

**The number of degrees awarded in science and engineering by U.S. colleges and universities continues to grow, although recent declines are evident in computer science degrees at the bachelor's and master's degree levels.**

Figure 8.1. Earned bachelor's degrees by field: 1985–2005

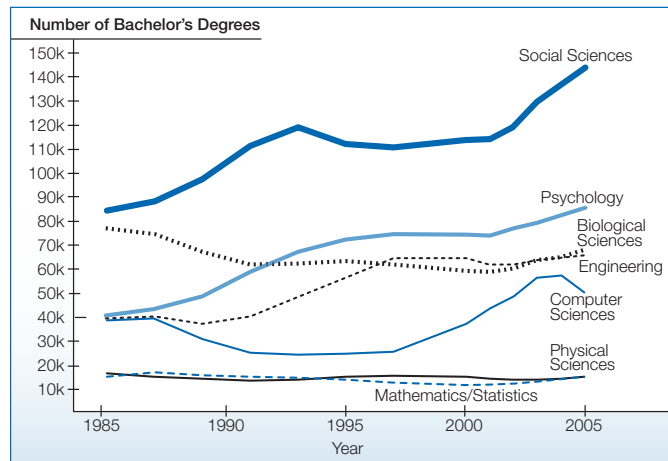


Figure 8.2. Earned master's degrees by field: 1985–2005

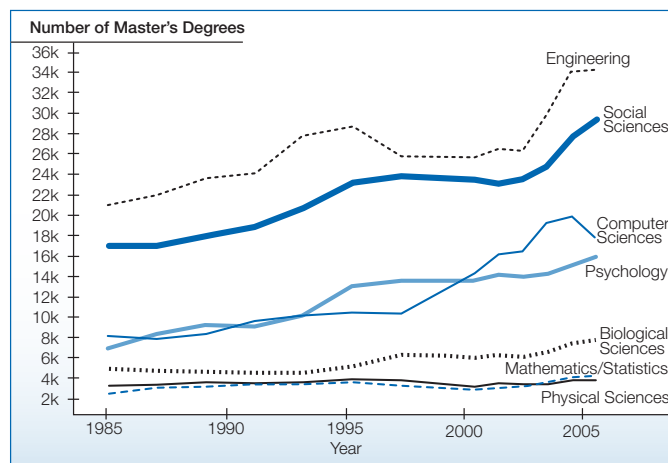
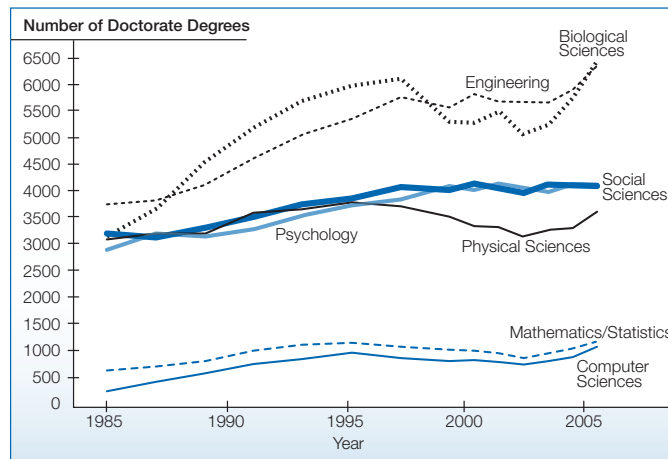


Figure 8.3. Earned doctorate degrees by field: 1985–2005



**Why is This Indicator Important?**

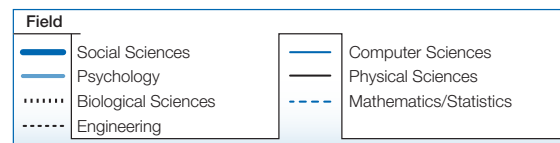
- Trends in the number of graduates in each S&E field reflect changes in the supply of qualified candidates for S&E occupations.

**Key Observations**

- The social sciences and psychology continue to dominate S&E degree patterns at the bachelor's degree level, although significant growth is also evident in the biological sciences.
- While engineering continues to represent the most prevalent type of master's degree awarded in the United States, a dip occurred between 1995 and 2002 followed by a period of rapid recovery.
- The number of master's degrees awarded in the social sciences, psychology and the biological sciences continues to grow.
- The number of master's degrees awarded in the computer sciences recently declined.
- Sharp increases are evident in doctoral degrees awarded in the biological sciences and engineering – two broad fields which dominate S&E doctoral degree patterns in the United States.

**Related Discussion**

- The number of S&E research doctorates conferred annually by US universities reached a new peak of almost 30,000 in 2006, chiefly driven by a growing number of doctorates awarded to non-U.S. citizens (SRS InfoBrief: NSF 08-301).



SOURCE: Appendix Tables 2-27, 2-29, and 2-31, *Science and Engineering Indicators 2008*, National Science Foundation.