (7 percent, or 13,000 degrees), engineering (6 percent, or 11,100 degrees), and biological and biomedical sciences (4 percent, or 8,000 degrees). Between 2009-10 and 2018-19, the number of doctor's

degrees conferred in health professions and related programs increased by 44 percent, from 57,800 to 82,900 degrees. Over the same period, the number of doctor's degrees conferred in legal professions and studies decreased by 23 percent, from 44,600 to 34,400 degrees. Between 2009-10 and 2018-19, the number of doctor's degrees conferred increased in each of the three next largest fields: education (from 9,200 to 13,000 degrees, an increase of 41 percent), engineering (from 7,700 to 11,100 degrees, an increase of 44 percent), and biological and biomedical sciences (from 7,700 to 8,000 degrees, an increase of 4 percent).

Figure 5. Percentage of doctor's degrees conferred in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, by race/ethnicity and nonresident status: 2018–19



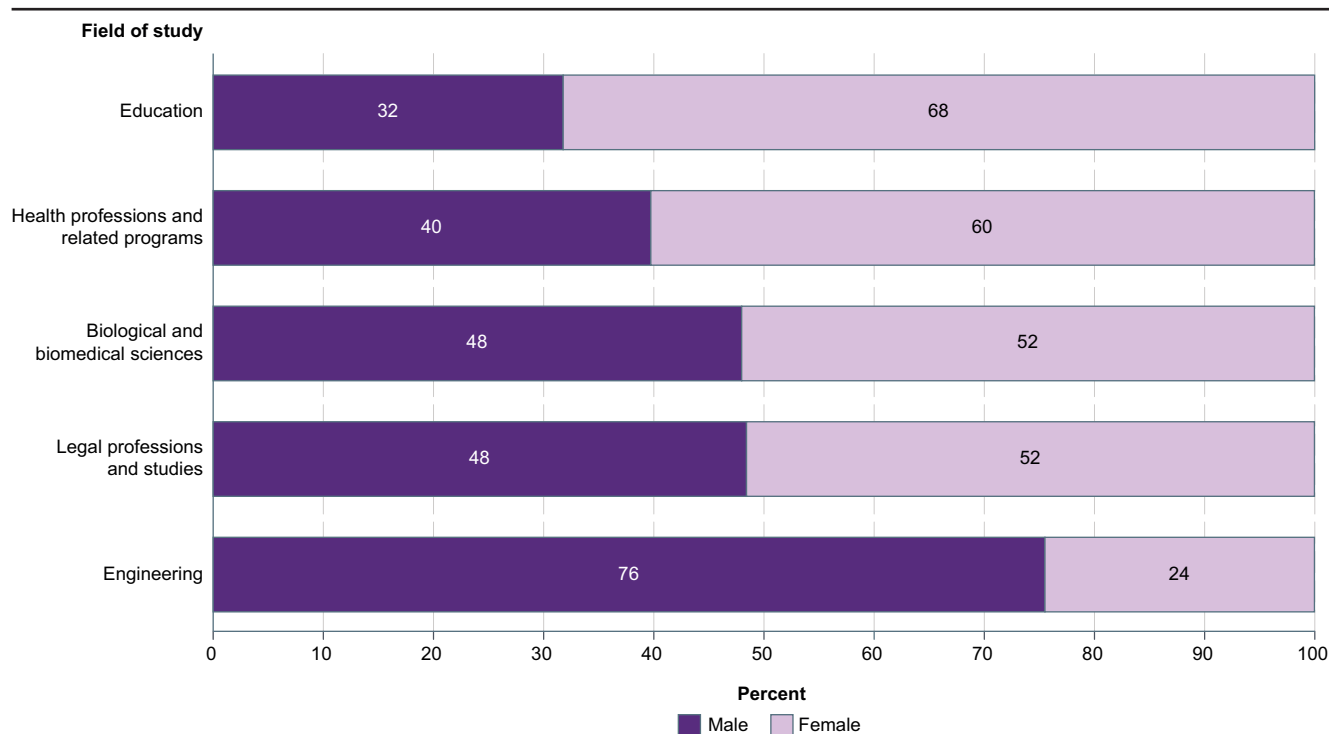
NOTE: Data are for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. STEM fields include biological and biomedical sciences, computer and information sciences, engineering, engineering technologies, mathematics and statistics, and physical sciences and science technologies. Data are for postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Race/ethnicity categories exclude nonresident alien students. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2019, Completions component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, tables 318.45 and 324.25.

In 2018-19, the two fields in which the most doctor's degrees were conferred—health professions and related programs and legal professions and studies—were the same for all racial/ethnic groups. For nonresident alien students, the two fields in which the most doctor's degrees were conferred were engineering and health professions and related programs.

Sixteen percent (29,900 degrees) of doctor's degrees were conferred in STEM fields in 2018-19. The percentage of

doctor's degrees conferred in a STEM field varied among racial/ethnic groups. Of doctor's degrees conferred to students of Two or more races, White students, and Asian students, 11 percent each were in a STEM field. This was higher than the percentages of doctor's degrees conferred in a STEM field for students who were Hispanic (9 percent), Pacific Islander (8 percent), American Indian/Alaska Native (7 percent), and Black (5 percent). The percentage of doctor's degrees conferred in a STEM field was highest for nonresident alien students (56 percent).

Figure 6. Percentage distribution of doctor's degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions in selected fields of study, by sex: 2018–19



NOTE: Data are for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The fields shown are the five programs in which the largest numbers of doctor's degrees were conferred in 2018–19. Doctor's degrees include Ph.D., Ed.D., and comparable degrees at the doctoral level, as well as such degrees as M.D., D.D.S., and J.D. that were formerly classified as first-professional degrees. Data are for postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2019, Completions component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, tables 324.30 and 324.35.

In 2018-19, females earned 54 percent (101,800 degrees) and males earned 46 percent (85,800 degrees) of all doctor's degrees conferred. Of the five fields in which the most doctor's degrees were conferred, females earned the majority of degrees in education (68 percent), health

professions and related programs (60 percent), biological and biomedical sciences (52 percent), and legal professions and studies (52 percent). Males earned the majority of degrees in engineering (76 percent).

Endnotes:

- ¹ Data in this indicator represent the 50 states and the District of Columbia.
- ² 2010-11 was the last year the classification of first-professional degrees was used.
- ³ In the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), racial/ethnic data were not collected for nonresident alien students, and their data were compiled as a separate group.

- ⁴ STEM fields include biological and biomedical sciences; computer and information sciences; engineering and engineering technologies; mathematics and statistics; and physical sciences and science technologies. Construction trades and mechanic and repair technologies/technicians are categorized as engineering technologies in some tables to facilitate trend comparisons but are not included as STEM fields in this indicator.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, tables 318.45, 323.10, 323.30, 323.40, 323.50, 324.10, 324.25, 324.30, and 324.35

Related indicators and resources: [Postsecondary Certificates and Degrees Conferred](#); [Trends in Student Loan Debt for Graduate School Completers](#) [*The Condition of Education 2018 Spotlight*]; [Undergraduate and Graduate Degree Fields](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]; [Undergraduate Degree Fields](#)

Glossary: Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP); Doctor's degree; Master's degree; Racial/ethnic group; STEM fields