



SALARY SURVEY

STARTING SALARIES FOR NEW COLLEGE GRADUATES • DATA REPORTED BY EMPLOYERS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



About the Survey

The Winter 2016 Salary Survey contains annual salary projections for Class of 2016 college graduates. The figures reported are for base salaries only and do not include bonuses, commissions, fringe benefits, or overtime rates. The report provides the detailed salary projections by academic major and degree level, along with breakouts by both industry and geographic region.

Data contained in the report were obtained by surveying NACE employer members from August 5, 2015, through November 6, 2015. A total of 274 surveys were returned—a 27.4 percent response rate. Of those responding, 14.2 percent of respondents were from the West, 23 percent were from the Northeast, 31 percent were from the Midwest, and 31.8 percent were from the Southeast. A list of respondents by industry and size, and a partial list of organizations that supplied data for this report can be found in the Appendix.

Salary Survey (ISSN 1520-8648) is available to individuals holding membership in the National Association of Colleges and Employers; it is also available on a subscription basis. The *Salary Survey* report is published three times a year—January, April, and September—by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, 62 Highland Ave., Bethlehem, PA 18017-9085. For more information, see www.nacweb.org/salary-resources/index.aspx or contact NACE at 610.868.1421.

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SALARY SURVEY WINTER 2016

Projected Starting Salaries for the College Class of 2016

Projected Starting Salaries for Bachelor's Degree Graduates

STEM graduates are expected to receive the highest starting salaries, according to results of NACE's *Job Outlook 2016* survey, which form the basis for the *Winter 2016 Salary Survey* report.

In addition, more than half of the employers responding to the *Job Outlook 2016* survey noted plans to hire 2016 graduates with bachelor's degrees in the STEM fields, making these grads among the mostly highly sought in the class.

Bachelor's degree graduates earning engineering degrees are expected to be the most highly paid. (See below.) Their overall average salary projection is \$64,891, up 3 percent over the average salary projection of \$62,998 for engineering graduates from the Class of 2015. (Note: All of the 15 reported individual engineering disciplines in this report have average salary projections that exceed \$60,000, which may explain the high overall average.)

Average Salaries by Discipline Bachelor's Degree		
Broad Category	2016 Average Salary	Responses
Engineering	\$64,891	499
Computer Science	\$61,321	205
Math & Sciences	\$55,087	83
Business	\$52,236	619
Agriculture & Natural Resources	\$48,729	24
Healthcare	\$48,712	11
Communications	\$47,047	76
Social Sciences	\$46,585	69
Humanities	\$46,065	46
Education	\$34,891	13

The computer sciences fields are second in terms of starting salary, with an overall average starting salary projected at \$61,321. Two of the three reported computer science disciplines also top the \$60,000 mark, while the third—information science and systems—falls just below that mark at \$59,810.

Degrees in math and sciences are also in high demand by employers; overall, graduates in these fields are expected to average \$55,087.

Business majors land in the fourth spot in terms of starting salaries, but are most sought-after by employers taking part in the *Job Outlook 2016* survey; more than three-quarters of respondents identified business majors as on their list of Class of 2016 majors to hire. Within the business disciplines, management information systems majors, (sometimes also considered a STEM degree) have the highest average projected starting salary of the group at \$56,846.

Among those earning communications degrees, the average salary projection is \$47,047, down 5 percent from last year's projection (\$49,395). Driving that drop: All four of the majors reported for this field are projected to attract lower salaries than was the case last year. Advertising majors are expected to experience the sharpest drop; their average salary is projected at \$47,500, down from \$51,769.

Projected salaries are also down for those in the social sciences; overall, these graduates are expected to average \$46,585, down from last year's projection of \$49,047. Within the social sciences, economics majors are expected to earn the highest average starting salary (\$49,271). That's down slightly from last year's projected average (\$50,832).

Humanities majors, however, are projected to see a slight increase: Their projected average salary stands at \$46,065, up from \$45,042. Data are limited for these graduates, but employers in finance, insurance, and real estate appear to be most interested.

Overall, education majors are expected to average \$34,891. Unfortunately, there were not enough data available last year to make a comparison to the current projection possible.

Projected Starting Salaries for Master's Degree Candidates

Engineering graduates are also projected to be the highest-paid at the master's degree level for the Class of 2016. The average overall salary projection for the group is \$73,871. (See below.)

Average Salaries by Discipline Master's Degree		
Broad Category	2016 Average Salary	Responses
Engineering	\$73,871	224
Computer Science	\$72,080	87
Business	\$71,663	221
Math & Sciences	\$67,891	38
Communications	\$55,727	11
Social Sciences	\$52,333	9

Computer science graduates land just after engineering majors, with an overall average salary projection of \$72,080—about 1 percent higher than last year's projected average of \$71,140 for the Class of 2015.

Business majors earning master's degrees are also seeing a higher average salary projection this year, which is up 5.5 percent from last year's average of \$67,890 to \$71,663.

The projected average salaries for both communications and social science majors are down some. The average projected for 2016 communications majors at the master's degree level is \$55,727 (compared to \$59,130 projected for 2015 master's degree grads); among social sciences majors, the average salary is projected at 52,333, down from \$54,816. However, it is important to keep in mind that data are limited for both groups.

Projected Salaries for Doctoral Degree Candidates

At the doctoral degree level, data are also limited, but computer science majors are projected to pull in the highest overall salary—\$101,324. (See below.) That’s an 8 percent increase over the projection for 2015 computer science graduates at this degree level.

Average Salaries by Discipline Doctoral Degree		
Broad Category	2016 Average Salary	Responses
Computer Science	\$101,324	17
Math & Sciences	\$98,693	16
Engineering	\$95,055	62
Business	\$74,459	3

In terms of salary increases, all four of the categories reported here for doctoral degrees are projected to see increases.

UPCOMING SALARY REPORTS

Watch for updating hiring projections for the Class of 2016 in the Job Outlook 2016 Spring Update—coming in April.

Starting Salary Data for the Class of 2016: Preliminary, actual starting salary data for the Class of 2016 will be published in the Fall 2016 issue of *Salary Survey*. Data—representing actual starting salaries—will be early results gathered through NACE’s *Class of 2016 First-Destination Survey*. Final starting salary data, again representing actual salary salaries gathered through the *Class of 2016 First-Destination Survey*, will be published in the Spring 2017 issue of *Salary Survey*.

Final Starting Salary Data for the Class of 2015: Featuring actual starting salaries for bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degree level graduates of the Class of 2015, the Spring 2016 *Salary Survey* will be based on data derived from colleges and universities participating in the *Class of 2015 First-Destination Survey* and is the final report on starting salaries for the class.

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