

# The Condition of Education 2009

## Indicator 40

### *Undergraduate Fields of Study*

The indicator and corresponding tables are taken directly from *The Condition of Education 2009*. 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 2009*, visit the NCES website (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009081>) or contact ED PUBS at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

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## Undergraduate Fields of Study

*In 2006–07, degrees in the field of business made up 21 percent of the bachelor's degrees awarded. Over 327,500 bachelor's degrees were awarded in business that year.*

In 2006–07, of the 1.5 million bachelor's degrees awarded that year, over 50 percent were concentrated in five fields: business (21 percent); social sciences and history (11 percent); education (7 percent); health professions and related clinical sciences (7 percent); and psychology (6 percent) (see table A-40-1). During the same time period, the fields of visual and performing arts (6 percent), engineering and engineering technologies (5 percent), communication and communications technologies (5 percent), and biological and biomedical sciences (5 percent) represented about an additional 20 percent of all bachelor's degrees awarded.

Overall, 351,200 more bachelor's degrees were awarded in 2006–07 than in 1996–97 (a 30 percent increase). Bachelor's degrees awarded in the field of parks, recreation, leisure and fitness studies had the largest percent increase (93 percent), followed by the fields of visual and performing arts (70 percent) and computer and information sciences and support services (66 percent). The field of education had the smallest percent increase over this time period (0.5 percent).

About 57 percent of all bachelor's degrees conferred in 2006–07 were awarded to females. In the five most prevalent bachelor's degree fields, females earned between 49 and 86 percent of all degrees awarded. In 2006–07, females earned fewer bachelor's degrees than males (i.e., males earned more degrees than females) in fields including engineering and engineering technologies (17 percent of these degrees were awarded to females), computer and information sciences and support services (19 percent female), philosophy and religious studies (38 percent female), and physical sciences and science technologies (41 percent female). For females, the field with the largest percent increase in bachelor's degrees

awarded between 1996–97 and 2006–07 was security and protective services (97 percent), while the field with the smallest percent increase during this time period for females was education (5 percent). There was a 14 percent decrease in the number of males who earned a bachelor's degree in the field of education over this time period.

In 2006–07, of the 728,100 associate's degrees earned, 54 percent were awarded in two broad areas of study: liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities (34 percent) and health professions and related clinical sciences (20 percent). Overall, 156,900 more associate's degrees were awarded in 2006–07 than in 1996–97 (a 27 percent increase). The field with the largest percent increase over this time period was computer and information sciences and support services (90 percent). Several fields experienced a decline in the number of associate's degrees awarded during this period. For example, 6,700 fewer associate's degrees were awarded in engineering and engineering technologies in 2006–07 than in 1996–97 (a 12 percent decrease).

In addition, females earned 62 percent of all associate's degrees awarded in 2006–07. Females earned the majority (96 percent) of all associate's degrees awarded in the field of family and consumer sciences/human sciences. Females earned fewer associate's degrees than males in fields including precision production trades (6 percent of these degrees were awarded to females) and engineering and engineering technologies (10 percent female).



**For more information:** *Table A-40-1; Indicators 39 and 41*

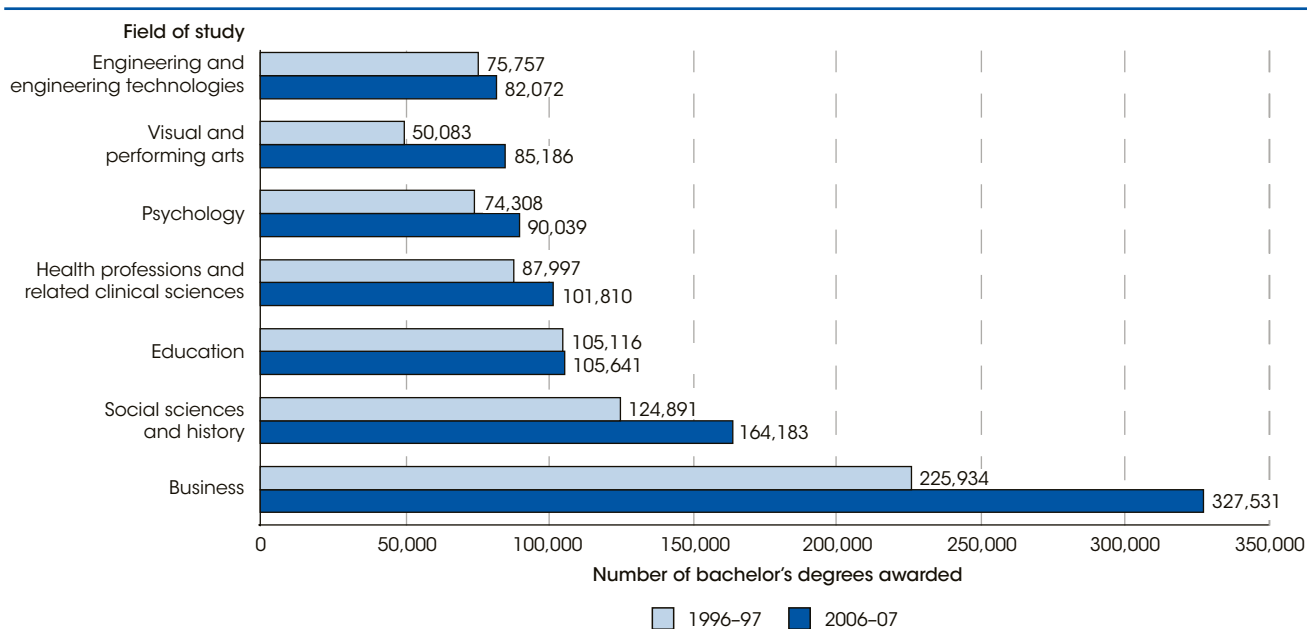
**Glossary:** *Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree*

### Technical Notes

The percent increases discussed in this indicator refer to aggregate fields of study. For more information on fields of study for postsecondary degrees, see *supplemental note 9*. The new *Classification of Instructional Programs* was initiated in 2002–03. Estimates for 1996–97 have been reclassified when necessary to conform to the new

taxonomy. For more information on the Classification of Postsecondary Education Institutions, see *supplemental note 8*. For more information on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), see *supplemental note 3*.

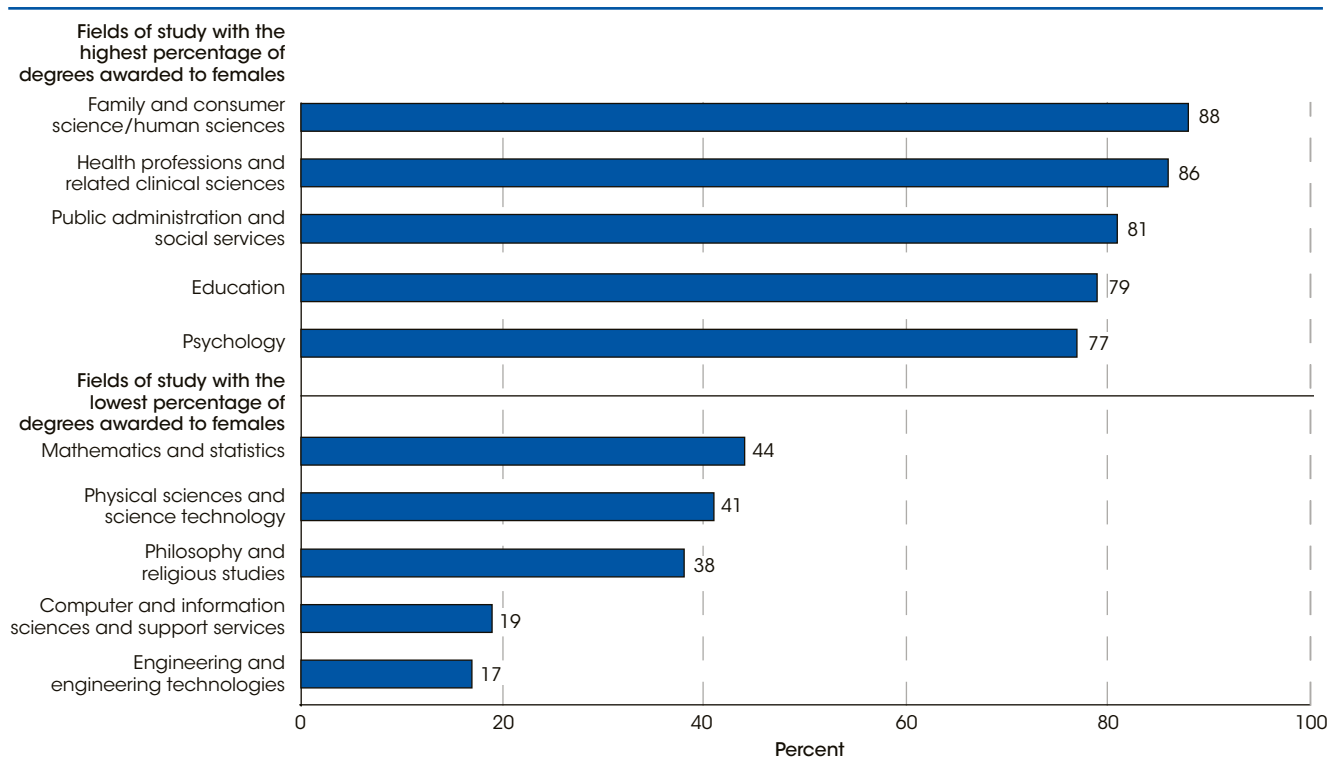
**Figure 40-1. Number of bachelor's degrees awarded by degree-granting institutions in selected fields of study: Academic years 1996-97 and 2006-07**



NOTE: For more information on fields of study for postsecondary degrees, see *supplemental note 9*. The new *Classification of Instructional Programs* was initiated in 2002-03. Estimates for 1996-97 have been reclassified when necessary to conform to the new taxonomy. For more information on the Classification of Postsecondary Education Institutions, see *supplemental note 8*. For more information on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), see *supplemental note 3*.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 1996-97 and 2006-07 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, "Completions Survey" (IPEDS-C:97) and Fall 2007.

**Figure 40-2. Percentage of bachelor's degrees awarded to females by degree-granting institutions in selected fields of study: Academic year 2006-07**



NOTE: For more information on fields of study for postsecondary degrees, see *supplemental note 9*. For more information on the Classification of Postsecondary Education Institutions, see *supplemental note 8*. For more information on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), see *supplemental note 3*.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2006-07 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, "Completions Survey," Fall 2007.

# Supplemental Table to Indicator 40

## Undergraduate Fields of Study

**Table A-40-1. Number of associate's and bachelor's degrees awarded by degree-granting institutions, percentage of total, percentage awarded to females, and percent change, by selected fields of study: Academic years 1996-97 and 2006-07**

Field of study	1996-97			2006-07			1996-97 to 2006-07		
	Number	Percent of total	Percent female	Number	Percent of total	Percent female	Change in number of degrees	Percent change	Percent change for females
<b>Associate's degrees</b>									
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>571,226</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>60.8</b>	<b>728,114</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>62.2</b>	<b>156,888</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>30.4</b>
Liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities	181,341	31.7	61.6	250,030	34.3	62.5	68,689	37.9	39.9
Health professions and related clinical sciences	102,077	17.9	84.3	145,436	20.0	85.4	43,359	42.5	44.4
Business	100,400	17.6	69.3	116,101	15.9	64.3	15,701	15.6	7.3
Engineering and engineering technologies	57,324	10.0	12.3	50,662	7.0	10.4	-6,662	-11.6	-25.3
Security and protective services	19,889	3.5	31.7	28,208	3.9	45.1	8,319	41.8	102.0
Computer and information sciences and support services	14,607	2.6	47.4	27,712	3.8	26.2	13,105	89.7	4.8
Visual and performing arts	13,593	2.4	56.8	20,244	2.8	59.4	6,651	48.9	55.9
Multi/interdisciplinary studies	9,182	1.6	52.1	15,838	2.2	58.5	6,656	72.5	93.6
Education	10,587	1.9	68.0	13,021	1.8	86.4	2,434	23.0	56.2
Legal professions and studies	11,242	2.0	89.6	10,391	1.4	89.9	-851	-7.6	-7.2
Family and consumer sciences/humanities	7,998	1.4	91.7	9,124	1.3	96.4	1,126	14.1	19.8
Social sciences and history	4,056	0.7	61.8	7,080	1.0	64.8	3,024	74.6	83.0
Agriculture and natural resources	6,463	1.1	33.0	5,838	0.8	37.9	-625	-9.7	3.7
Communication and communications technologies	4,893	0.9	46.2	5,704	0.8	44.2	811	16.6	11.3
Public administration and social services	4,270	0.7	84.4	4,338	0.6	86.3	68	1.6	3.9
Physical sciences and science technologies	2,526	0.4	49.3	3,404	0.5	42.8	878	34.8	16.9
Psychology	1,612	0.3	76.6	2,213	0.3	76.6	601	37.3	37.3
Biological and biomedical sciences	2,133	0.4	63.6	2,060	0.3	67.2	-73	-3.4	2.0
Precision production trades	1,773	0.3	12.6	1,973	0.3	6.3	200	11.3	-44.4
Transportation and materials moving	1,572	0.3	16.7	1,674	0.2	13.9	102	6.5	-11.5
Parks, recreation, leisure and fitness studies	885	0.2	38.8	1,251	0.2	40.1	366	41.4	46.4

See notes at end of table.

**Table A-40-1. Number of associate's and bachelor's degrees awarded by degree-granting institutions, percentage of total, percentage awarded to females, and percent change, by selected fields of study: Academic years 1996-97 and 2006-07—Continued**

Field of study	1996-97			2006-07			1996-97 to 2006-07		
	Number	Percent of total	Percent female	Number	Percent of total	Percent female	Change in number of degrees	Percent change	Percent change for females
<b>Bachelor's degrees</b>									
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>1,172,879</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>55.6</b>	<b>1,524,092</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>57.4</b>	<b>351,213</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>34.1</b>
Business	225,934	19.3	48.6	327,531	21.5	49.2	101,597	45.0	46.6
Social sciences and history	124,891	10.6	48.7	164,183	10.8	49.8	39,292	31.5	34.5
Education	105,116	9.0	75.0	105,641	6.9	78.7	525	0.5	5.4
Health professions and related clinical sciences	87,997	7.5	81.3	101,810	6.7	85.9	13,813	15.7	22.3
Psychology	74,308	6.3	73.9	90,039	5.9	77.4	15,731	21.2	27.0
Visual and performing arts	50,083	4.3	58.6	85,186	5.6	61.6	35,103	70.1	78.7
Engineering and engineering technologies	75,757	6.5	16.8	82,072	5.4	16.9	6,315	8.3	9.1
Communication and communications technologies	47,894	4.1	58.7	78,420	5.1	63.0	30,526	63.7	75.7
Biological and biomedical sciences	63,679	5.4	53.8	75,151	4.9	60.1	11,472	18.0	32.0
English language and literature/letters	48,641	4.1	66.4	55,122	3.6	68.3	6,481	13.3	16.5
Liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities	34,776	3.0	61.2	44,255	2.9	68.1	9,479	27.3	41.5
Computer and information sciences and support services	25,422	2.2	27.1	42,170	2.8	18.6	16,748	65.9	13.5
Security and protective services	25,165	2.1	39.8	39,206	2.6	50.2	14,041	55.8	96.7
Multi/interdisciplinary studies	26,887	2.3	66.1	33,792	2.2	69.1	6,905	25.7	31.4
Parks, recreation, leisure and fitness studies	14,246	1.2	48.6	27,430	1.8	48.3	13,184	92.5	91.3
Public administration and social services	20,649	1.8	79.8	23,147	1.5	81.2	2,498	12.1	14.1
Agriculture and natural resources	22,597	1.9	39.0	23,133	1.5	46.8	536	2.4	22.9
Family and consumer sciences/human sciences	14,886	1.3	88.5	21,400	1.4	87.9	6,514	43.8	42.8
Physical sciences and science technologies	19,496	1.7	37.4	21,073	1.4	40.9	1,577	8.1	18.3
Foreign languages, literatures, and linguistics	14,487	1.2	69.7	20,275	1.3	69.6	5,788	40.0	39.6
Mathematics and statistics	12,401	1.1	46.4	14,954	1.0	44.1	2,553	20.6	14.6
Philosophy and religious studies	7,832	0.7	36.7	11,969	0.8	37.9	4,137	52.8	57.8

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

NOTE: For more information on fields of study for postsecondary degrees, see *supplemental note 9*. The new Classification of Instructional Programs was initiated in 2002-03. Estimates for 1996-97 have been reclassified when necessary to conform to the new taxonomy. For more information on the Classification of Postsecondary Education Institutions, see *supplemental note 8*. For more information on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), see *supplemental note 3*.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 1996-97 and 2006-07 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, "Completions Survey" (IPEDS-C:97) and Fall 2007.