

Haramaya University's Journey from 11 Graduates to over 127,000 Graduates

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Since its establishment in 1954, the university has awarded degrees to 127,045 graduates (100, 988 male and 26, 057 female) across various programs, including Diploma, Certificate, Bachelor's, Master's, Medical Specialty, Medical Sub-specialty, and PhD offered in both regular and non-regular modalities (see Table 1).

The university's graduate data reveals a remarkable story of growth and transformation over nearly seven decades. From humble beginnings in 1956/57 with just 11 bachelor's degree graduates in General Agriculture (Table 2), the university has expanded exponentially, awarding degrees to over 127,000 students up to 2024/25 (Figure 1). This growth reflects the university's strategic development, with significant milestones including diploma graduates in the 1970s, master's degrees in 1980/81, PhD in 2006/07, medical specialty in 2019/20, and medical sub-specialty in 2023/24 (Table 2). The most remarkable expansion occurred in the 2000s. This was true particularly between 2005 and 2015 when the number of graduates reached its peak, with the 2014/15 academic year seeing an unprecedented 8,947 graduates across all programs (Figure 2). This was mainly due to a large number of bachelor graduates from the distance education program at different centres across the country.

Bachelor's degrees have consistently formed the backbone of the university's graduation profile, accounting for 78.77% of all graduates of the university (Figure 1). The program has shown both remarkable growth and important shifts in gender representation. From being exclusively male-dominated in the 1950s and 1960s, the bachelor's program achieved significant gender parity in 2015/16 with 3,525 male and 2,526 female graduates (Figure 2). This trend reflects broader societal changes in access to higher education. Meanwhile, postgraduate programs tell a different, but equally important story. The 10,989 master's graduates (8.65% of all graduates) demonstrate the university's growing research capacity, particularly since 2010 when annual numbers consistently surpassed 400 graduates. The smaller but significant PhD graduates (471 graduates total) represent the university's maturation as a research institution, with an annual number of graduates growing from just 3 in 2006/07 to 65 in 2022/23 (Figure 1).

The data lends also an important insight into gender equality and program diversification. While male graduates still outnumber female graduates overall (79 % to 21 %), the proportion of female graduates has increased steadily across all programs. This progress is particularly evident in bachelor's degrees, where female representation grew from 0% in the 1950s to over 36.7 % in recent years (Figure 2). The university's recent graduates in medical specialties (2019/20) and sub-specialties (2023/24) show promise for addressing the specialized workforce in the health sector. Though diploma programs (12+2) represented 6.45 % of all graduates, the university stopped admitting students in the diploma (12+2) program in 2006/7, following growth in Higher Diploma Program (HDP) after 2004/05.

Looking at recent trends, the university appears to be entering a new phase of its development. While bachelor's degree numbers have fluctuated in the past five years (1,596-4,933 annually), master's degrees have maintained strong numbers (566-810 annually), and PhD programs have shown steady growth (Figure 1). The launching of medical specialty and sub-specialty programs adds a new dimension to the university's academic profile. These trends suggest the institution is maturing beyond its original focus on undergraduate education to become a research university with strengths in post-graduate programs. The data provides not just a record of past achievements but also a foundation for strategic planning as the university looks forward to maintaining its growth while addressing evolving educational needs and visible gender-based access disparity across all programs.

Several Haramaya University graduates have been making significant contributions to the country and beyond. Some of them have become distinguished scientists, political leaders, ministers, policymakers, institutional leaders, public intellectuals, researchers, innovators, technologists, diplomats, educators, scientists, bankers, entrepreneurs and environmental stewards among others. The university hopes that its recent graduates will carry with them the ambition to become great and work toward achieving greatness in their respective fields of study by expanding the frontiers of knowledge, challenging the artificial limits imposed on their capacity to transform their environment and striving to create a future shaped by wisdom, transformative

thinking and innovative attitudes. In the future too, Haramaya University will exert maximum efforts to produce graduates whose needs and desires surpass the struggle for mere material fulfilment and who are instead guided by a profound moral commitment to a holistic societal transformation. This is

because the country's hope as well as the hope of the entire world for progress largely lies in the transformative power of education and its role in cultivating moral imagination, which is an unstoppable driving force in the pursuit of knowledge, intellectual advancement and innovative worldview.

Table 1: Graduate Statistics at Haramaya University (1957–February 2025) by Gender and Academic Level

Diploma (12+2)			Bachelor			Other Diploma			Specialty in Medicine			Sub-specialty in Medicine			Masters			PhD			Grand Total		
M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
6,909	1,284	8,193	77,906	22,162	100,068	5,920	1,280	7,200	101	16	117	6	—	7	9,723	1,266	10,989	423	48	47	100,988	26,057	1,27,045

Note : Masters include MSc, MA, MBA, LLM, & MED

: Bachelor includes BSc, BA, LLB, Bed, MD, DVM, & Bpharm

: Other Diploma includes HDP, PGDT, PGDSL, PGCSSS, PGCPSS, & PGDHET

The overall graduate count, not including June 2015 graduates.

Table 2: The University's first graduates categorized by Academic level, year, and field of study

Level of Study	Graduation Academic year	Field of study	Sex		
			M	F	T
PhD	2006/07 (1999EC)	Plant Pathology	2	0	2
		Plant Breeding	1	0	1
Master	1980/81(1973EC)	Plant Science	6	0	6
		Animal Science	5	1	6
		Agricultural Economics	1	0	1
		General Agriculture	11	0	11
Bachelor	1956/57(1949EC)	Surgery	3	0	3
		Internal Medicine	5	0	5
		Pediatrics	3	2	5
Medical Sub-specialty	2023/24AY (2016EC)	Gynecologic Oncology	2	0	2
		Maternal Fetal Medicine	2	0	2
		Urogynecology	1	1	2
Diploma (12+2)	1969/70 (1962EC)	Home Economics	1	7	8
Higher Diploma	1997 (1989EC)	Higher Diploma Program (HDP)	19	2	21

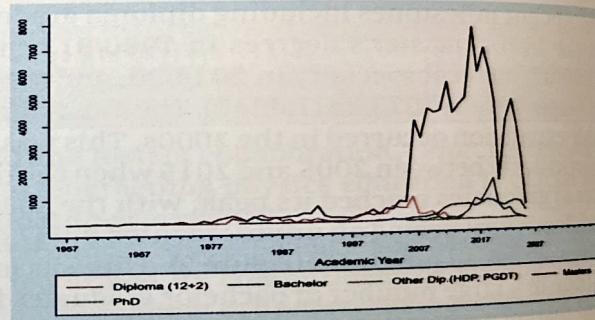


Figure 1: Trends in HU Graduates by Academic Level (1957- February 2025)

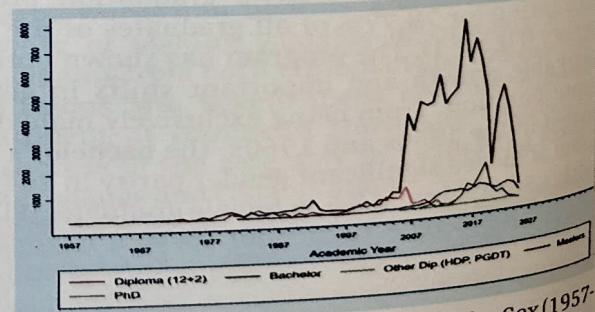


Figure 2: Trends in HU Graduates by Sex (1957- February 2025)