

NCES DATA POINT

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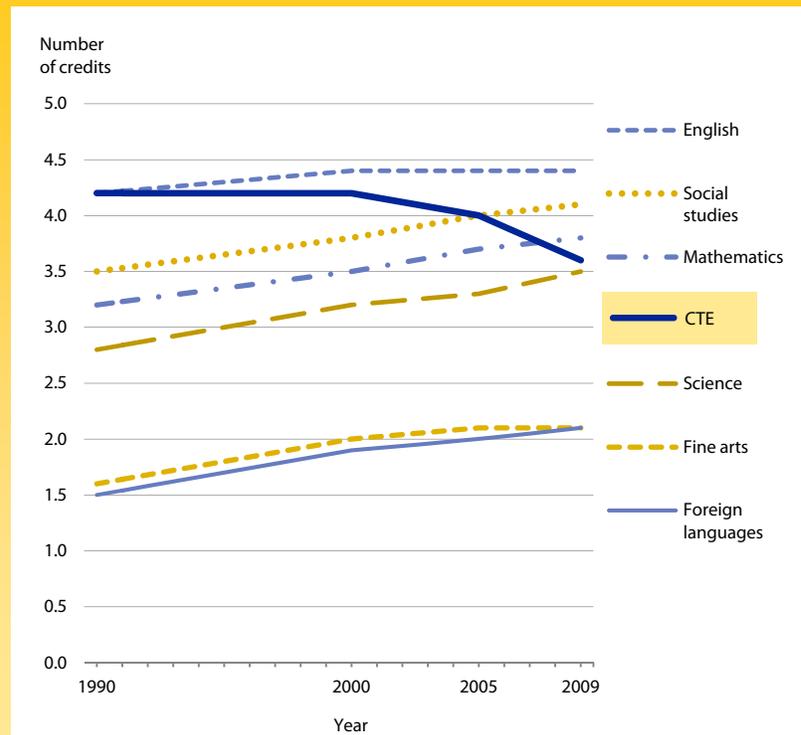
Trends in CTE Coursetaking

Overall coursetaking in Career and Technical Education (CTE) has declined.

From 1990 to 2009, the average number of CTE credits earned by U.S. public high school graduates declined, from 4.2 to 3.6, while the average number of credits earned in other subject areas increased (figure 1).

- Coursetaking in occupational areas, such as agriculture and natural resources or business, dropped from 2.7 to 2.5 credits (not in figure).
- In nonoccupational areas (i.e., general labor market preparation and consumer and family studies), CTE coursetaking dropped from 1.5 to 1.1 credits (not in figure).
- In contrast, average credits earned in core academic fields (i.e., English, mathematics, science, and social studies) rose between 1990 and 2009 (figure 1).

FIGURE 1. Average number of credits earned in each subject area by public high school graduates, 1990 to 2009



NOTE: Tabular data for averages and their standard errors are available in tables H125 and SH125, at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ctes/tables/index.asp?LEVEL=SECONDARY>. CTE is defined in the glossary at http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ctes/tables/glossary_secondary.asp.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, High School Transcript Study, 1990, 2000, 2005, and 2009.

Despite an overall decline in CTE credits, coursetaking in areas such as communications and health care have increased.

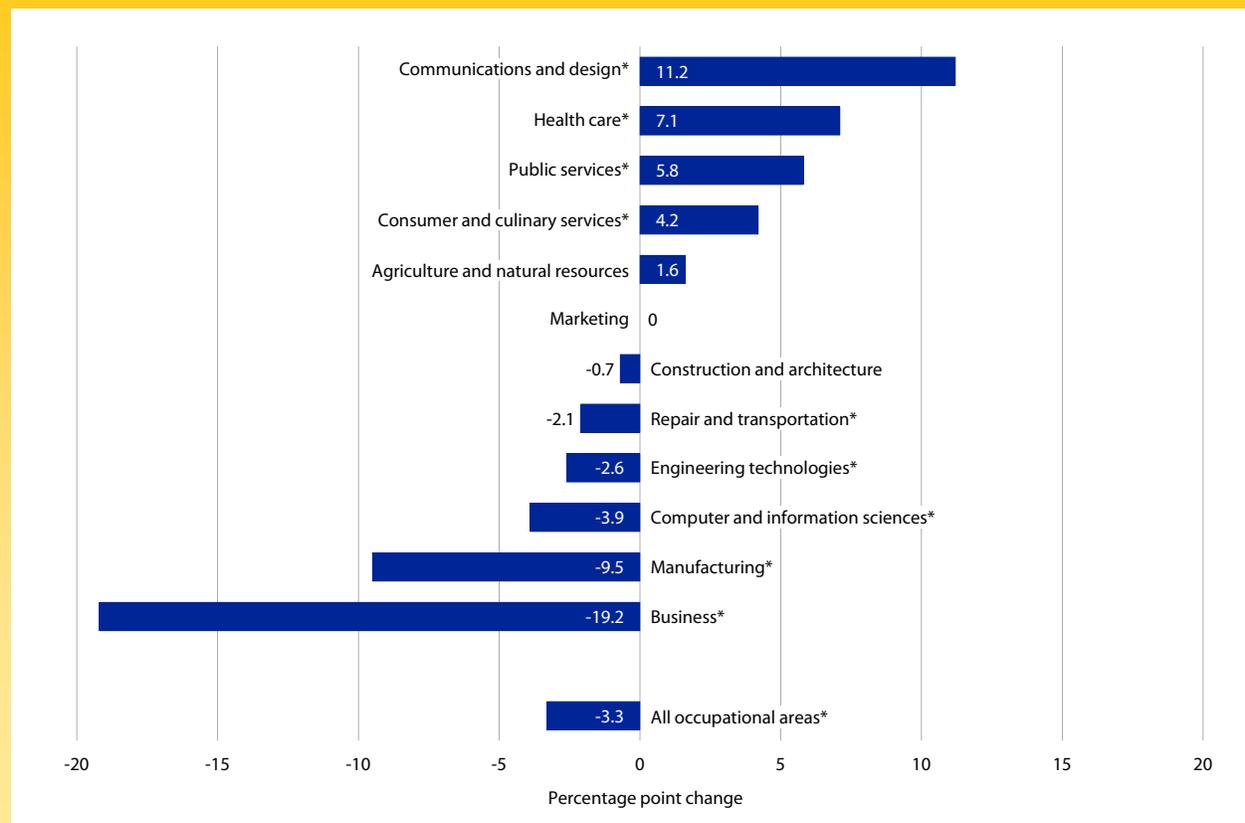
The percentage of graduates who earned credit in *any* occupational CTE area declined from 88 percent in 1990 to 85 percent in 2009. However, *within* occupational CTE, the direction and magnitude of change differed by specific occupational area (figure 2).

- Occupational areas with declining participation were business, manufacturing, computer and information

sciences, engineering technologies, and repair and transportation, with business being the area of largest decline (figure 2).

- Occupational areas with increasing participation were communications and design, health care, public services, and consumer and culinary services, with communications and design being the area of largest increase (figure 2).

FIGURE 2. Change in the percentage of public high school graduates earning credits in each occupational area from 1990 to 2009



*Significantly different ($p < .05$) from zero.

NOTE: Tabular data for percentages and their standard errors are available in tables H126 and SH126, at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ctes/tables/index.asp?LEVEL=SECONDARY>.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, High School Transcript Study, 1990, 2000, 2005, and 2009.

This NCES Data Point presents information on education topics of current interest. It was authored by Lisa Hudson of NCES. All estimates shown are based on samples and are subject to sampling variability. All differences are statistically significant at the .05 level.

In the design, conduct, and data processing of National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) surveys, efforts are made to minimize the effects of nonsampling errors, such as item nonresponse, measurement error, data processing error, or other systematic error.