Graduate education provides students with opportunities to build careers and expand the boundaries of knowledge, and is critical to producing the next generation of thought leaders, including scientists, engineers, researchers, teachers, and other important members of our nation’s most highly-educated workforce. NORC provides vital information on graduate education, including what brings students to graduate studies, students’ experiences during graduate school, degree completion rates, career and professional paths of graduate degree recipients, and other topics related to the success of students and the graduate education system.

Career and Professional Pathways for Graduate Degree Holders
The journey of our nation’s graduate students does not end with degree completion; their education must prepare them for success in the workforce. Furthermore, the majority of Ph.D. holders follow careers outside of academe while others leave the U.S. entirely after graduation just as some J.D. holders pursue careers outside of law firms. NORC researchers track the career and professional pathways of graduate degree recipients to determine how they contribute to the workforce and society, both here and abroad, and how these outcomes change over time.

Campus Climate and Quality of Graduate Experience
Many factors affect graduate students’ perceptions of the quality of their graduate school experience, from campus-wide factors to their relationship with their advisor and other professors. NORC assesses the experiences and opinions of graduate students across many dimensions capturing a wide range of data, from satisfaction with their program and institution to perceptions of diversity, campus sexual

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Percent of U.S. residing SEH doctorates working outside their doctorate field, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer and mathematical sciences</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological, agricultural and environmental life sciences</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical and related sciences</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and related sciences</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health-related fields</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Percentage working outside their doctorate field represents the proportion of men and women who reported working in a field that is “somewhat” or “not at all” related to their doctorate field. The overall rate of people working outside their field is 34%.
Graduate Student Debt
Many graduate students borrow in order to finance their graduate educations, whether for tuition or the cost of living during graduate school, on top of debt from their undergraduate studies. Some potential enrollees factor their tolerance for accruing additional debt into enrollment decisions. It is important for university administrators to understand all of these components of graduate student debt to better understand their students and the choices they make. NORC studies can inform administrators about the reasons graduate students incur debt and the amount and sources of that debt by program of study and other salient factors.

Degree Completions
Once graduate students are enrolled, a number of factors impact degree completion rates and time to degree. NORC assesses what factors impact degree completion rates and times, as well as whether these factors differ by demographic factors and field of study. Informed by this research, NORC helps university administrators understand how to best support their students’ educational trajectories and identify students who may need additional interventions to support their success.

Supporting Diversity in Graduate Education
Many initiatives to increase the representation of women and minorities in graduate education, particularly in STEM fields, are underway. These efforts seek to diversify our population of highly educated workers by providing a more diverse pool from which to recruit. Because representation varies by field, many initiatives are field-specific and target the groups that are most underrepresented in that field. NORC regularly collects data about the representation of various groups by field, including quantitative and qualitative data about the experiences and opinions of graduate students, faculty members, and university administrators about diversity within their programs and elsewhere as well as how (and if) the representation of underrepresented groups should be improved. For example, the GRFP included an assessment of how the fellowship impacted representation within institutions enrolling fellows.

Assessment of Graduate Programs
As graduate enrollment changes and new fields of study emerge, graduate administrators must be able to assess how well their graduate programs achieve their goals. NORC works with stakeholders to identify goals, develop research questions, implement research methods to collect and analyze data, and write and present reports that clearly summarize results. This holistic approach to identifying goals and measuring their achievement helps institutions understand the effectiveness of their graduate programs and identify both areas of success and areas for potential improvement.

Managing Graduate Enrollment
Institutions have different approaches to how they manage graduate enrollment. Whether an institution has a highly centralized or more decentralized approach, graduate administrators must set strategic enrollment goals that account for both capacity and quality. Enrollment decisions affect many aspects of administering graduate schools, including supporting enrollees and retaining them through degree completion. They also affect graduate students’ experiences while enrolled. Understanding how enrollment decisions affect these other aspects of graduate education, and how other factors such as marketing, recruiting, admissions, and financial aid affect enrollment, is critical to successfully managing graduate enrollment. NORC can provide information to graduate administrators to inform strategic decision making in this area.

International Student Experience
Understanding how the experiences and areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of international students differ from domestic students helps institutions better manage graduate enrollment and support students in obtaining graduate degrees and embarking on successful careers. The proportion of international students varies greatly by field of study and institution, and their experiences vary by country of origin, English proficiency, campus climate, and other factors. NORC can work with academic deans and administrators to identify how the experiences of international students differ to enable more effective recruitment and support of their international students.

Financing Graduate Education
The availability of funding for graduate education varies by degree program, field of study, and institution, and may be routinely available only for students in certain programs. Most graduate students are funded through a variety of sources, including research and teaching assistantships, private and public fellowship programs, and loans. Some students supplement this funding through jobs, contributions from friends and family, and other sources. NORC tracks the sources and amounts of funding utilized by students across disciplines, degree programs, and institutions to better understand how graduate students are financing their education. For example, the GRFP included a comparison of the funding sources used by fellows and similar non-fellows.

Graduate student experiences include the Campus Climate Surveys and the Evaluation of NSF’s Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP).