

Companies Planning to Hire More Recent College Graduates This Year and Pay Them Better, According to CareerBuilder Survey

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CHICAGO, April 23, 2015 [/PRNewswire/](#) -- As graduation season approaches, soon-to-be college alumni will have more to celebrate than just the end of term papers and final exams: Ample job prospects and higher-than-usual starting salaries. According to a new survey from CareerBuilder, 65 percent of employers say they plan to hire recent college graduates this year, up from 57 last year and the highest outlook since 2007. One third will offer higher pay than last year, and 1 in 4 will pay \$50,000 or more.

"New college graduates have better prospects this year than in years' past – both in terms of opportunities and salary offers," said Rosemary Haefner, Chief Human Resources Officer of CareerBuilder. "They still face challenges, however. One in five employers feel colleges do not adequately prepare students with crucial workplace competencies, including soft skills and real-world experience that might be gained through things like internships. Job seekers with a good mix of both technical and soft skills will have the best prospects right out of college."

The national survey was conducted online by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder from February 11 to March 6, 2015, and included a representative sample of 2,175 hiring managers and human resource professionals across industries and company sizes

Where do new graduates fall short?

While prospects are better, some employers are concerned that new college grads may not be ready for the real world. Twenty-one percent do not feel academic institutions are adequately preparing students for roles needed within their organizations. When asked where academic institutions fall short, these employers cited the following concerns:

- Too much emphasis on book learning instead of real world learning: 46 percent
- I need workers with a blend of technical skills and soft skills gained from liberal arts: 38 percent
- Entry-level roles within my organization are more complex today: 22 percent
- Not enough focus on internships: 15 percent
- Technology is changing too quickly for academics to keep up: 14 percent
- Not enough students are graduating with the degrees my company needs: 10 percent

When asked to name which skills they think recent college graduates lack for the workplace, most of these employers cited interpersonal or problem-solving skills:

- Interpersonal or people skills: 52 percent
- Problem-solving skills: 46 percent
- Oral communication: 41 percent
- Leadership: 40 percent
- Written communication: 38 percent
- Teamwork: 37 percent
- Creative thinking: 36 percent
- Project management: 26 percent
- Research and analysis: 16 percent
- Math: 15 percent
- Computer and Technical: 13 percent

Major buzz: The most in-demand college majors

Demand for students with business and technical majors has typically been high among employers, and this year is no exception, with 38 percent of employers naming business as the most sought-after major. Other in-demand majors include:

- Computer and Information Sciences – 27 percent
- Engineering – 18 percent
- Math and Statistics – 14 percent
- Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences – 14 percent
- Communications Technologies – 12 percent

- Engineering Technologies – 12 percent
- Communication and Journalism – 10 percent
- Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities – 9 percent
- Science Technologies – 8 percent
- Education – 7 percent

Information technology (30 percent) and customer service jobs (28 percent) top the list of position types hiring managers are primarily looking to fill. Opportunities also abound in finance/accounting (22 percent), sales (21 percent) and business development (19 percent).

Payday prospects: What can new grads expect to earn?

Job opportunities aren't the only things on the upswing: One third (33 percent) of employers who plan to hire recent college graduates will offer higher starting salaries they did last year. Fifty-seven percent expect no change in salary offers, and 1 in 10 (10 percent) expect a decrease in starting salaries.

Nearly half of employers (48 percent) say they will make offers to students before they graduate. Expected starting salaries for recent graduates break down as follows:

- Under \$30,000: 26 percent
- \$30,000 to less than \$40,000: 28 percent
- \$40,000 to less than \$50,000: 20 percent
- \$50,000 and higher: 26 percent

These numbers, however, are not set in stone: The majority of employers (65 percent) say they are willing to negotiate salary offers.

Top Job Search Tips for Recent Graduates:

Finals may be over, but many new college graduates are facing their biggest challenge yet: Looking for a job. The following are tips to help graduates get the most out of their job search.

Search early, search often: The majority of employers who plan to hire recent graduates (54 percent) begin recruiting college students in their senior year, but more than 1 in 4 (27 percent) start courting students as juniors, sophomores and even freshmen. Start researching companies you're interested in as early as possible and don't be afraid to reach out to inquire about part-time jobs or internship opportunities, which are some of the best ways to get your foot in the door.

Play up your "real world" experience: Of the employers who believe colleges fail to adequately prepare students for the roles needed at their firms, nearly half (46 percent) say colleges do not put enough emphasis on real-world learning. Be ready to showcase your street smarts by playing up relevant experience from classwork, volunteering and extra-curricular activities, in addition to previous jobs and internships.

Update your status: A lot of employers check candidates' social networking profiles when considering them for a job, so make sure your online presence is 'employer-friendly'- either by changing your privacy settings or using your social media profiles to highlight your skills, creativity and relevant interests.

Think big picture: When considering a job offer, focus on the whole compensation package, not just the paycheck. The salary offer might not meet your expectations, but there could be great learning and advancement opportunities, benefits and other perks that make accepting the job worthwhile.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder among 2,175 hiring and human resource managers ages 18 and over (employed full-time, not self-employed, non-government) between February 11 and March 6, 2015 (percentages for some questions are based on a subset, based on their responses to certain questions). With a pure probability sample of 2,175, one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 2.10 percentage points. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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