

NACE SALARY SURVEY

STARTING SALARIES FOR NEW COLLEGE GRADUATES

APRIL 2012 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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ABOUT THE SURVEY

Data contained in the NACE *Salary Survey* are produced through a compilation of data derived from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Census Bureau, and a master data set developed by Job Search Intelligence. Data for the Spring 2012 *Salary Survey* report were retrieved in February 2012, and were compiled using a proprietary methodology created by Job Search Intelligence. (Please note: Some fields include an asterisk, indicating that data are not currently available in those instances. However, data will be available in future reports.)

Salary Survey (ISSN 1520-8648) is available to individuals holding organizational membership in the National Association of Colleges and Employers; it is also available on a subscription basis. *Salary Survey* 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 or contact NACE at 800.544.5272.

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THE NEW SALARY SURVEY

Since 1960, when the first issue of Salary Survey was published, NACE has been providing information about salaries for new college graduates. Compiled from data provided by participating colleges and universities that collected the information from their graduates, the report featured starting salary offers.

The Spring 2012 Salary Survey issue marks the second report using NACE's new data collection method. This new and improved report contains employer-based data gathered from government and other sources, and the data are actual starting salaries, not offers. Because the data come from a statistically valid sample of employers rather than from voluntary reports by students, the new report is more representative of the college population as a whole; the old report was heavily weighted toward engineering, accounting, and other disciplines that traditionally receive job offers prior to graduation. The new report contains more data, and the data are more robust, allowing for additional analysis.

*The change in methodology and the shift from salary offer data to actual salary data necessitate two additional changes: First, in the past, the Winter report had been the first report for the new year's class. This year, the Winter 2012 report provided final salary data for the Class of 2011, and this issue, the Spring 2012 report, marks the first report for the Class of 2012. Second: Due to the seasonality of the data, the **median** salary values are being compared from this year to last year, as opposed to the **average** salaries.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The first report on starting salaries the college Class of 2012 kicks off with an increase in the average starting salary for bachelor’s degree students.

Overall, the average starting salary for a Class of 2012 graduate is \$44,442—a 6.6 percent increase over the average salary reported for the Class of 2011 in the Winter 2012 *Salary Survey* report. However, much of that leap can be attributed to seasonal factors. A truer comparison can be made between median salaries for the Class of 2012 and 2011: As illustrated in Figure 1, the overall median salary for Class of 2012 grads is up 4.5 percent over the median posted for the Class of 2011. (Note: As salaries in this report have only been nominally adjusted for seasonality, this report uses median salaries—not average salaries—for comparison purposes.)

FIGURE 1 | MEDIAN SALARIES BY DISCIPLINE

Broad Category	2012 Median Salary	2011 Median Salary	Percent Change
Business	\$47,748	\$47,282	1.0%
Communications	\$40,022	\$38,549	3.8%
Computer Science	\$56,383	\$55,087	2.4%
Education	\$37,423	\$35,828	4.5%
Engineering	\$58,581	\$58,802	-0.4%
Health Sciences	\$43,477	\$43,802	-0.7%
Humanities & Social Sciences	\$34,789	\$34,630	0.5%
Math & Sciences	\$40,939	\$39,928	2.5%
Overall	\$42,569	\$40,735	4.5%

BUSINESS

The overall median salary for business majors as a group is up 1 percent to \$47,748. While this appears to be a small increase, many of the individual majors report more substantial gains.

For accounting majors, the median salary is up 2.8 percent to \$47,800. Top employers for accounting grads include professional, scientific, and technical services (including accounting) firms, but wholesale employers offered top pay—\$51,500 on average.

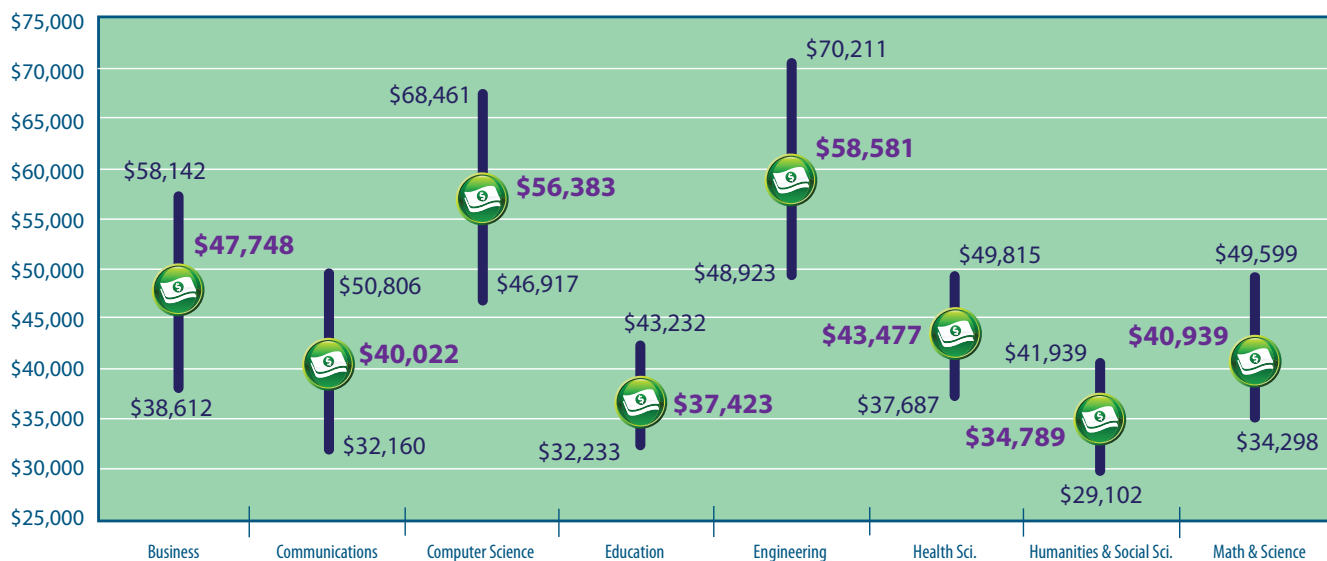
Business administration/management majors also saw an increase in their starting salaries. Their median salary rose 2.9 percent to \$49,200. Employers in the finance and insurance industries reported the largest number of new grad entrants, with an average starting salary of \$51,300. Highest pay, however, went to business administration grads who landed jobs in the finance and insurance industry; employers in this industry provided these grads with an average salary of \$63,900.

Among the business disciplines, economics graduates earn the highest starting salaries. Their median starting salary currently stands at \$54,800, up 5.6 percent over last year’s median of \$51,900. They found the largest number of opportunities with finance and insurance employers; their highest starting salary—\$57,000—also came from these employers. Moreover, economics grads who landed jobs as financial managers in the finance/insurance industry saw their average salary top out at \$64,000.

Starting salaries to finance majors start the year 2.3 percent higher than last year: their current median salary is \$49,700. Although their overall starting salary is lower than that of economics graduates, those who took jobs as financial managers outpaced their counterparts, earning an average starting salary of \$66,000.

There is also positive news for marketing majors: Their median salary is \$49,600, up 3.8 percent. Those who found jobs in the information industry did substantially better, earning an average starting salary of \$59,600.

FIGURE 2 | SALARY RANGES | BY DISCIPLINE



COMMUNICATIONS

Students graduating in the communications fields also saw their overall starting salary bump up. As a group, their median starting salary rose 3.8 percent and now stands at \$40,022. In this group, all majors—advertising, communications, and journalism—saw their starting salaries increase between 2 and 3 percent—but many landed positions with more impressive starting salaries. For example, advertising majors who took management jobs in the management sector received an average starting salary of \$59,400.

COMPUTER SCIENCES

Graduates within the computer sciences fields have starting salaries that are 2.4 percent higher this year; their overall median starting salary rose from \$55,087 to \$56,383. Employers in the information sector reported the highest number of new graduate entrants, with an impressive starting salary to boot—\$64,400.

EDUCATION

Of all the disciplines, those in the education fields saw the highest increase to their median starting salary, which rose 4.5 percent from \$35,828 to \$37,423. Within this group, starting salaries are highest for special education majors; their median salary now stands at \$42,200, up 2.2 percent over last year.

ENGINEERING

The overall median salary for graduates in the engineering disciplines has changed little over last year.

The current median salary is \$58,581, down less than 1 percent from last year's median salary of \$58,802.

Computer engineering grads are the highest paid of the engineering disciplines, with a median salary of \$67,800, a 0.6 percent increase over their Class of 2011 counterparts' median salary.

Right behind computer engineering graduates are aerospace engineering grads, who saw a 1.9 percent increase, bringing their median starting salary to \$64,200. The median salary for civil engineering graduates had similar movement, rising 1.7 percent to \$55,300.

Bioengineering and chemical engineering students posted identical increases (1 percent); their median starting salaries are \$41,800 and \$63,000, respectively.

Electrical engineering graduates saw the largest increase of the engineering disciplines—a 2.7 percent increase, bringing their median starting salary to \$57,300.

The median starting salary to students majoring in mechanical engineering rose 1.6 percent and now stands at \$58,600.

HEALTH SCIENCES

Salaries for health sciences graduates show little movement. Their overall median salary is down less than 1 percent from \$43,802 to \$43,477.

For nursing majors, the change is similar; their median starting salary rose just 0.6 percent from \$48,100 to \$48,400. For general health and related sciences majors, the median starting salary rose 1.7 percent to \$36,400.

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

For graduates in the humanities and social sciences fields, starting salaries have remained relatively stable. The overall median salary to the group is up 0.5 percent from \$34,630 to \$34,789.

All of the individual majors in this group posted increases to their median starting salaries, but visual and performing arts majors saw the biggest increase in this category. Their median starting salary rose 2.1 percent to \$34,800. However, within this group, political science majors posted the highest median salary, \$38,400, a 1.3 percent increase over last year.

Overall, the education services industry was the biggest employer of humanities and social sciences grads (with an average starting salary of \$37,800)—providing the largest number of opportunities for English, foreign language, history, liberal arts, political science, and psychology majors.

Criminal justice majors were most likely to be hired by government employers, and social work and sociology majors had the most new graduate entrants to the health-care and social assistance industries. Retail trade was the single-biggest industry for visual and performing arts majors, with an average salary of just \$26,000.

By industry, top pay for humanities and social sciences majors, however, came from management companies, which provided them with an average starting salary of \$43,500.

Among the humanities/social sciences, top pay by position was reported for political science graduates for financial manager positions within the professional, scientific and technical services industry—an average of \$61,900. Next in line were visual and performing arts graduates hired by retailers for marketing or sales manager positions; their average salary is \$56,500.

MATH AND SCIENCES

The overall median salary for graduates earning math and sciences degrees has increased modestly by 2.5 percent to \$40,939. Within the individual fields, construction science/management graduates saw a 1.9 percent increase to their median salary, bringing it to \$54,700. All of their top-employing industries, construction firms, professional, scientific and technical services employers, and government employers reported average salaries that topped \$55,000.

While mathematics majors saw a 1.5 percent increase to their median starting salary, now standing at \$47,000, they also had three of their top-employing industries paying average starting salaries of more than \$50,000.

Overall, the first look at salaries for the Class of 2012 is promising. The Fall 2012 Salary Survey, to be published in September, will provide the next look at salaries for these graduates.

SALARY SURVEY ONLINE

**NOW
AVAILABLE!**

New web-based tool from the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

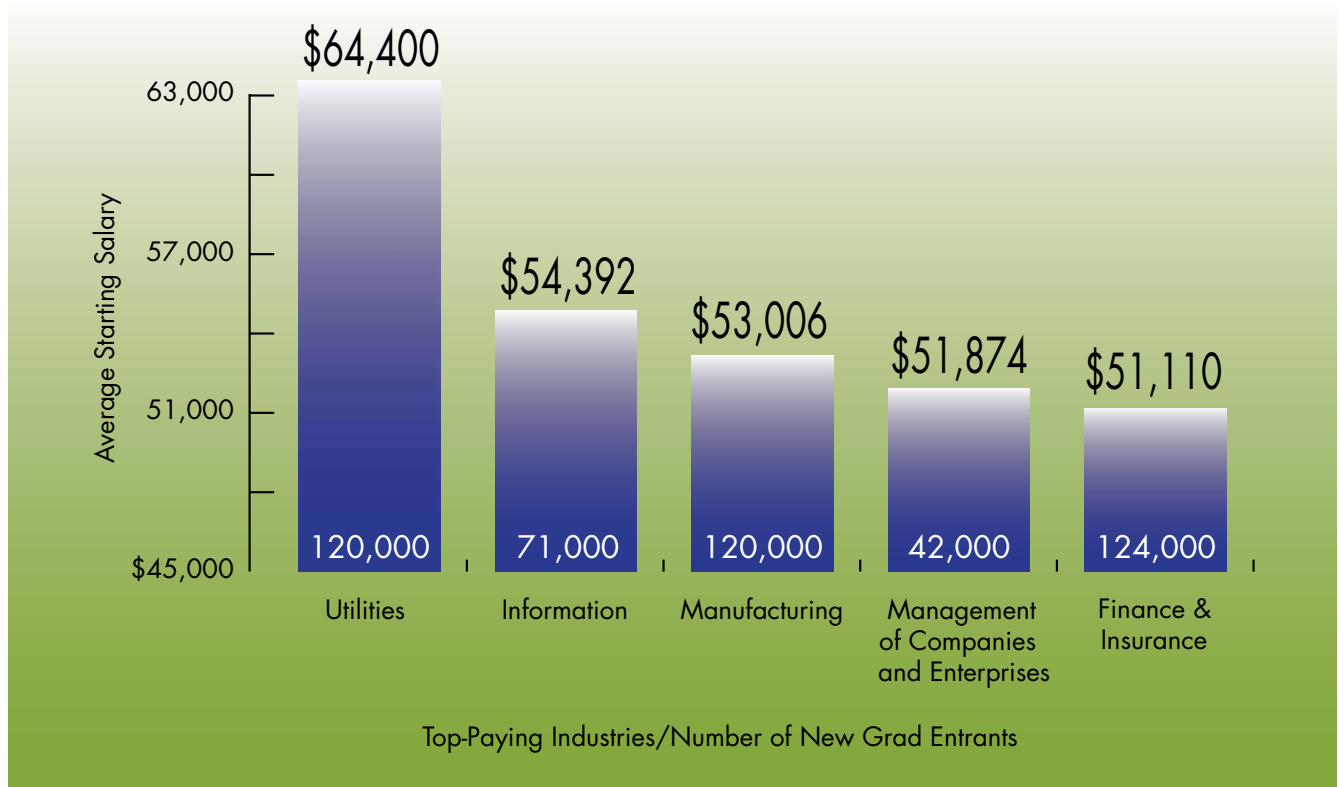
- Access national and regional salary data for new college grads on the fly
- Get detailed information by industry and occupation
- Featuring employer-reported salary data updated bimonthly

Learn More: www.nacweb.org/salary-survey-data/

Salary Survey Online, available to NACE organizational members and Salary Survey subscribers, is the companion to the Salary Survey Report and provides users with access to more data and more-detailed data.

TOP-PAYING | INDUSTRIES

The chart below shows the top five industries that paid the highest starting salaries to 2012 bachelor's degree graduates, regardless of major. The number of new graduate entrants reported by each particular industry is also listed here.



INDUSTRY | DEFINITIONS

Utilities: The utilities sector comprises establishments engaged in the provision of the following utility services—electric power, natural gas, steam supply, water supply, and sewage removal.

Information: The information sector comprises establishments engaged in the following processes: 1) producing and distributing information and cultural products, 2) providing the means to transmit or distribute these products, as well as data or communications, and 3) processing data. (Example: software publishers)

Manufacturing: The manufacturing sector comprises establishments engaged in the mechanical, physical, or chemical transformation of materials, substances, or components into new products.

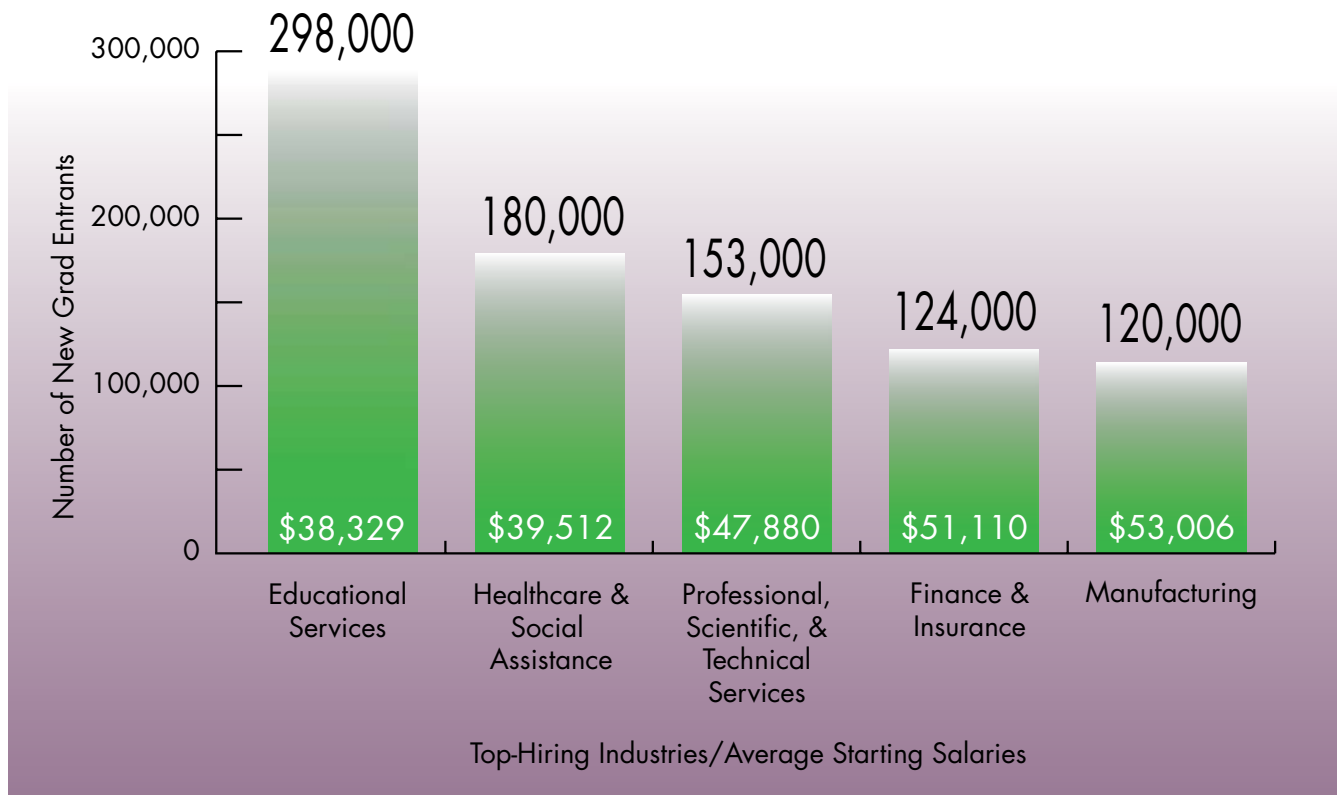
Management of Companies and Enterprises: This sector comprises 1) establishments that hold the securities of companies and enterprises for the purpose of owning a controlling interest or influencing management decisions, or 2) establishments that administer, oversee, and manage establishments of the company or enterprise.

Finance & Insurance: This sector includes establishments primarily engaged in financial transactions and/or in facilitating financial transactions.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), 2007. www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/

TOP-HIRING | INDUSTRIES

This chart shows the top five industries that reported the highest number of new graduate entrants for 2012 bachelor's degree graduates, regardless of major. The average starting salary reported by each particular industry is also listed here.



INDUSTRY | DEFINITIONS

Educational Services: This sector comprises establishments that provide instruction and training in a wide variety of subjects. The instruction and training is provided by establishments such as schools, colleges, universities, and training centers.

Healthcare & Social Assistance: The Healthcare & Social Assistance sector comprises establishments providing health care and social assistance for individuals. The sector includes both health care and social assistance because it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the boundaries of these two activities.

Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services: This sector comprises establishments that specialize in performing professional, scientific, and technical activities for others. These activities require a high degree of expertise and training. (Examples – accounting, bookkeeping, payroll services, architectural, engineering, and computer services.)

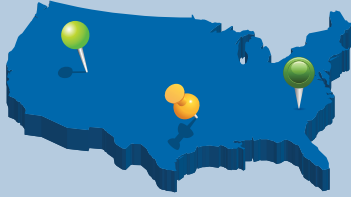
Finance & Insurance: This sector includes establishments primarily engaged in financial transactions and/or in facilitating financial transactions.

Manufacturing: The manufacturing sector comprises establishments engaged in the mechanical, physical, or chemical transformation of materials, substances, or components into new products.

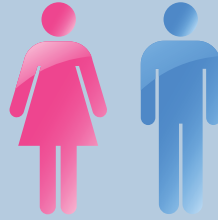
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), 2007. www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/

GET CUSTOMIZED SALARY INFORMATION

Salary data are available by



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RACE/ETHNICITY

For more information, contact Andrea McEwen, 800.544.5272, ext. 126; amcewen@naceweb.org.

SALARY SURVEY

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