

# WHICH COLLEGE MAJORS TRANSLATE INTO THE HIGHEST-PAYING JOBS?

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There's a joke that goes: To the optimist, the glass is half full. To the pessimist, the glass is half empty. To the engineer, the glass is twice as big as it needs to be.

But when it comes to salary compared to other professions, there's no joke. The engineer's glass is definitely full.

In a new study by Payscale.com on *The Bachelor's Degrees with the Highest Salary Potential*, nine of the top 10 are engineering degrees.

What students decide to major in has a huge impact on their future earnings. In general, those majors in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) are rewarded the most monetarily. Conversely, those majors with the lowest future salary potential are those dealing with education and child development.



Major	Early Career Salary	Mid-Career Salary
1. Petroleum Engineering	\$102,300	\$176,300
2. Actuarial Mathematics	\$60,800	\$119,600
3. Nuclear Engineering	\$67,000	\$118,800
4. Chemical Engineering	\$69,600	\$116,700
5. Electronics & Communication Engineering	\$64,100	\$113,200
6. Electrical & Computer Engineering	\$66,500	\$113,000
7. Computer Science (CS) & Engineering	\$67,700	\$112,600
8. Computer Engineering (CE)	\$67,300	\$108,600
9. Electrical Engineering	\$65,900	\$107,900
10. Materials Science & Engineering	\$64,000	\$105,100

Engineers who go on to earn master's or doctorate degrees, make considerably higher salaries. Petroleum engineering is still No. 1 on the list of earners with graduate degrees, and four other engineering degrees are in the top 10. Attorneys are No. 10 on the list, with early career salary averaging \$66,100 growing to \$139,000 at mid-career.

Other graduate degrees that bring the highest earning power are nurse anesthesia (No. 2 with \$140,900 average starting salary), MBA's in both strategy and strategic management, and computer science.

The earning power of other popular undergraduate majors, according to the Payscale study, are:

Major	Early Career Salary	Mid-Career Salary
13. Computer Science	\$61,600	\$103,600
33. Finance	\$50,900	\$89,300
40. Information Technology	\$51,100	\$86,500
44. International Business	\$46,100	\$85,400
55. Marketing and Management	\$44,000	\$82,900
74. Advertising	\$41,100	\$77,500
78. English Literature	\$40,600	\$76,500
89. Nursing	\$56,900	\$73,600
93. Business Administration	\$45,500	\$73,100
97. History	\$40,500	\$72,300
100. Journalism	\$39,000	\$69,700
126. Public Relations	\$38,600	\$65,800
139. Psychology	\$37,300	\$61,800
148. Sociology	\$38,600	\$60,300
164. Criminal Justice	\$35,900	\$58,800

170. Art	\$37,600	\$57,700
186. Education	\$38,100	\$54,600
202. Elementary Education	\$33,600	\$45,500
206. Early Childhood Education	\$29,700	\$38,000

The most underemployed college major, according to Payscale studies, based on low compensation or “having part-time work but wanting full-time or holding a job that doesn’t require or utilize the person’s education, experience or training” is criminal justice, with 62 percent of graduates feeling underemployed.

Criminal justice majors are followed by business management and administration majors at 60 percent and health care administration, with 58 percent feeling underemployed.

Other college majors that currently have more trouble translating into meaningful jobs for the graduates are general studies, sociology, English, graphic design, liberal arts, education and psychology.