

<http://stats.bls.gov/ocohome.htm>

# GRAB

## Handbook's greatest hits

The number of page requests at the 1998-99 *Occupational Outlook Handbook* website exceeds a million a month. Which occupations are drawing them in? BLS tracks the number of "hits" each occupation receives per month, and some consistently come out ahead.

In 1998, five occupations—computer scientists and systems analysts; administrative services managers; kindergarten, elementary, and secondary school teachers; computer programmers; and lawyers and judges—were among the 10 most popular every month. Four occupations—psychologists; accountants and auditors; marketing, advertising, and public relations managers; and biological and medical scientists—placed in the top 15. Two occupations—physicians and registered nurses—missed being among the top 15 only once during the year, placing 16<sup>th</sup> in those instances.

Visit the *Handbook's* website at <http://www.bls.gov/ocohome.htm> to learn more about your favorite occupations. Maybe they'll be among next year's greatest hits.



## Jobs with the highest earnings grow fastest

Jobs in occupations and industries with the highest earnings grew more than 10 percent between 1996 and 1998. That's about twice as fast as those in the middle earnings group and three times as fast as the lowest earnings group.

To reach this conclusion, BLS economists divided employment into occupation-industry pairings—for example, sales workers in the retail industry and managers in the construction industry. They then grouped the pairs into high, middle, or low earnings categories. The high earnings group grew steadily from 1996 to 1998, but growth in the middle and low earnings groups slowed in 1998.

The authors of the study, William Goodman and Timothy Considine, contend that these differences in job growth were caused, in part, by economic difficulties overseas. "Job growth slows during crises overseas" appeared in the February issue of the *Monthly Labor Review*. The issue is in many college and university libraries and is available for \$8.50 from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402; (202) 512-1800. The article also is available online via the Review's website at <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/mlrhome.htm>.

## Free information on biology careers

If you want your life's work to be in the life sciences, the Smithsonian Institution can help. The National Museum of Natural History has compiled a list of free or inexpensive career guidance materials published by Federal agencies and professional associations. The leaflets, brochures, articles, and books discuss careers in general biology and many specialties, including zoology, biochemistry, parasitology, and scientific illustration.

For a free copy of "Sources of Career Information on Careers in Biology, Conservation, and Oceanography," visit the Smithsonian website at <http://www.si.edu/resource/faq/nmnh/careers.htm> or call (202) 357-2700.

## Suggestions welcome

Do you have an item for the Grab Bag? Send it to Olivia Crosby, PSB 2135, 2 Massachusetts Ave. NE., Washington, DC 20212. Phone (202) 606-5716; fax (202) 606-5745; e-mail: [Crosby\\_O@bls.gov](mailto:Crosby_O@bls.gov)

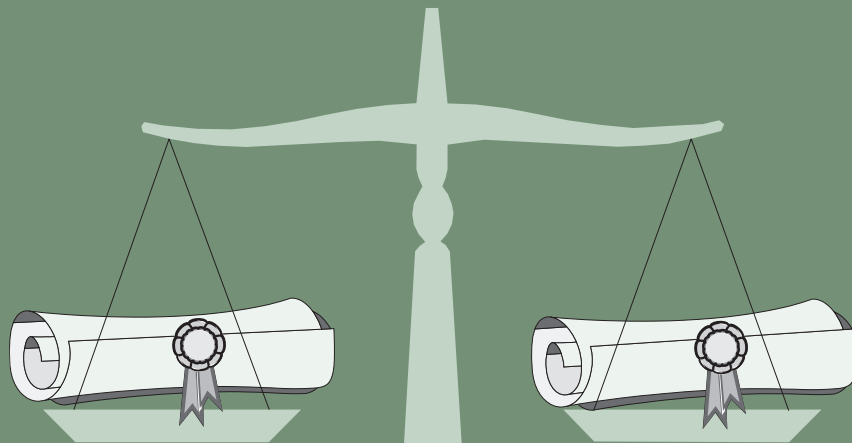
# BAG

## Employers testing basic skills

Many employers rely on written examinations to weed out unskilled applicants. Thirty-five percent of large and mid-sized companies test applicants' math skills, and 31 percent test literacy, according to a survey conducted in January by the American Management Association.

The survey also reports that more than one-third of applicants fail these exams because they lack the reading, writing, or math skills needed to do the job. Although some companies will hire and train applicants who fail, over 85 percent will not.

For additional survey information, visit the Association's website at <http://www.amanet.org/research> or write to the Association at 1601 Broadway, New York, NY 16019. (See Nancy Saffer's articles in the summer OQ to learn more about the connection between high school basics and careers.)



## G.E.D. research summarized

How helpful is the General Educational Development (G.E.D.) credential? According to a research synopsis published by the Department of Education, studies have concluded that:

- ◆ 50 to 65 percent of G.E.D. recipients go on to receive additional education
- ◆ In postsecondary schools, G.E.D. recipients earn grades similar to those of high school graduates but are less likely than high school graduates to complete a program of study
- ◆ G.E.D. recipients earn wages that are 5 to 11 percent higher than those of high school dropouts but lower than those of high school graduates.

The synopsis describes the purpose of the G.E.D. and summarizes G.E.D. research. To order a free copy of *Research Synthesis: Educational and Labor Market Performance of G.E.D. Recipients*, call 1 (800) 4-EDPUBS (433-7827).

## School-to-work pays for students and employers

School-to-work programs achieve quantifiable results for students and employers, according to the newest publication by the National Employer Leadership Council. *Intuitions Confirmed: The bottom line return on school-to-work investment for students and employers* summarizes the results of regional studies.

The report concludes that school-to-work students have higher grades, improved attendance, and a better chance of attending college. These students are more likely to take challenging math classes—an important step toward college study. After graduation, their former mentors often recruit them.

Employers, too, receive measurable benefits. Eight Leadership Council companies conducted cost-benefit analyses of their programs. All but one found that financial benefits, such as reduced recruitment and training costs and the value of the work students performed, outweighed costs. Other benefits cited but not quantified included improved employee morale and favorable publicity.

To learn more, visit the Council's website at <http://www.nelc.org>.

