

# New report summarizes key themes in American doctoral education

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A new report recently released by the National Science Foundation, titled "Doctorate Recipients from U.S. Universities: 2009," presents a statistical overview of the U.S. doctoral education system in snapshots and long-term trends.

It notes the American system of doctoral education is widely considered the world's best, as evidenced by the large number of international students who choose to pursue a doctorate at U.S. universities. But this status is subject to the many factors that shape U.S. doctoral education.

"Given the increased global engagement and [economic prosperity](#) in [developing nations](#), STEM graduates will have many more career options and residency choices," said Subra Suresh, director of NSF. STEM graduates are students who earned a degree in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

"The United States has long been the favorite destination to pursue graduate education and subsequent research opportunities. We could see a change in that trend," he said making the case for revitalizing America's STEM pipeline, the graduate school system through which students prepare to enter the high-tech workforce.

This new report aims to provide decision makers with information that underlies informed improvements in the U.S. doctoral [education system](#). The data contained in it serve as a measure of investment in human resources devoted to science, engineering, research, and scholarship, and

as such are an indicator of the capacity for knowledge creation and innovation. They reflect political, economic, social, technological, and demographic trends.

The report is the latest edition in an annual series formerly called "Doctorate Recipients from U.S. Universities: Summary Report." The report is the work of the Science Resources Statistics Division of NSF's Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate.

Data for the report come from an annual census of individuals who receive doctoral degrees from research studies at accredited U.S. academic institutions. This census, the Survey of Earned Doctorates, or SED, is a continuous examination of doctoral education ongoing since 1957.

The 2009 edition unveils major changes in the format and organization of the report.

It is now printed in a compact, portable volume that calls attention to important trends in doctoral education, and is organized around five themes: who receives a doctorate, which fields attract study; what influences the path to the doctorate, how it is paid for, and postgraduation trends.

Online, the reader is invited to explore trends in greater depth. All of the detailed data tables previously published in the summary report are now available online, along with interactive graphics, presentation slides, and links to related content. The data tables are available both in portable document format (PDF) and as Microsoft Excel files for easy viewing, printing, and downloading.

Provided by National Science Foundation

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