

## Results of the 2008 CTR Exams (as Compared to Previous Years)

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In 2008, 345 candidates took the NCRA CTR Exam, compared to a seven-year high of 623 candidates in 2007. The range for the last seven years includes a previous low of 433 in 2005 to a previous high of 571 in 2003. The increase in number of candidates for the 2007 exam may have been due to many wanting to take the exam before the educational requirements were updated. In 2008, Route 1 eligibility requirements were changed to include two semesters of college-level courses in human anatomy and/or physiology. In 2009 and 2010, additional education will be required to take the CTR exam, reflecting the Council on Certification's focus on requiring a minimum of an associate's degree by 2010.

Seventy-eight percent (268) of 2008 exam-takers were first-time candidates, slightly higher than in previous years, i.e., 67% in 2007 (Fig. 1). Overall, 65% of the candidates passed the exam, but only 38% of repeat candidates passed compared to 73% of first-time candidates—again, a pattern similar to what we've seen in previous years. In 2007, 59% passed the exam with 41% of repeat candidates and 67% of first-time candidates successful (Fig. 2).

Other information from the 2008 exams includes the following.

**Content Category:** Content areas were reorganized and weighted differently starting with the 2007 exams. The name of one content area, *Registry Organization and Operations (ROO)*, remained the same. Six other areas were reorganized into three content areas, as follows:

- *Anatomy, Physiology, and Histology* and *Abstracting and Coding* became *Abstracting, Coding, and Follow up*.
- *Statistics and Epidemiology* and *Computer Principles* are now *Data Analysis and Interpretation*.
- *ICDO Coding Exercise* and *Staging by Site Exercises* are now *Application of Coding and Staging Principles*.

Because of these changes, 2008 exam results will only be compared with results from the 2007 exams.

The open-book category of *Application of Coding and Staging Principles* received the highest average percent correct, 78%, in both 2007 and 2008. The two categories of *Registry Organization and Operations (ROO)* and *Abstracting, Coding, and Follow up*, with 74% and 75% average correct, respectively, were similar to 2007, when each received 72% correct. The lowest average percent correct, 68%, was found in the category of *Data Analysis and Interpretation*, although this was slightly higher than the 64% attained in the 2007 exams (Fig. 3).

**Eligibility Route:** For the first time, there was almost equal distribution in four of the five eligibility routes selected by the candidates: Routes 1 and 2 were each selected by 26%; Route 3 by 21%; and Route 4 by 23%. Route 5, which requires one year of experience and a master's degree or higher, was selected by 4%.

2008 requirements for the other routes were:

Route 1: two years' experience in the Cancer Registry field and two semesters of college-level courses in human anatomy and/or physiology;

Route 2: completion of an NCRA-accredited formal education program;

Routes 3 and 4, one year of experience and completion of an approved college curriculum or license.

In 2007, Route 1 was chosen by the majority of candidates, 61%; Route 2, 12%; Route 3; 9%; Route 4, 17%; and Route 5, 1%. The percent of candidates passing the 2008 exams were Route 1, 58%; Route 2, 50%; Route 3, 70%; Route 4, 80%, and Route 5, 87%.

Again, results by eligibility route for the various content areas can not be compared with years prior to 2007 because of the reorganization of content areas. In 2008, the average percent correct in each of three content areas increased from Route 1 (lowest) to Route 5 (highest). However, in one category, the open-book *Application of Coding and Staging Principles*, results were higher (78%) for Route 1 candidates than Route 2 (73%). Results across routes from the 2007 exams were very similar. The only major difference when comparing exam results of the two years is that the average percent correct score for *Abstracting, Coding, and Follow up* for Route 5 candidates increased from 79% in 2007 to 84% in 2008. In 2008, this was the highest average score of all the four content categories. The second-highest was 81% for *Application of Coding and Staging Principles*, then 78% for *Analysis and Interpretation*, and 71% for *ROO* (Fig. 4).

**Employer:** The predominant primary employer of 2008 candidates continued to be the Hospital Registry at 66% down from 75% in 2007. The second-largest employer was central or state Cancer Registries at 16%, slightly up from 14% in 2007 (Fig. 6).

**Country:** Seven percent (26) of the candidates were from other countries or U.S. territories: 7 from Puerto Rico, 11 from Canada, 3 from Saudi Arabia, and 1 each from Greece, Guam, Korea, Singapore, and United Arab Emirates. In 2007, there were 27 non-U.S. candidates. (*Data not shown.*)

**Age:** Candidates between 40 and 49 remain the largest category at 26% (28% in 2007), with those between 30 and 39 at 19%, and between 50 and 59 at 18%. Only 15% were younger than 29 years of age and 1 % 60 and older (Fig. 7).

**Experience:** The majority of candidates, 68% (69% in 2007), continue to have between one and five years of experience (Fig. 8). In general, the percent passing increased with years of experience, from 51% for the 15% with less than one year of experience to 81% for the 6% with 10 years or more of experience. The exception is candidates with one to two years of experience, who had the second-highest pass rate of 71%.

**Academic level:** Most (71%) candidates hold an associate's degree or higher, an increase from 56% in 2007. Another 25% (31% in 2007) have had some college. Only 3% (12% in 2007) have just a high-school diploma. This distribution is similar to that of past years (Fig. 9).

The passing score for the 2008 CTR exams was 70% or above. In general, the average total exam scores increased with years of education. The lowest-average total exam score, 64%, was seen for candidates with a high-school education. Scores in other categories were: some college, 72%; associate's degree, 73%; bachelor's degree, 77%, and master's degree or doctorate, 80%. This distribution is also similar to past years (Fig. 10).

*Note 1: Percentages are not generally reported for non-responders, but reported percentages are based on the total number of candidates.*

*Note 2: All comparisons are based on observed percentages and no tests of significance were performed on differences.*

Fig 1.

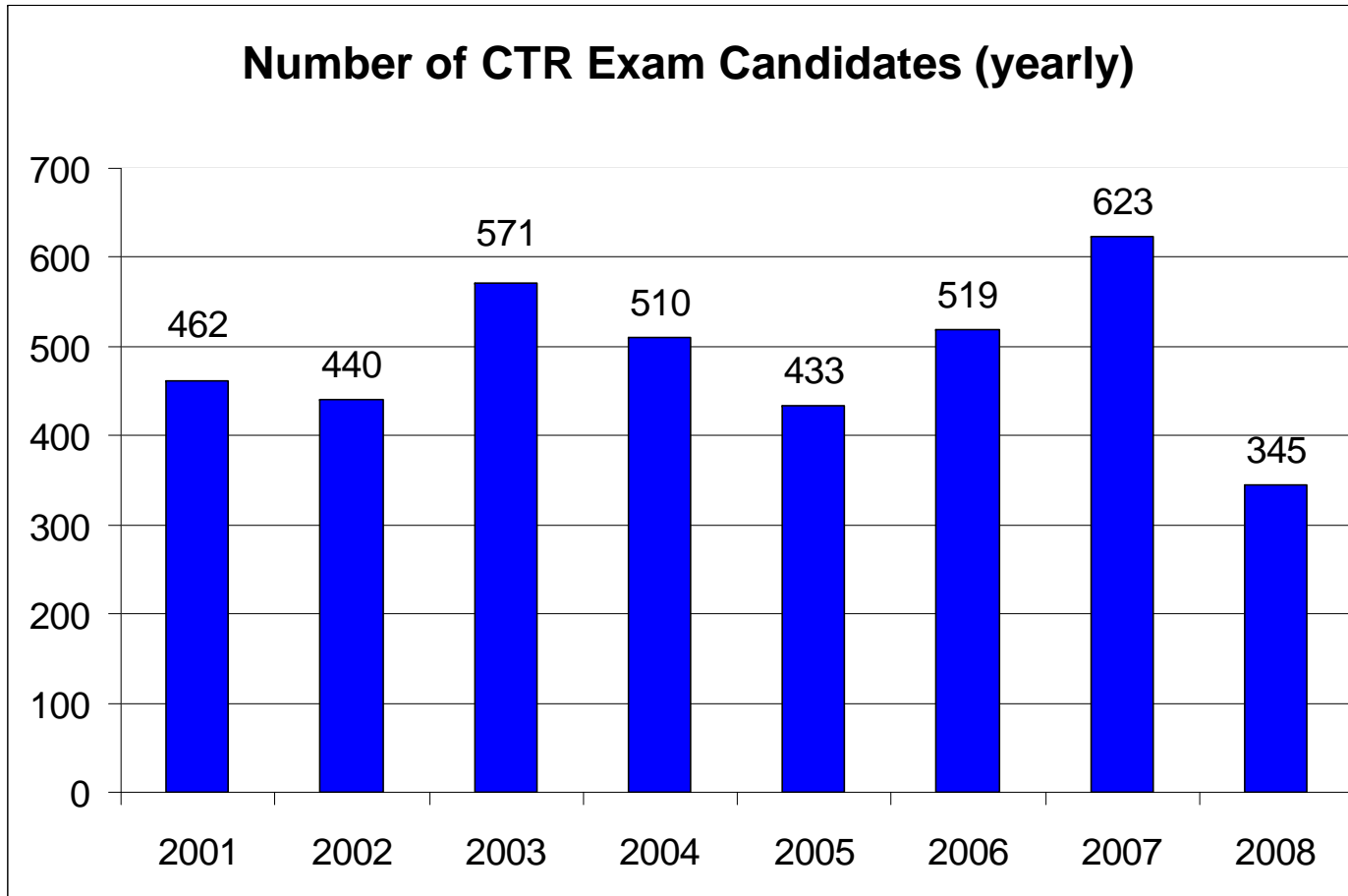


Fig 2.

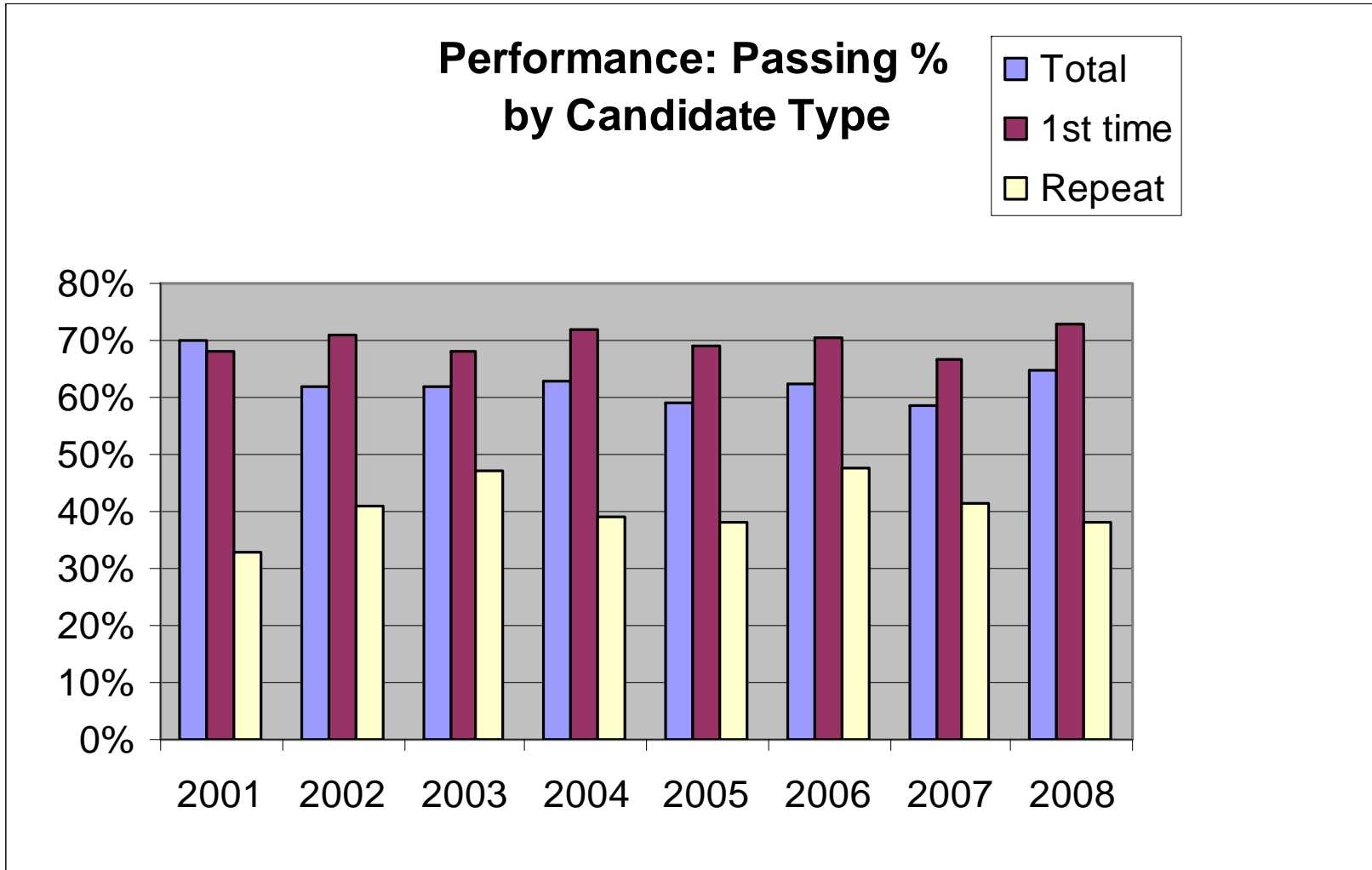


Fig. 3.

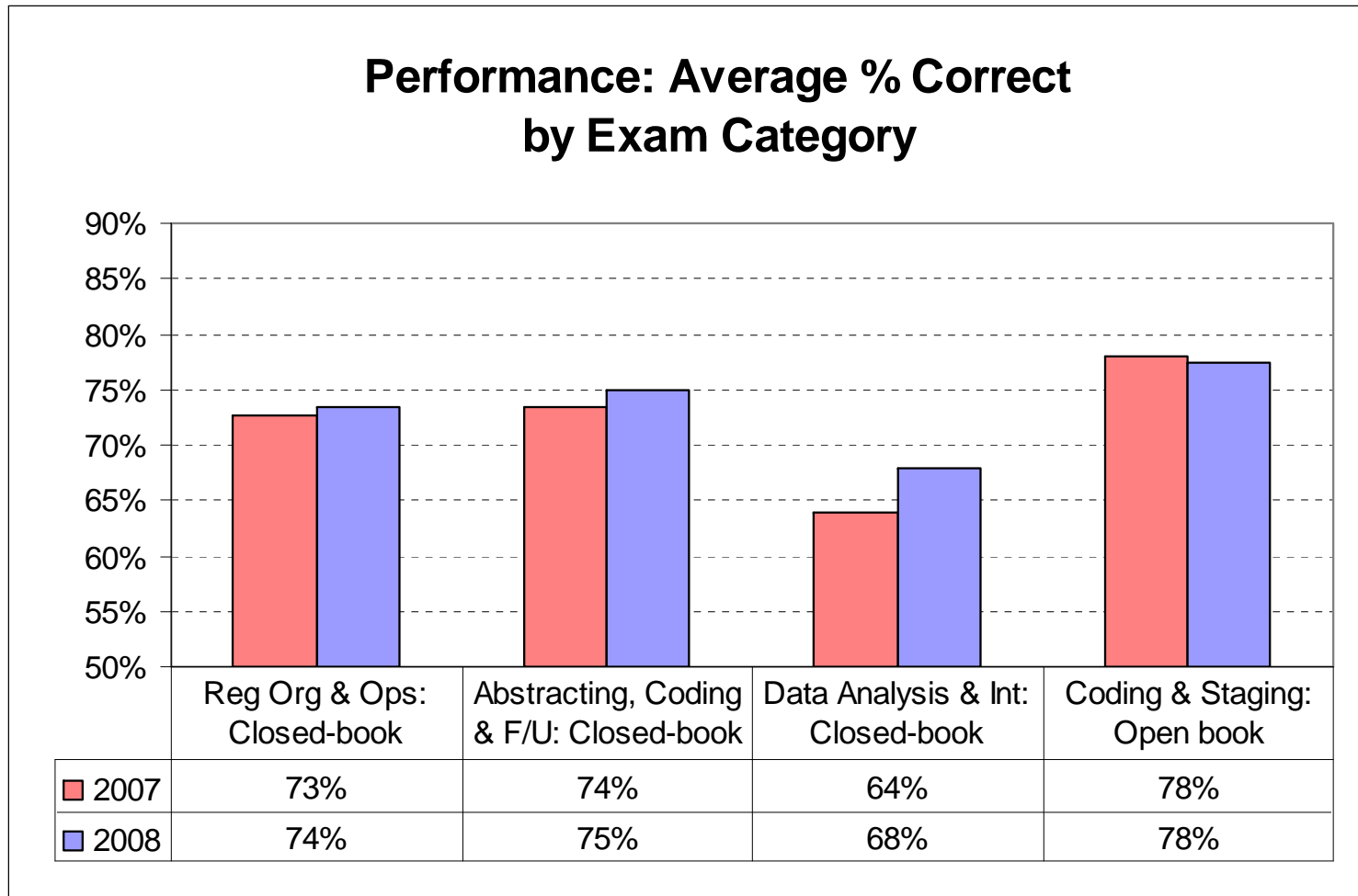


Fig.4

**Performance: Average % Correct by Exam Category and Eligibility Route**

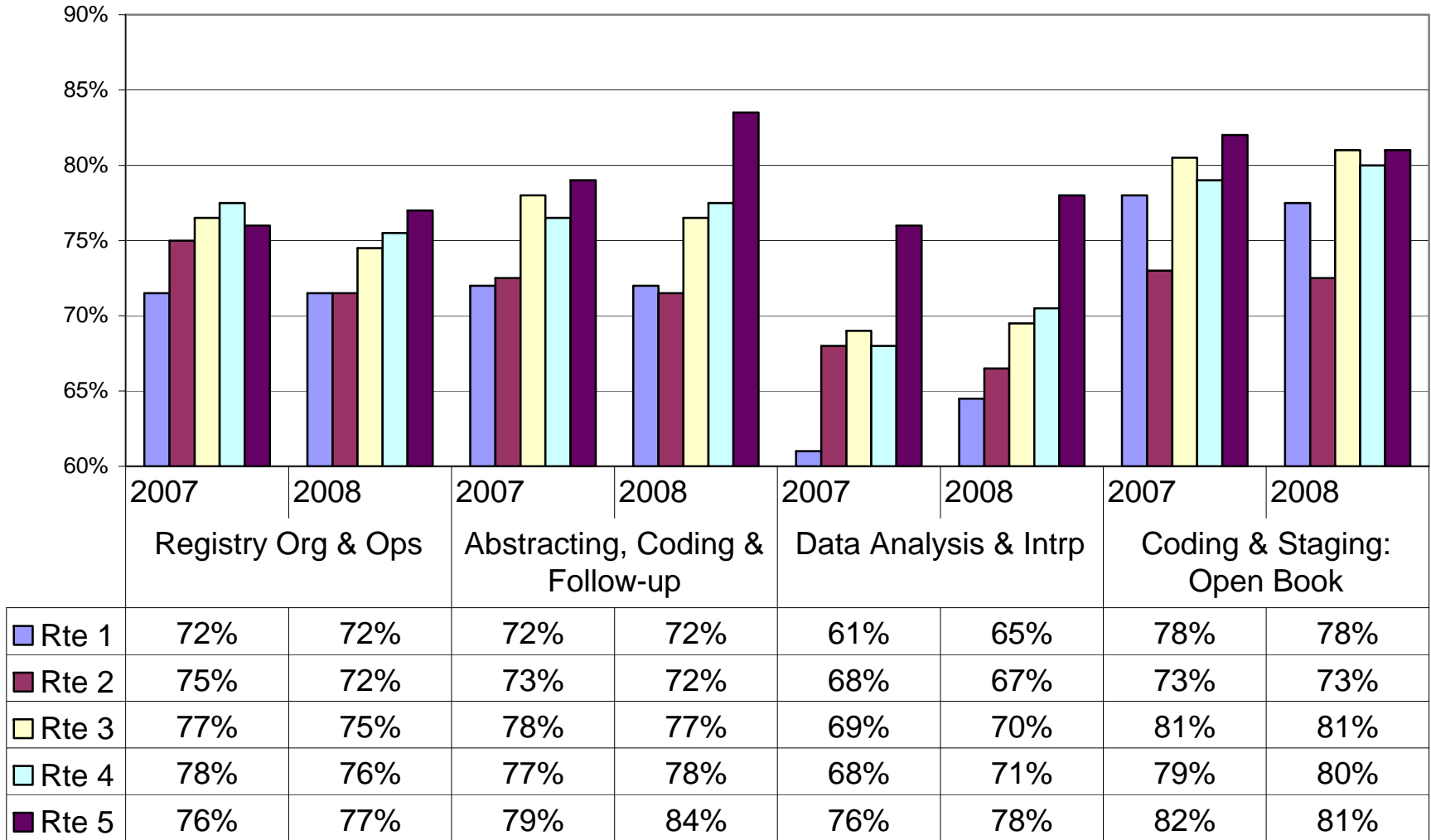


Fig 5.

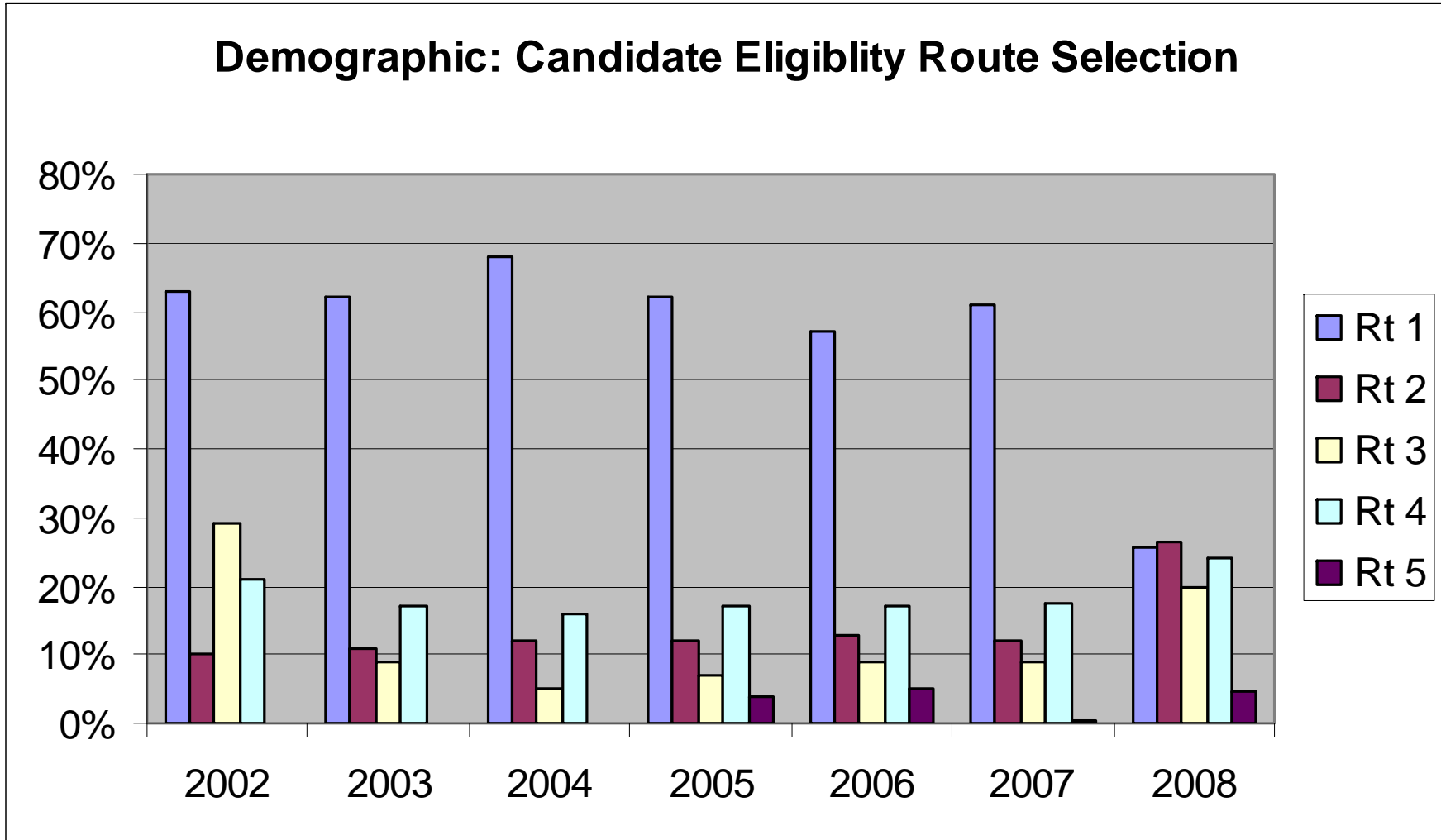


Fig. 6.

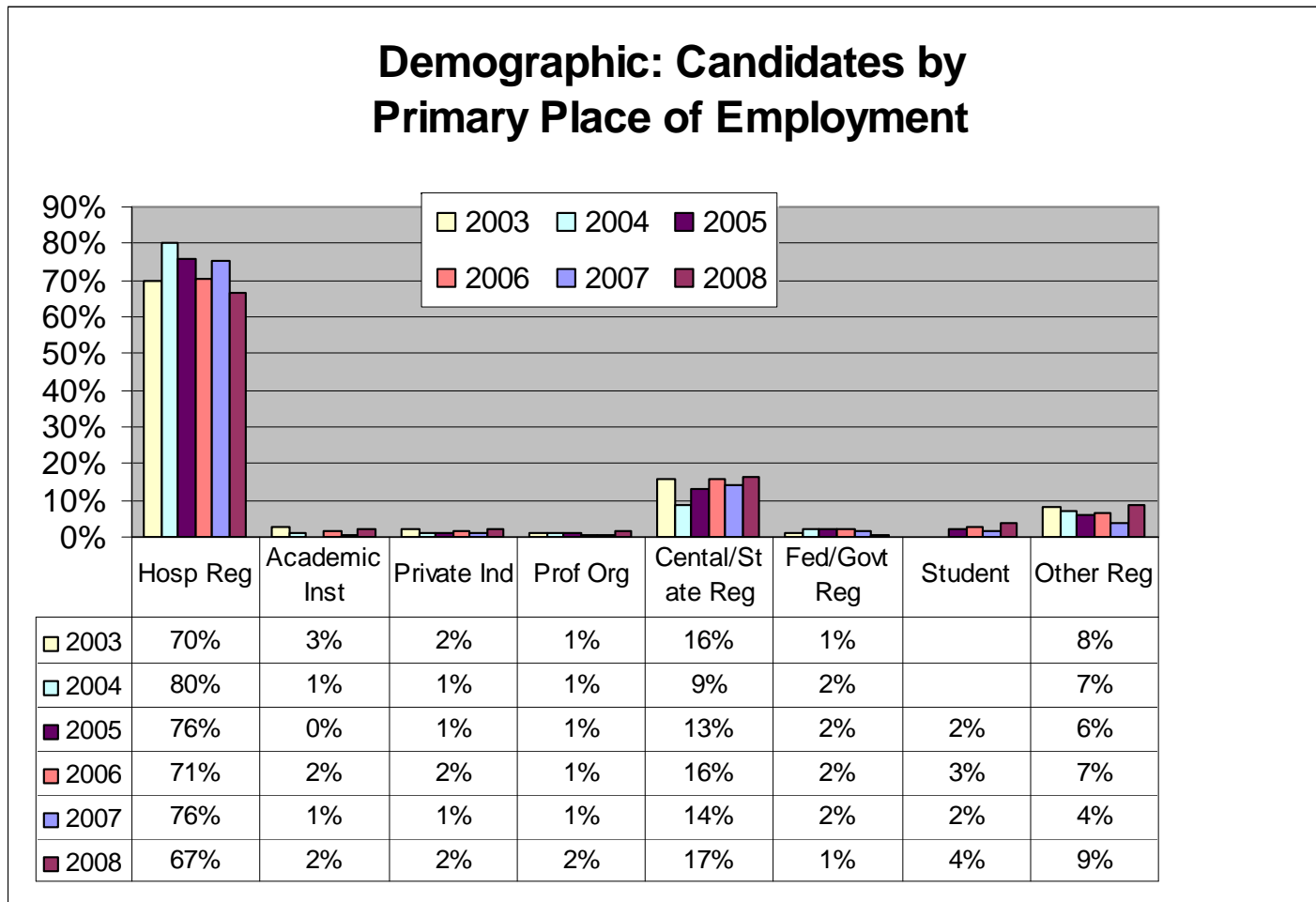


Fig. 7.

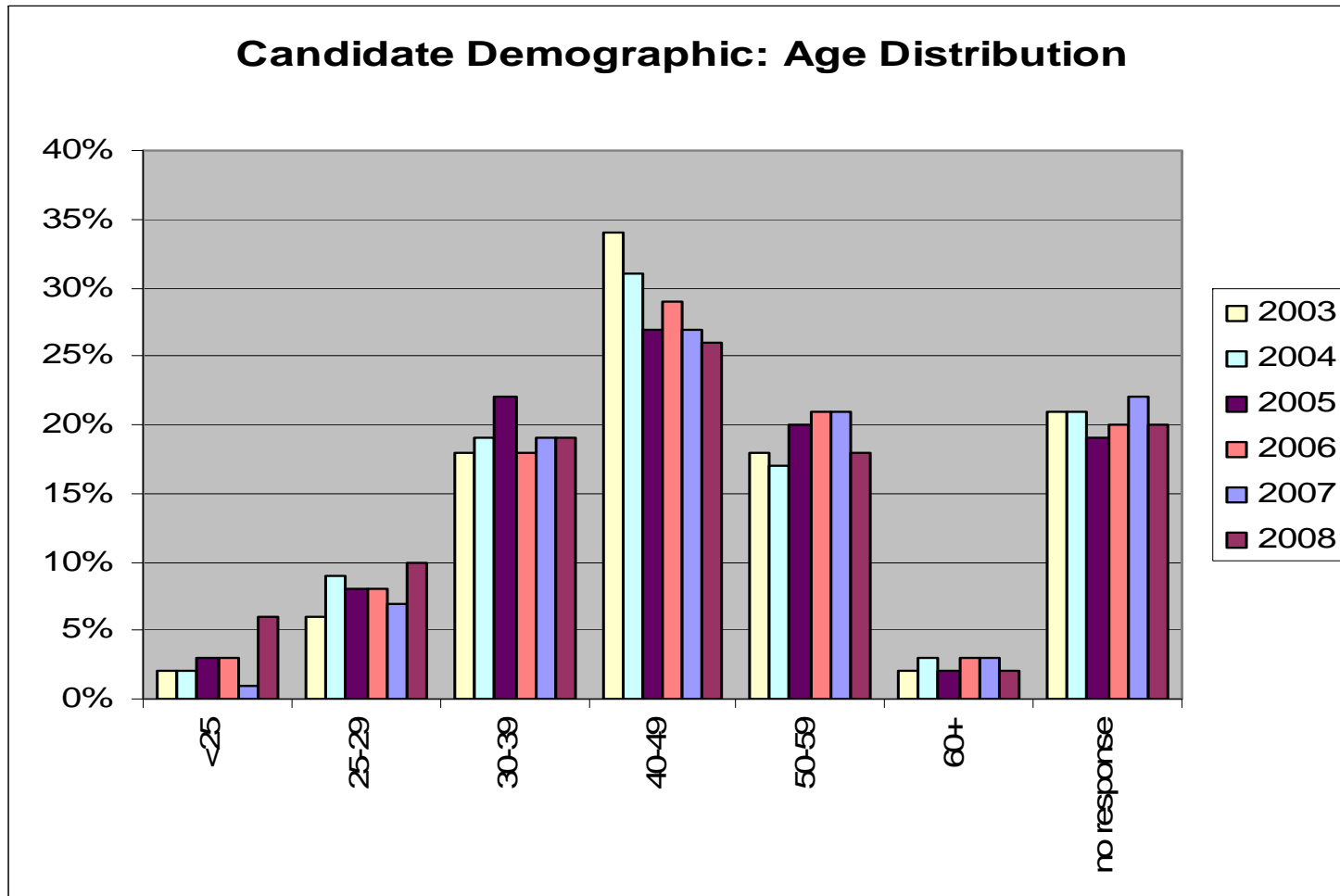


Fig. 8

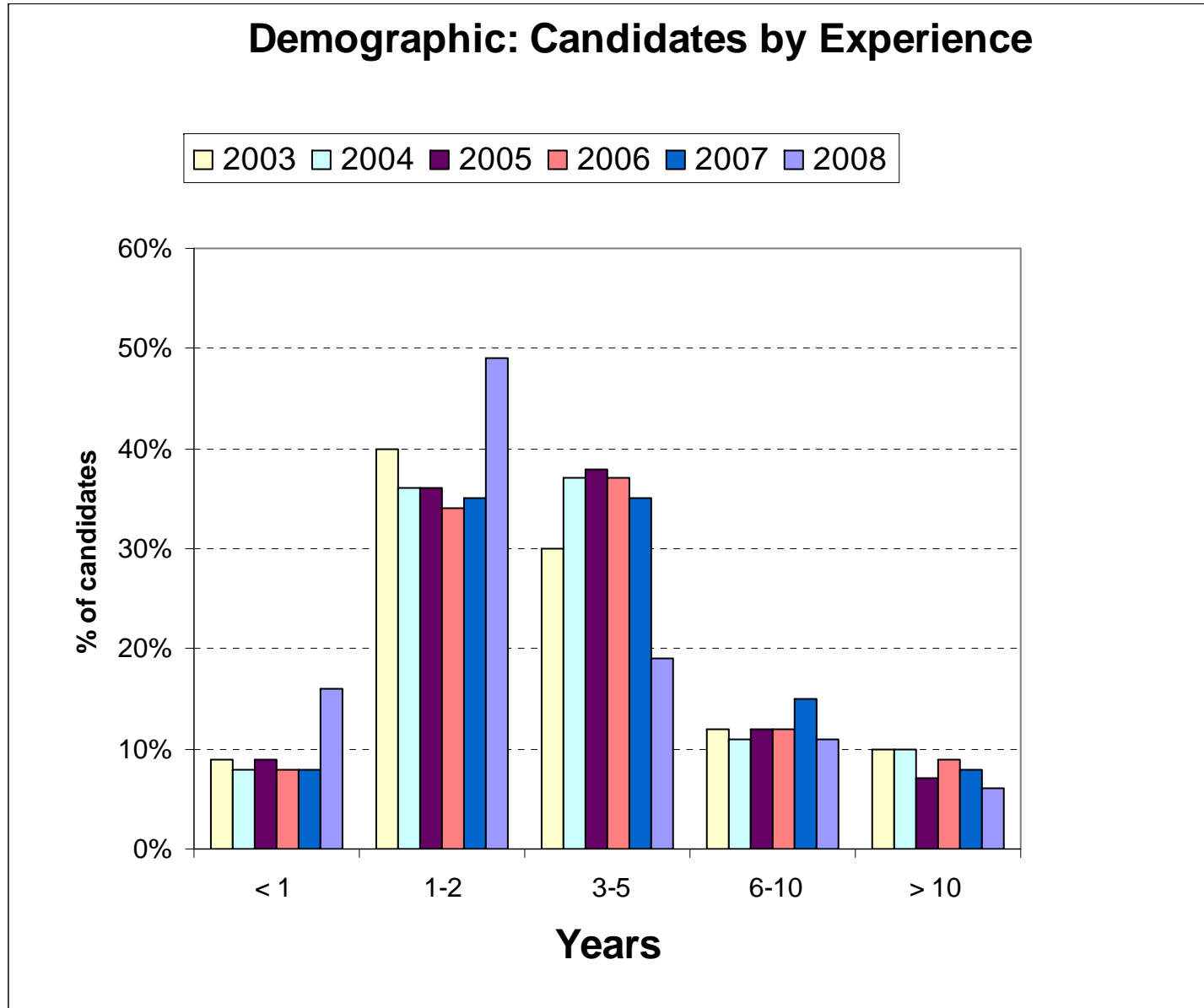


Fig. 9

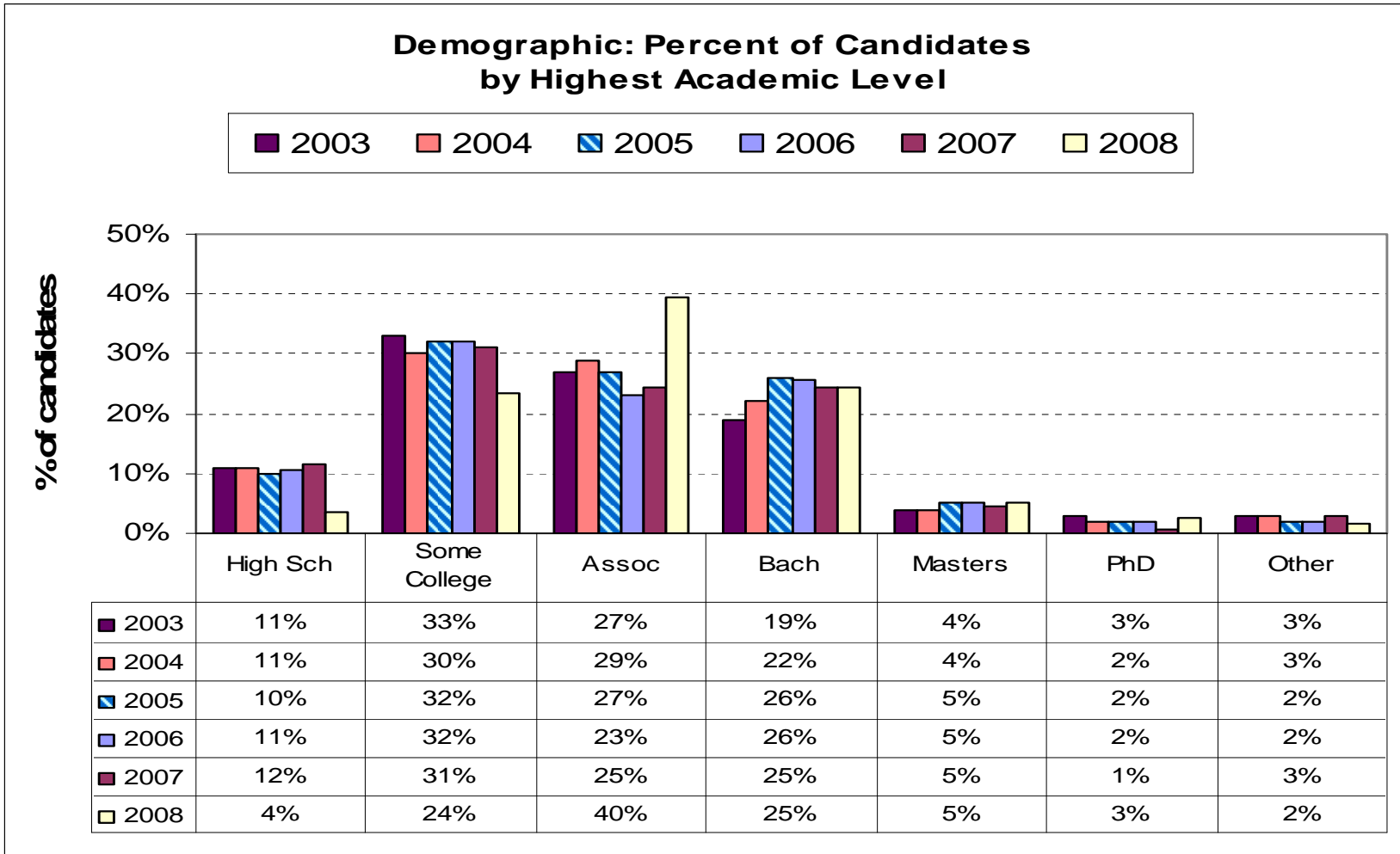
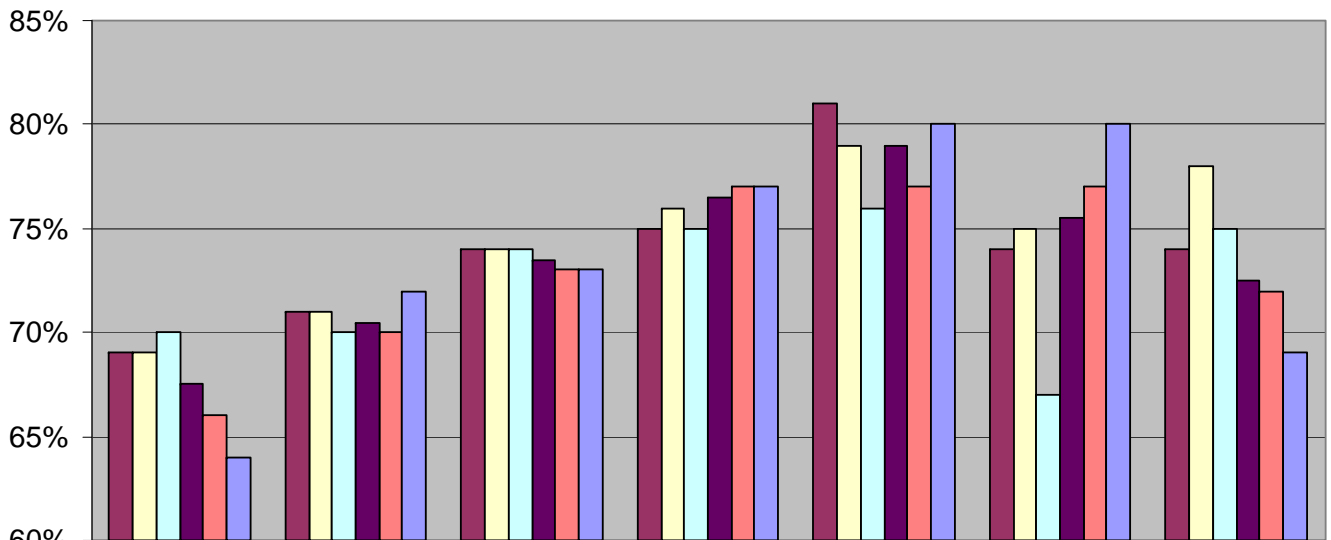


Fig.10

### Performance: Avg Total Score (%) by Highest Academic Achievement



	High school	Some college	Associate's	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate	Other
■ 2003	69%	71%	74%	75%	81%	74%	74%
■ 2004	69%	71%	74%	76%	79%	75%	78%
■ 2005	70%	70%	74%	75%	76%	67%	75%
■ 2006	68%	71%	74%	77%	79%	76%	73%
■ 2007	66%	70%	73%	77%	77%	77%	72%
■ 2008	64%	72%	73%	77%	80%	80%	69%