Degrees That Get You Hired

Find out which 6 degrees rank highest in terms of employment

By Chris Kyle

Come graduation time, the English major, history buff, computer whiz, and business student all look alike in their caps and gowns.

Their job prospects, on the other hand, look very different.

Corporate consulting firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas polled 100 human resource professionals to find out what graduating students this year can expect from the job market in 2010, and, specifically, which degrees have the best odds of helping students get jobs.

If you're contemplating a return to school and deciding what you want to study, read on for the six degrees that rank highest in terms of employment.

#1 - Health Care Degree

Graduates with recession-proof degrees in health care will find the most success in 2010, according to Challenger. In fact, more than one in four (26.3 percent) HR professionals picked health care as the best bet for job security. Nurses are receiving the most job offers in this category.

Desirable Degrees:
- Nursing
- Physical Therapy
- Pharmacy
- Medical Technician

Average Starting Salaries:
- Nursing: $47,217
- Health & Related Sciences: $30,522

Search for Nursing and Health Care schools now.

#2 - Business Administration Degree

It's no coincidence that business is booming for graduates with a business degree...it's the most popular bachelor's degree in the country.

Graduating with a degree in business administration puts job seekers in the second strongest position overall, just behind health care, according to the Challenger survey.

Desirable Degrees:
- Business
- Business Administration
- Business Administrative Support

Average Starting Salary:
- Business Administration: $45,200

Find the right Business school and start your training!
#3 - Computer Science Degree

Computers are an indispensable part of the economy, and so are graduates who study computer science, which ranks as the third most valuable degree in today's job market.

Desirable Degrees:
- Computer Science
- Technology Support
- Information Technology and Systems

Average Starting Salaries:
- Computer Science: $61,205
- Information Sciences & Systems: $54,038

Search for local and online Technology and Computer Science schools.

#4 - Accounting/Finance Degree

Finance and accounting graduates can expect their fortunes to improve as the economy improves. "Historically, hiring on Wall Street has recovered before the rest of the economy," Richard Lipstein, managing director at Boyden Global Executive Search, told the Philadelphia Inquirer.

Desirable Degrees:
- Accounting
- Finance

Average Starting Salaries:
- Economics: $52,909
- Finance: $49,607
- Accounting: $47,982

Search for Accounting/Finance programs.

#5 - Engineering Degree

It might surprise you to learn that engineering degrees are ranked fifth in terms of employment - and not first - but don't start feeling sorry for engineers just yet. According to a survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, eight of the top 10 best-paid majors are in engineering.

Desirable Degrees:
- Biomedical Engineering
- Civil Engineering
- Electrical Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Network Engineering and Administration
- Programming and Software Engineering

Average Starting Salaries:
- Petroleum Engineering: $86,220
- Computer Engineering: $60,879
- Mechanical Engineering: $58,392

#6 - Marketing Degree

Demand remains strong for marketing graduates in the business world, though a more general business administration degree, ranked number two overall, gets the edge in today's tight job market because of its broader application.

Desirable Degree:
- Marketing

Average Starting Salary:
- Marketing: $42,499

Search for schools with local and online Marketing degree programs now.

All salary information from the National Association of Colleges and Employers' Winter 2010 Salary Survey, which looked at starting salary offers for new Class of 2010 college graduates.