

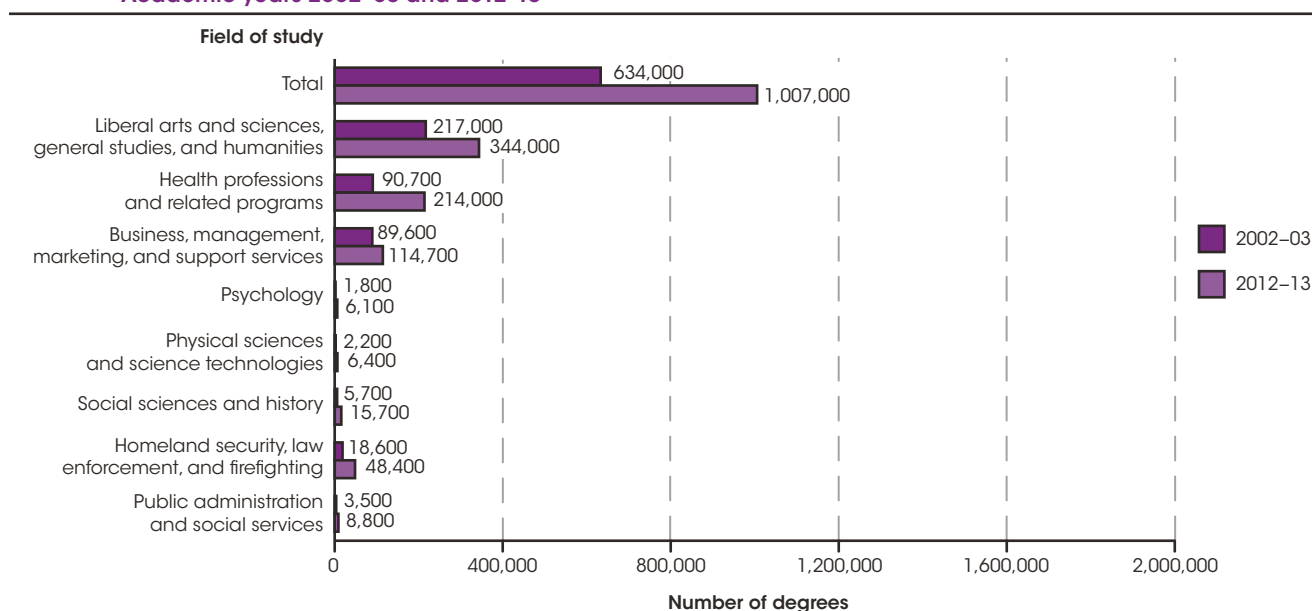
Undergraduate Degree Fields

From 2002–03 to 2012–13, the number of associate’s degrees awarded increased by 59 percent, from 634,000 to over 1 million, and the number of bachelor’s degrees awarded increased by 36 percent, from 1.3 million to 1.8 million.

In academic year 2012–13, over 1 million associate’s degrees were awarded by Title IV postsecondary institutions, a decrease of 1 percent from the previous year. Of the associate’s degrees awarded in 2012–13, about two-thirds (67 percent) were concentrated in three fields of study: liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities (34 percent); health professions and related programs (21 percent); and business, management,

marketing, and support services (11 percent). These three fields were the largest in 2002–03 and 2011–12 as well. The three fields awarding the next largest percentages of associate’s degrees in 2012–13 were homeland security, law enforcement, and firefighting (5 percent); computer and information sciences and support services (4 percent); and engineering technologies and engineering-related fields (3 percent).

Figure 1. Number of associate’s degrees awarded by postsecondary institutions in selected fields of study: Academic years 2002–03 and 2012–13



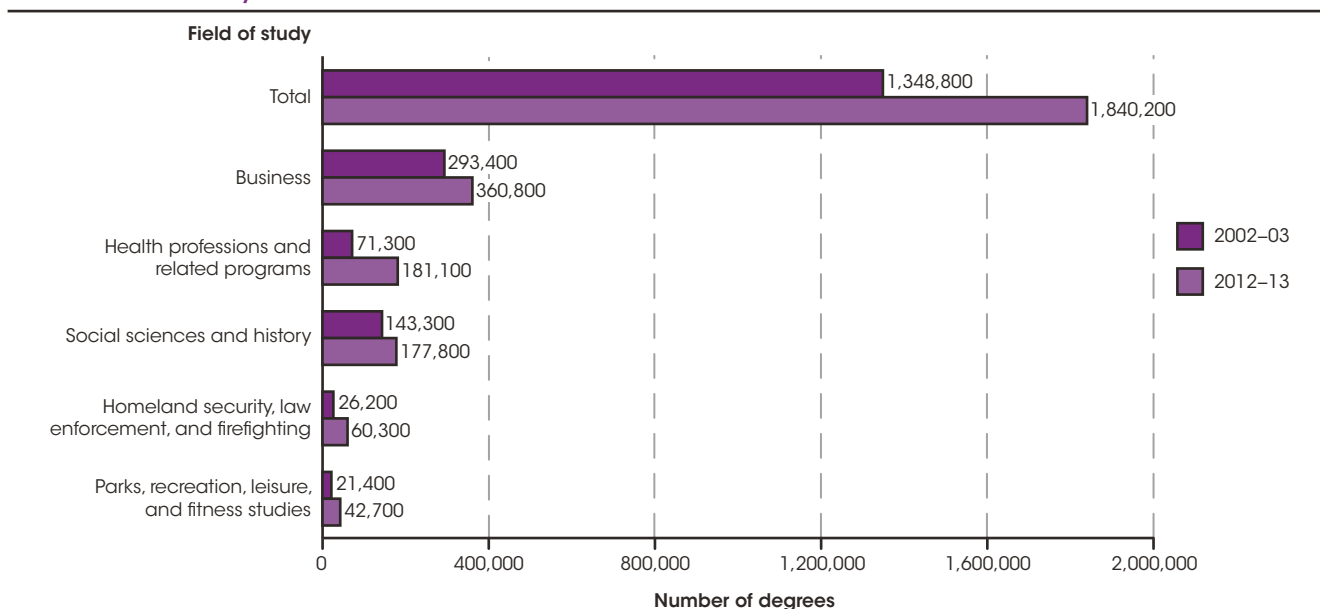
NOTE: The first three fields of study shown were selected because they were the fields in which the largest number of associate’s degrees were awarded in 2012–13. The final five fields of study were selected because they were the fields with the largest increases in associate’s degrees awarded between 2002–03 and 2012–13. Data are for postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. The new Classification of Instructional Programs was initiated in 2009–10. The estimates for 2002–03 have been reclassified when necessary to make them conform to the new taxonomy. For associate’s degrees, “business” includes the business, management, marketing, and related support services field of study. Some data have been revised from previously published figures.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2003 and Fall 2013, Completions component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 321.10.

Between 2002–03 and 2012–13, the number of associate’s degrees awarded increased by 373,000 degrees, or 59 percent. Over this time period, the number of associate’s degrees awarded in the three largest fields—liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities; health professions and related programs; and business management, marketing, and support services—increased by 58 percent, 136 percent, and 28 percent, respectively. Of the 20 largest fields of study in which the most associate’s degrees were awarded in 2012–13, the field of psychology had the largest percentage increase over the previous decade (243 percent, from 1,800 to

6,100 degrees). Additionally, the number of associate’s degrees awarded more than doubled in the following fields: physical sciences and science technologies increased from 2,200 to 6,400 degrees (190 percent); social sciences and history increased from 5,700 to 15,700 degrees (174 percent); homeland security, law enforcement, and firefighting increased from 18,600 to 48,400 degrees (160 percent); public administration and social services increased from 3,500 to 8,800 degrees (148 percent); and health professions and related programs, mentioned above, increased from 90,700 to 214,000 degrees (136 percent).

Figure 2. Number of bachelor's degrees awarded by postsecondary institutions in selected fields of study: Academic years 2002–03 and 2012–13



NOTE: The first three fields of study shown were selected because they were the fields in which the largest number of bachelor's degrees were awarded in 2012–13. The final two fields of study were selected because they were the fields with the largest increases in bachelor's degrees awarded between 2002–03 and 2012–13. Data are for postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. The new Classification of Instructional Programs was initiated in 2009–10. The estimates for 2002–03 have been reclassified when necessary to make them conform to the new taxonomy. For bachelor's degrees, "business" includes the business, management, marketing, and related support services field of study and the personal and culinary services field of study. Some data have been revised from previously published figures.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2003 and Fall 2013, Completions component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 322.10.

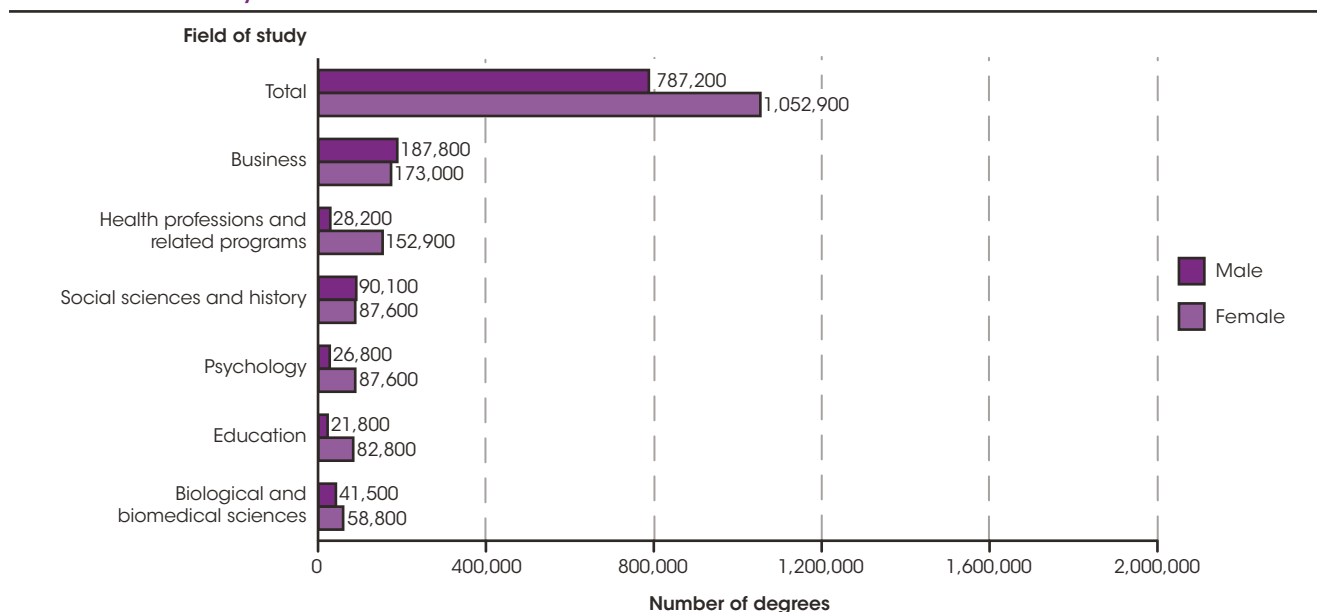
In 2012–13, some 1.8 million bachelor's degrees were awarded by Title IV postsecondary institutions, an increase of 3 percent from 2011–12. The three fields awarding the largest percentages of bachelor's degrees in 2012–13 were: business¹ (20 percent), health professions and related programs (10 percent), and social sciences and history (10 percent). The three fields awarding the next largest percentages of bachelor's degrees in 2012–13

were psychology (6 percent), education (6 percent), and biological and biomedical sciences (5 percent). These six fields awarded the largest percentages of bachelor's degrees in 2011–12 as well. They were also six of the nine fields that awarded the largest percentages of bachelor's degrees in 2002–03 (the other three were visual and performing arts; communication, journalism, and related programs; and engineering).

Overall, the number of bachelor's degrees awarded increased by 491,000 degrees from 2002–03 to 2012–13, reflecting an increase of 36 percent. The three largest fields of study—business, health professions and related programs, and social sciences and history—had increases during this period of 23 percent, 154 percent, and 24 percent, respectively. Of the 20 largest fields of study in 2012–13, the largest percentage increases over the

previous decade occurred in the following fields: health professions and related programs increased from 71,300 to 181,100 degrees (154 percent); homeland security, law enforcement, and firefighting increased from 26,200 to 60,300 degrees (130 percent); and parks, recreation, leisure, and fitness studies increased from 21,400 to 42,700 degrees (99 percent).

Figure 3. Number of bachelor's degrees awarded by postsecondary institutions in selected fields of study, by sex: Academic year 2012–13



NOTE: The six fields of study shown were selected because they were the fields in which the largest number of bachelor's degrees were awarded in 2012–13. Data are for postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. For bachelor's degrees, "business" includes the business, management, marketing, and related support services field of study and the personal and culinary services field of study. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2013, Completions component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, tables 322.40 and 322.50.

In 2012–13, about 57 percent of bachelor's degrees, some 1.1 million degrees, were awarded to females. The same percentage of bachelor's degrees was awarded to females in 2011–12 as well. Of the six fields awarding the largest percentages of bachelor's degrees in 2012–13, females were awarded the majority of degrees in the following four fields: health professions and related programs (84 percent of degrees awarded to females), education

(79 percent of degrees awarded to females), psychology (77 percent of degrees awarded to females), and biological and biomedical sciences (59 percent of degrees awarded to females). Males were awarded the majority of degrees in business (52 percent of degrees awarded to males) and social sciences and history (51 percent of degrees awarded to males).

Endnotes:

¹ For bachelor's degrees, "business" includes the business, management, marketing, and related support services field of study, as well as the personal and culinary services field

of study. This differs from associate's degrees, for which "business" does not include the personal and culinary services field of study.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, tables 321.10, 322.10, 322.40, and 322.50

Related indicators: Annual Earnings of Young Adults (indicator 3), Employment Rates and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment (indicator 4), Graduate Degree Fields (indicator 34), Degrees Conferred by Public and Private Institutions (indicator 42)

Glossary: Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree, Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP)