



## Employment prospects: Diploma beats dropout

Most people know that when it comes to employment, opportunities are better for high school graduates than for high school dropouts. But if you're still skeptical, just take a look at data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

BLS data show that finishing high school led to greater rates of employment for youths who were 20 years old in 2000–05. Fifty-five percent of 20-year-old high school dropouts were employed, compared with 71 percent of high school graduates who had never enrolled in college.

More education also led to steadier work. High school graduates not enrolled in college were employed, on average, 78 percent of the year; in contrast, high school dropouts were employed 55 percent of the year.

These results are from the BLS National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997, an annual survey of about 9,000 young people who were first interviewed in 1997.

For more information about this survey, write to the BLS National Longitudinal Survey Program, 2 Massachusetts Avenue NE., Suite 4945, Washington, DC 20212; call (202) 691-6378; or view the report online at [www.bls.gov/nls/nlsy97.htm](http://www.bls.gov/nls/nlsy97.htm).

## Putting learning into context

Working in today's fast-paced job market often requires a wide array of skills. Luckily, the States' Career Clusters Initiative has developed a model to meet the challenge of preparing workers.

Career clusters are groups of occupations that require the same types of technical knowledge. Well-rounded training in a career cluster provides the skills necessary for success in a variety of related jobs.

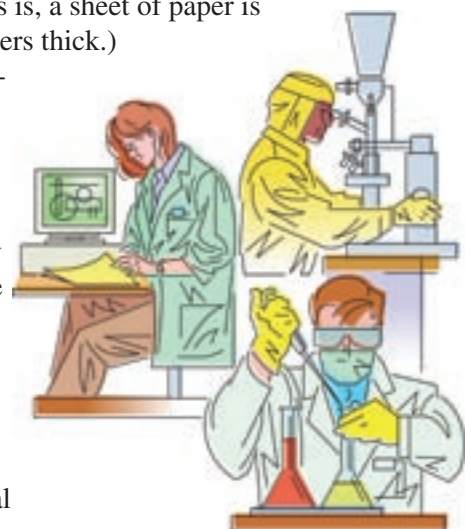
The 16 different clusters encompass all occupational codes identified by the Occupational Information Network (O\*NET) and the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system. Cluster topics include career fields

## Big work in a tiny world

Imagine building the world's fastest computer chip, atom by atom. If you're interested in science and cutting-edge technology, then nanotechnology might be the career field for you.

Nanoscientists manipulate materials at what is called the nanoscale, from about 1 to 100 nanometers. (To illustrate how tiny this is, a sheet of paper is 100,000 nanometers thick.)

A material's macroscopic properties—such as magnetism, heat conductivity, or reflectivity—may be different at the nanoscale. Scientists hope their work results in the development of new building materials, medical equipment, and numerous other advances.



For more information about training in nanotechnology, write to the National Nanotechnology Coordination Office, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Stafford II, Room 405, Arlington, Virginia 22230, or browse online at [www.nano.gov](http://www.nano.gov). (Also see "Careers for scientists—and others—in scientific research and development," in the summer 2005 *OOQ* and available online at [www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/2005/summer/art04.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/2005/summer/art04.pdf).)

such as information technology, manufacturing, and finance.

Each cluster has two levels of technical expertise. The foundation level identifies all skills shared between the occupations within a cluster. The pathway level details more specific knowledge sets necessary for each subgroup.

For more information, write to the States' Career Clusters Initiative, 1500 Seventh Avenue West, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074; call (405) 743-5103; or browse online at [www.careerclusters.org](http://www.careerclusters.org).

## Free info on Federal aid for college

Students concerned about rising tuition can look to the Federal Government for help. A new brochure from the U.S. Department of Education answers students' questions about paying for school.

The brochure describes three Federal loans available to students: Stafford, PLUS, and consolidation loans.



Stafford loans provide low-interest money to students. PLUS (Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students) low-interest loans help parents pay for their children's education. Consolidation loans are for students or parents seeking to combine multiple Federal loans into one monthly payment.

To receive the brochure, write to the U.S. Department of Education's Publications Office, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, Maryland 20794; call toll free, 1 (877) 4ED-PUBS (433-7827); or visit online at [www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov/federalaidfirst](http://www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov/federalaidfirst).

Federal student loans—not including the PLUS loans—range from \$3,500 to \$10,500 each year for undergraduates and up to \$20,500 a year for graduate students. To be eligible for a Federal student loan, students must complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), available online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

## Internships on the rise

The most important step toward getting a job after college may come while you're still in school. Results from recent National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) surveys show that companies are increasingly using internship programs to identify new employees.

In 2007, according to NACE, nearly 70 percent of interns received job offers from their internship employer, up from 57 percent in 2001. NACE data also show that students participating in paid internships may be gaining more than just experience: Undergraduate and graduate interns in 2007 were offered average hourly wages of \$16.33 and \$25, respectively. And as internship programs become more vital for employee recruitment, the number of paid internships offered by employers is likely to continue increasing.

These results are from two NACE surveys. For more information about these or other NACE studies, write to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, 62 Highland Avenue, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18017; call

toll free, 1 (800) 544-5272; or visit its Web site, [www.naceweb.org](http://www.naceweb.org). (To learn more about pursuing an internship, see "Internships: Previewing a profession," in the summer 2006 *OOQ* online at [www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/2006/summer/art02.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/2006/summer/art02.pdf).)

