

# NACE SALARY SURVEY

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Final starting salaries for class of 2020 new college graduates  
Data reported by colleges and universities

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**FEATURING**  
Actual Starting Salaries  
For all Degree Levels

**ASSOCIATE  
BACHELOR'S  
MASTER'S  
DOCTORAL**



# ABOUT THE SURVEY

The Summer 2021 *Salary Survey* report provides actual starting salaries (not projections) and serves as the final salary report for the college Class of 2020.

The figures reported are for base salaries only and do not include bonuses, commissions, fringe benefits, or overtime rates. The report provides the detailed salaries by academic major at the associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree levels, along with breakouts by both geographic region and Carnegie Classification at the bachelor's degree level based upon the participating institutions. Data were gathered from Class of 2020 graduates through December 31, 2020, and reported to NACE through May 15, 2021.

The salary data presented here were reported to NACE through its national *Class of 2020 First-Destination Survey* by 341 colleges and universities nationwide and represent data for 757,144 graduates at the associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree levels. Most of the analysis provided here, however, focuses on the data provided for more than 77,180 bachelor's degree graduates. Of those schools providing salary information, 249 provided salary data by specific program or major; this report contains average salaries for 38 majors at the associate level, 249 majors at the bachelor's level, 195 majors at the master's level, and 101 majors at the doctoral level. A list of those institutions providing salary data by program or major can be found in the appendix of this report.

*Salary Survey* (ISSN 1520-8648) is available to individuals holding membership in the National Association of Colleges and Employers; it is also available on a subscription basis. The *Salary Survey* report is published two times a year—winter and summer—by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, 62 Highland Ave., Bethlehem, PA 18017-9085. For more information, see [www.nacweb.org/store/subscription/salary-survey/](http://www.nacweb.org/store/subscription/salary-survey/) or contact NACE at 610.868.1421.

# SALARIES FOR COLLEGE GRADUATES CLIMB DESPITE PANDEMIC

Despite the deeply negative impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on business, average starting salaries for new college graduates continue to climb. The final overall average starting salary for the college Class of 2020 landed at \$55,260—2.5% above the final average starting salary for the Class of 2019 (\$53,889).

Not surprisingly, technical majors were the highest paid among Class of 2020 graduates earning bachelor's degrees. In fact, the list of the 10 majors with the highest average starting salary is dominated by those in technical areas, led by petroleum engineering, computer programming, and computer engineering. (See Figure 1.)

In addition, in some cases, salary increases most likely reflect these unique times. For example, the increased demand for nurses as frontline workers during the COVID-19 pandemic may have fueled the 2.1% increase in the average starting salary for registered nursing majors, despite the overall salary of health sciences majors dipping 0.1% from last year.

The Summer 2021 *Salary Survey* also illustrates the value a master's degree can have over a bachelor's for certain majors. In particular, master's level biology majors and communication disorders sciences majors netted average starting salaries that—with differentials of 86.5% and 70.6%, respectively—were massive increases over their counterparts at the bachelor's degree level. While the differentials for other majors—such as business administration, computer/information technology administration, communication and media studies, and others—were not as large, they were still significant and, perhaps, provide sufficient incentive for bachelor's graduates in these majors to continue on for advanced degrees. (See Figure 2.)

Looking ahead: A first look at salaries for the Class of 2022 will be available in the Winter 2022 *Salary Survey*. The report will be based on starting salary projections provided by employers.

**FIGURE 1: TOP-PAID MAJORS AMONG CLASS OF 2020 GRADUATES EARNING BACHELOR'S DEGREES**

MAJOR	AVERAGE STARTING SALARY
Petroleum engineering	\$87,989
Computer programming	\$86,098
Computer engineering	\$85,996
Computer science	\$85,766
Electrical, electronics, and communications engineering	\$80,819
Operations research	\$80,166
Computer and information science	\$78,603
Statistics	\$75,916
Applied mathematics	\$73,558
Chemical engineering	\$72,713

**FIGURE 2: DIFFERENTIAL BETWEEN AVERAGE STARTING SALARIES FOR CLASS OF 2020 GRADUATES EARNING BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S DEGREES**

MAJOR	AVERAGE BACHELOR'S SALARY	AVERAGE MASTER'S SALARY	% DIFFERENTIAL
Biology	\$37,182	\$69,353	86.5%
Communication disorders sciences	\$34,517	\$58,890	70.6%
Business administration/management	\$54,392	\$82,372	51.4%
Computer/information technology administration and management	\$59,032	\$86,695	46.9%
Communication and media studies	\$42,345	\$62,166	46.8%
Systems engineering	\$73,559	\$106,640	45.0%
Registered nursing	\$58,626	\$84,674	44.4%
Psychology	\$37,006	\$52,786	42.6%
English language and literature/letters	\$38,597	\$54,102	40.2%
Social work	\$35,622	\$48,711	36.7%

# PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Below is a list of the institutions that supplied the salary data that was used in the NACE Summer 2021 *Salary Survey*. This list includes the 341 schools that provided salary data by specific program or major through NACE's *First-Destination Survey*.

Abilene Christian University	CUNY Bernard M Baruch College
Alfred University	Curry College
Alma College	Davenport University
American University	Delaware Valley University
Anderson University	DeSales University
Aquinas College	Doane University
Arizona State University	Dordt University
Arkansas Tech University	Earlham College
Auburn University	Eastern Illinois University
Augustana College	Elgin Community College
Azusa Pacific University	Elmira College
Baker College	Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University: Daytona Beach
Belmont University	Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University: Prescott
Binghamton University	Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University: Worldwide
Biola University	Emerson College
Bob Jones University	Florida Southern College
Boston College	Florida State University
Boston University	Fordham University
Bradley University	Franklin W Olin College of Engineering
California Polytechnic State University - San Luis Obispo	Geneva College
California State University San Marcos	George Mason University
Cameron University	George Washington University
Cardinal Stritch University	Georgetown University
Carnegie Mellon University	Georgia Institute of Technology
Cedar Crest College	Georgia Southern University
Central State University	Gonzaga University
Champlain College	Grace College and Theological Seminary
Chapman University	Grand View University
Clemson University	Hartwick College
Coe College	Hastings College
College of Coastal Georgia	Hofstra University
Colorado Mountain College	Illinois Wesleyan University
Colorado School of Mines	Indiana State University
Columbia University - Mailman School of Public Health	Indiana University South Bend Judd Leighton School of Business and Economics

Iona College  
Ithaca College  
Jacksonville State University  
Jacksonville University  
Kalamazoo College  
Kansas State University  
Kennesaw State University  
Kent State University  
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania  
La Roche University  
Lafayette College  
Le Moyne College  
Lehigh University  
Lewis & Clark College  
Lewis University  
Loyola University New Orleans  
Manhattanville College  
Mansfield University of Pennsylvania  
Marquette University  
Maryville College  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Massachusetts Maritime Academy  
Mayville State University  
McPherson College  
Mercer University  
Miami University - Oxford  
Miami University - Regionals  
Michigan Technological University  
Midland University  
Milwaukee School of Engineering  
Missouri State University - Springfield  
Montana Technological University  
Morehead State University  
Morgan State University  
Mount Holyoke College  
Muhlenberg College  
National University  
Nazareth College  
New Jersey Institute of Technology  
New York University  
North Carolina A & T State University

North Central College  
Northeastern State University  
Northeastern University  
Northwestern College  
Oakland University  
Oglethorpe University  
Ohio Dominican University  
Ohio Northern University  
Oklahoma State University  
Olivet Nazarene University  
Our Lady of the Lake University  
Pace University  
Pacific Lutheran University  
Pacific University  
Pennsylvania College of Technology  
Princeton University  
Principia College  
Purdue University  
Purdue University Global  
Purdue University Northwest  
Radford University  
Ramapo College of New Jersey  
Randolph-Macon College  
Rice University  
Robert Morris University  
Rochester University  
Roger Williams University  
Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology  
Rutgers University Camden  
Rutgers University New Brunswick  
Saint Ambrose University  
Saint John Fisher College  
Saint Joseph's University  
Saint Norbert College  
San Francisco State University  
Schreiner University  
Seattle University  
Seton Hill University  
Simmons University  
Sonoma State University  
South Dakota School of Mines and Technology

Southern Illinois University - Carbondale  
Southern Illinois University – Carbondale  
College of Business and Analytics  
Southern Methodist University  
Southern Methodist University Cox School of Business  
Southern Wesleyan University  
Spelman College  
Spring Arbor University  
Springfield College  
St. Catherine University  
St. Lawrence University  
St. Mary's College of Maryland  
Stark State College  
Stonehill College  
SUNY at Purchase College  
SUNY College at Geneseo  
Syracuse University  
Tennessee State University  
Tennessee Technological University  
Tennessee Wesleyan University  
Texas A&M University - San Antonio  
Texas Wesleyan University  
The Ohio State University  
The University of Alabama - Tuscaloosa  
The University of Tennessee - Knoxville  
The University of Tennessee-Martin  
The University of Texas at Austin  
The University of Texas Permian Basin  
Trine University  
Trinity University  
Troy University  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
University of Arizona  
University of Arkansas  
University of California - Berkeley  
University of California - Riverside  
University of California - Santa Barbara  
University of Central Missouri  
University of Dallas  
University of Dayton  
University of Denver

University of Detroit Mercy  
University of Houston - Downtown Marilyn Davies  
College of Business Career Center  
University of Idaho  
University of Illinois at Springfield  
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign  
University of Iowa  
University of Kansas - School of Business  
University of Kentucky  
University of Louisville - College of Business  
University of Massachusetts - Dartmouth  
University of Miami  
University of Minnesota -  
College of Science and Engineering  
University of Missouri–Columbia  
University of Missouri-St. Louis  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
University of Nevada - Las Vegas  
University of Nevada - Reno  
University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
University of North Georgia  
University of North Texas  
University of Oklahoma  
University of Oregon  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Portland  
University of Richmond  
University of Rochester  
University of Saint Francis-Fort Wayne  
University Of San Diego  
University of South Carolina - Columbia  
University of Southern California  
University of Southern Mississippi  
University of St. Thomas  
University of Tulsa  
University of Utah  
University of Washington - Seattle  
University of West Alabama  
University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire  
University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh  
University of Wisconsin - River Falls  
University of Wisconsin - Stout

University of Wyoming  
Upper Iowa University  
Ursinus College  
Utah State University  
Vanguard University of Southern California  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
Washburn University  
Wellesley College  
West Texas A&M University  
West Virginia University -  
John Chambers College of Business & Economics  
West Virginia Wesleyan College  
Western Colorado University  
Western Connecticut State University  
Westmont College  
Whitworth University  
Widener University  
William & Mary  
William Paterson University of New Jersey  
Wisconsin Lutheran College  
Wittenberg University  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute  
Xavier University



**SALARY SURVEY**

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