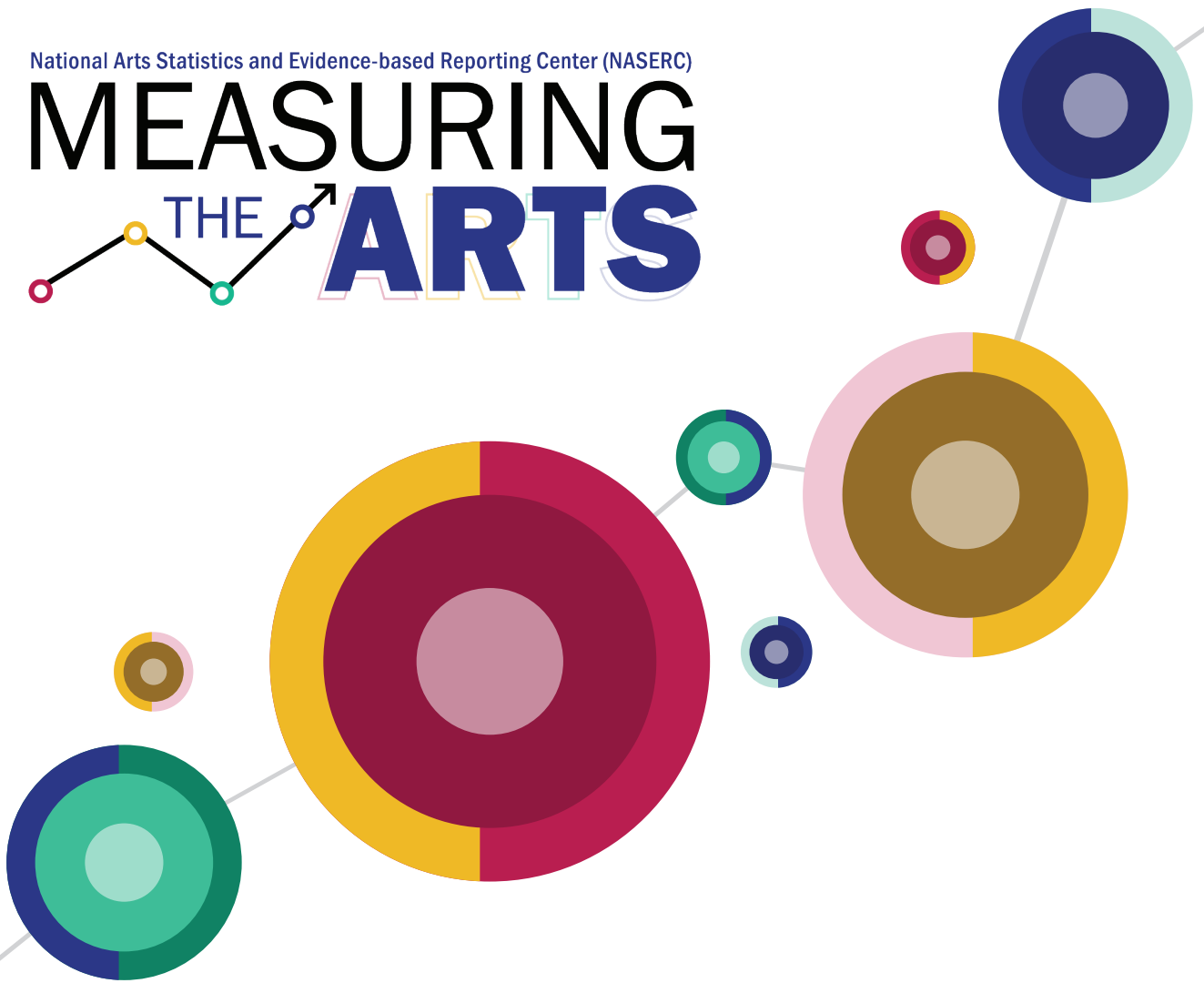


National Arts Statistics and Evidence-based Reporting Center (NASERC)

MEASURING THE ARTS



Domain D

Arts and Education



Indicator D.1: **Who Majors in the Arts?**

Introduction

Postsecondary degrees are the required or preferred entrance qualifications for many arts careers. Two other indicators in the series—**Indicator A.1: Who Are the Artists?** and **Indicator A.2: Who Are the Other Cultural Workers?**—show that artists and other cultural workers in the U.S. labor force are more likely to have a bachelor’s degree or master’s degree or higher than the labor force in general. Thus, the numbers of postsecondary degrees awarded in arts and cultural fields of study may reflect young adults’ aspirations for careers in artistic or other cultural worker occupations.¹ Indicator D.1 looks at the number and percentage of postsecondary degrees awarded in arts and cultural fields of study, which include the visual and performing arts as well as other arts-related fields of study such as arts education, architecture, creative arts therapies, and creative writing. The final section highlights the number and characteristics of degree recipients in the fields of art, music, dance, and drama teacher education. More information on the selection and definitions of arts and cultural fields of study are provided in *Definition of Arts and Cultural Fields of Study*.

Definition of Arts and Cultural Fields of Study

The fields of study selected for analysis in Indicator D.1 include the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) visual and performing arts category and subcategories as well as certain additional fields of study (“other arts-related fields of study”) deemed relevant to the artist labor force. Other arts-related fields of study represent relatively high shares of the artists labor force, as shown by the American Community Survey (ACS). Those fields of study are architecture and architectural engineering; art, dance, and music therapy; art, music, dance, and drama teacher education; communication and communications technologies; computer software and media applications; rhetoric, composition, and creative writing; and religious/sacred music.



Number and Type of Postsecondary Degrees in Arts and Cultural Fields of Study

In 2020–21,² postsecondary institutions in the United States awarded 4.2 million associate’s, bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees. Of those, 127,400 (or 3 percent) were in visual and performing arts fields of study and 164,700 (4 percent) in other arts-related fields of study (**Figure D1-1** and see **Table D1-1**). Within the visual and performing arts, 19,900 were associate’s degrees, 90,000 were bachelor’s degrees, 15,700 were master’s degrees, and 1,700 were doctoral degrees. Within other arts-related fields of study, 16,700 were associate’s degrees, 119,700 were bachelor’s degrees, 27,200 were master’s degrees, and 1,000 were doctoral degrees.

Between 2010–11 and 2020–21, the total number of postsecondary degrees awarded rose from 3.6 million to 4.2 million (an increase of 17 percent).³ The number of degrees awarded in other arts-related fields of study also grew during this time, but the increase was more modest. Postsecondary institutions awarded 155,100 degrees in other arts-related fields in 2010–11 and 164,700 degrees in 2020–21 (an increase of 6 percent). For the visual and performing arts, the numbers of postsecondary degrees awarded decreased from 133,300 to 127,400 (a 4 percent decrease) over the 10-year period. It is important to note that the data for 2020–21 capture degrees awarded between July 2020 and June 2021. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on academic participation and degree completion during this period is still under investigation and should be considered when analyzing trends.

The changes in numbers of degrees awarded between 2010–11 and 2020–21 varied by degree level. Institutions awarded 21,400 associate’s degrees in visual and performing arts in 2010–11 and 19,900 associates degrees in these fields in 2020–21 (a decrease of 7 percent). In this same 10-year period,

¹ For more information on the definitions of artists and other cultural workers see **Indicator A.1: Who Are the Artists?** and **Indicator A.2: Who Are the Other Cultural Workers?**

² Postsecondary institutions report all degrees and other awards conferred during an entire reporting period, from July 1 of one calendar year through June 30 of the following year.

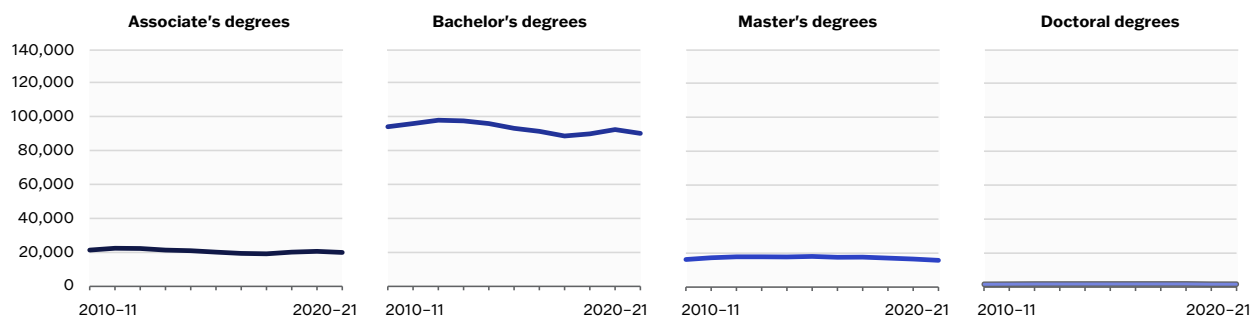
³ Differences between estimates (including trends over time) are significant because they are based on administrative data and therefore not subject to

the number of bachelor's degrees awarded in visual and performing arts went from 93,900 to 90,000 (a decrease of 4 percent), and the number of master's degrees in these fields decreased from 16,300 to 15,700

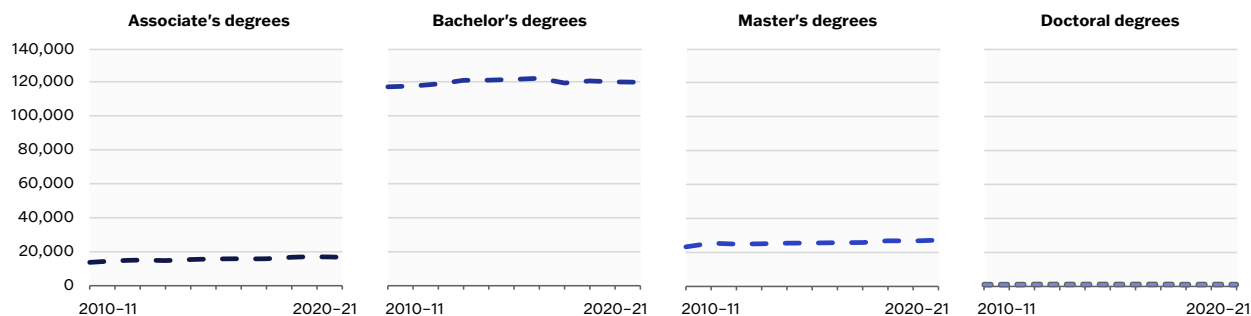
(a decrease of 3 percent). In contrast, the number of doctoral degrees awarded in visual and performing arts fields of study increased from 1,600 in 2010–11 to 1,700 in 2020–11 (an increase of 1 percent).

Figure D1-1. Number of postsecondary degrees awarded in visual and performing arts and other arts-related fields of study, by education level: 2010–11 to 2020–21

Number of visual and performing arts degrees



Number of other arts-related fields of study degrees



NOTE: Estimates are for degrees conferred to U.S. citizens and nonresidents. Postsecondary institutions report all degrees and other awards conferred during an entire reporting period, from July 1 of one calendar year through June 30 of the following year. Degrees awarded in visual and performing arts fields of study include all degrees awarded in the visual and performing arts field of study (CIP 50.0000) and subfields. Degrees awarded in other arts-related fields of study include all degrees awarded in architecture and architectural engineering (CIP 4.000, 14.401, and 15.0101); communication and communications technologies (CIP 9.0000 and 10.0000); art, music, dance, and drama teacher education (CIP 13.1302, 13.12, and 13.1324); computer software and media applications (CIP 11.801, 11.802, 11.803, 11.804, 11.899, and 11.1004); rhetoric, composition, and creative writing (CIP 23.1304 and 23.1302); art, dance, and music therapy (CIP 51.2301, 51.2302, and 51.2305); and religious/sacred music (CIP 39.0501).

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2011–Fall 2021.

statistical testing based on sampling theory. For more information see *The Arts in the United States: Developing Key National Indicators of Arts Activity* report.

Differences in Degrees Awarded in Visual and Performing Arts and Other Arts-related Fields of Study



The overwhelming majority of postsecondary degrees awarded in visual and performing arts and other arts-related fields of study in 2020–21 were bachelor’s degrees. Of all postsecondary degrees in visual and performing arts fields of study, 71 percent were bachelor’s degrees. In all other arts-related fields of study, 73 percent of degrees awarded were bachelor’s degrees. By comparison, bachelor’s degrees accounted for approximately 50 percent of all postsecondary degrees awarded in 2020–21.

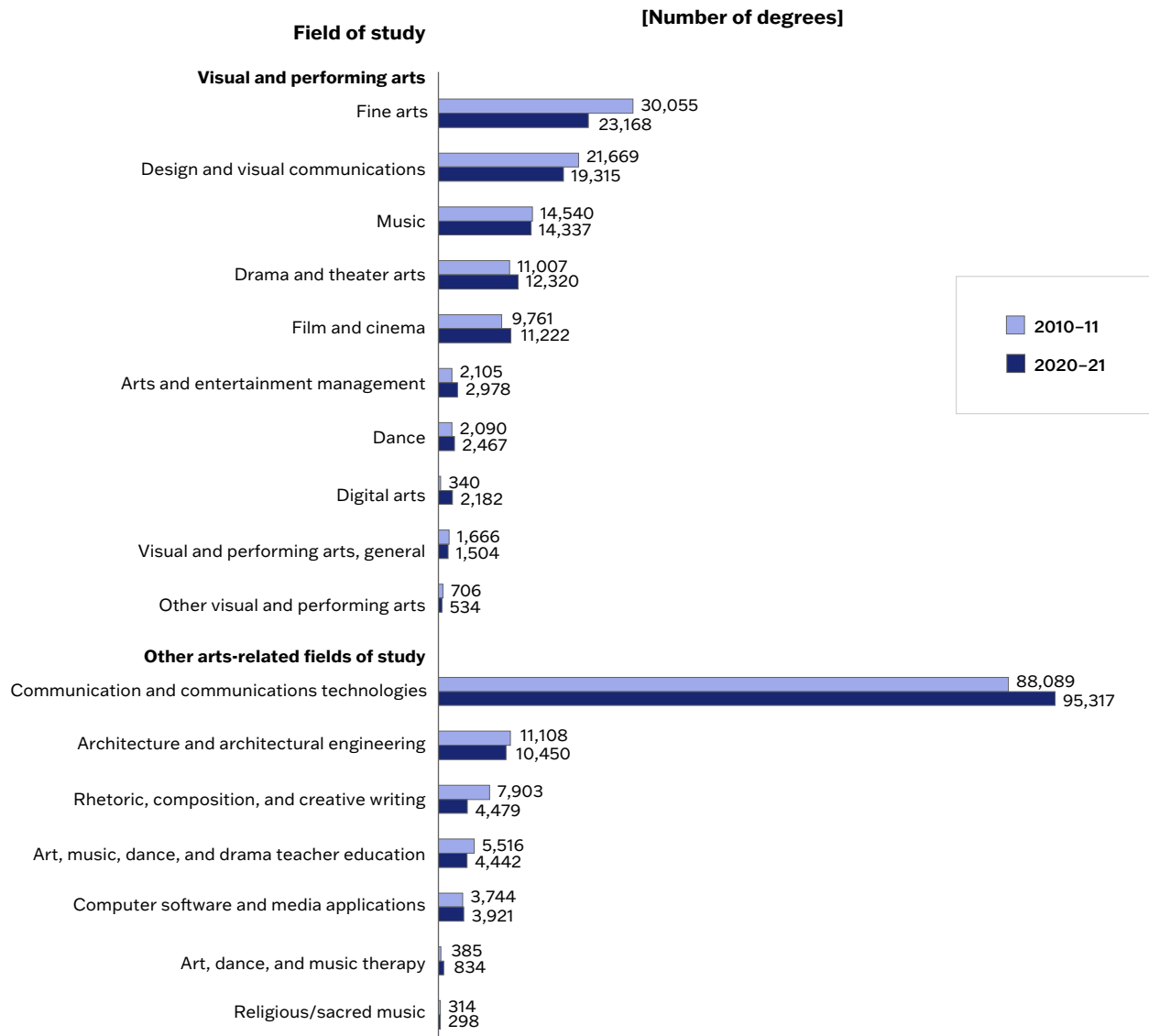
The largest number of bachelor’s degrees within visual and performing arts fields of study in 2020–21 was awarded in fine arts (23,200), followed by design and visual communications (19,300), and music (14,300; **Figure D1-2**). Consistent with the overall trend, the number of bachelor’s degrees in these fields of study has decreased since 2010–11. Over the 10-year period, institutions awarded nearly 6,900 fewer bachelor’s degrees in fine arts (a 23 percent decrease), 2,400 fewer bachelor’s degrees in design and visual communications (an 11 percent decrease), and 200 fewer bachelor’s degrees in music (a 1 percent decrease).

However, some visual and performing arts fields of study witnessed increases in bachelor’s degrees awarded during this 10-year period. Postsecondary institutions awarded 1,800 more degrees in digital arts

in 2020–21 than in 2010–11 (a 542 percent increase), 1,500 more degrees in film and cinema (a 15 percent increase) and 1,300 more bachelor’s degrees in drama and theater arts (a 12 percent increase). While the numbers of bachelor’s degrees awarded in art and entertainment management and dance remain relatively low (both less than 3,000 degrees), the two fields of study experienced substantial growth in terms of percentage change (increases of 41 percent and 18 percent, respectively).

Among other arts-related fields of study in 2020–21, the largest number of bachelor’s degrees was awarded in communication and communications technologies (95,300 degrees), followed by architecture and architectural engineering (10,500 degrees); rhetoric, composition, and creative writing (4,500 degrees); and art, music, dance, and drama teacher education (4,400 degrees). The number of communication and communications technologies bachelor’s degrees also increased by more than 7,200 (8 percent) between 2010–11 and 2020–21. The largest percent increase in bachelor’s degrees awarded was in field of art, dance, and music therapy, which increased from just under 400 degrees in 2010–11 to just over 800 degrees in 2020–21 (an increase of 117 percent). Conversely, rhetoric, composition, and creative writing remained one of the largest other arts-related fields of study, but one that experienced both the largest absolute and percentage decrease in this period, from 7,900 bachelor’s degrees awarded in 2010–11 to 4,500 in 2020–21 (a 43 percent decrease). Postsecondary institutions also awarded 19 percent fewer bachelor’s degrees in art, music, dance, and drama teacher education during this period.

Figure D1-2. Number of bachelor's degrees awarded in visual and performing arts and other arts-related fields of study: 2010–11 and 2020–21



NOTE: Estimates are for degrees conferred to U.S. citizens and nonresidents. Postsecondary institutions report all degrees and other awards conferred during an entire reporting period, from July 1 of one calendar year through June 30 of the following year.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2011 and Fall 2021.

Differences in Degrees Awarded in Visual and Performing Arts and Other Arts-related Fields of Study, by Demographic Characteristics

In 2020–21, bachelor’s degree recipients in visual and performing arts and other arts-related fields of study were more likely to be female (63 percent and 62 percent, respectively) than male (37 percent and 38 percent, respectively; **Figure D1-3**). This is a slight change from 2010–11, when females were awarded 61 percent of bachelor’s degrees in visual and performing arts fields of study and 60 percent in other arts-related fields of study. The proportion of females receiving bachelor’s degrees in visual and performing arts and other arts-related fields of study was also higher than the overall proportion of females receiving bachelor’s degrees in 2020–21 (58 percent).

Within the visual and performing arts fields in 2020–21, the largest difference by sex in bachelor’s degrees awarded was in dance (89 percent female). Females received the majority of bachelor’s degrees in all visual and performing arts fields of study except for film and cinema (48 percent) and music (46 percent). Digital arts and arts and entertainment management saw the largest increases in the proportion of females receiving bachelor’s degrees in 2020–21, compared to 2010–11. In both fields of study, females went from receiving fewer bachelor’s degrees than males to receiving the majority of degrees awarded (34 percent to 52 percent in digital arts and 48 percent to 61 percent in arts and entertainment management).

Among other arts-related fields of study more generally, the largest gender difference in bachelor’s degrees in 2020–21 was in art, dance, and music therapy (89 percent of degrees were awarded to females), followed by rhetoric, composition, and creative writing (69 percent) and art, music, dance, and drama teacher education (66 percent). The greatest change in the proportion of bachelor’s degrees awarded to females between 2010–11 and 2020–21 was in the computer software and media applications field of study. While females did not comprise the majority of bachelor’s degree recipients in this field of study in 2020–21 (41 percent), the proportion had increased by 14 percentage points from 2010–11, when females received just 27 percent of bachelor’s degrees in this field of study.

In 2020–21, the majority of bachelor’s degree recipients in visual and performing arts and other arts-related fields of study were White, but the proportions have decreased since 2010–11. In 2010–11, 76 percent of visual and performing arts bachelor’s degree recipients were White, compared to 62 percent 10 years later (**Figure D1-4**). Among those awarded bachelor’s degrees in visual and performing arts fields of study in 2020–21, 62 percent were White, 16 percent were Hispanic, 9 percent were Black, 7 percent were Asian, 5 percent were of two or more races, and fewer than 1 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native or Pacific Islander. Similarly, among bachelor’s degree recipients in arts-related fields of study more generally, 63 percent were White, 16 percent were Hispanic, 11 percent were Black, 5 percent were Asian, 5 percent were of two or more races, and fewer than 1 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native or Pacific Islander.

Figure D1-3. Percentage distribution of bachelor's degrees in visual and performing arts and other arts-related fields of study, by sex: 2010–11 and 2020–21

Total, all degrees

2010–11	42.8%	57.2%
2020–21	41.7%	58.3%

Total, Visual and performing arts

2010–11	38.7%	61.3%
2020–21	36.8%	63.2%

Total, other arts-related fields

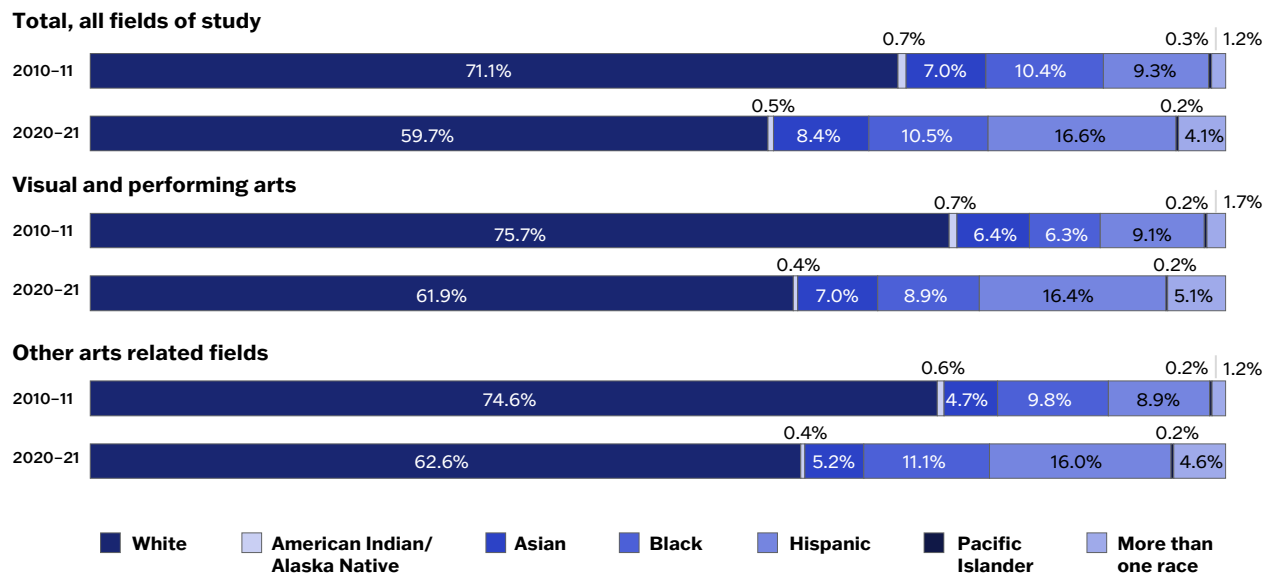
2010–11	40.4%	59.6%
2020–21	38.5%	61.5%

Field of study	Year	Sex	
		Male	Female
Dance	2010–11	11.9%	88.1%
	2020–21	10.7%	89.3%
Fine arts	2010–11	29.2%	70.8%
	2020–21	26.7%	73.3%
Design and visual communications	2010–11	33.3%	66.7%
	2020–21	29.8%	70.2%
Visual and performing arts, general	2010–11	37.2%	62.8%
	2020–21	34.5%	65.5%
Drama and theater arts	2010–11	37.8%	62.2%
	2020–21	35.5%	64.5%
Other visual and performing arts	2010–11	38.7%	61.3%
	2020–21	41.4%	58.6%
Arts and entertainment management	2010–11	52.2%	47.8%
	2020–21	39.1%	60.9%
Music	2010–11	53.6%	46.4%
	2020–21	53.9%	46.1%
Film and cinema	2010–11	60.6%	39.4%
	2020–21	52.5%	47.5%
Digital arts	2010–11	66.2%	33.8%
	2020–21	48.1%	51.9%
Architecture and architectural engineering	2010–11	60.7%	39.3%
	2020–21	52.6%	47.4%
Communication and communication technologies	2010–11	37.5%	62.5%
	2020–21	36.8%	63.2%
Art, music, dance, and drama teacher education	2010–11	33.2%	66.8%
	2020–21	34.2%	65.8%
Computer software and media applications	2010–11	72.6%	27.4%
	2020–21	58.8%	41.2%
Rhetoric, composition, and creative writing	2010–11	35.3%	64.7%
	2020–21	31.2%	68.8%
Art, dance, and music therapy	2010–11	13.0%	87.0%
	2020–21	11.2%	88.8%
Religious/sacred music	2010–11	54.8%	45.2%
	2020–21	47.7%	52.3%

NOTE: Estimates are for degrees conferred to U.S. citizens and nonresidents. Postsecondary institutions report all degrees and other awards conferred during an entire reporting period, from July 1 of one calendar year through June 30 of the following year.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2011 and Fall 2021.

Figure D1-4. Percentage distribution of bachelor's degrees awarded to U.S. citizens in visual and performing arts, other arts-related fields, and all fields of study, by race/ethnicity: 2010–11 and 2020–21



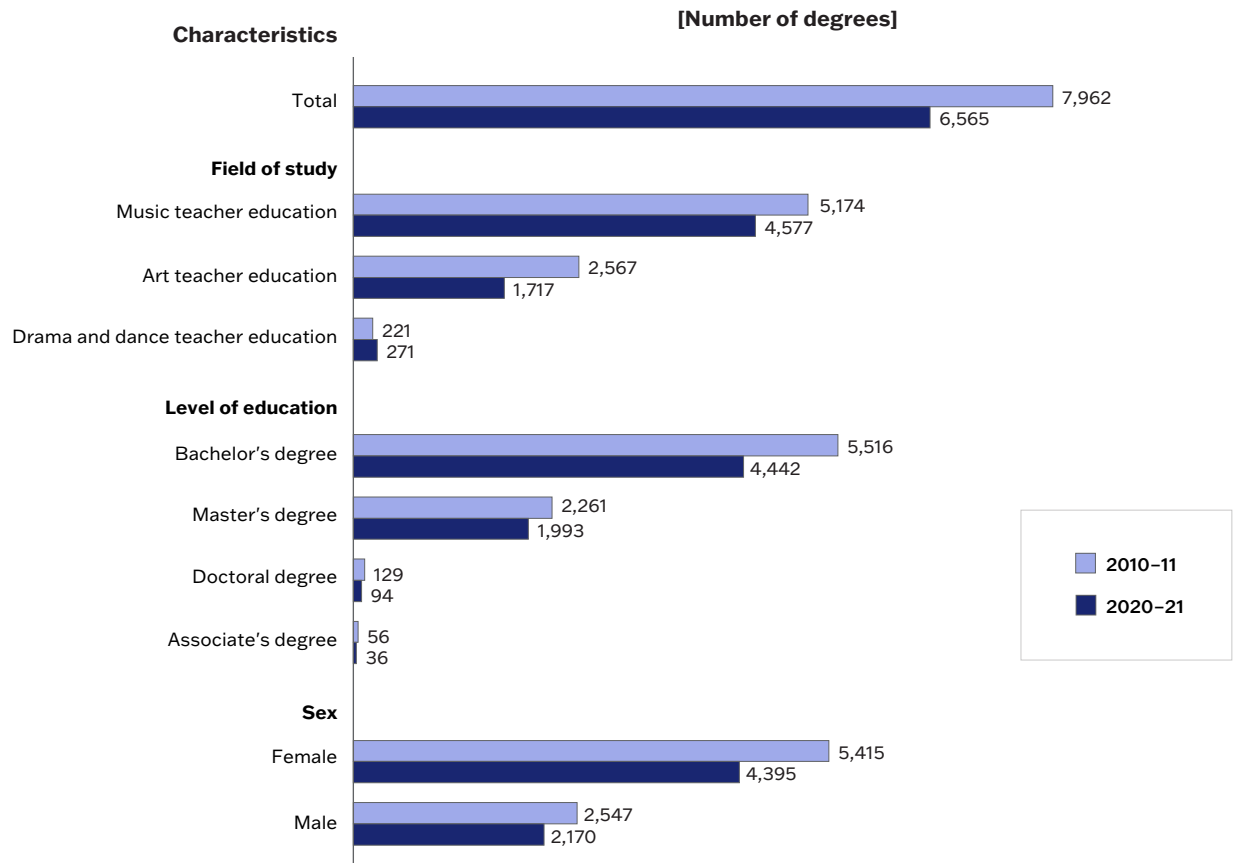
NOTE: Data on race/ethnicity available only for U.S. citizens. Postsecondary institutions report all degrees and other awards conferred during an entire reporting period, from July 1 of one calendar year through June 30 of the following year. Race groups are mutually exclusive; persons of Hispanic ethnicity can be of any race. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2011 and Fall 2021.

Field of study highlight: Art, music, dance, and drama teacher education

Teachers of the arts, whether at the elementary, secondary, or postsecondary educational levels, facilitate their students’ development of artistic talent and depth of appreciation for the arts. The arts teacher workforce is described in **Indicator D.2: Who Teaches the Arts in Schools?** It is also of value to explore who is graduating with degrees in art, music, dance, and drama teacher education. In 2020–21, approximately

6,600 total postsecondary degrees were awarded in art, music, dance, and drama teacher education, and this number represents a decrease of 18 percent from 2010–11 (**Figure D1-5**). Of these 6,600 total postsecondary degrees, 1,700 were awarded in art teacher education, 4,600 in music teacher education, and 300 in drama and dance teacher education. The majority of art, music, dance, and drama teacher education degrees were at the bachelor’s degree level (4,400 or 68 percent of all degrees). In addition, degree recipients in art, music, dance, and drama teacher education were roughly two times more likely to be female than male (67 percent versus 33 percent).

Figure D1-5. Characteristics of art, music, dance, and drama teacher education degree recipients: 2010–11 and 2020–21



NOTE: Estimates are for degrees conferred to U.S. citizens and nonresidents. Postsecondary institutions report all degrees and other awards conferred during an entire reporting period, from July 1 of one calendar year through June 30 of the following year.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2011 and Fall 2021.

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