

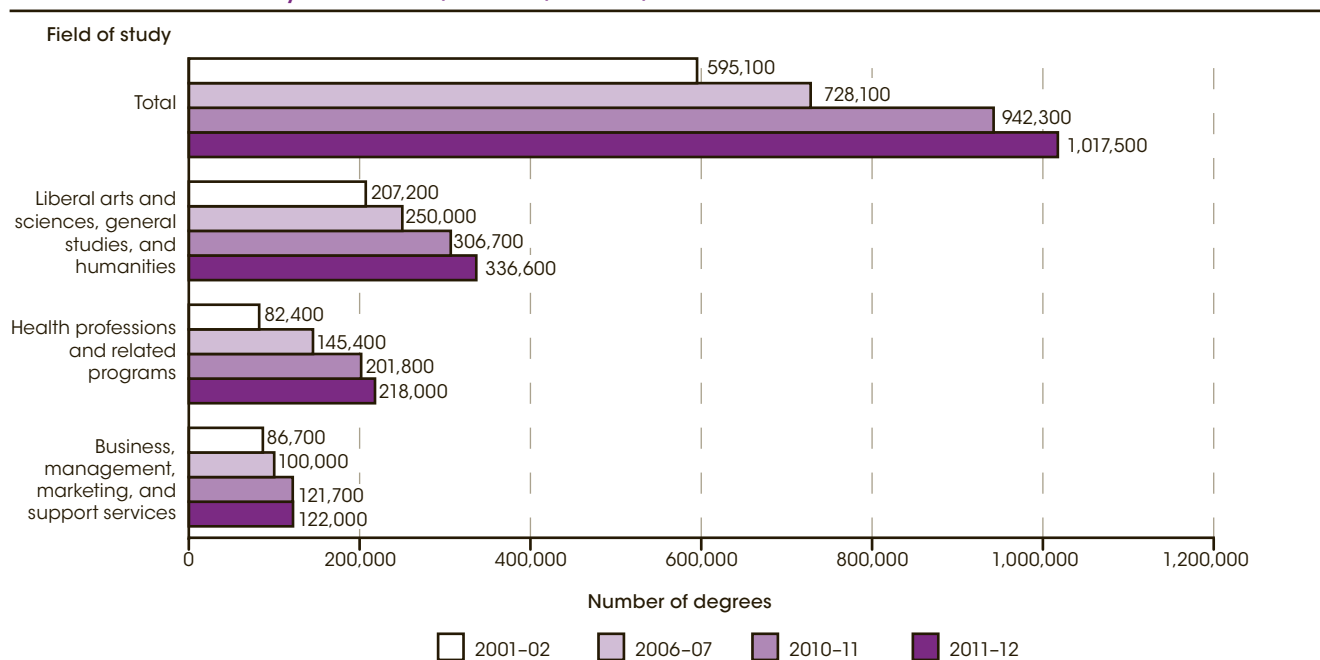
Undergraduate Degree Fields

From academic year 2001–02 to 2011–12, the number of associate’s degrees awarded increased by 71 percent, from 595,100 to over 1 million, and the number of bachelor’s degrees awarded increased by 39 percent, from 1.3 million to 1.8 million.

In 2011–12, some 1 million associate’s degrees were awarded by postsecondary institutions, an increase of 8 percent since the previous year. About two-thirds (66 percent) of the associate’s degrees awarded in 2011–12 were in three broad fields of study: liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities (33 percent); health professions and related programs (21 percent); and business, management, marketing, and support services (12 percent). The largest percentages of associate’s

degrees were awarded in these three fields in 2011–12 as well as in 2001–02 and in 2010–11. The three fields awarding the next largest percentages of associate’s degrees each accounted for 3 percent or more of all associate’s degrees awarded. These were engineering technologies and engineering-related fields (4 percent); computer and information sciences and support services (4 percent); and homeland security, law enforcement, and firefighting (5 percent).

Figure 1. Number of associate’s degrees awarded by Title IV postsecondary institutions in selected fields of study: Academic years 2001–02, 2006–07, 2010–11, and 2011–12



NOTE: These three fields were selected because they were the fields in which the largest percentages of associate’s degrees were awarded in 2011–12. Data are for postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. The new Classification of Instructional Programs was initiated in 2009–10. The estimates for 2001–02 and 2006–07 have been reclassified when necessary to make them conform to the new taxonomy. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2002, Fall 2007, Fall 2011, and Fall 2012, Completions component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2013*, table 321.10.

The number of associate’s degrees awarded in the fields of liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities; health professions and related programs; and business management, marketing, and support services increased from 2001–02 to 2011–12. Degrees awarded for liberal arts and sciences increased by 62 percent during this period, from 207,200 to 336,600. Health profession degrees conferred increased by 165 percent, from 82,400 to 218,000, and business degrees awarded increased by 41 percent, from 86,700 to 122,000.

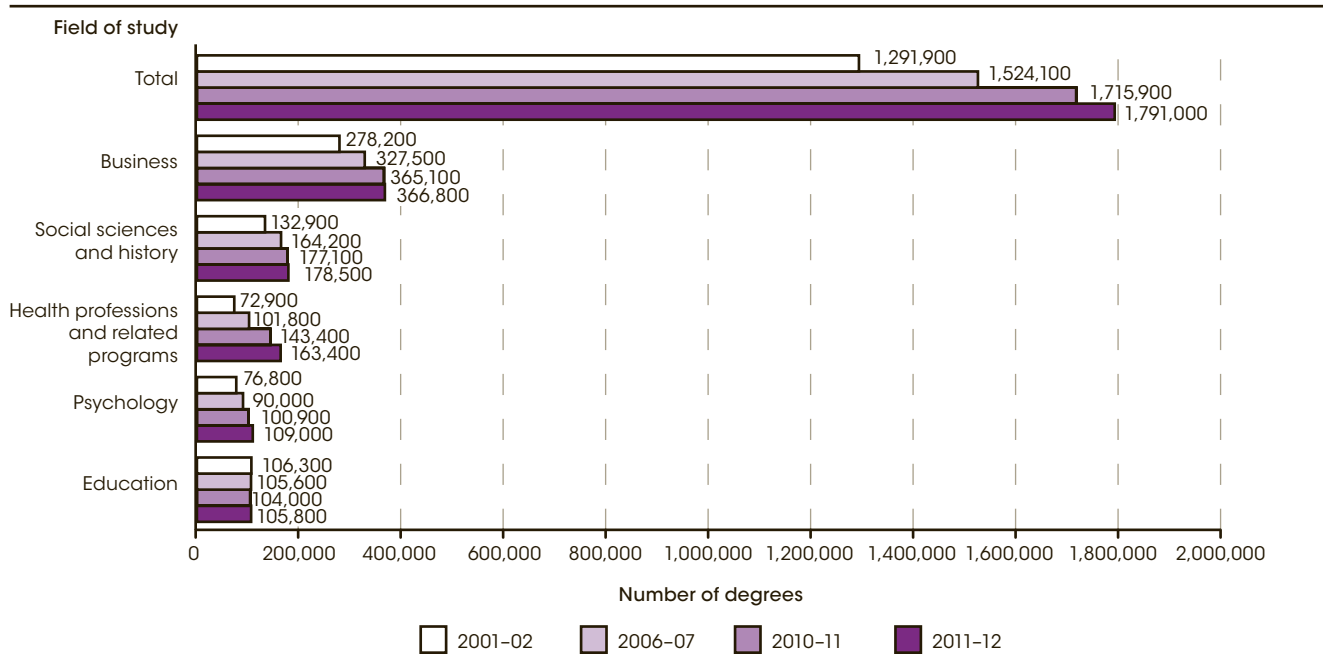
Overall, the number of associate’s degrees awarded increased by 422,400 degrees, or 71 percent, from academic year 2001–02 to 2011–12. Of the 20 major fields of study in which the most associate’s degrees were awarded in 2011–12, the field of homeland security, law enforcement, and firefighting had the largest percentage increase over the past decade (204 percent, from 16,700 to 50,700 degrees). Additionally, the number of associate’s degrees awarded more than doubled in the following fields: psychology (177 percent, from 1,700 to 4,700), public

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administration and social services (175 percent, from 3,300 to 9,100), health professions and related programs (165 percent, from 82,400 to 218,000), social sciences and history (153 percent, from 5,600 to 14,100), physical sciences and science technologies (151 percent, from 2,300 to 5,800), personal and culinary services and construction trades (118 percent each, from 9,300 to 20,400 and from

2,600 to 5,800, respectively), education (114 percent, from 9,600 to 20,500), and multi/interdisciplinary studies (106 percent, from 13,200 to 27,300). In contrast, the number of associate's degrees conferred in engineering technologies and engineering-related fields declined from 40,200 in 2001–02 to 36,500 in 2011–12 (a decrease of 9 percent).

Figure 2. Number of bachelor's degrees awarded by Title IV postsecondary institutions in selected fields of study: Academic years 2001–02, 2006–07, 2010–11, and 2011–12



NOTE: These five fields were selected because they were the fields in which the largest percentages of bachelor's degrees were awarded in 2011–12. Data are for postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. The new Classification of Instructional Programs was initiated in 2009–10. The estimates for 2001–02 and 2006–07 have been reclassified when necessary to make them conform to the new taxonomy. "Business" includes Business, management, marketing, and related support services and Personal and culinary services. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2002, Fall 2007, Fall 2011, and Fall 2012, Completions component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2013*, table 322.10.

In 2011–12, some 1.8 million bachelor's degrees were awarded by postsecondary institutions, an increase of 4 percent from 2010–11. Of the bachelor's degrees awarded in 2011–12, almost one-third (30 percent) were concentrated in two fields: business (20 percent) and social sciences and history (10 percent). The three fields awarding the next largest percentages of bachelor's degrees in 2011–12 were health professions and related programs (9 percent), psychology (6 percent), and education (6 percent). These were the same five fields in which the largest percentages of bachelor's degrees were awarded in 2001–02, 2006–07, and 2010–11.

Overall, the number of bachelor's degrees awarded increased by 499,100 degrees from academic year 2001–02 to 2011–12, reflecting an increase of 39 percent. During this period, the two fields of study awarding the largest percentages of bachelor's degrees, business and social

sciences and history, had increases of 32 percent and 34 percent, respectively. Of the 20 major fields of study in which the most bachelor's degrees were awarded in 2011–12, the largest percentage increases occurred in the fields of health professions and related programs (from 72,900 to 163,400 degrees, an increase of 124 percent), and homeland security, law enforcement, and firefighting (from 25,500 to 53,800 degrees, an increase of 111 percent). The number of psychology degrees awarded between 2001–02 and 2011–12 increased by 42 percent, from 76,800 to 109,000. In contrast, the number of degrees conferred declined in computer and information sciences and support services from 2001–02 to 2011–12 (from 50,400 to 47,400 degrees, a decrease of 6 percent). The number of bachelor degrees awarded in the field of education in 2011–12 (105,800) was about the same as the number awarded in 2001–02 (106,300).

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2013*, tables 321.10 and 322.10

Glossary: Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree, Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP)

For more information, see the Reader's Guide and the Guide to Sources.