

The Path Forward

The Future of Graduate Education
in the United States



News Release

Landmark Study Confirms Graduate Education's Role in Maintaining U.S. Global Competitiveness and Innovation

2.5 million new jobs will require a graduate degree by 2018

Washington, D.C. (April 29, 2010) – A landmark report released today confirms the necessity of a graduate-level workforce to maintain U.S. competitiveness and innovation. However, the report warns that the country must adopt a national strategy to increase degree completion and broaden participation in graduate education, or risk losing its position as the world leader in cutting-edge research and innovation.

The Path Forward: The Future of Graduate Education in the United States calls on the federal government, universities and industry to work together to ensure that U.S. graduate schools remain preeminent and that a growing number of U.S. citizens begin and complete graduate degree programs. The Commission on the Future of Graduate Education is a joint effort of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) and Educational Testing Service (ETS). The 18-member Commission includes university and industry leaders.

"Our nation has produced the world's most highly skilled and educated workforce for decades, but factors such as growing international competition, demographic changes in the college-age population, and budget constraints have converged to threaten the historical preeminence of U.S. graduate education," says William Russel, Commission Chair and Dean of the Graduate School at Princeton University. "Graduate school must be a viable option for a growing, rather than a shrinking, number of Americans, especially those from underrepresented groups."



www.fgereport.org

The report argues that developing human talent must become a national priority, and that graduate education must be an essential component of our national innovation strategy. It summarizes political, demographic, educational and economic trends — analyzing data from a wide spectrum of sources. The report contends that graduate education remains the engine of a highly skilled workforce, yet is currently vulnerable on several fronts. For example:

- In the United States, the number of jobs that require a graduate degree is estimated to grow by 2.5 million by 2018, including an expected 17 percent increase in those requiring a doctorate and 18 percent in those requiring a master's.
- The potential applicant pool for graduate school could be affected by demographic changes. While underrepresented minorities are the fastest-growing segment of the population, students from these groups currently begin and complete college at far lower rates than majority students.

Internationally, the U.S. share of the global international student market has shrunk since 2000, and competition abroad is increasing. Europe and Asia are investing in graduate education as essential components of economic development, and have begun to outpace the United States in doctoral production, especially in science and engineering. Potential international graduate students have more options today as to where to pursue their graduate studies and their careers.

"A great strength of U.S. graduate education is the preparation of people at the master's level for a wide variety of careers," says Stanley S. Litow, Commission member and Vice President of Corporate Citizenship & Corporate Affairs at IBM. "Doctoral education is another key driver of innovation, and its role can only be enhanced by more effective partnership between business and academia.

"In that regard, industry plays an important role in providing internship opportunities and support for innovative graduate programs in partnership with business," he adds.

The report was released at a forum at the U.S. Capitol, where members of Congress, the U.S. Under Secretary of Education and corporate and academic leaders offered their perspectives on the future of graduate education. The report's findings and recommendations are targeted to policymakers, universities and employers, and urge that:

Federal policymakers should:

- Continue and expand support for existing graduate education programs, including federal traineeship and fellowship programs
- Increase support for graduate education by creating two initiatives:
 - A “COMPETES” doctoral traineeship program to support doctoral students in areas of national need
 - A competitive grant program to provide partial funding to create new, innovative master’s programs or reinvigorate existing programs
- Expand loan forgiveness programs

Universities should:

- Continue efforts to identify and attract talented students to graduate education
- Improve graduate completion rates, which currently are near 50 percent in many fields at the doctoral level, and are unknown at the master’s level
- Clarify non-academic career pathways for graduate students, especially at the doctoral level

Employers should:

- Develop more partnerships with universities and governments to promote the participation of students from underrepresented groups in graduate school
- Collaborate with universities to define entry points into careers and the skills needed for 21st-century jobs
- Provide internships and work-study opportunities for graduate students

About the report

The report, *The Path Forward: The Future of Graduate Education in the United States*, was guided by the Commission on the Future of Graduate Education — a group jointly formed by CGS and ETS in 2009 to study how graduate education can meet the challenges of the 21st century. The Commission comprises 18 university presidents and chancellors, provosts, graduate school deans, corporate leaders and higher education scholars. The report and additional information is available at **www.fgereport.org**.

About ETS

At nonprofit ETS, we advance quality and equity in education for people worldwide by creating assessments based on rigorous research. ETS serves individuals, educational institutions and government agencies by providing customized solutions for teacher certification, English-language learning, and elementary, secondary and post-secondary education, as well as conducting education research, analysis and policy studies. Founded in 1947, ETS develops, administers and scores more than 50 million tests annually — including the GRE®, TOEFL® and TOEIC® tests and *The Praxis Series*™ assessments — in more than 180 countries, at over 9,000 locations worldwide.

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About CGS

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of over 500 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada engaged in graduate education, research, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. Among U.S. institutions, CGS members award 95% of the doctoral degrees and 78% of the master's degrees.* The organization's mission is to improve and advance graduate education, which it accomplishes through advocacy in the federal policy arena, research, and the development and dissemination of best practices.

www.cgsnet.org

* Based on data from the 2008 *CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees*

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