

# RECRUITING TRENDS

## 2016-17

### 46th Edition

#### BRIEF 3

### Starting Salaries

**Key findings from 2016-17 are presented in this research brief. We have broken the release of employer information into a series of short briefs that will be made available over the next six weeks. You can download the briefs from the [Collegiate Employment Research Institute](#).**



# Meet the Completers

We generated this convenience sample from employers currently seeking college talent through their interactions with college and university career services offices. Nearly 200 career service centers from around the country invited their employers to participate in this study. Approximately 4,350 employers provided information useful for understanding recruiting trends and practices. We will use information provided by those recruiting talent for full-time positions, internships, and co-ops for these research briefs. Readers can use the following key sample characteristics to determine how applicable our survey results are for their campus employer base.

Company Size		
Very small	> 9 employees	9%
Fast-growth	10-100 employees	30%
Small	101–500 employees	23%
Midsize	501–3,999 employees	20%
Large	4,000–25,000 employees	10%
Very large	> 25,000 employees	8%

Active Recruiting by Region	
International	5%
Entire U.S.	25%
Regional recruiting only	69%

Role in College Recruiting	
Full-time positions	71%
Internship or co-op positions only	12%
Short-term hiring	7%
Experienced hiring	10%

Key States	
Massachusetts	10%
Michigan	9%
Arizona, California, Florida, Ohio & Texas	6%

Institutions Where Companies Recruit Talent	
Two-year public college	28%
Four-year public college	53%
Four-year private college	40%
Two- & four-year for-profit institution	22%
Institution with bachelor's & advanced degree programs	69%
Institution with advanced degrees only	10%
Historically black college & university	17%
Hispanic-serving institution	15%
Asian, Asian-Pacific serving institutions	14%

Key Economic Sectors	
Professional, business & scientific services	22%
Manufacturing	13%
Educational services	10%
Finance & insurance	8%
Government	7%
Healthcare & social assistance	7%
Nonprofits	7%

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Recruiting Trends 2016-17* is made possible by the efforts of many dedicated and generous colleagues, friends of the institute, and corporate sponsors. We thank all the colleges and universities who encouraged local, regional, and national organizations to participate in our survey and for their confidence in our contribution to research on college recruiting. Please visit our web page, [Consortium For Student Transition Studies](#), for a complete list of participants. We also thank our editor, Stephanie Schlick.

We extend special appreciation to several people whose special insights contribute to CERI's research activities: Jeff Beavers (CEO 3sevenPartners), Duncan Ferguson (Managing Director, Vantage Leadership Consulting), and James Spohrer (Director of University Programs Worldwide [and numerous other titles], IBM Almaden Research Center).



*Our respondents will increase starting salary offers by more than 4 percent. What is more impressive is that 48 percent of respondents will be raising salaries (up 9 percentage points this year).*

We have not seen this many employers raising salary offers since 2006-07. The remaining respondents will offer the same starting salaries as last year.

This year's increase in starting salaries is the first sign that salaries are rising at a fast pace. Starting salaries by academic major for which we had sufficient data have been trending upward during the past three years. Salaries for some majors for which we do not have sufficient observations to provide stable data may appear to be drifting up and down. Please note that these figures have not been adjusted for inflation.

Before the recession, 33 percent of employers offered performance bonuses and 17 percent offered signing bonuses to new college graduates. The percentage of employers offering incentives dropped precipitously by 2010-11. Although low by historical standards, 7 percent of employers will offer signing bonuses this year (the same as last year). Only 13 percent will be awarding performance bonuses at the end of the first year of employment.

This is down sharply from 22 percent of employers who did so last year. Employers did not comment on the bonuses, so we can only conjecture at this point. It may be that employers are placing their resources into starting salaries instead of bonuses.

The percentage of employers who pay only commissions remains at 8 percent. Even with more sales positions being offered, base salary appears to be the accepted practice at this time.

### Salary offers

The average starting salaries reflect base salary only and do not include commissions, stipends, bonuses, housing and moving allowances, or other incentives. We examined extremely low and high salaries to see if they fit within an acceptable range and omitted the few extremely low salaries. We removed salaries that represented stipends, contract work, or lump sum payments: most of these salaries were less than \$10,000. We admit we may have not identified all the stipend employment reported. However, the standard deviations around all averages reported in the tables are within appropriate levels.

Starting salaries have been broken out in several ways so that the reader can see how sector and organization size influence starting salaries. We have chosen groups with sufficient observations to make comparisons across sector and size meaningful.

The academic major list contains degrees with sufficient reported salary offers to provide solid salary evidence. To provide representative majors from major discipline groups (specifically physical and biological sciences, social sciences, humanities and liberal arts, and communications) the number of observations deemed acceptable was lowered to at least 50 observations.

Trends in Starting Salaries and Bonuses										
Employers offering	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Increase in starting salaries (%)	53	32	12	17	20	25	32	37	39	48
Average percentage increase (avg.)	4.2	4.0	2.8	3.0	5.0	5.0	6.0	5.2	4.7	4.2
Signing bonus (%)	10	17	7	1	5	5	6	7	7	7
Performance bonus (%)	20	33	20	5	18	19	25	28	22	14
Commission-based salaries (%)	10	4	—	—	9	10	13	14	8	8
— Insufficient data was provided to calculate a useful average.										

Average Starting Salary - Selected Industrial Sectors						
Selected majors	Manufacturing	Finance & Insurance	Professional, Business & Scientific Services	Government	Retail Trade	Nonprofit
All majors	\$50,126	\$45,750	\$44,466	\$42,519	\$41,857	\$35,024
All technical	\$59,008	\$58,444	\$59,190	\$49,969	—	—
All business	\$50,032	\$49,919	\$47,992	\$41,704	\$44,636	—
All liberal arts	\$46,304	\$50,609	\$41,919	\$45,586	—	\$32,966
Electrical engineering	\$61,782	—	\$64,491	—	—	—
Mechanical engineering	\$60,910	—	\$59,406	—	—	—
Computer science	\$57,968	—	\$60,806	\$51,714	—	—
Chemical engineering	\$53,903	—	—	—	—	—
Finance	\$53,556	\$48,431	\$48,162	—	—	—
Supply chain	\$52,522	—	—	—	—	—
Accounting	\$49,820	\$47,429	\$51,118	—	—	—
Marketing	\$49,811	\$42,423	\$45,545	—	—	—
Human resources	\$47,757	—	\$46,833	—	—	—
— Insufficient data was provided to calculate a useful average.						

Average Starting Salary — Organizational Size				
	< 100 employees	101 to 1,500 employees	1501 to 10,000 employees	> 10,000 employees
All majors	\$39,346	\$41,779	\$43,056	\$50,667
All technical	\$54,337	\$55,323	\$56,551	\$58,282
All business	\$44,954	\$46,240	\$48,354	\$50,377
All liberal arts	\$40,009	\$41,123	\$41,333	\$47,412
All health	\$43,268	\$43,244	\$45,105	\$50,591
Accounting	\$46,988	\$47,017	\$47,711	\$48,562
Finance	\$46,492	\$40,500	\$45,605	\$49,543
Marketing	\$40,422	\$46,697	\$44,580	\$45,936
Supply chain	\$45,458	\$47,107	\$48,600	\$51,212
Economics	\$42,714	\$46,736	—	\$46,615
Human resources	\$40,317	\$47,042	\$46,687	—
Advertising	\$37,454	\$44,143	—	—
Computer science	\$56,923	\$57,371	\$57,667	\$59,970
Computer engineering	\$57,333	\$64,762	\$59,040	\$62,150
Electrical engineering	\$62,282	\$64,214	\$60,167	\$59,625
Mechanical engineering	\$57,818	\$60,727	\$57,727	\$59,143

— Insufficient data was provided to calculate a useful average.

Average Starting Salaries — Selected Majors								
	2007-08	2009-10	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Advertising	\$35,700	\$35,500	\$34,100	\$35,286	\$38,500	\$36,600	\$35,733	\$41,388
Computer science	\$50,200	\$47,500	\$47,200	\$47,561	\$52,200	\$52,237	\$56,974	\$57,762
Electrical engineering	\$53,200	\$51,600	\$55,100	\$52,307	\$57,100	\$57,000	\$61,173	\$62,428
Marketing	\$39,100	\$38,300	\$38,100	\$38,874	\$40,700	\$41,500	\$43,481	\$44,087
Mathematics	\$40,700	\$43,600	\$44,600	\$41,880	\$49,200	\$47,900	\$44,609	\$45,632

Starting Salaries — Associate's Degree		
Selected major	Average	Range
All engineering & technical	\$46,739	\$10,000 – \$100,000
All computer science	\$46,483	\$12,000 – \$113,000
All nursing	\$39,880	\$12,000 – \$80,000
All health services, technicians & technologists	\$38,196	\$10,000 – \$96,000
All business	\$38,190	\$10,000 – \$91,000
All other degrees	\$32,704	\$10,000 – \$109,000

Starting Salaries — PhD & Professional		
Selected major	Average	Range
Pharmacy	\$89,725	\$20,000 – \$146,000
Engineering & computer science	\$77,811	\$20,000 – \$168,000
Law	\$74,130	\$20,000 – \$200,000
Physical & biological sciences	\$73,422	\$20,000 – \$141,000
Business	\$67,578	\$20,000 – \$188,000
Social sciences & humanities	\$58,897	\$16,000 – \$123,000

Starting Salaries — MBA & Master's Degree		
Selected major	Average	Range
Computer science	\$72,071	\$15,000 – \$145,000
Engineering	\$69,729	\$20,000 – \$200,000
MBA	\$62,700	\$10,000 – \$151,000
Physical & biological sciences	\$59,204	\$10,000 – \$200,000
Accounting	\$58,159	\$10,000 – \$144,000
LIR/HR	\$58,125	\$10,000 – \$127,000
Health sciences MS & MSW	\$53,283	\$10,000 – \$175,000
Social sciences MA & MS	\$48,697	\$10,000 – \$150,000



Starting Salaries — Bachelor's Degree		
Selected major	Average	Range
Electrical engineering	\$62,428	\$25,000 – \$130,000
Software design	\$61,466	\$25,000 – \$134,000
Chemical engineering	\$61,125	\$31,000 – \$125,000
Computer engineering	\$61,092	\$15,000 – \$130,000
Mechanical engineering	\$59,610	\$15,000 – \$134,000
Computer programming	\$59,163	\$15,000 – \$130,000
Information security systems	\$58,798	\$19,000 – \$123,000
Computer science	\$57,762	\$15,000 – \$130,000
MIS (computer science)	\$57,301	\$15,000 – \$122,000
Engineering technicians	\$55,693	\$15,000 – \$132,000
Computer information systems	\$54,744	\$15,000 – \$115,000
Civil engineering	\$54,333	\$25,000 – \$93,000
MIS (business)	\$51,958	\$20,000 – \$113,000
Construction	\$49,577	\$23,000 – \$101,000
Engineering technology	\$49,168	\$15,000 – \$125,000
Finance	\$48,285	\$20,000 – \$104,000
Supply chain	\$48,194	\$19,000 – \$77,000
Risk management	\$47,830	\$20,000 – \$101,000
Human resources	\$47,272	\$16,000 – \$91,000
Accounting	\$47,245	\$20,000 – \$97,000
Nursing	\$46,159	\$15,000 – \$94,000
Mathematics (includes applied)	\$45,632	\$25,000 – \$83,000
Economics	\$45,409	\$20,000 – \$94,000
E-commerce/entrepreneurial	\$44,179	\$20,000 – \$109,000
Marketing	\$44,087	\$10,000 – \$88,000
Agricultural business	\$44,026	\$30,000 – \$60,000
Chemistry	\$43,644	\$15,000 – \$72,000
Environmental sciences	\$41,729	\$25,000 – \$74,000

Starting Salaries — Bachelor's Degree		
Selected major	Average	Range
Advertising	\$41,338	\$17,000 – \$87,000
Public relations	\$40,979	\$16,000 – \$80,000
Political science	\$40,906	\$25,000 – \$61,000
Biology	\$40,711	\$15,000 – \$66,000
Music/drama/visual arts	\$40,681	\$20,000 – \$98,000
Communication	\$39,990	\$16,000 – \$85,000
Criminal justice	\$39,622	\$20,000 – \$55,000
Foreign languages	\$39,238	\$24,000 – \$61,000
High school math & science education	\$38,841	\$18,000 – \$58,000
Middle school math & science education	\$38,706	\$18,000 – \$58,000
History	\$38,361	\$10,000 – \$57,000
English	\$38,303	\$12,000 – \$63,000
Psychology	\$38,079	\$20,000 – \$77,000
Special education	\$38,002	\$15,000 – \$56,000
Elementary education	\$37,803	\$15,000 – \$56,000
Anthropology/sociology	\$37,672	\$15,000 – \$73,000
Social work	\$37,115	\$15,000 – \$77,000
Pre-K & kindergarten education	\$35,626	\$14,000 – \$55,000
All majors	\$41,880	\$12,000 – \$105,000
All technical (engineering, computer science, IT)	\$55,687	\$12,000 – \$130,000
All business	\$46,835	\$12,000 – \$148,000
All social sciences/humanities/liberal arts/science	\$41,447	\$12,000 – \$117,000
All health sciences	\$44,372	\$10,000 – \$107,000