

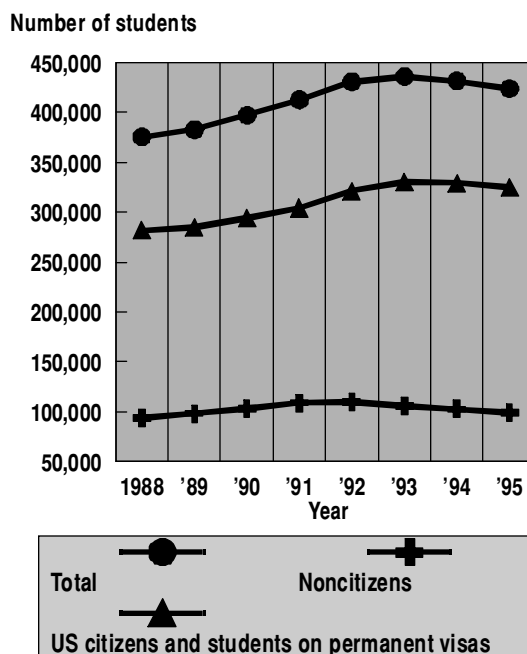
Graduate Enrollment Drops for the Second Year in a Row

by Joan S.
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Enrollment of non-US citizens dropped almost 4 percent in 1995.

The number of science and engineering (S&E) graduate students in United States universities dropped 2 percent from 1994 to 1995, the second drop in 2 years (see chart 1). Enrollment decreased among both full-time and part-time students. The number of full-time S&E graduate students who enrolled for the first time dropped 4 percent in 1995. First-time enrollment dropped in each year since 1992, indicating likely future decreases in total enrollment.

Chart 1. Graduate students in science and engineering in all institutions, by citizenship status: 1988-95



SOURCE: National Science Foundation/SRS, Survey of Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering

The number of non-US citizen¹ S&E graduate students declined since 1992 and dropped almost 4 percent in 1995. Non-US citizens comprised 23 percent of graduate

S&E enrollment in 1995—down from a peak of 26 percent in 1991. The number of US citizen and permanent visa graduate students in S&E also decreased by 1 percent in 1995. Among graduate students with US citizenship or permanent visas, 18 percent were members of minority groups: 6 percent black, 4 percent Hispanic, 0.4 percent American Indian, and 8 percent Asian. The number of black, Hispanic, and American Indian graduate students in S&E has gradually increased over the years. In 1995, enrollment of blacks rose 4 percent; American Indians, 10 percent; and Hispanics, 6 percent. Enrollment of Asians with US citizenship or permanent visas decreased 2 percent.

Although the number of men enrolled in graduate S&E programs fell 3 percent in 1995, the number of women rose 1 percent. As a result of women's rising enrollment and men's falling enrollment, women's share of graduate S&E enrollment increased to 38 percent. Differences in enrollment trends for men and women are due largely to differences in S&E fields. Women comprise approximately half of enrollment in biological sciences and social sciences, fields in which total enrollment is stable or increasing. Men are concentrated in fields in which total enrollment is decreasing (e.g. mathematical and computer sciences; engineering; physical sciences; and earth, atmospheric, and ocean sciences).

The number of students enrolled in social sciences in 1995 remained essentially the same as in 1994, while enrollment in agricultural sciences grew 2 percent and enrollment in biological sciences grew 1 percent. Enrollment in all other major S&E fields was down (see table 1). The largest decreases were in physics (down 6 percent), mathematical sciences (down 6 percent), and engineering

¹ on temporary visas

Electronic Dissemination

SRS data are available through the World Wide Web (<http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/srs/stats.htm>) For NSF's Telephonic Device for the Deaf, dial 703-306-0090. If you are a user of electronic mail and have access to the internet, you may order publications electronically. Send requests to pubs@nsf.gov. In your request, include the NSF publication number and title, your name, and a complete mailing address.

Table 1. Graduate students in science and engineering in all institutions, by field: 1988-95

Field	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Total S&E.....	375,287	382,769	397,159	412,708	430,797	436,233	431,758	423,922
Physical sciences.....	32,962	33,616	34,075	34,710	35,348	35,318	34,449	33,470
Earth, atmospheric & ocean sciences.....	13,867	13,643	13,984	14,480	15,347	15,805	16,042	15,802
Mathematical sciences.....	19,077	19,247	19,774	19,952	20,355	20,000	19,579	18,509
Computer sciences.....	32,227	32,482	34,257	34,610	36,320	36,298	34,278	33,509
Agricultural sciences.....	11,135	11,190	11,316	11,506	11,827	11,914	12,199	12,426
Biological sciences.....	47,565	48,852	49,989	51,778	54,177	56,452	58,143	58,753
Psychology.....	43,963	45,529	48,168	52,343	53,599	54,680	54,726	54,243
Social sciences.....	71,662	74,168	77,971	80,753	85,789	88,885	89,282	89,681
Engineering.....	102,829	104,043	107,625	113,576	118,035	116,881	113,060	107,529

SOURCE: National Science Foundation/SRS, Survey of Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering.

(down 5 percent). The rate of decline in some fields of engineering was even greater—enrollment in mechanical engineering dropped almost 8 percent, enrollment in nuclear engineering dropped 7 percent, and enrollment in mining engineering dropped 12 percent. First-time enrollment dropped in all major fields, with the exception of computer science. Decreases were greatest in physical sciences, mathematical sciences, and engineering .

In contrast to graduate enrollment, the number of postdoctoral fellows in science and engineering rose 1 percent in 1995 to 25,995. Although the

total number of postdoctoral fellows in science and engineering rose steadily since 1982 and the number in some fields continued to increase in 1995, in other fields (chemistry, physics, agricultural sciences, and social sciences), the number declined in 1995.

The data presented in this Data Brief were obtained from the 1995 Survey of Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering. Data were collected from approximately 11,600 departments at 602 institutions of higher education. The departmental response rate was 98.6 percent; how-

ever, 15 percent of the departments required partial imputation for missing data. More detailed data are available in the forthcoming report, *Selected Data on Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering: Fall 1995*.

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