

The Numbers

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9:19 am ET
Oct 1, 2014

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How College Major, Field and Job Affect Annual Pay

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By [RANI MOLLA](#)

For the best shot at a high-paying job, you should probably major in some sort of engineering. However, there's good money to be had even if you major in the arts or social sciences—as long as you major in graphic design (rather than photography) or economics (rather than social work).

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About The Numbers

The Wall Street Journal examines numbers in the news, business and politics. Some numbers are flat-out wrong or biased, while others are valid and help us make informed decisions. We tell the stories behind the stats in occasional updates on this blog.

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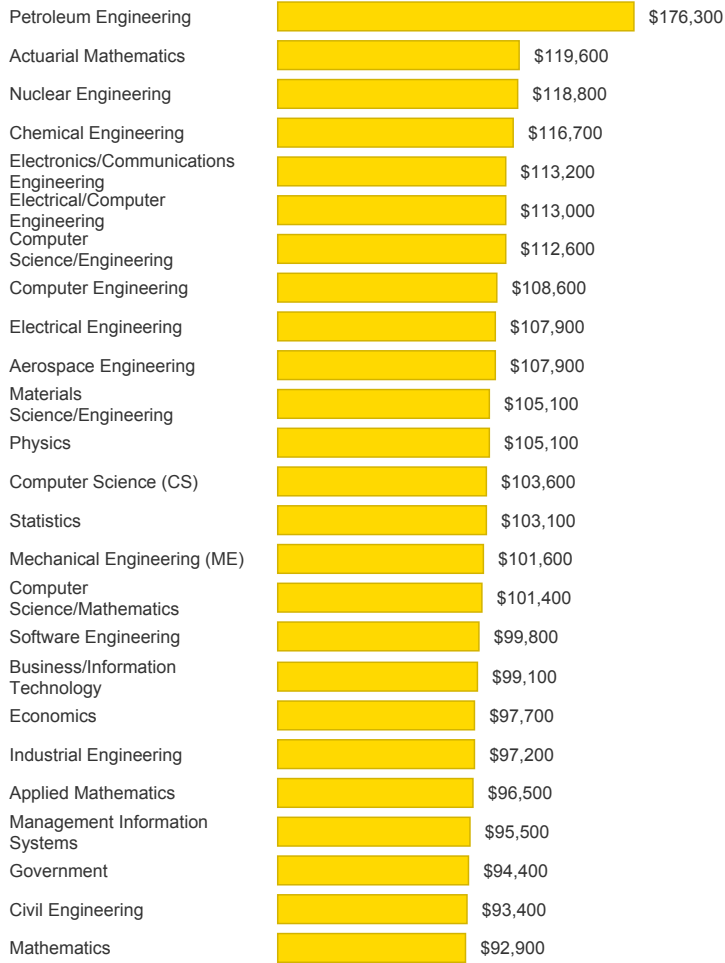
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Top 25 Majors by Pay

(mid-career median pay)



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Source: [PayScale](#), [Get the data](#)

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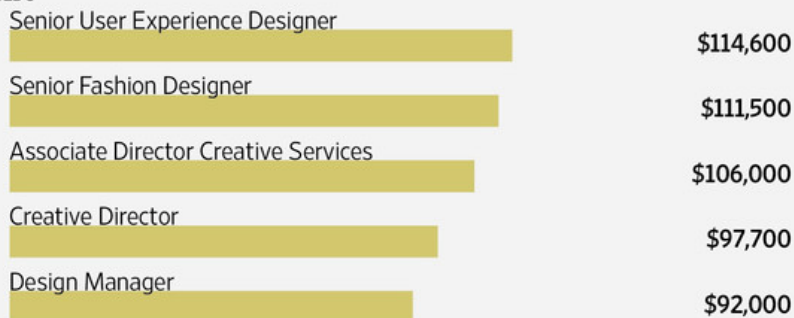
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Data from PayScale's [College Salary Report](#) released today show how the choice of major, field and job can affect median annual pay.

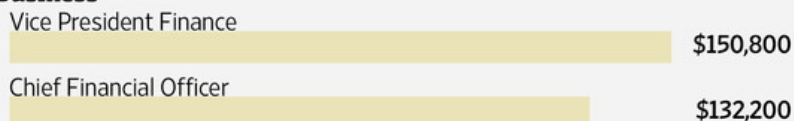
Field Work

Jobs with the top mid-career median salaries by field

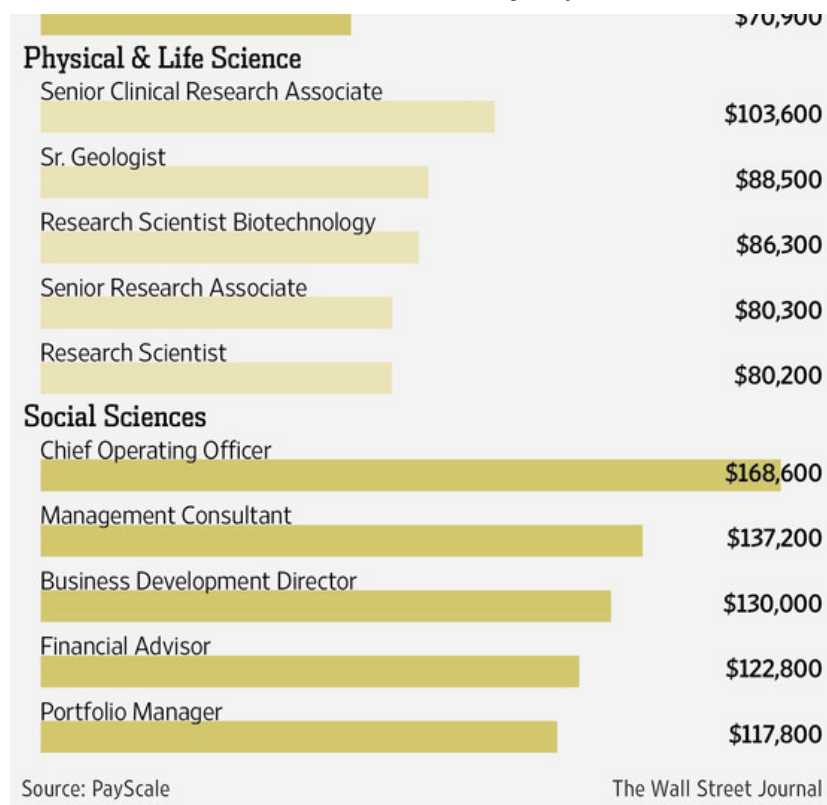
Art



Business



| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Financial Advisor | \$122,800 |
| Corporate Controller | \$95,400 |
| Tax Manager | \$94,500 |
| Communications | |
| Director of Public Relations | \$105,200 |
| Public Relations Director | \$95,200 |
| Media Director | \$93,200 |
| Corporate Communications Manager | \$89,600 |
| Marketing Communications Director | \$89,500 |
| Computer Science | |
| Senior Java Developer | \$109,100 |
| IT Security Consultant | \$105,700 |
| Oracle Database Administrator | \$104,600 |
| Information Security Engineer | \$104,000 |
| Network Security Engineer | \$103,100 |
| Education | |
| Human Resources Director | \$92,500 |
| Executive Director | \$75,800 |
| Executive Assistant | \$54,200 |
| Physical Education Teacher | \$50,700 |
| Tutor | \$50,600 |
| Engineering | |
| Petroleum Engineer | \$178,400 |
| Principal Mechanical Engineer | \$122,800 |
| Principal Electrical Engineer | \$122,500 |
| Electrical Engineering Manager | \$120,500 |
| Senior Chemical Engineer | \$117,800 |
| Humanities | |
| Senior Technical Writer | \$85,100 |
| Director of Communications | \$84,300 |
| Senior Copywriter | \$75,500 |
| Public Relations Manager | \$73,400 |
| Communications Manager | \$70,000 |



The online salary information company collected pay information from 1.4 million civilian employees working in the U.S, with degrees from 1,000 schools. Self-employed, project-based, and contract employees aren't included.

Earlier this month, PayScale released data on [which colleges have the highest-paid graduates](#).

Sort jobs by major and pay in the table below.

Jobs by Field Major and Pay

Show entriesSearch:

| Field ▾ | Job | Most Common Major For Job Within Major Field | Mid-Career Median Pay |
|---------|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Art | Industrial Designer | Industrial Design (ID) | \$84,100 |
| Art | Interior Designer | Interior Design | \$56,500 |
| Art | Fashion Designer | Fashion Design | \$81,400 |
| Art | Senior Interior Designer | Interior Design | \$69,700 |
| Art | Senior Industrial Designer | Industrial Design (ID) | \$88,700 |
| Art | Sr. Art Director | Graphic Design | \$76,400 |
| Art | Technical Designer, Apparel | Fashion Design | \$74,000 |
| Art | Senior Fashion Designer | Fashion Design | \$111,500 |
| Art | Senior Graphic Designer | Graphic Design | \$57,300 |
| Art | Graphic Designer | Graphic Design | \$47,200 |

Showing 1 to 10 of 272 entries

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4:10 pm October 11, 2014

OMFS wrote:

To Simp: your name explains your mindless comment

3:37 am October 8, 2014

1 wrote:

1

11:18 am October 4, 2014

Jake Simp wrote:

#lamarepublican

Typical idiotic, uninformed republican to tell us we need to spend MORE on defence, while we already spend more than the next 7 highest 7 countries combined including Russia and China. You my friend, are why we should do with some old people what they did with Old Yeller, out back with a 12 long barrel to the dome....

9:56 pm October 3, 2014

Ed wrote:

"As a political science major and finance student I think linking loans to major would be disastrous."

What is disastrous is that in the late 70's I was able to obtain an engineering degree at a state college by working part-time and lifestyle offsets like living in a dump, whereas today kids graduate saddled with debt equivalent to a modest home.

Calculus is an eternally bad word. No one every got laid toting that book around. Today students have laptops and PDFs thanks to engineers addressing that very problem. In my day we had brown grocery bag paper and scotch tape asking what if...

2:55 pm October 3, 2014

Emily Mazariegp wrote:

From the "Methodology" section,

"Full-Time, Civilian Employees Only: Only graduates who are employed full-time, not on active military duty and paid with either an hourly wage or an annual salary are included.

Self-employed, project-based, and contract employees are not included. For example, project-based graphic designers and architects, and nearly all small business owners and novelists, are not included."

These studies never include the "reserve army of labor" which would bring down these salaries considerably across the board.



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