

## Top 10 highest paying college majors

By: Carly Stockwell, College Factual July 30, 2014 10:39 am

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It's true that on average college graduates make more over their lifetime than non-grads. However, not all majors pay you back the same amount.

Here are 10 of the highest paying majors as ranked by College Factual. The salary data provided are all averages, and come from extensive survey data conducted by PayScale. We only use results from those with bachelor's degrees. The figures listed are average starting salaries.

It is no surprise that this top 10 list is heavily populated with STEM degrees, as they are continuously in demand. You should also note that not every university will provide you with degrees of equal value. Some schools graduate students who end up making much more in starting and midcareer pay than their peers at other universities. Check out the rankings to see what we mean.

### 1. Petroleum Engineering: \$89,000

All engineering degrees rank well as having high starting salaries, but the highest of all is Petroleum Engineering, with an average starting pay of \$89,000 and mid-career salary of \$159,900. This is a fairly specialized and difficult subject, with only about 1,000 students a year graduating with this degree. Graduates often find jobs with oil companies or oil production manufacturers.

However, all other degrees in engineering also rank highly for starting pay. Choose a major in Electrical Engineering for average starting pay of \$62,400, Mechanical Engineering for starting pay of \$57,800, or major in Civil Engineering for starting pay of \$52,700.

### 2. Computer Science: \$53,800

Computer Science focuses on the interactions between humans and computers. This broad major translates to jobs in many different fields, from computer system development, to software publishing, research or work for educational or government facilities.

A similar major is Mathematics & Computer Science, which also draws in high average starting salaries of \$50,700.

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### 3. Nursing: \$53,300

Nursing is one field that is always in demand. A graduate with a bachelor's in nursing makes an average starting salary of 53,300 and a mid-career salary of \$70,100. This is a major that is heavy in science and also involves hands-on training. Nurses find jobs all over the country in many different specializations including neonatal, family health, surgery, and geriatric care.

### 4. Applied Mathematics: \$52,200

A degree in Applied Mathematics prepares graduates to use math in everyday situations to calculate costs, make estimations, predict outcomes, and design systems. This is a practical degree that allows graduates to work in a variety of fields, from building and construction to education, finance, economics or education. Graduates make average starting salaries of \$52,200 and mid-career salaries of \$101,850.

Some related majors also come up highly on the best paid list, including Math with an average starting salary of \$47,000.

### 5. Physics: \$50,800

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A major in physics can lead to careers in research or development at such places as NASA, the Department of Defense, or private science firms. Students with a Bachelor's in Physics can expect average starting salary of \$50,800 and mid-career pay of \$90,500.

### 6. Management Information Systems (MIS): \$49,600

Management Information Systems (MIS) are essential to the running of any large business today. Students in this major will learn how to set-up, run and manage information systems, network and storage for businesses and other large companies or organizations. This degree involves training in both business and computer programs. The average mid-career salary for a graduate with a degree in MIS makes \$86,600.

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### 7. Construction Management: \$49,200

If you have an interested in building and development, as well as business and management you can combine your interests into a Construction Management degree. This degree is also available as an Associates at some colleges, but jobs requiring bachelor's degrees typically pay

better. This is a degree for a student who enjoys practical hands-on tasks, who is capable of higher level thinking regarding management, math and business. Average mid-career salary is \$83,300.

#### 8. Computer Information Systems (CIS): \$49,000

Students who choose to major in Computer Information Systems learn the ins and outs of computer networks, security issues and other information technology issues. In addition to this they will also often take classes in math, science and business. A degree in this field can lead to jobs in many different business and corporate settings, whether it's managing a large IT department, or designing a computer system from scratch for a small business. CIS grads can expect early career salaries averaging about \$49,000 and mid-career salaries of \$85,900.

#### 9. Mathematics & Statistics: \$48,900

Statistics allows you to learn the theory and systems behind math in order to analyze numbers, detect possible causes and solutions, and predict trends. The skills of a statistician are useful in many fields, including business, healthcare, scientific research and education. The average starting salary for graduates with a degree in Mathematics and Statistics is \$48,900 with average mid-career salaries of \$99,800.

#### 10. Computer Programming: \$48,000

Do you love working with computers and dream of developing and programming your own software, websites or applications? Students in this major will learn a variety of programming languages and software, as well as take classes in math and science. Computer programmers find jobs in a variety of fields, creating programs for software development companies, educational and research facilities, and many other businesses.

Carly Stockwell is the director of Media Content at College Factual

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