

Life, physical and social sciences

Occupations within this sector:

- **Agricultural and food technicians**

Employment of agricultural and food technicians is expected to grow by 7 percent from 2010 to 2020, slower than the average for all occupations. Increased awareness and enforcement of food safety regulations will increase inspection requirements and, therefore, demand for agricultural and food science technicians.

Most growth over the next 10 years is expected to be in federal food inspection jobs. Jobs in private industry will also grow, but at a more modest rate.

- **Food scientists and technologists**

Job growth for food scientists and technologists is expected to be driven by the demand for new food products and food safety measures. Food research is expected to increase because the public is more aware of nutrition, health, food safety, and the need to keep herd animals from getting infections.

Overall job prospects for anthropologists and archeologists are expected to be competitive. Those with a Ph.D. and extensive experience doing anthropological or archeological fieldwork will have the best job opportunities.

- **Anthropologists and archeologists**

Employment of anthropologists and archeologists is expected to grow 21 percent from 2010 to 2020, faster than the average for all occupations.

Although job opportunities for anthropologists will expand in businesses, consulting firms, and other non-traditional settings, workers will face strong competition for jobs because of the small number of positions.

- **Atmospheric scientists**

Employment of atmospheric scientists is projected to grow by 11 percent from 2010 to 2020, about as fast as the average for all occupations. New computer models have vastly improved the accuracy of forecasts and allow atmospheric scientists to tailor forecasts to specific purposes. This should increase the need for atmospheric scientists working in private industry as businesses demand more specialized weather information.

- **Biochemists and biophysicists**

Employment of biochemists and biophysicists is projected to increase by 31 percent from 2010 to 2020, much faster than the average for all occupations.

Biochemists and biophysicists involved in basic research should expect strong competition for permanent research and faculty positions at colleges and universities. Biochemists and biophysicists with postdoctoral experience who have had research articles published in scientific journals should have the best prospects for these positions. Many biochemists and biophysicists work through multiple postdoctoral appointments before getting a permanent position in academia.

- **Biologic technicians**

Employment of biologic technicians is projected to increase 14 percent from 2010 to 2020, as fast as the average for all occupations. Greater demand for biotechnology research is expected to increase the need for these workers.

Strong competition for jobs is expected. There have been large increases in the numbers of bachelor's degrees in biology and other life sciences awarded each year, and this trend is expected to continue. Applicants who have laboratory experience, either through coursework or previous work experience, should have the best opportunities.

- **Chemical technicians**

Employment of chemical technicians is expected to increase by 7 percent from 2010 to 2020, slower than the average for all occupations. Chemical technicians will continue to be needed in scientific research and development (R&D) and to monitor the quality of chemical products and processes. Greater interest in environmental issues, such as pollution control, clean energy, and sustainability, are expected to increase the demand for chemistry research and development

As the instrumentation and techniques used in research, development, and production become more complex, employers will seek job candidates with highly developed technical skills. Job opportunities are expected to be best for graduates of applied science technology programs who are well trained on equipment used in laboratories or production facilities.

- **Environmental scientists**

Employment of environmental scientists and specialists is expected to grow by 19 percent from 2010 to 2020, about as fast as the average for all occupations. Heightened public interest in the hazards facing the environment, as well as the increasing demands placed on the environment by population growth, is projected to spur demand for environmental scientists and specialists. Further demand is also expected as a result of new and increasingly complex environmental laws and regulations.

Environmental scientists and specialists should have good job opportunities. In addition to growth, many job openings will be created by scientists who retire, advance to management positions, or change careers.

- **Forensic science technicians**

Employment of forensic science technicians is projected to grow by 19 percent from 2010 to 2020, about as fast as the average for all occupations. Technological advances and the growing awareness of forensic evidence among potential jurors are expected to increase the use of forensic evidence in criminal proceedings. More forensic science technicians will be needed to provide timely forensics information to law enforcement agencies and courts.

- **Microbiologists**

Employment of microbiologists is projected to increase by 13 percent from 2010 to 2020, about as fast as the average for all occupations. More microbiologists will be needed to apply knowledge from basic research to develop biological products and processes that improve our lives.

- **Psychologists**

Overall employment of psychologists is expected to grow 22 percent from 2010 to 2020, faster than the average for all occupations. Employment growth will vary by specialty.

Job prospects should be best for those who have a doctoral degree in an applied specialty and those with a specialist or doctoral degree in school psychology. Because admission to psychology graduate programs is so selective, job opportunities for doctoral graduates are expected to be fair.

- **Sociologists**

Employment of sociologists is expected to grow 18 percent from 2010 to 2020, about as fast as the average for all occupations.

Jobseekers can expect to face competition for most sociologist research positions. Sociology is a popular field of study, with a relatively small number of research positions.

Instead, many bachelor's and master's degree holders will find positions in related fields, such as social services, education, public policy, or other areas. Although these fields require the skills and concepts that sociologists learn as part of their education, workers should face less competition for positions not specifically labeled as "sociologists."

Candidates with an advanced degree, strong statistical and research skills, and a background in applied sociology will have the best job prospects.