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Today's Best Entry-Level Salaries

By Mary Lorenz, CareerBuilder.com writer

Whether you're a recent grad who's been living in your parents' basement since Commencement Day or in the midst of your college career trying to figure out what you should major in, there's good news coming your way.

According to a recent study by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), members of the class of 2007 can expect to earn bigger starting salaries as they enter the workforce than their predecessors. Results show that the average starting salary has increased across many disciplines since last year, the result of increased competition among employers for employees fresh out of college. Furthermore, hiring managers expect this trend to continue for years to come.

Among those graduates who will benefit from the highest entry-level salary increases are those with degrees in marketing, whose average offer is up 6.1 percent this year at $40,161.

Not only will engineering graduates enjoy a significant increase in starting salaries, they will also receive the highest salary offers overall. Offer amounts are up 5.4 percent for chemical and civil engineers at $59,361 and $48,509, respectively; 4.8 percent for computer engineers at $56,201; 4.6 percent for mechanical engineering grads $54,128; and 3.2 percent at $55,292.

Salary offers for those with degrees in management information systems/business data processing have increased 4.2 percent for an average starting salary of $47,648. Those who hold computer science degrees should expect average starting salaries of $53,396, up 4.1 percent from last year, and information sciences graduates will receive an average offer of $50,852, a 4.6 percent increase.

Not into numbers? Take heart: Although on the lower end of the spectrum, starting salaries for liberal arts graduates have also increased. Offers for political science/government majors are up 5.9 percent, raising their average offer to $34,590. English majors are also faring well with a 5.3 percent increase, bringing their average offer to $32,553. Psychology majors saw a 4.7 percent increase with an average offer of $31,631; sociology majors gained 3.5 percent, making their average offer $32,033; and history majors' starting salaries increased by 3.3 percent to $33,768.

"Job and salary prospects for new grads are excellent right now," says Nathan Lippe, Senior Career Adviser at CBcampus.com. "But it's important that job seekers do their research in order to get the most out of these opportunities. Research the company and the average starting salary for your industry so you know what you're worth. Go to career fairs. Meet with recruiters. Do everything you can."

Chemical Engineering - $59,361
Chemical engineering grads have the option of working in either the government or private sector in the areas of research and development, design or product development.

Computer Engineering - $56,201
Computer engineers may choose from a variety of career paths from creating new products and services as design engineers to improving existing products as development engineers.

Electrical Engineering - $55,292
Because nearly every industry works with electricity or electrical devices, electrical engineers can work in nearly every type of business, doing everything from designing and building medical equipment to working for the military or department of defense.

Mechanical Engineering - $54,128
Mechanical engineers may work on electric generators, internal combustion engines and other power-generating machines for businesses like equipment manufacturers, aerospace companies, material processing plants, transportation companies or petroleum companies.

Computer Science - $53,396
Computer science majors may go on to work in artificial intelligence, computer design and engineering, architecture, information technology or software applications, doing everything from developing computers that simulate human learning to designing computer software.

Civil Engineering - $48,483
Civil engineering majors go on to work all over the country, and some may spend their entire careers traveling and working on different projects. They may work for traditional engineering firms as well as telecommunication businesses, consulting firms, or even toy and athletic equipment manufacturers.

Economics - $48,483
Economics majors can do everything from private consulting for businesses to working for one of many government agencies.

Management of Information Systems - $47,648
Information systems managers work for organizations to ensure the availability, continuity and security of data and information technology services within an organization; yet, they may also work as business analysts.

Finance - $47,239
Career options for finance majors range from investment banking, helping investors trade securities or manage financial assets, to money management to financial planning for anyone from big businesses to smaller firms.

Accounting - $46,718
Accounting majors often go into auditing and tax services, rising to become controllers, treasurers, financial vice presidents, chief financial officers or even corporation presidents.

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