

National Science Foundation

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1989 Growth in Graduate S/E Enrollment Highest Since 1986

In the science, engineering, and health fields, 441,000 graduate students enrolled for advanced degrees in 1989. This number constitutes a 3-percent increase over that of 1988 and represents the greatest increase since 1986. The source of these data is the NSF fall 1989 Survey of Graduate Science and Engineering Students and Postdoctorates (GSESP), for which SRS received the final response data in September 1990.¹

Graduate enrollment increased in almost all fields from 1988 to 1989, especially in health fields, which increased by 6 percent, and in social sciences and psychology, each of which increased at 4 percent. The latter two enrollments remained the largest in science fields, at 17 percent and 10 percent, respectively. The small 1988 decrease in engineering enrollment was reversed, and graduate engineering students numbered almost 105,000. A decline occurred in only one field—environmental sciences.

The number of women enrolled in graduate S/E programs continued to rise more rapidly than that of men, reaching 38 percent of the total. Women continued to make up a majority of those enrolled in psychology and accounted for 13 percent of the engineering graduate students.

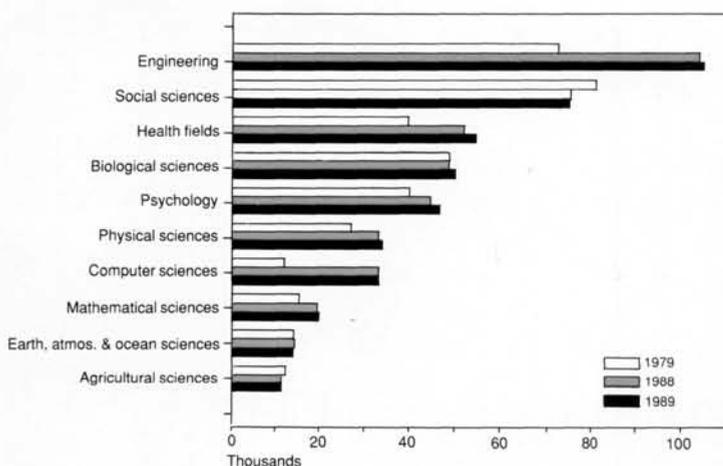
Foreign students increased at twice the rate of those with U.S. citizenship and accounted for 23 percent of those enrolled full time. Foreign students were most heavily concentrated in engineering, where they represented 47 percent of the total, and in computer science and mathematics, 44 percent and 43 percent, respectively.

About two of every three graduate students were enrolled full time in 1989, accounting for 65 percent of the total. This represents a 3-percent growth since 1988, compared to less than 2 percent for those enrolled part time.

Academic institutions remained the major source of support for most of the full-time graduate students reported, 42 percent, followed by self, loans, and family, 29 percent, and the federal government, 20 percent. Of the federal agencies for which separate support data were requested, only the Department of Defense provided primary support to fewer students in 1989 than in 1988.

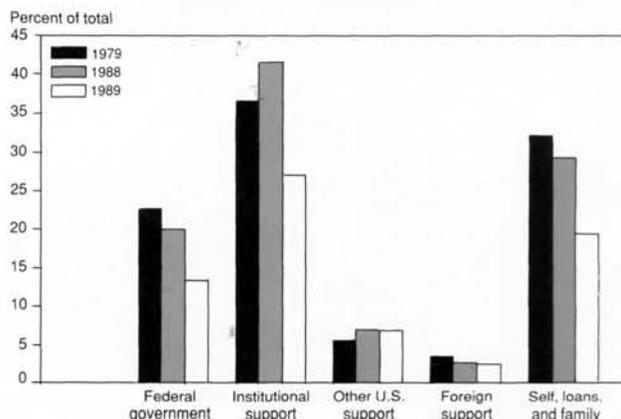
¹The GSESP Survey is designed to query academic departments in all educational institutions offering doctoral and master's programs in science, engineering, and health fields. Survey results of the fall 1989 survey were released in October 1990. Additional information is available from J.G. Huckenpahler, Division of Science Resources Studies, 202-634-4787.

Graduate science and engineering enrollment, by field



SOURCE: National Science Foundation, SRS.

Full-time science and engineering graduate students, by source of major support



SOURCE: National Science Foundation, SRS.