



## NEWS

The S.C. Commission on Higher Education  
Mr. Gary Glenn, Interim Executive Director  
1122 Lady Street, Suite 300  
Columbia, SC 29201

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**Contact:**  
Julie Carullo  
Director of External Affairs  
803-737-2292 / 803-730-3830  
[jcarullo@che.sc.gov](mailto:jcarullo@che.sc.gov)

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### **Study Highlights Potential Shortages in Engineering and Health Related Occupations for South Carolina**

COLUMBIA, S.C. – A new study by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) explores the match of recent college graduates with projected workforce demand. Using 2010–2014 degree-completion data from the state’s public and independent colleges and universities, the annual average number of degrees earned by instructional area was compared to the annual average job openings for related occupations projected over 2012–2022. Detailed in the report are trends for the most popular areas of study, the fastest growing and largest occupations as forecasted by the SC Department of Employment and Workforce, and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields.

Potential shortages are suggested for South Carolina in satisfying projected demand in some healthcare and engineering-related fields. Occupations projected to experience shortages run the full range of degree-levels, from associate’s and baccalaureate degrees through graduate and professional degrees.

The study also points to challenges with analyses of workforce supply and demand. These include, for example, limitations in matching college programs one-to-one with occupations and the inability of employment projections to fully capture rapid changes in the job market.

STEM and healthcare fields, for which many of the anticipated labor mismatches are expected, include programs of study that typically match more easily to specific occupations, which aids the supply and demand analysis. In comparison, the ability to match programs with occupations is more difficult in general fields of study such as business, history, biology, and psychology where career options for graduates are more varied. Other factors influencing the extent to which any projected shortages will impact the state include the number of individuals moving to South Carolina from another state who may be able to fill some of the positions, as well as the number of individuals graduating from out-of-state institutions licensed to operate in South Carolina who are not accounted for in the analysis.

The study’s findings can be viewed as a starting point for further investigation and exploration among South Carolina’s education and workforce agencies, the state’s business community, and other stakeholders in identifying current and future state education and workforce needs.

A copy of the full report, ***Occupational Outlook for Various Programs of Studies: Completion Trends in SC Higher Education 2009/10 – 2013/14***, is available [HERE](#).

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*The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) serves as the state’s coordinating body for higher education. CHE is committed to promoting quality, efficiency, and affordability in the state system of higher education through coordination, regulation, advocacy, and oversight, as directed by the General Assembly. Information about current activities of CHE and higher education in South Carolina can be found on the agency’s website: [www.che.sc.gov](http://www.che.sc.gov).*