International Students' Career Choices

Between 2005 and 2014, there was a 54 percent increase in the number of bachelor's degrees awarded to foreign-born students, compared with a 33 percent increase for their US-born or permanent resident peers during the same period. The growth in foreign-born students is even more pronounced in master's programs, which historically have awarded the largest (63 percent in 2014) share of degrees awarded to this group. Since 2005, the number of master's degrees awarded to foreign-born students has grown by 42 percent, compared with a 17 percent increase for U.S.-born students and permanent residents. However, growth in the award of doctoral degrees shows a different trend. During the same period, the number of doctoral degrees awarded to U.S.-born or permanent resident students grew by a remarkable 72 percent – 30 percentage points higher than the rate observed for foreign-born students.

In the decade 2003 to 2013, the number of immigrants in the U.S. workforce whose highest degrees were in engineering grew from 725,000 to 1,050,000, or 44 percent.* However, during the same period, the proportion of foreign-born engineering graduates who were actually employed as engineers decreased from 40 percent in 2003 to 30 percent in 2013. Over the past decade, more than 60 percent of the foreign-born engineering workforce in the United States has come from Asia.

BACHELOR'S DEGREES

	2005	2014	Growth
U.S.-BORN OR PERM. RES	68,054	90,210	33%
FOREIGN-BORN	5,495	8,435	54%

MASTER'S DEGREES

	2005	2014	Growth
U.S.-BORN OR PERM. RES	23,283	27,197	17%
FOREIGN-BORN	17,303	24,639	42%

DOCTORAL DEGREES

	2005	2014	Growth
U.S.-BORN OR PERM. RES	2,973	5,112	72%
FOREIGN-BORN	4,360	6,203	42%

HOME REGIONS OF INTERNATIONAL ENGINEERING GRADUATES

Europe

2003		2013
142,000	**TOTAL**	**162,000**
74,000	NON-ENGINEERS	83,000
42,000	ENGINEERS	41,000

Asia

2003		2013
439,000	**TOTAL**	**676,000**
234,000	NON-ENGINEERS	399,000
155,000	ENGINEERS	180,000

North America

2003		2013
22,000	**TOTAL**	**18,000**
9,000	NON-ENGINEERS	9,000
10,000	ENGINEERS	6,000

Central America

2003		2013
26,000	**TOTAL**	**50,000**
14,000	NON-ENGINEERS	32,000
10,000	ENGINEERS	14,000

Caribbean

2003		2013
21,000	**TOTAL**	**32,000**
12,000	NON-ENGINEERS	21,000
7,000	ENGINEERS	8,000

South America

2003		2013
38,000	**TOTAL**	**66,000**
21,000	NON-ENGINEERS	39,000
12,000	ENGINEERS	15,000

Africa

2003		2013
33,000	**TOTAL**	**42,000**
16,000	NON-ENGINEERS	21,000
13,000	ENGINEERS	13,000

Oceania

2003		2013
3,000	**TOTAL**	**4,000**
1,000	NON-ENGINEERS	3,000
1,000	ENGINEERS	1,000

NOTE: These charts do not include a third category of graduates who did not specify their occupations. Therefore, the sum of engineers and non-engineers does not add up to the total.

** Source: Scientists and Engineers Statistical Data System, National Science Foundation*

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