Yale University
Milestones in the Education of Women at Yale

Year | Event
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1701 | Charter of the Collegiate School passed by the General Court of the Colony of Connecticut, “of the founding, suitably endowing & ordering a Collegiate School … wherein Youth may be instructed in the Arts & Sciences…through the blessing of Almighty God.”
1783 | Lucinda Foot, age twelve, examined by President Ezra Stiles and found “that were it not for her sex, she would be considered fit to be admitted as a student in the freshman class of Yale University.”
1869 | Yale School of the Fine Arts, the first coeducational school at Yale, opened.
1886 | First woman received a degree from the Yale Law School, Alice Rufie Blake Jordan. As she applied using initials, it was assumed she was a man. The rules for admission were then revised, and women were not officially admitted until 1919.
1891 | The degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts conferred for the first time. The recipient was Josephine Miles Lewis.
1892 | Women admitted to the Yale Graduate School.
1894 | First group of women awarded Doctor of Philosophy degrees from Yale. At the 1894 Commencement, seven of the twenty-one Ph.D. degree recipients were women.
1905 | First woman "Assistant in Instruction” was Florence Bingham Kinne, in Pathology Department.
1910 | First honorary degree awarded to a woman, Jane Addams.
1916 | Women admitted to the Yale School of Medicine.
1916 | First woman "Lecturer” was Anna Maria Rhoda Erdmann, in Biology Department.
1919 | School of Law officially enrolls women.
1920 | First law degree awarded to a woman after official enrollment, Shirley M. Moore.
1920 | First medical degree awarded to a woman, Louise Farnam Wilson.
1920 | First woman professor (assistant) was Catherine Turner Bryce in Elementary Education.
1922 | Degree of Doctor of Public Health (first awarded in 1920) awarded to a woman, Helen R. Gage.
1923 | Yale School of Nursing established. Annie Goodrich appointed the first female dean at Yale.
1923 | Drama School opened as a department of the School of the Fine Arts and immediately accepted women.
1926 | First Yale degree awarded to an African American woman, Otelia Cromwell, Doctor of Philosophy.
1934 | Women admitted to the Yale Divinity School.
1952 | First woman received tenure, Bessie Lee Gambrill in the Department of Education.
1959 | First woman received tenure in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.
1965 | Women faculty members appointed fellows of the residential colleges for the first time.
1966 | Women admitted to the School of Forestry.
1968 | “Coeducation Plan” approved by the faculty.
1969 | 230 women entered the freshman class and 358 women transfer students registered in Yale College.
1970 | First Women’s Studies course taught, “Women in a Male Society.”
1970 | First woman residential college dean appointed (in Morse and Saybrook Colleges).
1971 | First women named to serve on the Yale Corporation, Hanna Gray and Marian Wright Edelman.
1971 | First woman master of a residential college appointed, Katherine Lustman.
1971 | First women (transfer students) graduated from Yale College.
1973 | First class of women undergraduates graduated, 177 of the original 230 female freshmen.
1974 | First woman appointed officer of the University (provost), Hanna Gray.
1977 | First woman to serve as University president (acting), Hanna Gray.
1981 | Women’s Studies major approved by the faculty.
1991 | First woman appointed dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Judith Rodin.
2002 | First artist and first Asian American woman to serve on the Yale Corporation, Maya Lin.

Source: Judith Schiff, Sterling Memorial Library, Manuscripts and Archives

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Enrollment Milestones in the Education of Yale Women
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