

## Employment Status of Scientists

In the spring of 1971, the National Science Foundation surveyed the 300,000 scientists who responded to the 1970 National Register of Scientific and Technical Personnel.<sup>1</sup> Some of the findings of this survey were:

- Responses from scientists indicated an unemployment rate of 2.6 percent, as compared with 1.5 percent in spring 1970. The national unemployment rate for all workers for the first quarter of 1971 averaged 6.5 percent, with professional, technical, and kindred workers reporting a rate of 2.8 percent.<sup>2</sup>
- The unemployment rate for scientists with doctorates was 1.4 percent in 1971 as compared with 0.9 percent in 1970; the rate for non-

<sup>1</sup> A response rate of 85 percent was achieved, representing about 50 percent of all U.S. scientists. Since the coverage was not complete, the data represent minimum absolute numbers of unemployed. The percentage rate of unemployment for such parameters as age, field of science, work activity, and degree level are, however, considered accurate measures for the 1970 Register population of scientists.

<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor.

doctorate scientists was 3.5 percent, compared to 2.9 percent in 1970.

- The rate for scientists under 30 years of age was by far the highest, 5.3 percent, for any group.
- The 5.2 percent unemployment rate for women scientists contrasts with 2.3 percent for men.
- Research and development were the previous work activities of three-fifths of the unemployed scientists, compared to two-fifths of all 1970 registrants.
- Defense and space constituted the most recent areas of activity of 11 percent and 4 percent, respectively, of the unemployed.
- Approximately 45 percent of the 1971 unemployed scientists reported that their last science-related employment was supported to some degree by U.S. Government funds.
- The unemployment rate for non-citizen scientists was 4.2 percent, compared with 2.5 percent for U.S. citizens.
- Of the 6,300 scientists who reported that they were not em-

ployed and were seeking employment, 900 had been unemployed in 1970.

- Over one-half of the unemployed scientists reporting were in the fields of chemistry and physics. Unemployment rates in these fields were 3.0 percent and 3.9 percent, respectively, as compared with 1.5 percent and 2.3 percent in 1970.
- More than two-fifths of the unemployed scientists — 42 percent — were located in five States: California, New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and New Jersey.

To appraise the extent to which scientists are engaging in work outside science, employed respondents were asked to indicate if their present positions were science-related or of a nonscience nature. Of the 239,000 employed respondents, 3,900, or 1.6 percent, indicated they had accepted nonscience positions since March 1970. Over 22 percent of the group held a doctorate; the fields of chemistry, physics, psychology, and mathematics accounted for most of the scientists who have accepted nonscience positions.

COMPARISON OF UNEMPLOYMENT RATES, SPRING 1970 WITH SPRING 1971, BY FIELDS OF SCIENCE

