

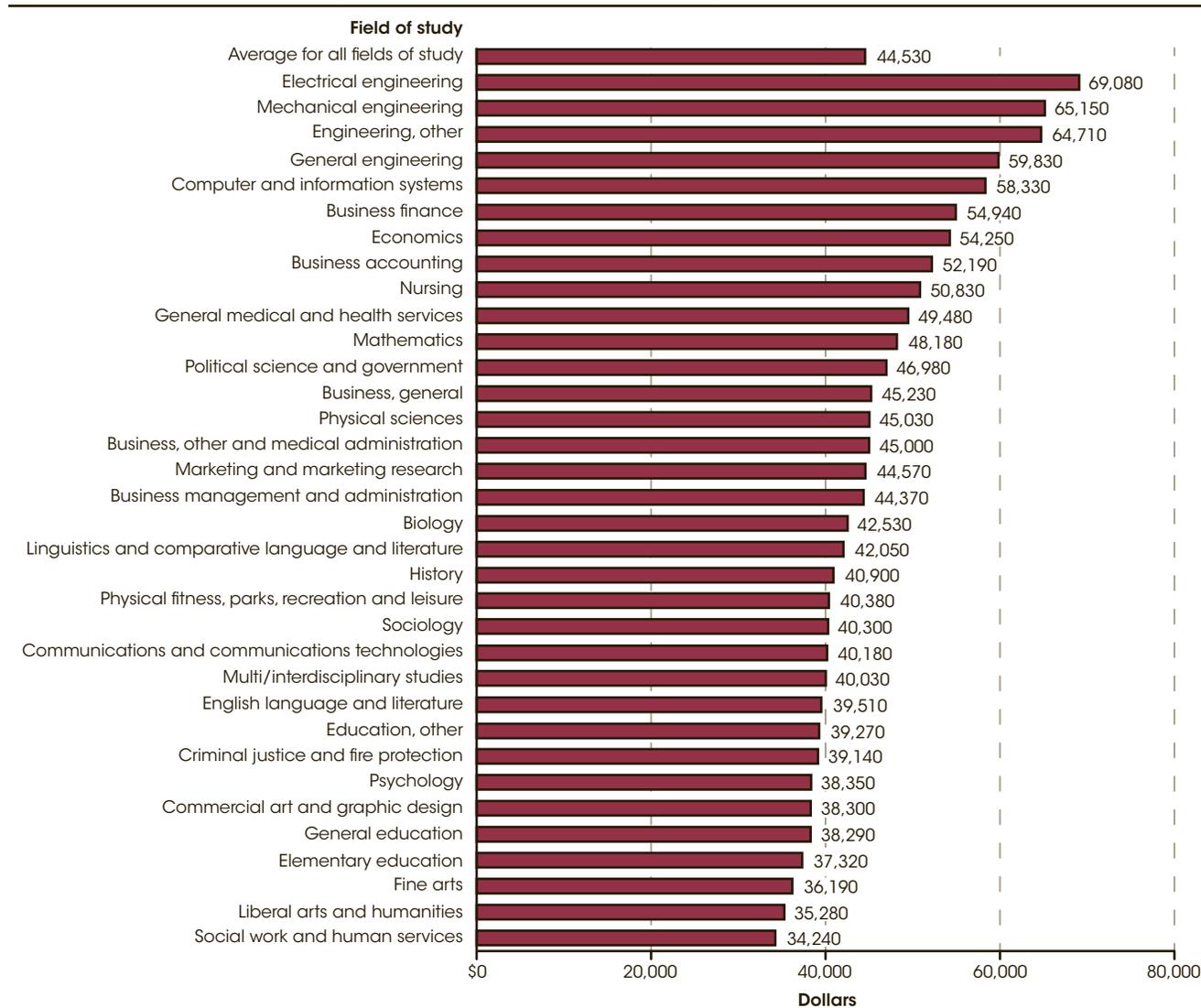
Employment Outcomes of Bachelor's Degree Recipients

The average unemployment rate for young adult bachelor's degree recipients ages 25–29 was lower in 2012 than in 2009 (4.8 vs. 5.2 percent). However, the median annual earnings for these young adults decreased from \$48,030 in 2009 to \$44,530 in 2012, in constant 2012 dollars.

In 2012, some 32 percent of young adults ages 25–29 held bachelor's degrees. The median annual earnings for these bachelor's degree recipients were \$44,530, and the average unemployment rate was 4.8 percent. However, there were substantial variations among people with different undergraduate majors. For example, for the fields of study

in which about 1 percent or more of the population had earned degrees, median annual earnings ranged from \$34,240 to \$69,080, and unemployment rates ranged from 2.7 percent to 8.2 percent. All annual earnings are reported in constant 2012 dollars, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Figure 1. Median annual earnings of 25- to 29-year-old bachelor's degree recipients, by selected fields of study: 2012

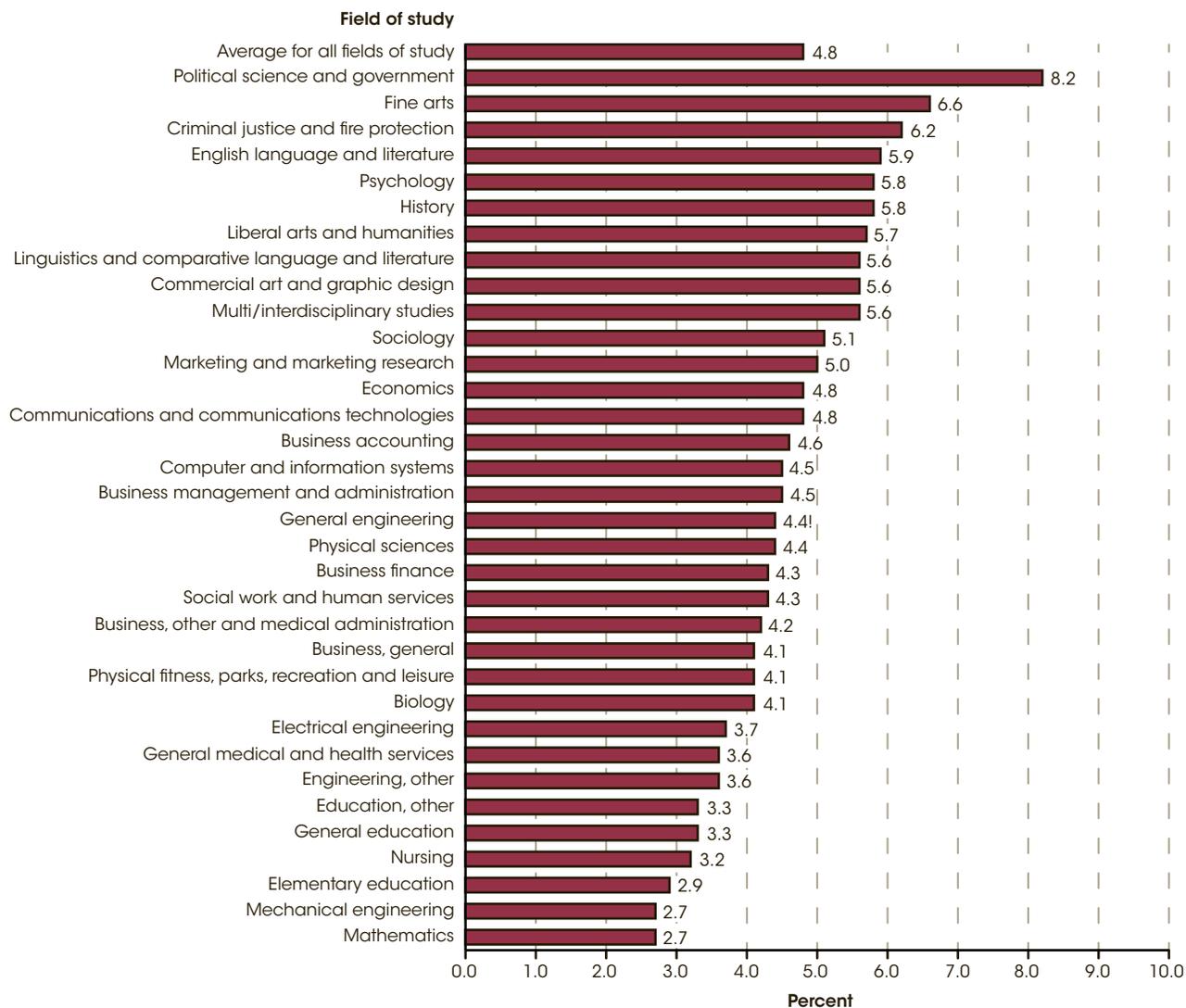


NOTE: Includes only fields in which one percent or more of the population had earned degrees.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2013*, table 505.10.

The median annual earnings in 2012 for young adults ages 25–29 varied depending on field of study. For example, young adults with bachelor’s degrees in electrical engineering (\$69,080), mechanical engineering (\$65,150), and computer and information systems (\$58,330) had some of the highest median annual earnings. In comparison, young adults with bachelor’s degrees in social work and human services (\$34,240), liberal arts and humanities (\$35,280), and elementary education (\$37,320) had some of the lowest median annual earnings. Bachelor’s degree recipients in the largest fields of study,

defined as fields with at least 300,000 degree recipients, also varied in their median annual earnings. Among the largest fields, young adults with bachelor’s degrees in communications and communications technology (\$40,180) and psychology (\$38,350) had median annual earnings lower than the median earnings for all fields of study (\$44,530). Median annual earnings for young adults with bachelor’s degrees in the remaining large fields, business management and administration (\$44,370) and biology (\$42,530), were not measurably different from the average median earnings for all fields.

Figure 2. Unemployment rates of 25- to 29-year-old bachelor’s degree recipients, by selected fields of study: 2012



! Interpret data with caution.

NOTE: Includes only fields in which one percent or more of the population had earned degrees.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2013*, table 505.10.

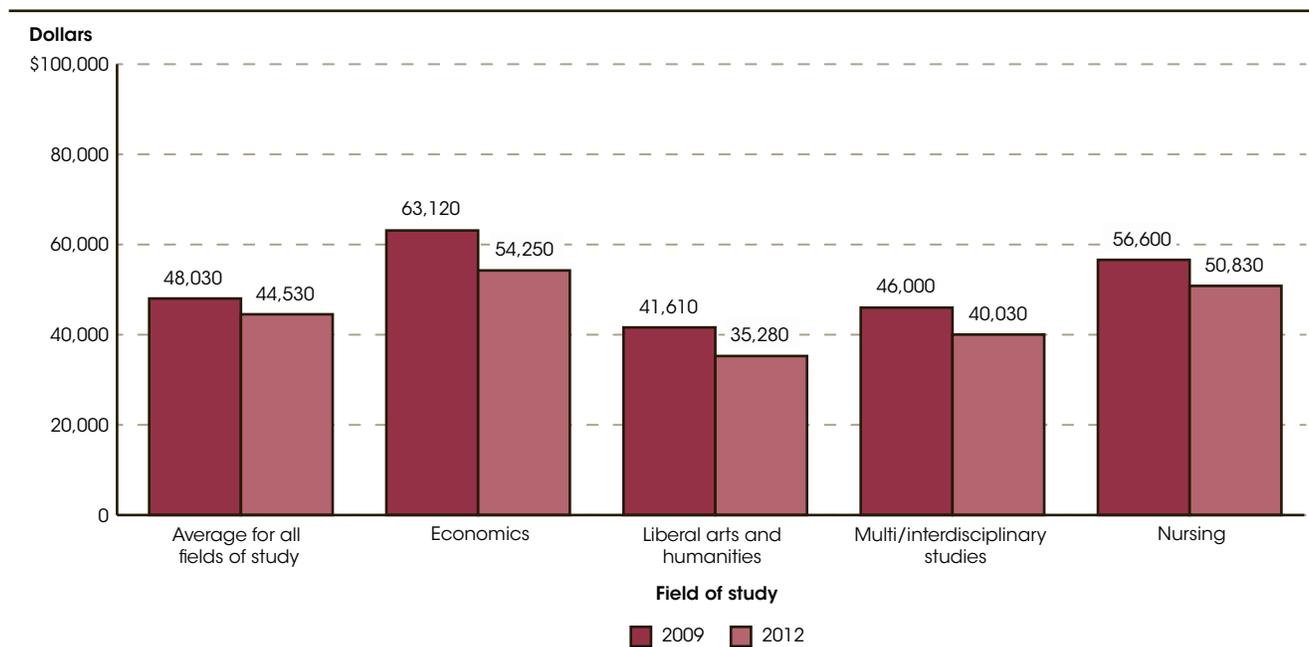
The 2012 unemployment rate for young adults ages 25–29 also varied by field of study. For example, the unemployment rate was lowest for young adults with bachelor’s degrees in mathematics (2.7 percent), mechanical engineering (2.7 percent), and elementary education (2.9 percent). In comparison, the unemployment rate was highest for young adults with bachelor’s degrees in political science and government (8.2 percent) and fine arts (6.6 percent). The unemployment rates for young adults with bachelor’s degrees in the largest fields of study, psychology (5.8 percent), communications and communications technologies (4.8 percent), business management and administration (4.5 percent), and biology (4.1 percent), were not measurably different from the average unemployment rate for all fields of study (4.8 percent).

Young adults ages 25–29 with bachelor’s degrees in either mechanical engineering or nursing had above average annual earnings and below average unemployment rates. Mechanical engineering graduates had median earnings of \$65,150 and an average unemployment rate of 2.7 percent;

nursing graduates had median earnings of \$50,830 and an average unemployment rate of 3.2 percent. In contrast, young adults with bachelor’s degrees in fine arts had below average annual earnings and an above average unemployment rate (\$36,190 and 6.6 percent).

The average unemployment rate for young adult bachelor’s degree recipients ages 25–29 was lower in 2012 than in 2009 (4.8 vs. 5.2 percent). Similarly, unemployment rates were lower in 2012 than in 2009 for young adults with bachelor’s degrees in business management and administration (4.5 vs. 5.9 percent), fine arts (6.6 vs. 8.8 percent), mechanical engineering (2.7 vs. 5.0 percent), and commercial art and graphic design (5.6 vs. 9.2 percent). However, the 2012 unemployment rate for young adults with bachelor’s degrees in nursing was higher than that in 2009 (3.2 vs. 1.5 percent); the 2012 rate for nursing was still lower than the average unemployment rate for all fields of study. For most other fields of study, the unemployment rate did not change measurably between 2009 and 2012.

Figure 3. Median annual earnings of 25- to 29-year-old bachelor’s degree recipients, by selected fields of study: 2009 and 2012



NOTE: All annual earnings from table 505.10 were converted to constant 2012 dollars, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2013*, table 505.10.

The lower unemployment rate in 2012 compared to 2009 reflected an improvement in the job situation for young adult bachelor’s degree recipients. However, between 2009 and 2012, the median annual earnings for young adult bachelor’s degree recipients decreased from \$48,030 to \$44,530 (in constant 2012 dollars). Young adults with bachelor’s degrees in economics experienced the

largest change in median annual earnings, decreasing from \$63,120 in 2009 to \$54,250 in 2012. Other fields for which bachelor’s degree recipients’ median annual earnings were lower in 2012 than in 2009 included liberal arts and humanities, multi/interdisciplinary studies, and nursing. No field of study experienced a significant increase in annual earnings during this period.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2013*, table 505.10

Glossary: Bachelor’s degree, Constant dollars, Consumer Price Index (CPI)