Highlights

- **The U.S. workforce in 1999 included 11 million college-educated individuals with either science and engineering (S&E) degrees or S&E occupations.** The vast majority (10.5 million) held at least one college degree in a science or engineering field. About 31 percent (3.3 million) of the 10.5 million S&E degree-holders in the workforce were also employed in S&E occupations. Regardless of occupation, more than three-quarters of those whose highest degree was in S&E said their work was related to their degree.
- **Since 1980, nonacademic S&E jobs grew at more than four times the rate of the U.S. labor force as a whole.** Nonacademic S&E jobs increased by 159 percent between 1980 and 2000—an average annual growth rate of 4.9 percent compared with 1.1 percent for the entire labor force.
- **The total number of retirements among S&E-degreed workers will increase dramatically over the next 20 years, barring large changes in retirement rates.** More than half of S&E-degreed workers are age 40 or older, and the 40–44 age group is nearly four times as large as the 60–64 age group.
- **Despite increasing retirements, the S&E labor force is likely to increase for some time, albeit at a slower rate.** The rate of S&E-degreed workers reaching retirement ages will remain less than the rate of S&E degree production for many years.
- **Labor market conditions for those with S&E degrees improved during the 1990s.** Holders of S&E bachelor's degrees had lower unemployment rates and were significantly more likely to be doing work related to their degree in 1999 compared with 1993.
- **Labor market conditions for new Ph.D. recipients have been good by most conventional measures.** S&E doctorate-holders are both employed and doing work relevant to their training. Employment gains have come in the nonacademic sectors. In most fields, a small percentage of recent Ph.D. recipients are obtaining tenure-track positions.
- **In April 1999, 27.0 percent of doctorate-holders in S&E in the U.S. labor force were foreign born.** The lowest percentage of foreign-born doctorate-holders was in psychology (7.6 percent), and the highest was in civil engineering (51.5 percent). About one-fifth (19.9 percent) of those with master's degrees in S&E and about one-tenth (9.9 percent) of those with bachelor's degrees in S&E were foreign born. The largest percentages of these degrees were in electrical engineering (18.3 percent), civil engineering (16.1 percent), and computer sciences (15.2 percent).
- **High-skill temporary-visa migration is becoming an important factor in many economies.** In 1999, 240,936 workers entered Japan in high-skill visa categories—a 75 percent increase since 1992. Germany has recently introduced a high-skill temporary visa program.
- **The Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts faster growth in S&E occupations than in any others.** From 2000 to 2010, S&E occupations are projected to increase by 47 percent compared with 15 percent for all occupations. Although a projected 82 percent increase in computer-related S&E occupations will almost certainly dominate this expansion, most major S&E occupational groups are projected to show above-average growth.