

## Fact Sheet: Doctoral Students

### ❑ Who are doctoral students?

- In 1999, an estimated 45,900 doctoral degrees will be awarded in the United States<sup>1</sup>.
- Of those Ph.D. recipients, approximately 59% will be awarded to males and 41% awarded to females.
- In 1999, 73% of doctoral recipients were U.S. citizens or permanent residents and 27% were non-U.S. citizens<sup>2</sup>.
- In 1999, 53% of doctoral recipients were White or non-Hispanic, 6.7% were Asian or Pacific Islander, 4.9% were Black or non-Hispanic, 4% were Hispanic, and less than 1% were American Indian or Alaskan Natives.
- In 1999, the majority (76%) of doctoral recipients were between the ages of 40 and 75<sup>3</sup>.

### ❑ What are the primary mechanisms of support for doctoral students and what are their debt burdens?

- The primary mechanisms of support for graduate students may change annually throughout the career of graduate and professional students.
- In 1996, 33.3% of doctoral students in science and engineering were self-supported, 26.7% were supported by research assistantships (RA's), 20% by teaching assistantships (TA's), 8.8% by fellowships, and 4.7% by traineeships<sup>4</sup>.
- For 1996 recipients of doctoral degrees, 48% reported no debt, 19% reported debt less than \$10,000, and 25% reported debt greater than \$10,000<sup>5</sup>.
- For recipients of doctoral degrees between 1993 and 1996, teaching assistantships (TA's), followed by traineeships, and research assistantships (RA's) reported some level of debt.
- During the same period, psychology doctoral recipients reported the highest proportion of debt greater than \$30,000, followed by business, law, and architecture doctoral recipients.

### ❑ What fields are doctoral students in and where are they employed?

- In 1999, the largest proportion (37%) of doctoral recipients were in non-science and engineering fields including Health, Humanities, Education, and Professional fields followed by Biological and Agricultural Sciences (16%), Social Sciences (10%), and Psychology (9%)<sup>3</sup>.
- In 1999, the majority of doctoral recipients were employed in the South Atlantic (18.9%), followed by the Pacific (18.2%), and the Middle Atlantic (16.2%).
- Within fields, the majority of doctoral recipients in the Biological and Agricultural Sciences were employed in the South Atlantic (20.4%) and the majority of those employed in the Physical and Related Sciences were employed in the Pacific (19.1%).

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Earned Degrees Conferred, *Projections of Education Statistics to 2010*; Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), 'Degrees and Other Formal Awards Conferred' surveys; and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 'Completions' surveys.

<sup>2</sup>National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resources Studies. Graduate Enrollment in Science and Engineering Increases for the First Time Since 1993. NSF 01-312. January 11, 2001.

<sup>3</sup>National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resources Studies. 1999. Survey of Doctorate Recipients.

<sup>4</sup>National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resources Studies. Have Primary Financial Support for S& E Graduate Students Changed During the Past Two Decades? NSF 99-313. December 4, 1998.

<sup>5</sup>National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resource Studies. What is the Debt Burden of New Science and Engineering Ph.D.s? NSF 98-318. July 8, 1998.