

# the condition of education 2008



## INDICATOR 27

# Degrees Earned by Women

The indicator and corresponding tables are taken directly from *The Condition of Education 2008*. 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 2008*, visit the NCES website (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2008031>) or contact ED PUBS at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

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# Completions

## Degrees Earned by Women

*Women have earned a greater percentage of bachelor's degrees than men since the early 1980s overall, but men still earn a greater percentage of degrees in some fields, including computer and information sciences and engineering.*

From 1995–96 to 2005–06, the number of degrees earned by women grew at a faster rate than for men and accounted for over 65 percent of the increase in the total bachelor's and master's degrees awarded, and for nearly 85 percent of the increase in the total doctoral degrees awarded. At each degree level, degrees earned by women as a percentage of total degrees earned also increased during this time frame (see supplemental table 27-1). Though women have earned a greater number and percentage of bachelor's and master's degrees overall than men have since the early 1980s (NCES 2008-022, table 258), men continue to earn the majority of degrees at the doctoral level.

Women earned 58 percent of all bachelor's and 60 percent of all master's degrees awarded in 2005–06 (up from 55 and 56 percent, respectively, in 1995–96). During this period, the number of degrees earned by women increased by 33 percent at the bachelor's level (from 642,000 to 855,000) and by 57 percent at the master's level (from 227,000 to 356,000). The increase in education degrees earned by women accounted for 42 percent of the overall growth in master's degrees earned by women. Although women

earned 50 percent of bachelor's and 43 percent of master's degrees in business in 2005–06, the increase in degrees in this field contributed to over 20 percent of the total growth in degrees earned by women at both levels from 1995–96 to 2005–06. Women earned over 75 percent of bachelor's and master's degrees awarded in health professions, education, and psychology in 2005–06, but less than 30 percent of degrees awarded in computer and information sciences and in engineering at both levels.

Overall, women earned 49 percent of doctoral degrees awarded in 2005–06 (up from 40 percent in 1995–96). During this period, doctoral degrees earned by women increased by 54 percent (from 17,800 to 27,400). Increases in the number of degrees earned in health professions accounted for over 40 percent of the overall growth in doctoral degrees earned by women. In 2005–06, women earned less than 40 percent of doctoral degrees awarded in business, physical sciences, mathematics and statistics, computer and information sciences, and engineering. In contrast, women earned over 70 percent of doctoral degrees in psychology and health professions that year.

<sup>1</sup> Includes other fields not shown separately.

NOTE: Based on data from Title IV degree-granting institutions. See *supplemental note 9* for more information. The shaded section shows fields in which women earned at least 50 percent of the degrees in 2005–06. The contribution of growth is calculated as the increase in the number of degrees for a particular field divided by the increase in the total number of degrees. Calculations are based on unrounded numbers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). *Digest of Education Statistics, 2007* (NCES 2008-022), tables 258, 286, 288, 290–294, 296, 299–301, 303, 305, and 307, data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 1979–80 Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), “Degrees and Other Formal Awards Conferred” and 1990–91, 1995–96, and 2005–06 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, “Completions Survey” (IPEDS-C:91 and 96), and IPEDS, Fall 2006.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
Supplemental Notes 3, 9, 10  
Supplemental Table 27-1

**BACHELOR'S DEGREES: Percentage of bachelor's degrees women earned and change in the percentage of degrees women earned, by field of study: Academic years 1990–91, 1995–96, and 2005–06**

Field of study	Change in percentage points between			
	1990–91	1995–96	2005–06	1995–96 and 2005–06
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>53.9</b>	<b>55.1</b>	<b>57.5</b>	<b>2.4</b>
Health professions and related clinical sciences	83.9	81.5	86.0	4.5
Education	78.9	75.1	79.1	3.9
Psychology	72.6	73.0	77.5	4.5
English language and literature/letters	66.9	65.9	68.6	2.6
Communication, journalism, and related programs	60.8	58.8	63.4	4.7
Biological and biomedical sciences	50.8	52.6	61.5	8.9
Visual and performing arts	62.6	59.2	61.4	2.3
Social sciences and history	45.1	47.9	50.0	2.0
Business	47.2	48.6	49.8	1.2
Agriculture and natural resources	32.7	36.8	47.7	10.8
Mathematics and statistics	47.3	46.1	45.1	-1.1
Physical sciences and science technologies	31.6	36.0	41.8	5.8
Computer and information sciences and support services	29.4	27.5	20.6	-7.0
Engineering and engineering technologies	14.1	16.2	17.9	1.7

## Degrees Earned by Women

**Table 27-1. Number and percentage of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees women earned, percent change in the number of degrees women earned, and change in the percentage of degrees women earned, by field of study: Academic years 1990–91, 1995–96, and 2005–06**

Field of study	1990–91		1995–96		2005–06		Percent change in the number of degrees earned between 1995–96 and 2005–06	Change in percentage points between 1995–96 and 2005–06
	Number	Percent of total	Number	Percent of total	Number	Percent of total		
<b>Bachelor's degrees</b>								
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>590,493</b>	<b>53.9</b>	<b>642,338</b>	<b>55.1</b>	<b>854,642</b>	<b>57.5</b>	<b>33.1</b>	<b>2.4</b>
Health professions and related clinical sciences	50,256	83.9	70,145	81.5	79,059	86.0	12.7	4.5
Education	87,390	78.9	79,170	75.1	84,790	79.1	7.1	3.9
Psychology	42,588	72.6	53,580	73.0	68,269	77.5	27.4	4.5
English language and literature/letters	34,173	66.9	32,921	65.9	37,780	68.6	14.8	2.6
Communication, journalism, and related programs	32,241	60.8	28,305	58.8	48,794	63.4	72.4	4.7
Biological and biomedical sciences	20,019	50.8	31,968	52.6	42,527	61.5	33.0	8.9
Visual and performing arts	26,425	62.6	29,170	59.2	51,180	61.4	75.5	2.3
Social sciences and history	56,406	45.1	60,607	47.9	80,686	50.0	33.1	2.0
Business	117,608	47.2	110,078	48.6	158,359	49.8	43.9	1.2
Agriculture and natural resources	4,292	32.7	7,894	36.8	10,990	47.7	39.2	10.8
Mathematics and statistics	6,813	47.3	5,866	46.1	6,655	45.1	13.5	-1.1
Physical sciences and science technologies	5,164	31.6	7,061	36.0	8,487	41.8	20.2	5.8
Computer and information sciences and support services	7,388	29.4	6,749	27.5	9,775	20.6	44.8	-7.0
Engineering and engineering technologies	11,269	14.1	12,656	16.2	14,597	17.9	15.3	1.7
<b>Master's degrees</b>								
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>180,686</b>	<b>53.6</b>	<b>227,220</b>	<b>55.9</b>	<b>356,169</b>	<b>60.0</b>	<b>56.8</b>	<b>4.0</b>
Psychology	8,020	70.7	11,062	73.0	15,691	79.4	41.8	6.4
Health professions and related clinical sciences	16,931	79.3	26,903	79.3	40,750	79.3	51.5	#
Education	66,904	76.6	79,981	76.2	133,920	76.7	67.4	0.5
Communication, journalism, and related programs	2,616	60.5	3,408	61.3	5,134	66.3	50.6	5.0
English language and literature/letters	4,581	67.5	4,930	64.4	5,985	67.7	21.4	3.3
Biological and biomedical sciences	2,400	50.0	3,364	51.4	5,027	57.9	49.4	6.5
Visual and performing arts	4,827	55.8	5,919	57.6	7,729	57.1	30.6	-0.5
Social sciences and history	5,217	42.6	6,919	46.1	8,954	51.6	29.4	5.5
Agriculture and natural resources	1,135	34.4	1,909	41.9	2,360	50.9	23.6	8.9
Business	27,372	35.0	35,154	37.6	62,856	42.9	78.8	5.4
Mathematics and statistics	1,453	40.9	1,473	40.3	2,018	42.7	37.0	2.3
Physical sciences and science technologies	1,458	27.6	1,864	32.1	2,354	39.8	26.3	7.7
Computer and information sciences and support services	2,761	29.6	2,850	26.9	4,585	26.9	60.9	-0.1
Engineering and engineering technologies	3,670	14.4	5,018	17.3	7,864	23.5	56.7	6.1

See notes at end of table.

## Degrees Earned by Women

**Table 27-1. Number and percentage of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees women earned, percent change in the number of degrees women earned, and change in the percentage of degrees women earned, by field of study: Academic years 1990–91, 1995–96, and 2005–06—Continued**

Field of study	1990–91		1995–96		2005–06		Percent change in the number of degrees earned between 1995–96 and 2005–06	Change in percentage points between 1995–96 and 2005–06
	Number	Percent of total	Number	Percent of total	Number	Percent of total		
<b>Doctoral degrees</b>								
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	14,538	37.0	17,811	39.9	27,433	48.9	54.0	9.0
Psychology	2,412	61.3	2,761	66.7	3,574	72.6	29.4	6.0
Health professions and related clinical sciences	885	57.7	996	60.3	5,169	72.5	419.0	12.2
Education	3,575	57.8	3,842	61.5	4,920	64.9	28.1	3.4
English language and literature/letters	587	55.6	860	61.6	744	59.3	-13.5	-2.3
Communication, journalism, and related programs	122	44.9	155	44.9	257	55.4	65.8	10.5
Visual and performing arts	372	44.4	543	50.9	744	53.8	37.0	2.9
Biological and biomedical sciences	1,487	36.9	2,106	41.8	2,842	49.2	34.9	7.4
Social sciences and history	1,056	35.1	1,421	37.8	1,696	43.3	19.4	5.5
Agriculture and natural resources	232	19.6	333	26.4	484	40.5	45.3	14.1
Business	309	26.1	394	28.8	662	38.7	68.0	9.8
Physical sciences and science technologies	831	19.6	1,033	22.9	1,346	30.0	30.3	7.1
Mathematics and statistics	188	19.2	239	20.6	382	29.5	59.8	8.9
Computer and information sciences and support services	92	13.6	126	14.5	307	21.7	143.7	7.2
Engineering and engineering technologies	496	9.3	808	12.6	1,508	20.2	86.6	7.6

# Rounds to zero.

<sup>1</sup> Includes other fields not shown separately.

NOTE: See *supplemental note 10* for more information on fields of study. Figures are based on data from Title IV degree-granting institutions. See *supplemental note 9* for more information. The shaded sections show fields in which women earned at least 50 percent of the degrees in 2005–06. Calculations are based on unrounded numbers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

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