

## **Results of 2009 CTR Exams**

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*Editor's Note: This entire article, complete with color graphs, is available on NCRA's Council on Certification website at [www.ctrexam.org](http://www.ctrexam.org).*

In 2009, 368 candidates challenged the NCRA CTR Exam, compared to an eight-year high of 623 candidates in 2007. The range for the last eight 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. The decrease of candidates in 2008 is due to the change in eligibility requirements. In 2009, Route 1 eligibility requirements were changed to require a minimum of two years full-time (24 months or 3,900 hours) or equivalent experience in the Cancer Registry field and the equivalent of one year of college education that includes two semesters/3 quarters of Human Anatomy and/or Physiology, one semester of Medical Science/Biology plus a college-level course in Medical Terminology. In 2010, Eligibility Route 1 will be eliminated, meaning all candidates must have a minimum of an associate's degree.

Seventy-seven percent (285) of 2009 exam-takers were first-time candidates, consistent with 2008 (73%) but slightly higher than in previous years, i.e., 67% in 2007 (Fig. 2). Overall, 64% of the candidates passed the exam, but only 36% of repeat candidates passed compared to 74% of first-time candidates-again, a pattern similar to previous years. In 2008, 65% passed the exam with 38% of repeat candidates and 73% of first-time candidates successful (Fig. 2).

Other information from the 2009 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, 2009 exam results will only be compared with results from the 2007 and 2008 exams.

The open-book category of *Application of Coding and Staging Principles* received the highest average percent correct, 75%, compared to 78% in both 2007 and 2008. The two categories of *Registry Organization and Operations (ROO)* and *Abstracting, Coding, and Follow up*, with 74% average correct for both, were similar to 2008 (74% and 75% respectively) and 2007, when each received 72% correct. The lowest average percent correct, 71%, was found in the category of *Data Analysis and Interpretation*; an increase compared to the 64% attained in the 2007 and 68% in the 2008 exams (Fig. 3).

**Eligibility Route:** In 2009, 42% of candidate selected eligibility Routes 1 and 2 as compared to 52% in 2008 and 73% in 2007. Routes 3, 4, and 5 were selected by 58% in 2009 compared to 48% in 2008 and

27% in 2007. The majority of candidates taking the exam had at least an associate's degree. Breakdown of eligibility results for 2009 was Route 1, 26%; Route 2, 16%; Route 3, 32%; and Route 4, 24%. Route 5, 2%.

#### 2009 Eligibility Routes:

**Route 1:** two years' experience in the Cancer Registry field, two semesters of college-level courses in human anatomy and/or physiology, one semester medical science/biology plus college level course in medical terminology;

**Route 2:** completion of an NCRA-approved Cancer Information Management Associates degree or completion of NCRA-approved formal education program and completion of a minimum of an associates degree or equivalent;

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

**Route 5:** one year experience and a master's degree of higher

The percent of candidates passing the 2009 exams were Route 1, 49%; Route 2, 69%; Route 3, 69%; Route 4, 72%, and Route 5, 56% as compared to 2008 results: 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 2009, the average percent correct in each of three content areas was consistent with 2007 and 2008 results. However, in two categories, *Registry Organization and Operations* and the open-book *Application of Coding and Staging Principles*, results were lower (69% and 72% respectively) for Route 5 candidates than the other four Routes. The average percent correct score for *Data Analysis and Interpretation* increased for all routes except for Route 5 from 2007 to 2009 (Route 1 61% to 66%; Route 2 68% to 73%; Route 3 69% to 72% and Route 4 68% to 73%). Candidates in 2009 scored highest in *Abstracting, Coding and Follow-up* and *Application of Coding and Staging Principles* (both 78%) (Fig. 4).

**Employer:** The predominant primary employer of 2009 candidates continued to be the Hospital Registry at 76% compared to 67% in 2008 and 75% in 2007. The second-largest employer was central or state Cancer Registries at 15%, compared to 17% in 2008 and 14% in 2007 (Fig. 6).

**Country:** Seven percent (24) of the candidates were from other countries or U.S. territories: 5 from Puerto Rico, 8 from Canada, 3 from Saudi Arabia, 3 from South Korea, 3 from Singapore, and 2 from Jordan. In both 2008 and 2007, there were 26 candidates from other countries or U.S. territories. (Data not shown.)

**Age:** Candidates between the ages of 30 and 39 became the largest category at 25% an increase of 6% since 2008. This is the first time that candidates in this age range were constituted the largest number of test takers. Those between 40 and 49 decreased 3% (26% in 2008 and 28% in 2007). Candidates between 50 and 59 comprised 21% (18% in 2008). Only 5% were younger than 29 years of age and 1% 60 and older 16% did not indicate an age (Fig. 7).

**Experience:** The majority of candidates, 80% (68% in 2008; 69% in 2007), continue to have between one and five years of experience (Fig. 8). Candidates having over ten years experience, 3% of candidates, had the highest pass rate at 80% (81% in 2008) followed by those with less than one year with a pass rate of 77% (51% in 2008). Those with three to five years experience had a pass rate to 54% followed by six to ten years with 45% pass rate.

**Academic level:** Most (72%) candidates hold an associate's degree or higher, an increase from 56% in 2007 and 72% in 2008. Another 22% (31% in 2007; 25% in 2008) have had some college. This distribution is similar to that of past years (Fig. 9).

The passing score for the 2009 CTR exams was 70% or above. In general, the average total exam scores increased with years of education. Scores in other categories were: some college, 44%; associate's degree, 61%; bachelor's degree, 78%, and master's degree or doctorate, 87%. 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.

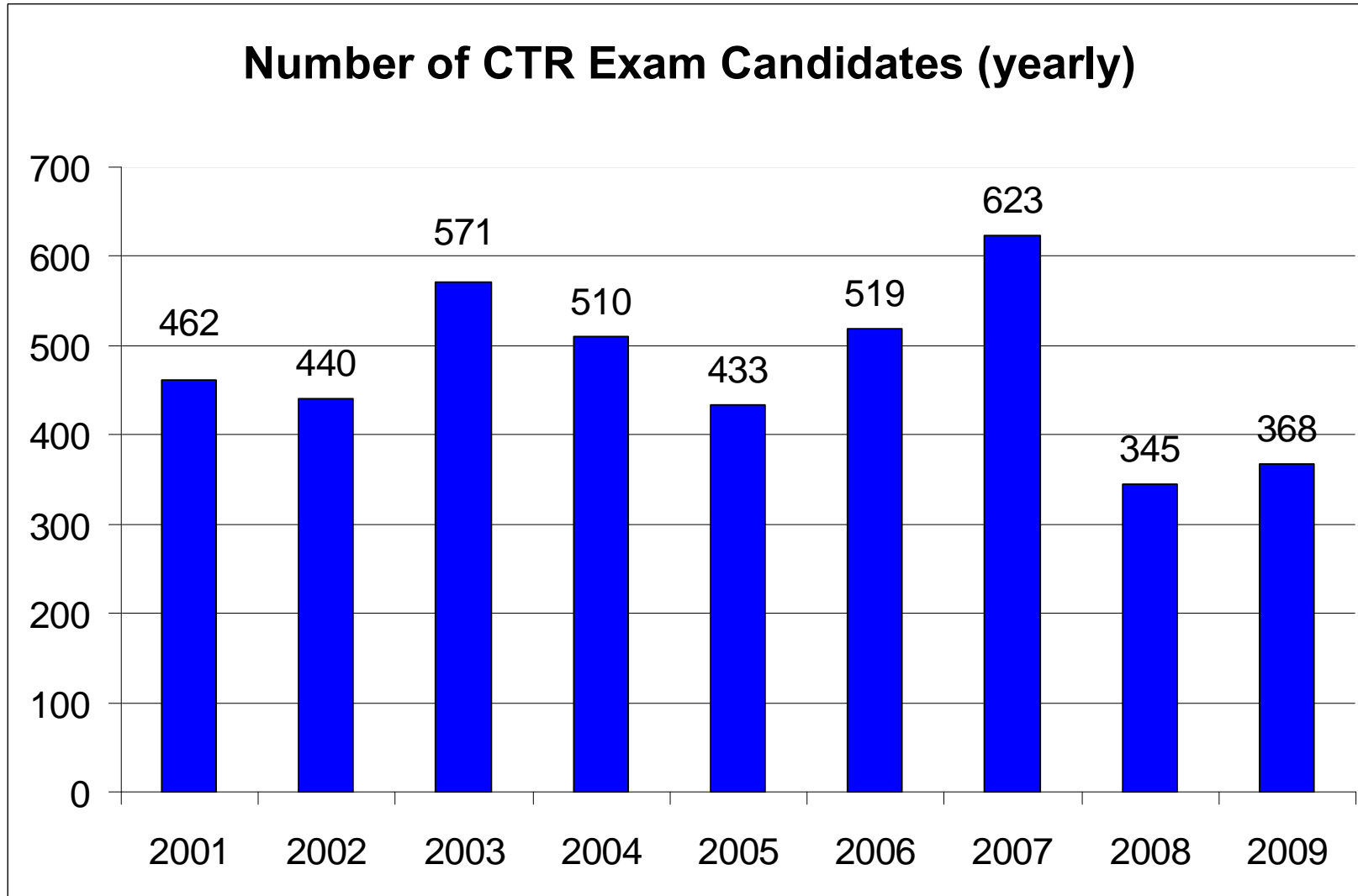


Fig 2.

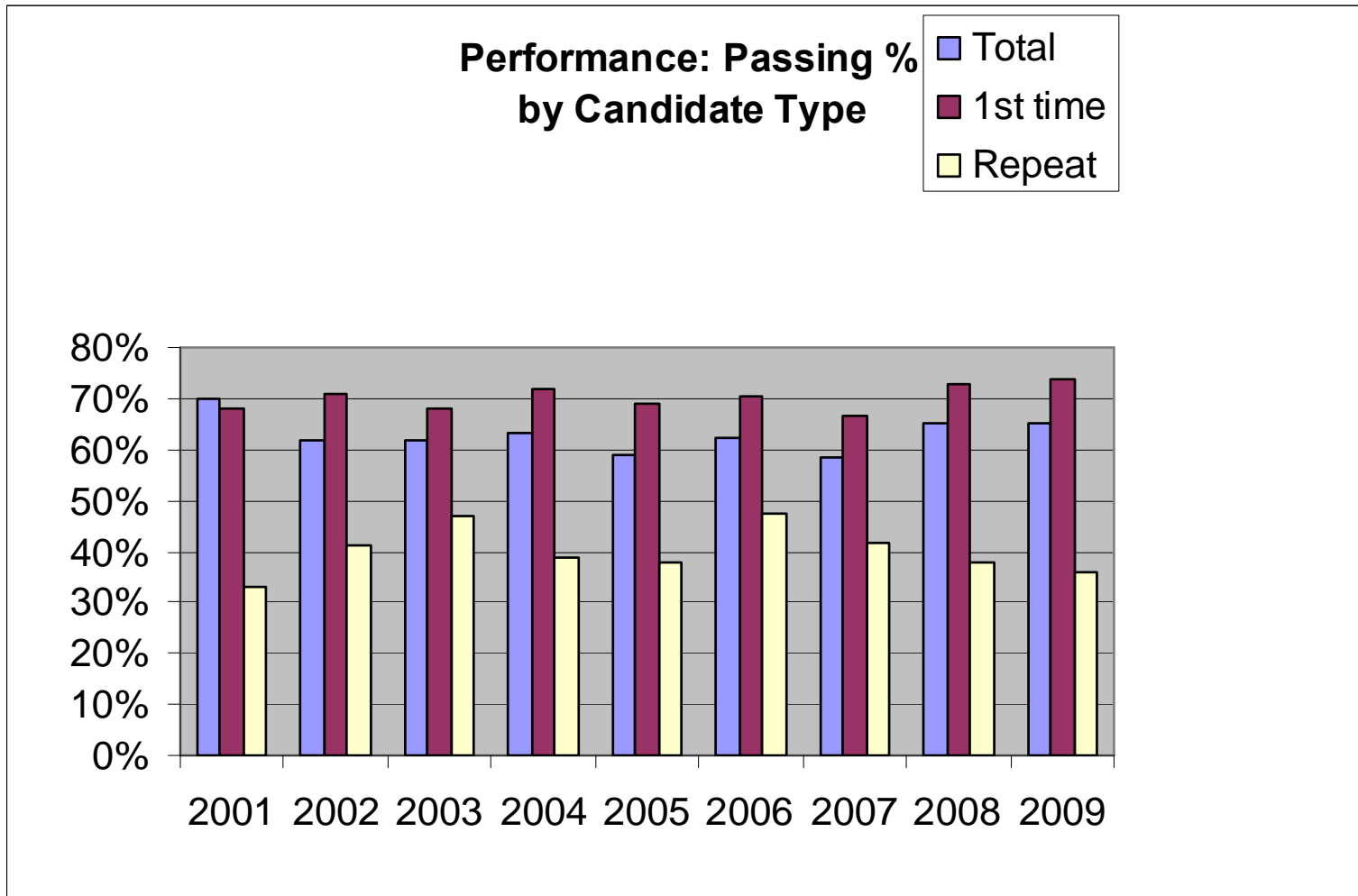


Fig. 3.

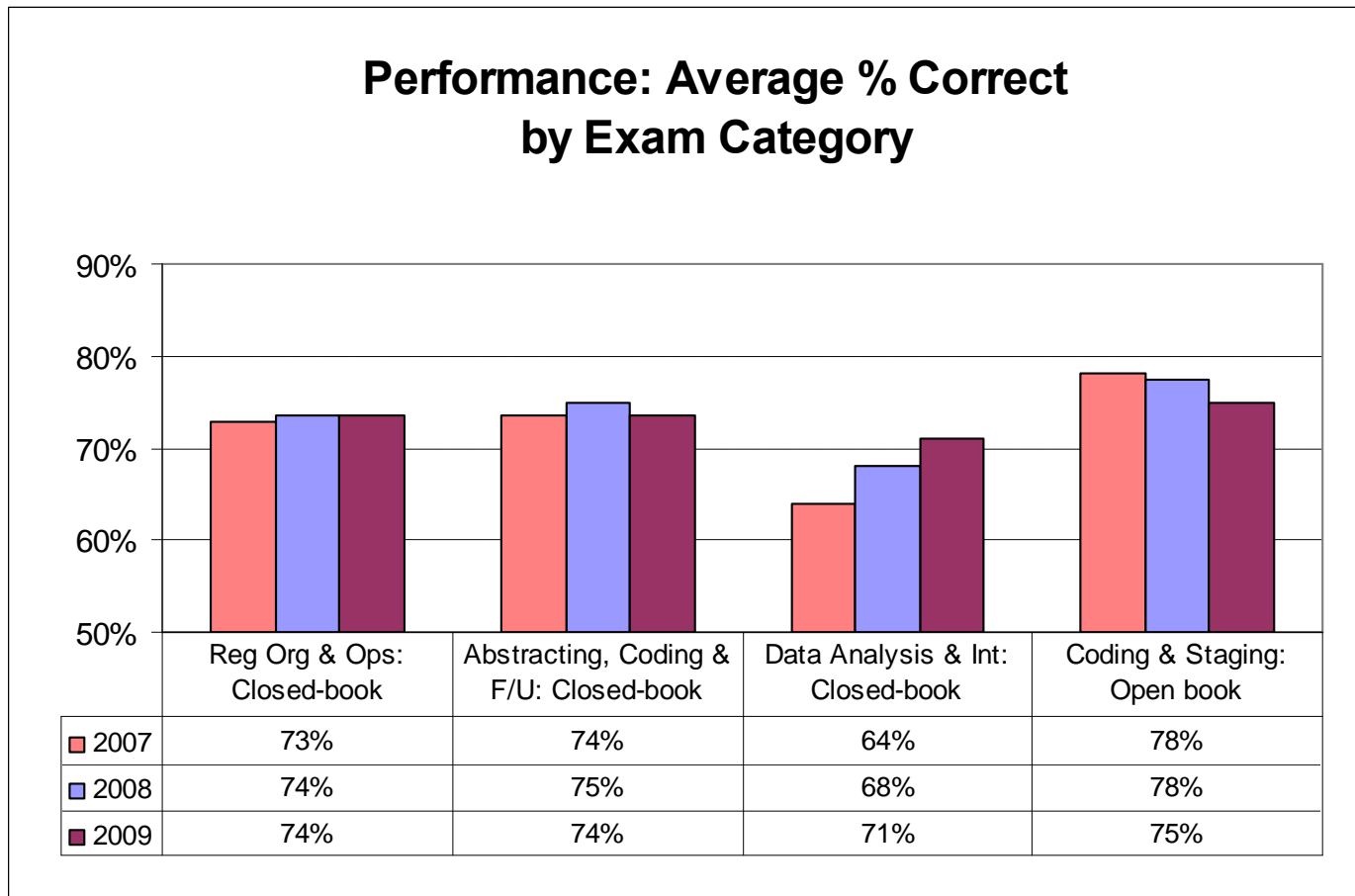


Fig.4

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

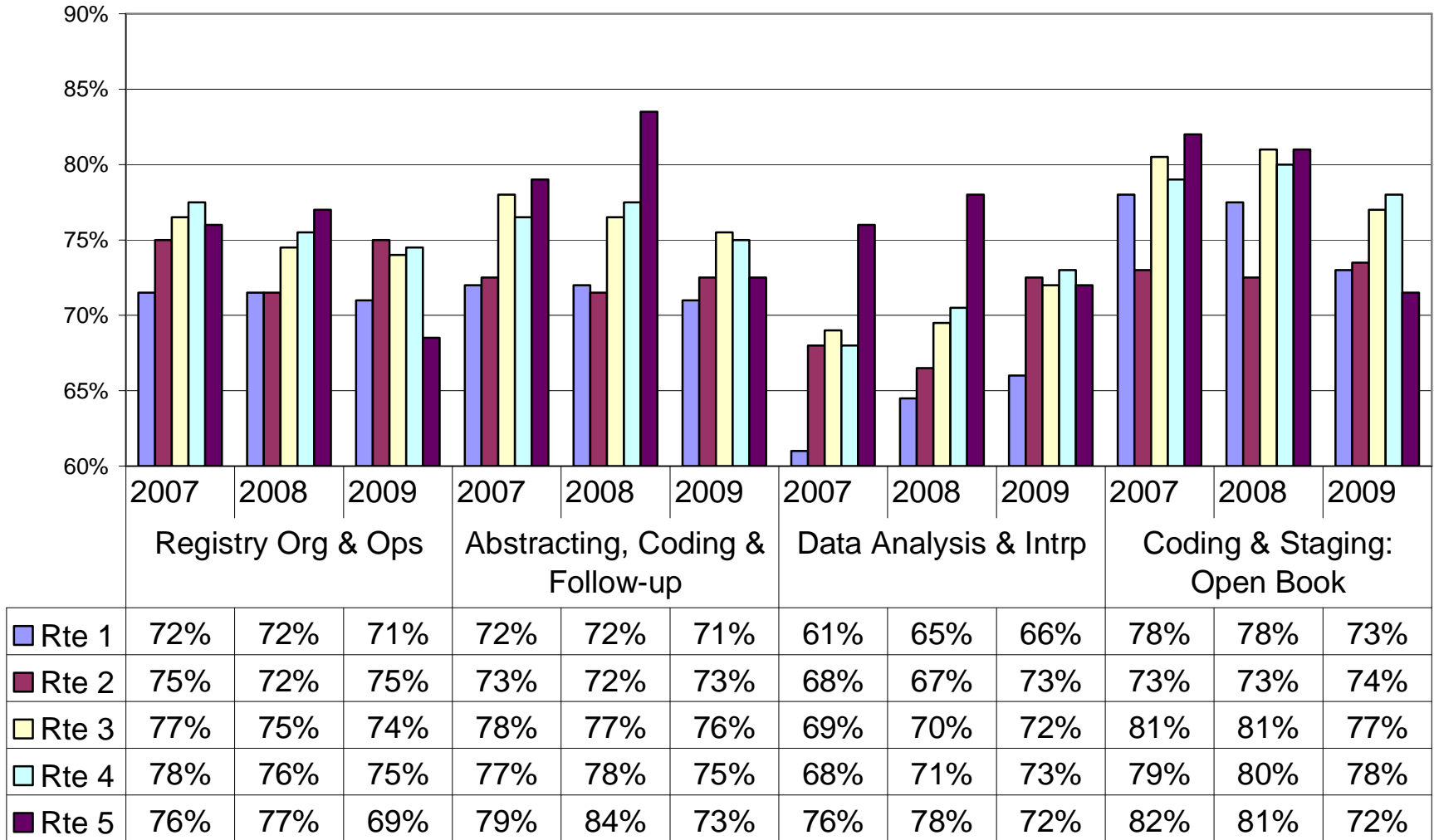


Fig 5.

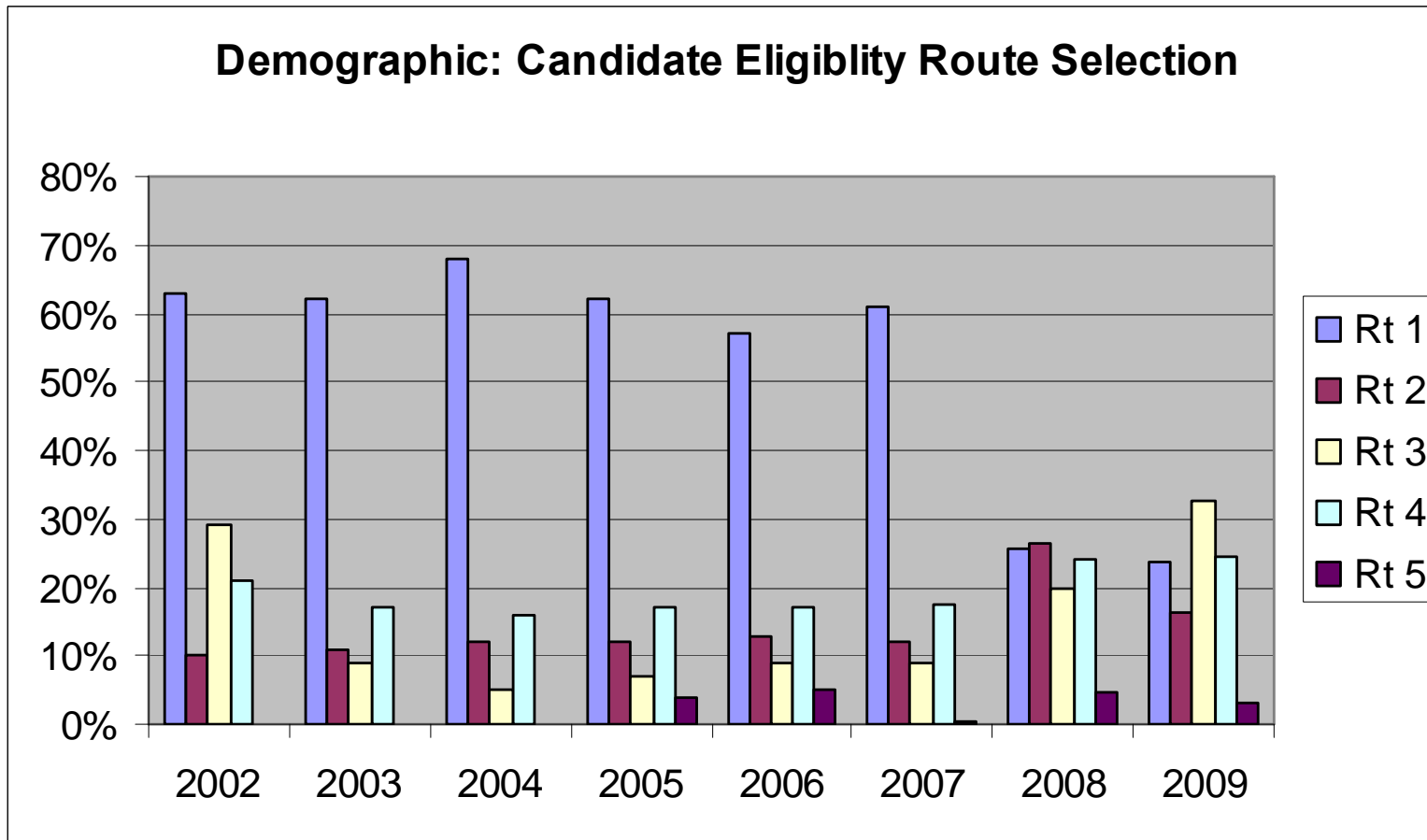


Fig. 6.

## Demographic: Candidates by Primary Place of Employment

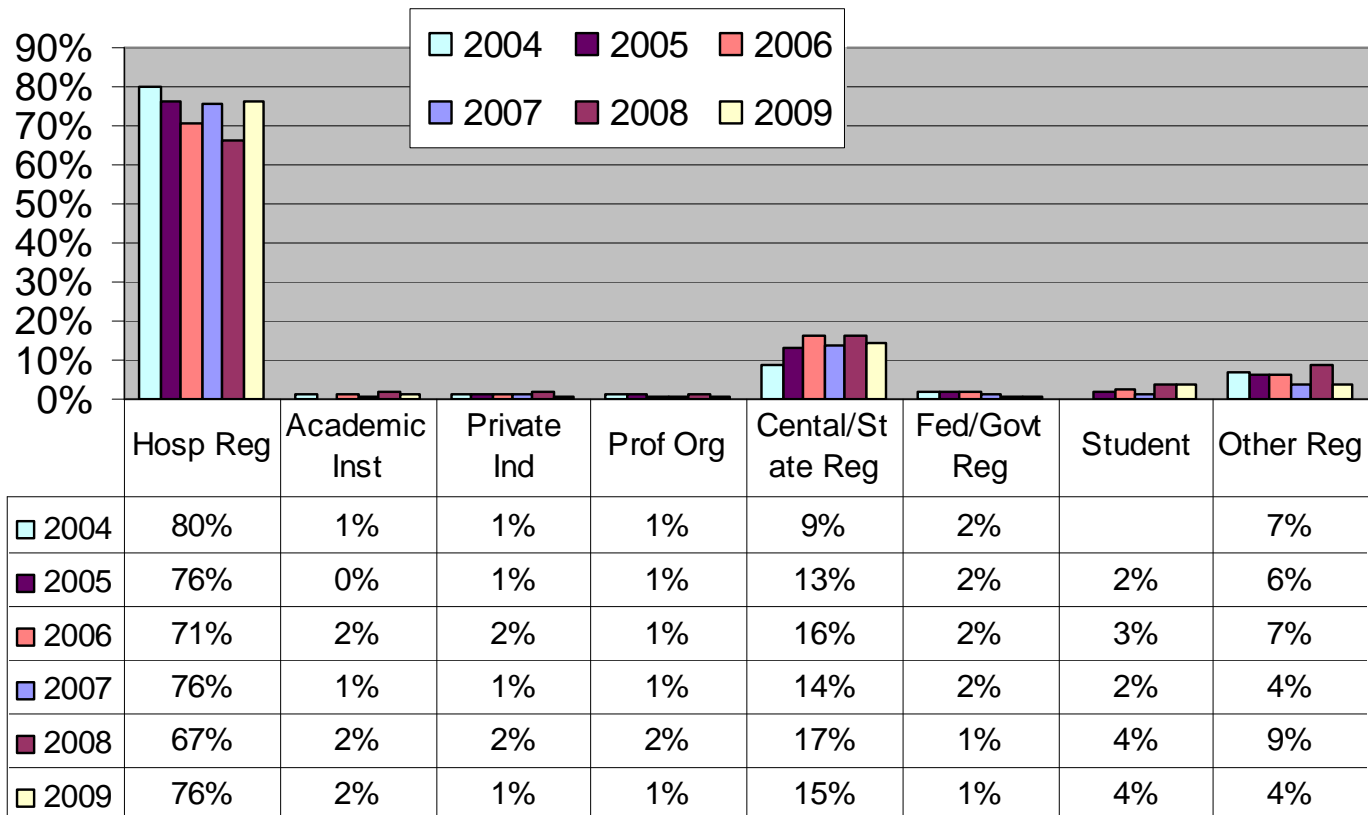


Fig. 7.

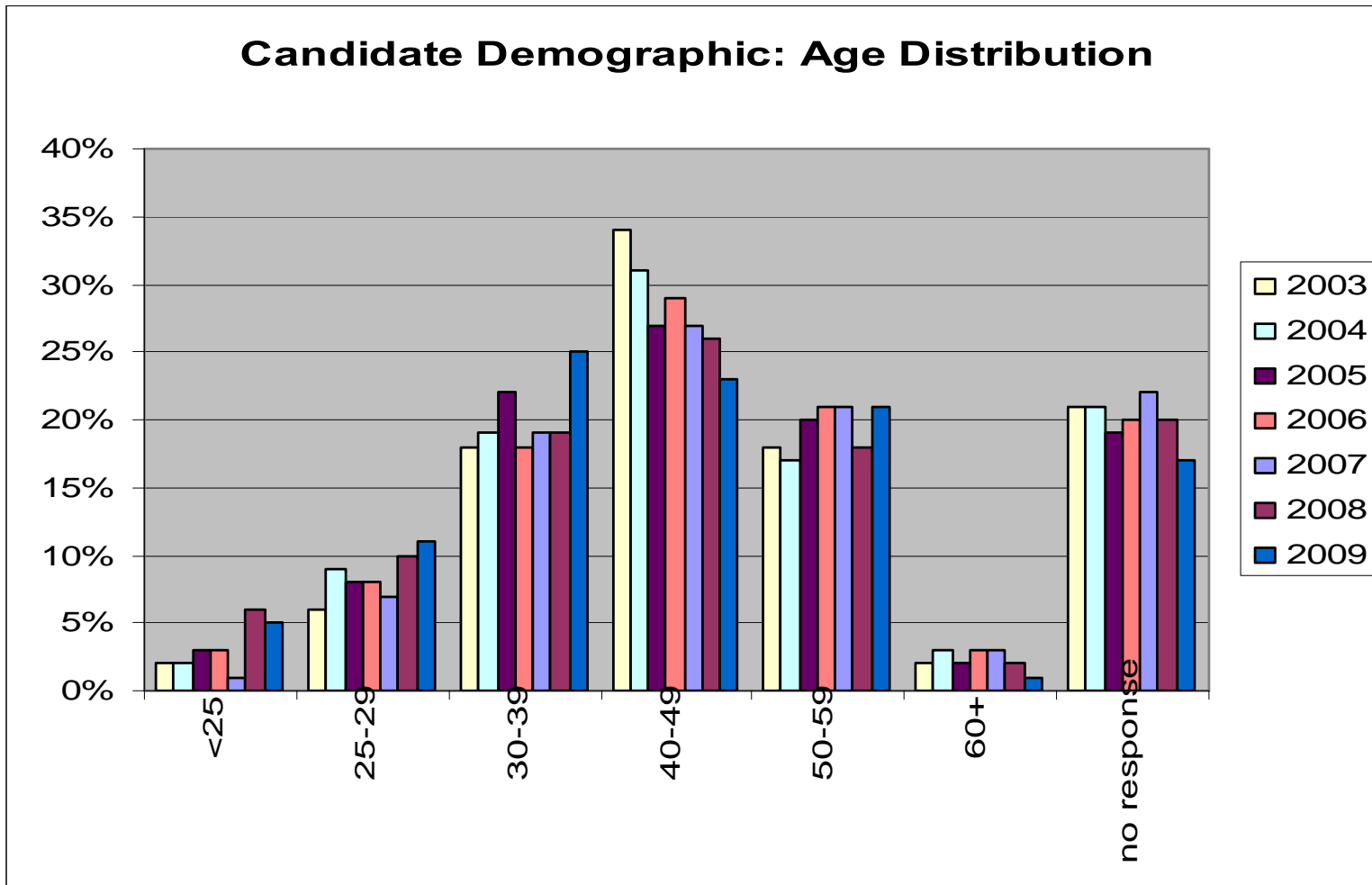


Fig. 8

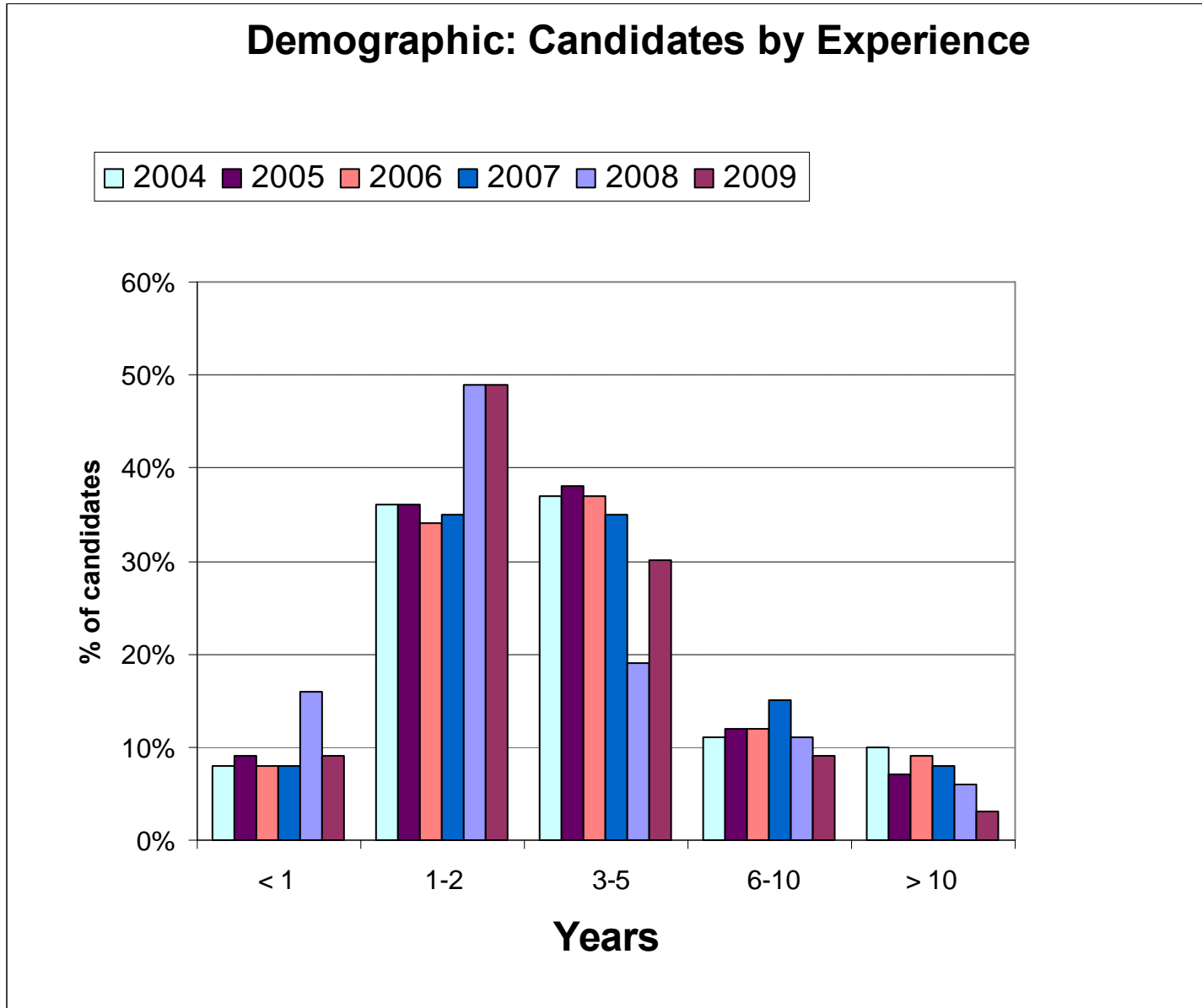


Fig. 9

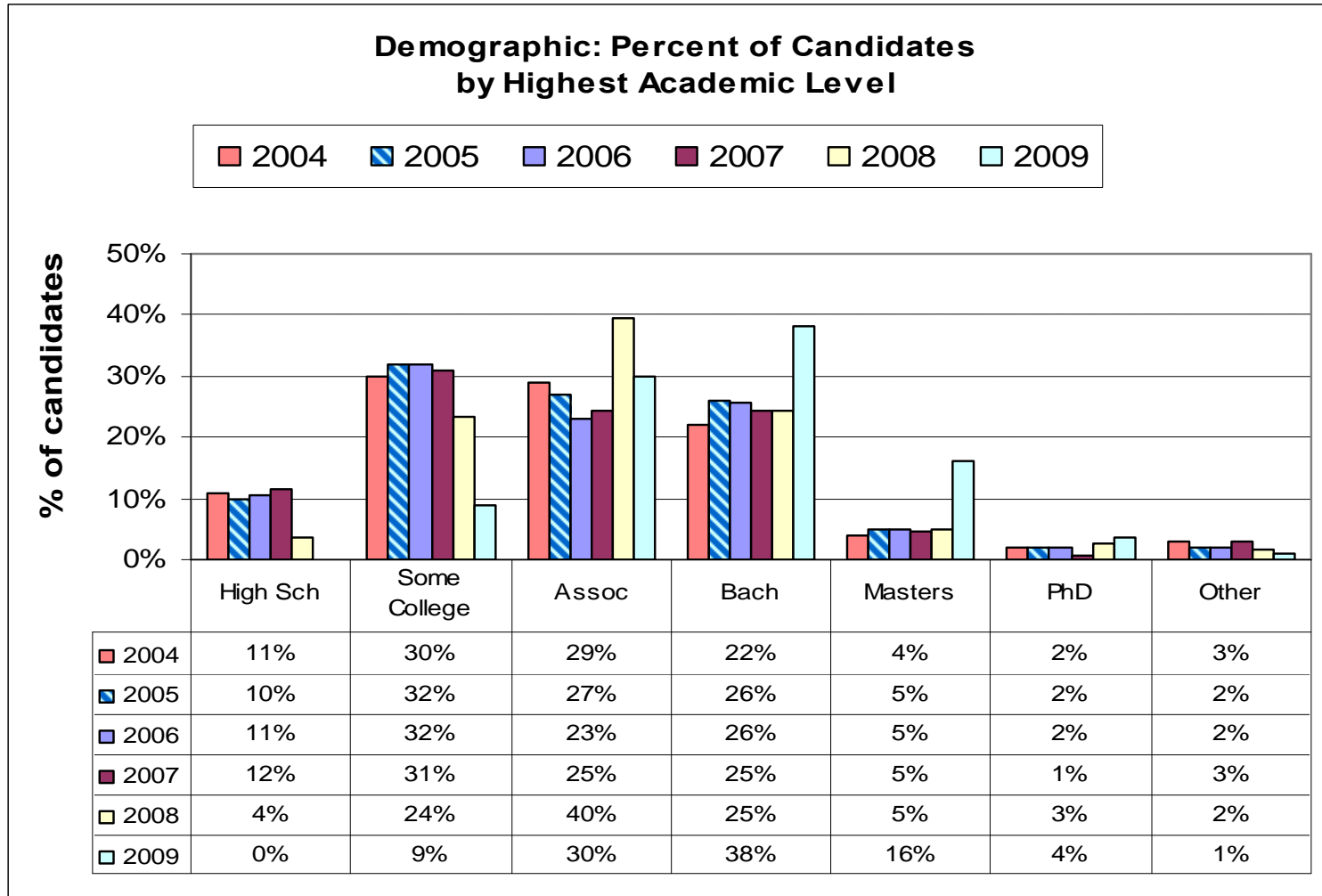
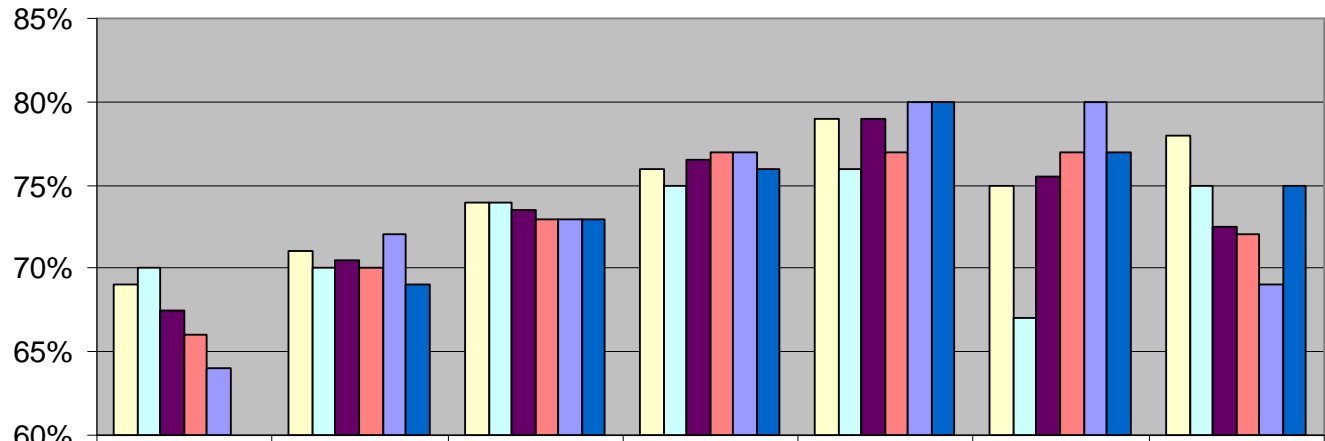


Fig. 10

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

■ 2004   
 ■ 2005   
 ■ 2006   
 ■ 2007   
 ■ 2008   
 ■ 2009



	High school	Some college	Associate's	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate	Other
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%
2009		69%	73%	76%	80%	77%	75%