

Asia Ascending in Science and Engineering

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Asia. Image source: NASA via Wikimedia Commons

(PhysOrg.com) -- This morning, the National Science Foundation in the United States released its regular report on science and engineering indicators. Not surprisingly, Asia appears to be ascending -- and quickly -- toward the top of the heap with regard to science and engineering development. "In most aspects of S&E the U.S. still has a leadership role," NSF officials told a press briefing on Wednesday, January 13, "but there is erosion in specific areas... In Asia, especially China, there is rapid growth."

The National Science Foundation looks at different areas to establish its indicators of science and engineering, including degrees granted in various countries, publications related to S&E, patents applied for and granted, high tech manufacturing, knowledge intensive industries, and other areas of interest. While the U.S. still leads in many areas, Asian countries are catching up, and China is overtaking Japan in key areas of research and development, as well as high tech manufacturing.

The U.S. still leads handily in knowledge intensive fields, including communications and finances. "Asian countries are not yet super active in those industries," the NSF said. However, the U.S. continues to lose ground in [high tech](#) manufacturing and is starting to give way to [Asia](#) in terms of education, and research and development. China is rapidly approaching the U.S. in terms of S&E doctorates granted each year, and many of the engineering doctoral students in the U.S. are, in fact, citizens of other countries, and not Americans.

It certainly will be an interesting few years ahead. If things continue at this rate, with fewer [science](#) and engineering students in the [United States](#), it shouldn't take long for the global technological center to shift.

More information: www.nsf.gov/statistics/seind10/pdf/about.pdf

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