

CONCLUSION

New S&E Ph.D.s commonly reported use of more than one mode of support for their graduate education. The average number of modes of support varies from 2.1 for the agricultural sciences to 2.9 for the social sciences, with an overall mean of 2.5. Five combinations of support modes were reported by just under 40 percent of all new S&E Ph.D.s in 1995. Two combinations—RA + TA and RA + own funds—accounted for about 20 percent of all combinations of modes. RA + TA + own funds and RA alone were the third and fourth most frequent combinations. TA + own funds was the fifth most frequently used combination of support modes.

Use of one or many modes of support, prevalence of particular modes of support, and use of particular combinations of support modes vary by S&E field, sex, race/ethnicity and citizenship, and type of institution. For example, nearly 75 percent of those in the agricultural sciences used one or two modes of support, but only 44 percent of those in psychology were covered by one or two modes. Asians or Pacific Islanders and noncitizens reported considerably fewer modes of support, on aver-

age, than did other groups. Ph.D.s attending public and private institutions used similar numbers of support modes but students attending Research I institutions reported using a larger number of support modes than those attending other institutions.

Changes in modes of support over time or differences among groups in types or combinations of support modes do not necessarily imply changes or differences in amounts of funding. In addition, other factors not examined in this study may affect support patterns. Such factors might include age, geographical location of institutions from which a degree is received, and part-time/full-time status of students.

The information provided in this study demonstrates the complex nature of graduate financial support. It indicates that those thinking either about the impacts of support modes on graduate S&E education or how to evaluate the impacts of specific graduate support programs for GPRA purposes need to take account of this complexity in their planning and deliberations.