

Guidance for PhD Applications

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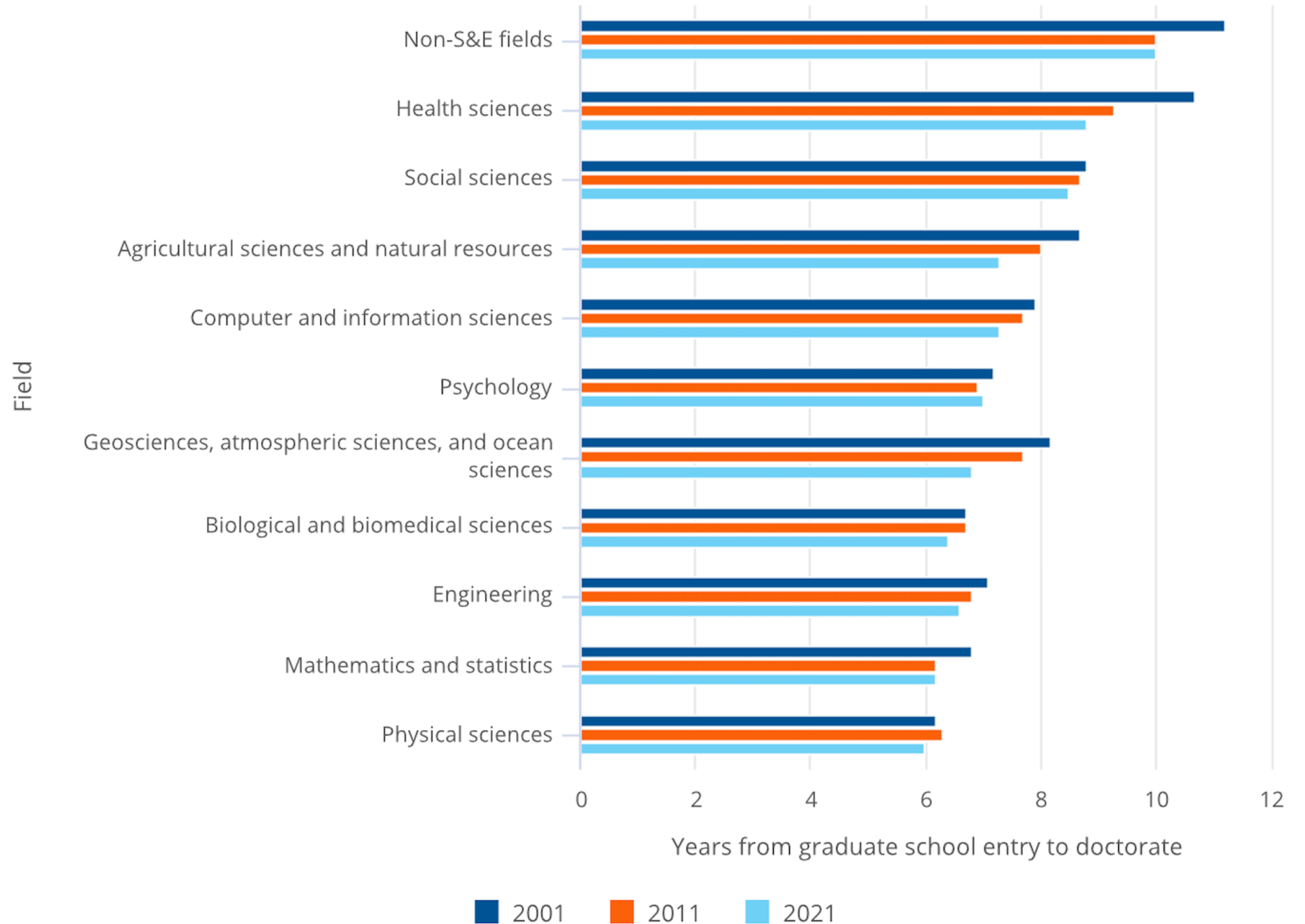
<https://csdalab.github.io/>



Median time to degree of doctorate recipients, by broad field: 2001–21

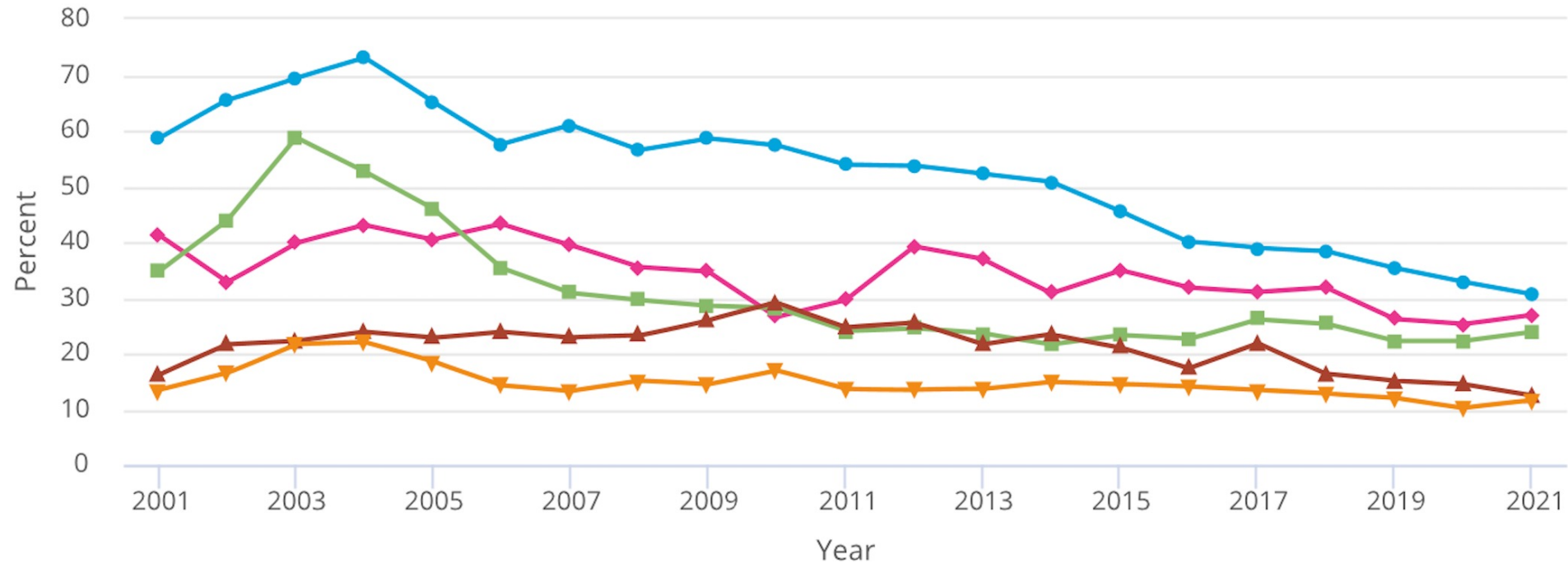
Before Application

- Time: are you ready to make a commitment of 6 or more years?
- Financial: in most mathematics-related PhD programs, no cost needed



Before Application

- Definite non-postdoc employment commitments in academe in the United States, by broad field: 2001–21



● Mathematics and statistics

◆ Geosciences, atmospheric sciences, and ocean sciences

■ Computer and information sciences

▲ Physical sciences

▼ Engineering

More Questions to Consider Before Application



Do you enjoy deeply investigating questions and topics, and sharing your ideas with others?



Can you advocate for yourself and are you self-directed?



Have you investigated academic culture at the universities you are considering?



Is this the right time to pursue a Ph.D.?



Ph.D. vs Master

Step 1: Choosing the Right Program


Key Factors

- Reputation & Ranking
- Faculty Interests
- Alumni Network
- **Location & Resources**
- Funding Opportunities

Resources: U.S. News & World Report

Tips

- Consider both fit and ambition
- Reach out to current students



Step 2: Application Components

- Online Application Forms
- **Statement of Purpose**
- **Personal Statement (essays)**
- **Letters of Recommendation**
- Transcripts (WES evaluations)
- GRE & Subject Test Scores
- TOEFL for international students
- **Resume/CV**
- Additional Materials (if applicable)

Statement of Purpose

- Usually graduate and professional schools are interested in the following matters, although the form of the question(s) and the responses may vary:
- **Your purpose in graduate study.** Think this through before you try to answer the question.
- **The area of study in which you wish to specialize.** Learn about the field in detail so that you are able to state your preferences using the language of the field.
- **Your intended future use of your graduate degree.** Include your career goals and plans for the future.
- **Your unique preparation and fitness for study in the field.** Correlate your academic background with your extracurricular experience to show how they unite to make you a special candidate.
- **Any problems or inconsistencies in your records or scores, such as a bad semester.** Explain this in a positive manner. Since this is a rebuttal argument, it should be followed by a positive statement of your abilities. In some instances, it may be more appropriate to discuss this outside of the statement of purpose.
- **Any special conditions that are not revealed elsewhere in the application, such as a significant (35 hour per week) workload outside of school.** This, too, should be followed with a positive statement about yourself and your future.
- **You may be asked, “Why do you wish to attend this school?”** Research the school and describe its special appeal to you.
- **Above all, this statement should contain information about you as a person.** They know nothing about you unless you tell them. You are the subject of the statement.

Additional links: <https://career.berkeley.edu/get-into-grad-school/graduate-school/statement-of-purpose/>
<https://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/steps-to-apply/requirements/statement-purpose/>

Personal (history) Statement

- The basic message: your academic achievement despite challenges
- It is especially helpful for admissions committees considering nominating you for fellowships for diversity if you discuss any or all of the following:
- Demonstrated significant academic achievement by overcoming barriers such as economic, social, or educational disadvantage;
- Potential to contribute to higher education through understanding the barriers facing women, domestic minorities, students with disabilities, and other members of groups underrepresented in higher education careers, as evidenced by life experiences and educational background. For example,,
 - attendance at a minority serving institution;
 - ability to articulate the barriers facing women and minorities in science and engineering fields;
 - participation in higher education pipeline programs such as, UC Leads, or McNair Scholars;
- Academic service advancing equitable access to higher education for women and racial minorities in fields where they are underrepresented;
- Leadership experience among students from groups that have been historically underrepresented in higher education;
- Research interests focusing on underserved populations and understanding issues of racial or gender inequalities. For example,
 - research that addresses issues such as race, gender, diversity, and inclusion;
 - research that addresses health disparities, educational access and achievement, political engagement, economic justice, social mobility, civil and human rights, and other questions of interest to historically underrepresented groups;
 - artistic expression and cultural production that reflects culturally diverse communities or voices not well represented in the arts and humanities.

Letters of Recommendation

- **Who to Ask**

- Professors with whom you've done research
- Academic advisors
- Employers in relevant fields

- **Tips**

- Request letters well in advance
- Provide recommenders with relevant materials

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

- The CV provides a snapshot of your academic identity to date by documenting research, teaching, mentoring, and service activities.
- Read the CVs of Ph.D. students in your field to identify norms and best practices.
- Present information in a way that is clear and easy to digest; you should not overwhelm your readers with information or confuse them with non-standard formats.
- For further CV advice, including tips on tailoring, see the
 - grad.uchicago.edu/career-development/job-resources/
 - <http://www.sfu.ca/~jstockie/research/cfdgroup/cvs.pdf>

Timeline

June-July:	research schools and programs
August- September:	make a school list and find all their requirements (if GRE or TOEFL are needed) Ask for recommendation letters Take (or retake) the GRE
October:	email a few professors from each program whose research you find most interesting to inquire if they will be taking on graduate students for the year you are applying to
November-December:	Several programs are due at the last two days of November and ~40% of them are due December 15 th Remind your letter writers of the deadlines Finalize your different statements for each school Submit your applications! Focus on finals if you are still an undergrad
January:	Start to hear back from programs and more information about interviews.
February - March	Attend interviews, Continue to hear back from universities
April:	Hear back from all programs and make a decision by April 15 th

Q&A

