



Trends in Science and Engineering Doctorates Earned by Women, 1956-75

In the 20-year period 1956-75, annual production of doctorates in science and engineering (S/E) fields increased from 5,300 to 17,800. The proportion of these degrees earned by women rose from 7 percent in 1956 to 15 percent in 1975. Most of this growth took place in the 1966-75 decade.

Annual doctorate production in all fields during this period rose from 8,900 in 1956 to 34,100 in 1975, with women receiving 10 percent of these degrees in 1956 and 21 percent in 1975. In nonscience fields women continue to make up a higher percentage of doctorates than in S/E fields. However, the relative increase in the proportion of women

among doctorate recipients over the 20-year period has been greater in science and engineering.

In every one of the five broad S/E fields, women's proportion of doctorates doubled or more than doubled over the period. In the social sciences, where participation by women is greater than in any other science field, women's proportion rose from 10 percent in 1956 to 24 percent in 1975. In engineering, the field where women have the least representation, women's proportion of doctorates increased more than tenfold over the period, starting from a very small base.

In number, women's annual doctorate

production over the 1956-75 period grew from 350 to 2,650 in science fields and from 900 to 7,300 in all fields together, with 1975 the year of peak production in all field categories. Among men, annual doctorate production in S/E fields reached a peak in 1971 and has declined slightly each year since then, with 1975 production 9 percent lower than that in 1971. Although the numerical increases in doctorates are to some extent a reflection of population growth, the rise in the number of women doctorates from 1965 to 1970 and from 1970 to 1975 far exceeded corresponding growth in the doctorate-age population.

Proportion of Women Among Doctorate Recipients By Field: 1956-75

