

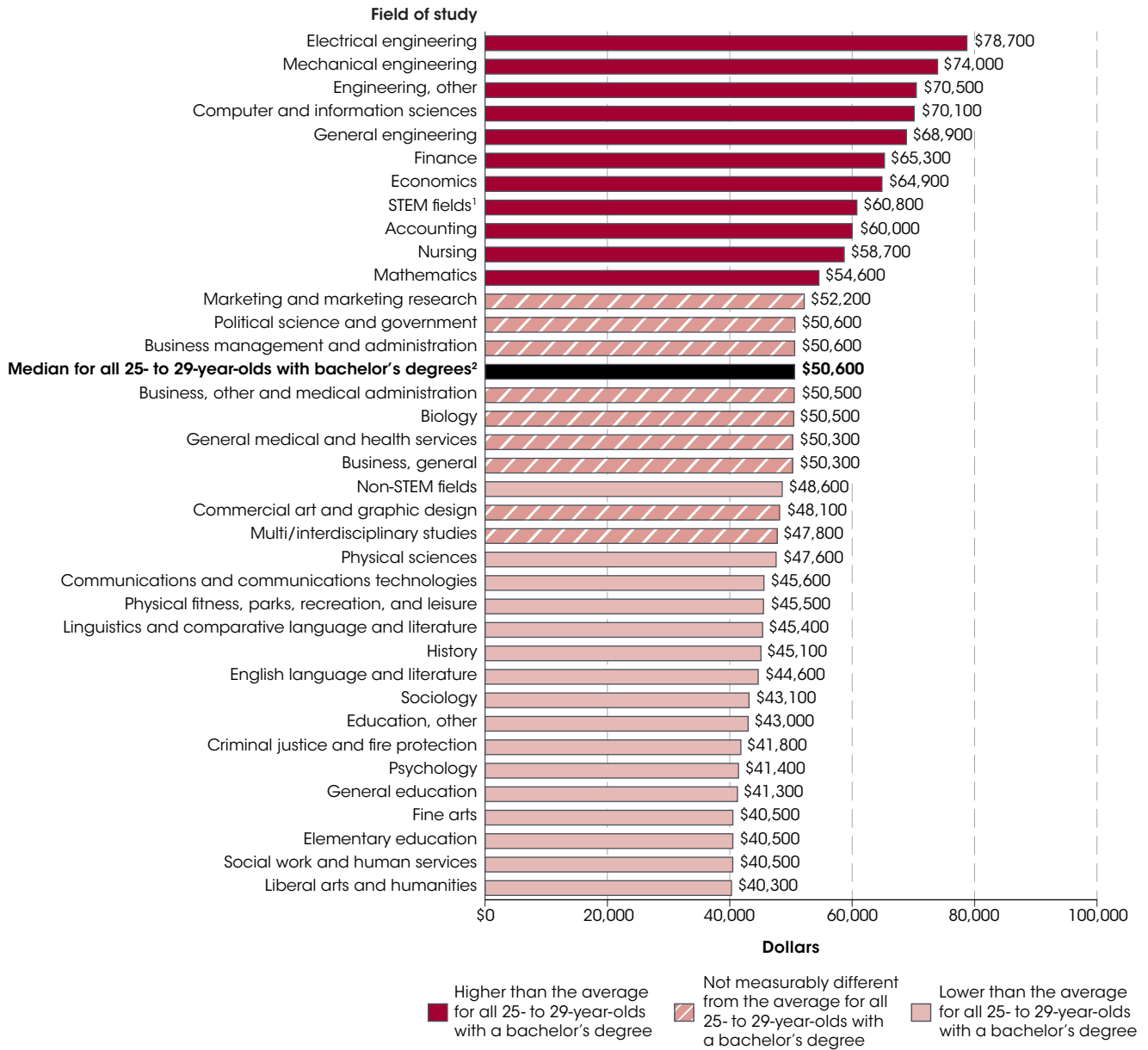
Employment Outcomes of Bachelor's Degree Holders

The average unemployment rate for 25- to 29-year old bachelor's degree holders was lower in 2018 than in 2010 (2.9 vs. 5.6 percent). However, the median annual earnings of these 25- to 29-year-olds, in constant 2018 dollars, were not measurably different between these two years.

In 2018, some 35 percent of 25- to 29-year-olds had earned bachelor's degrees. This indicator examines the median annual earnings and unemployment rate¹ of these 25- to 29-year old bachelor's degree holders by undergraduate field of study,² both for individual fields separately and for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields combined.³ Across all fields in 2018, the median annual earnings of those who were full-time year-round workers were \$50,600,⁴ and the average

unemployment rate was 2.9 percent. In 2018, the median annual earnings of those with bachelor's degrees in STEM fields (\$60,800) were higher than the median annual earnings of all bachelor's degree holders, while the average unemployment rate for those with bachelor's degrees in STEM fields (3.2 percent) was not measurably different from the average unemployment rate for all bachelor's degree holders.⁵

Figure 1. Median annual earnings of 25- to 29-year-old bachelor's degree holders, by selected fields of study: 2018



¹ "STEM fields" include biological and biomedical sciences, computer and information sciences, engineering and engineering technologies, mathematics and statistics, and physical sciences and science technologies.

² Includes fields not separately shown.

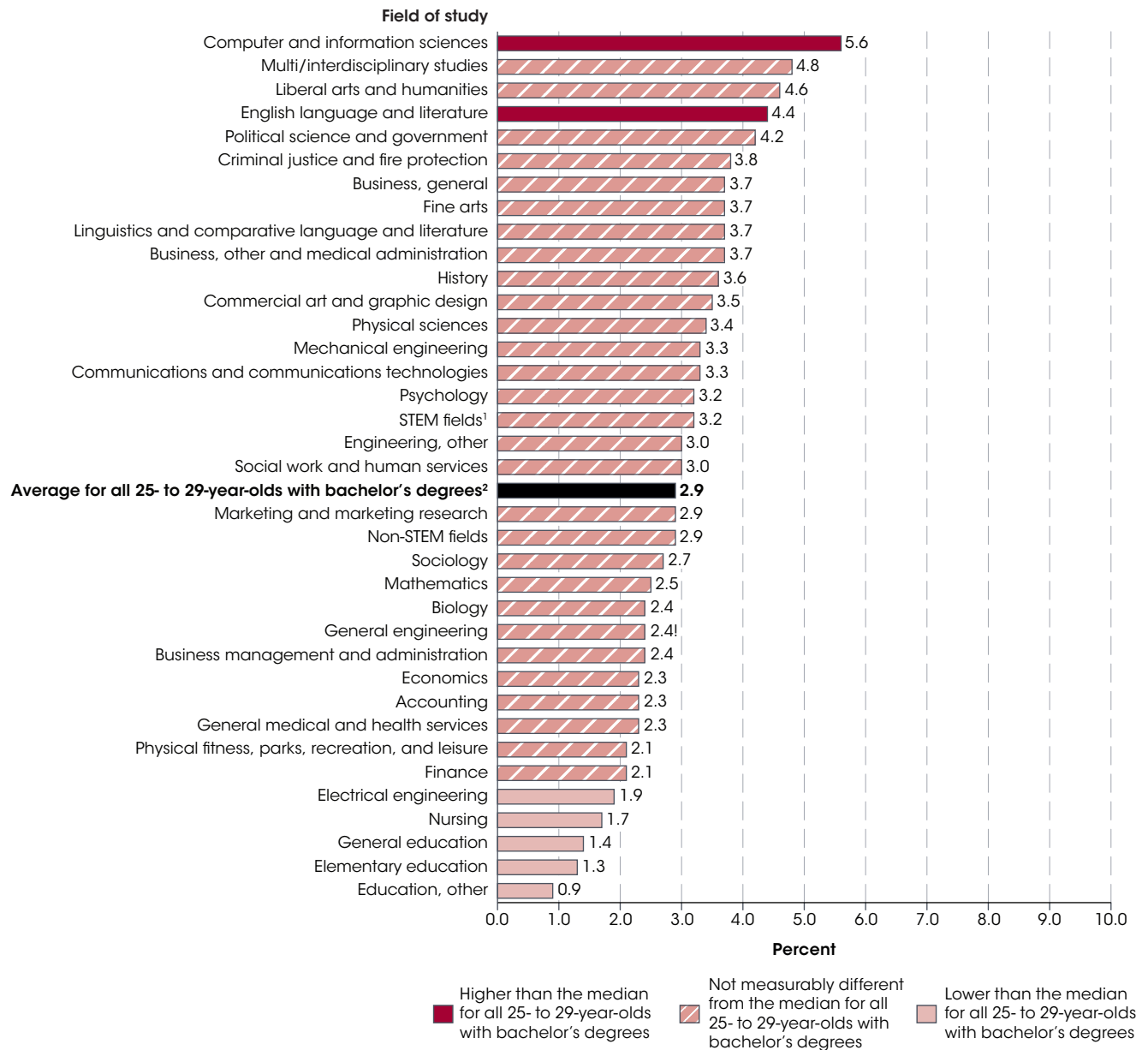
NOTE: Only fields in which 1 percent or more of 25- to 29-year-old bachelor's degree holders had earned degrees are displayed. Median annual earnings are for full-time year-round employees (those who worked 35 or more hours per week and 50 to 52 weeks in the year). Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 505.10.

This indicator includes only fields of study in which 1 percent or more of 25- to 29-year old bachelor's degree holders had earned degrees. Median annual earnings in 2018 ranged from \$40,300 to \$78,700 for 25-to 29-year old bachelor's degree holders in these fields of study. Median annual earnings of those who had earned bachelor's degrees and who were full-time year-round workers varied by field of study among these fields. For example, those with bachelor's degrees in electrical engineering had the highest median annual earnings (\$78,700). In addition, median annual earnings of those with bachelor's degrees in mechanical engineering (\$74,000) were higher than in most other fields. In contrast, median annual earnings of those with bachelor's degrees in liberal arts and humanities (\$40,300), social work and human services (\$40,500), elementary education (\$40,500), and fine arts (\$40,500) were lower than in most other fields.

Bachelor's degree holders in the largest fields of study, that is, fields with at least 300,000 degree holders,⁶ also varied in their median annual earnings in 2018. For example, the median annual earnings of 25- to 29-year-olds with bachelor's degrees in fine arts (\$40,500), psychology (\$41,400), and communications and communications technologies (\$45,600) were lower than the median annual earnings of all bachelor's degree holders (\$50,600). The median annual earnings of those with bachelor's degrees in nursing (\$58,700) and computer and information sciences (\$70,100) were higher than the median annual earnings of all bachelor's degree holders. In addition, those with bachelor's degrees in general medical and health services (\$50,300), biology (\$50,500), and business management and administration (\$50,600) had median annual earnings that were not measurably different from the median annual earnings of all bachelor's degree holders.

Figure 2. Average unemployment rates for 25- to 29-year-old bachelor's degree holders, by selected fields of study: 2018



! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

¹ "STEM fields" include biological and biomedical sciences, computer and information sciences, engineering and engineering technologies, mathematics and statistics, and physical sciences and science technologies.

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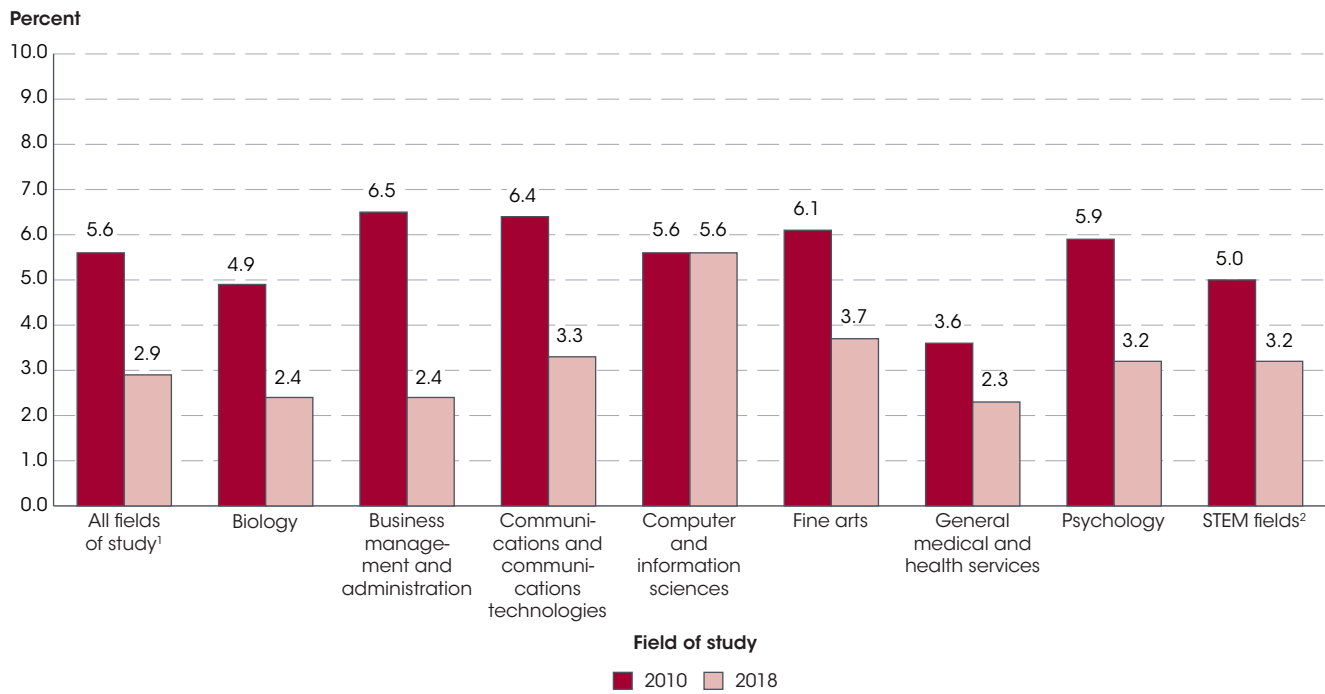
NOTE: Only fields in which 1 percent or more of 25- to 29-year-old bachelor's degree holders had earned degrees are displayed. The unemployment rate is the percentage of persons in the civilian labor force who are not working and who made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the prior 4 weeks. The civilian labor force consists of all civilians who are employed or seeking employment. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 505.10.

In 2018, among the fields of study in which 1 percent or more of 25- to 29-year-old bachelor's degree holders had earned degrees, unemployment rates ranged from 0.9 to 5.6 percent. The unemployment rate for those with bachelor's degrees also varied by field of study among these fields. For example, the unemployment rates for those with bachelor's degrees in the following fields of study were lower than the average unemployment rate for all bachelor's degree holders (2.9 percent): education, other (0.9 percent), elementary education (1.3 percent), general education (1.4 percent), nursing (1.7 percent), and electrical engineering (1.9 percent). In contrast, the unemployment rates for those with bachelor's degrees in English language and literature (4.4 percent) and computer and information sciences (5.6 percent) were higher than the average unemployment rate for all bachelor's degree holders. The unemployment rates for those with bachelor's degrees in all other fields—including some of the largest fields of study, such as biology, business management and administration, communications and communications technologies, fine arts, and psychology—were not measurably different from the average unemployment rate for all bachelor's degree holders.

In 2018, among the fields of study in which 1 percent or more of 25- to 29-year-old bachelor's degree holders had earned degrees, those with bachelor's degrees in electrical engineering and nursing had above-median annual earnings and below-average unemployment rates. Electrical engineering degree holders had median annual earnings of \$78,700 and an average unemployment rate of 1.9 percent. Nursing degree holders had median annual earnings of \$58,700 and an average unemployment rate of 1.7 percent. English language and literature was the only field for which bachelor's degree holders had both below-median annual earnings (\$44,600) and an above-average unemployment rate (4.4 percent). Bachelor's degree holders in education, other; elementary education; and general education had below-median annual earnings but below-average unemployment rates. In addition, computer and information sciences was the only field for which bachelor's degree holders had above-median annual earnings (\$70,100) and an above-average unemployment rate (5.6 percent).

Figure 3. Average unemployment rates for 25- to 29-year-old bachelor's degree holders, by selected fields of study: 2010 and 2018



¹ Includes fields not separately shown.

² "STEM fields" include biological and biomedical sciences, computer and information sciences, engineering and engineering technologies, mathematics and statistics, and physical sciences and science technologies.

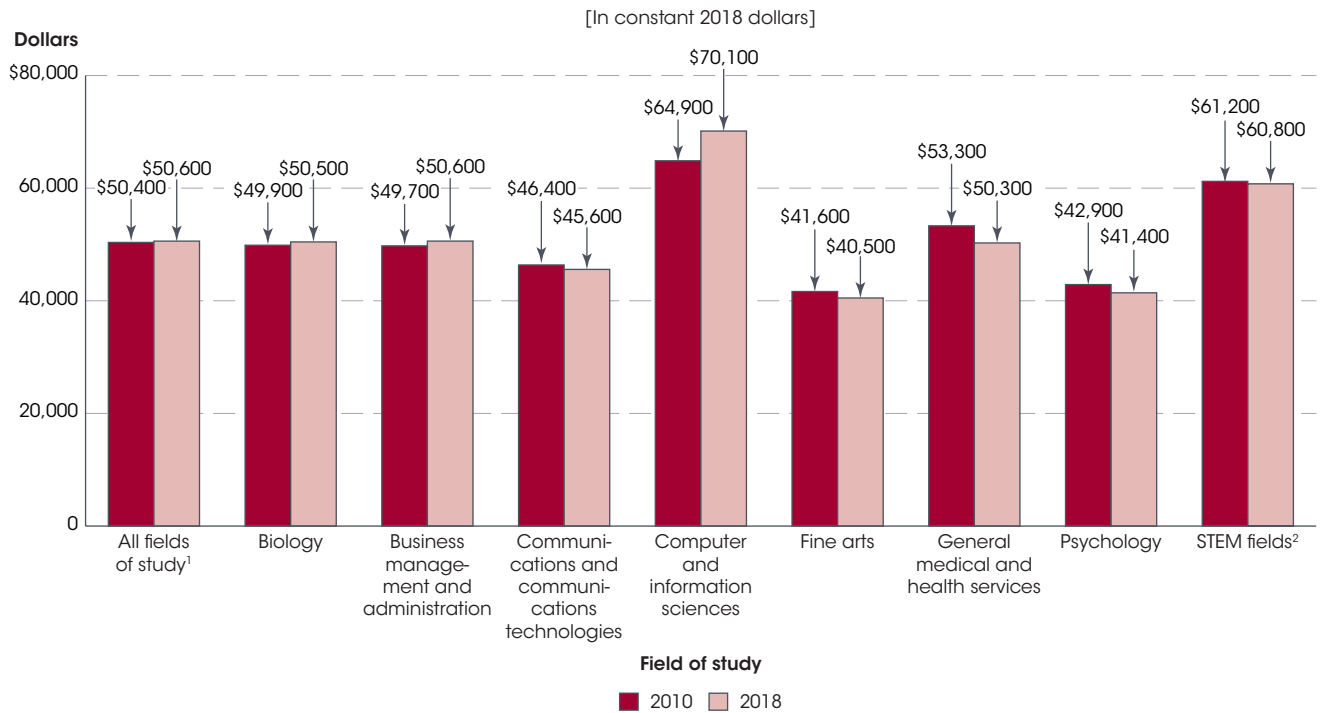
NOTE: Includes fields with at least 300,000 degree holders. The unemployment rate is the percentage of persons in the civilian labor force who are not working and who made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the prior 4 weeks. The civilian labor force consists of all civilians who are employed or seeking employment. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2010 and 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 505.10.

The average unemployment rate was lower in 2018 than in 2010 for 25- to 29-year-old bachelor's degree holders overall (2.9 vs. 5.6 percent) and for those in most fields of study. For example, unemployment rates were lower in 2018 than in 2010 for those with bachelor's degrees in six of the eight largest fields of study: biology (2.4 vs. 4.9 percent), business management and administration (2.4 vs. 6.5 percent), communications

and communications technologies (3.3 vs. 6.4 percent), fine arts (3.7 vs. 6.1 percent), general medical and health services (2.3 vs. 3.6 percent), and psychology (3.2 vs. 5.9 percent). There was no field of study where the average unemployment rate for those with bachelor's degrees was higher in 2018 than in 2010. The average unemployment rate was lower in 2018 than in 2010 for bachelor's degree holders in STEM fields (3.2 vs. 5.0 percent).

Figure 4. Median annual earnings of 25- to 29-year-old bachelor's degree holders, by selected fields of study: 2010 and 2018



¹ Includes fields not separately shown.

² "STEM fields" include biological and biomedical sciences, computer and information sciences, engineering and engineering technologies, mathematics and statistics, and physical sciences and science technologies.

NOTE: Includes fields with at least 300,000 degree holders. Median earnings are for full-time year-round employees (those who worked 35 or more hours per week and 50 to 52 weeks in the year). Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data. Constant dollars based on the Consumer Price Index, prepared by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2010 and 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 505.10.

While the average unemployment rate for 25- to 29-year-old bachelor's degree holders was lower in 2018 than in 2010, their median annual earnings in 2018 (\$50,600) were not measurably different from those in 2010 (in constant 2018 dollars). Only computer and information

sciences had higher median annual earnings in 2018 than in 2010 (\$70,100 vs. \$64,900). All other fields discussed in this indicator had 2018 median annual earnings that were not measurably different from those in 2010.

Endnotes:

¹ The unemployment rate is the percentage of persons in the civilian labor force who are not working and who made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the prior 4 weeks. The civilian labor force consists of all civilians who are employed or seeking employment.

² The first bachelor's degree major reported by respondents was used to classify their field of study, even though they were able to report a second bachelor's degree major and may possess advanced degrees in other fields.

³ STEM fields include biological and biomedical sciences, computer and information sciences, engineering and engineering technologies, mathematics and statistics, and physical sciences and science technologies.

⁴ All median annual earnings are reported in constant 2018 dollars, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), and represent the median annual earnings of full-time, year-round workers.

⁵ In this indicator, comparisons by field of study are limited to fields of study in which 1 percent or more of 25- to 29-year-old bachelor's degree holders had earned degrees, unless otherwise noted. Totals include all fields of study, including those in which less than 1 percent of bachelor's degree holders had earned degrees.

⁶ In 2018, there were at least 300,000 degree holders in each of the following fields: biology, business management and administration, communications and communications technologies, computer and information sciences, fine arts, general medical and health services, nursing, and psychology.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 505.10

Related indicators and resources: [Annual Earnings](#); [Employment and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment](#); [Undergraduate Degree Fields](#)

Glossary: Bachelor's degree; Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP); Constant dollars; Consumer Price Index (CPI); Employment status; Median earnings; STEM fields