

College Student Handbook

January 2020



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College majors that can lead to higher earnings

Choosing a college major is an important decision that many students delay making until their sophomore or even junior years. Only after taking a few courses and uncovering one's interests do some college students figure out what they want to do with their lives.

Each student is different, and while some may pursue a degree based on a particular passion, others may choose majors that can lead to high-paying jobs.

While men often lean toward majors like engineering and computer science that have traditionally been linked to high earnings, women have historically gravitated to lower-paying specialties like education and social sciences. But in recent years a shift has occurred, and more women have begun to choose majors associat-

ed with higher post-graduate salaries.

Reports from the career guidance site Glassdoor analyzed how much male and female professionals with the same college degree earned and identified many instances in which women went on to earn more than men in the first five years of their career. They've identified several majors where female college graduates can earn as much or more than their male counterparts and find successful careers.

- Architecture
- Pharmaceutical sciences
- Information sciences
- Chemical engineering
- Computer science
- Electrical engineering
- Mechanical engineering
- Computer engineering



- Business economics
- Civil engineering
- Sports management

Despite these findings, the college resource CollegeFactual and the U.S. Department of Education says that women remain likely to pursue education, design and applied arts, health services, and social work as career options.

Female students unsure of which major they want to pursue can take career assessments to help narrow down their options. Working with mentors or engaging in internships also can present a first-hand idea of high-paying career paths.

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Publications

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3 tips to finding the right graduate program

Graduate school allows college graduates the chance to intensify their studies as they pursue advanced degrees. Many professions require advanced degrees, but students may enroll in graduate school for various reasons, including their own intellectual curiosity and the chance to improve their earning potential.

Choosing a graduate program is an important decision that can impact students' career prospects and financial futures. According to Peterson's Real Guide to Colleges and Universities, the average annual tuition for a graduate program at a public university is \$30,000, while graduate students at private universities can expect to pay nearly \$40,000 each year. Such figures illustrate just how important it is for prospective graduate students to find the right schools for them.

1. Conduct exhaustive research.

Because the cost of graduate school is so substantial, students should be extra diligent when researching potential grad schools. Gather as much information about each school as possible, even contacting department heads and/or professors to learn if a given program is best for you. Graduate programs tend to be specialized, so make sure each

school you're considering offers exactly what you're seeking. For example, graduate programs in history may specialize in a particular period of history. As a result, students who want to pursue graduate degrees in history must find the program that allows them to study the period that most interests them. Finding such programs requires extensive research, so students must afford themselves ample time.

2. Speak to current students and recent graduates.

Current students and recent graduates can provide a unique perspective that prospective grad students won't get from brochures or online research, no matter how exhaustive that research might be. Encourage students and recent grads to be candid, asking them about their experiences as grad students and, for recent grads, how they fared in the job market after earning their degrees. Don't discount the latter, as grad school is an investment of time, energy and money, and that should lead to professional fulfillment upon graduating.

3. Be realistic about your finances.

While many people enroll in graduate programs to improve their earning potential, some

students may not enjoy that benefit. The cost of grad school varies depending on the school and the program, but prospective grad students may want to change their plans if the cost of obtaining an advanced degree will greatly affect their financial freedom for years to come. Students worried about their post-grad school earning potential may want to choose less expensive programs so they can still pursue their degrees without mort-

gaging their financial futures.

Graduate school requires a substantial

investment of time, energy and money. Prospective grad students should do every-

thing possible to ensure they invest in the grad school that best suits their particular needs.



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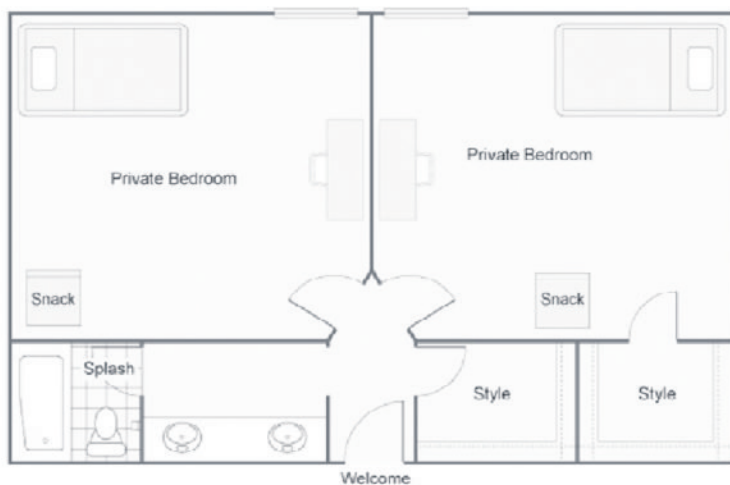
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Vocational schooling can pave the way to high-paying jobs

Many students believe that the next natural step after graduating from high school is to go off to college. Secondary education has become such a common transition that many parents begin saving for college tuition as soon as their children are born. Although college can be the next chapter in a student's education, many teenagers still choose to attend trade school.

Television personality Mike Rowe says the country is in the midst of a skilled labor shortage because workers lack the necessary training to fill the hundreds of thousands of available jobs. Lack of information may drive the notion that trade jobs are nothing more than a backup plan if college doesn't pan out. However, by realizing that trade jobs, along with short-term vocational training, is a smart investment — and eventually a lucrative career choice — attitudes about trade schools and labor-intensive jobs may shift.

A great number of college graduates enter the workforce with degrees that may not help them land jobs. And these students typically carry thousands of dollars in tuition debt. Many college grads are underemployed and working in jobs that aren't even in



their fields of study. Career and technical schools help students develop specialized skills that make graduates immediately marketable in their chosen fields, and trade salaries can be very competitive.

The following are some of the fastest-growing and highest-paying trade careers to consider, based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Forbes magazine.

• **Construction manager:** Construction professionals with great organizational and communication skills can enjoy high earning potential as construction managers. Expected growth of this career over the next 10 years is 5 percent. The average income of a construction manager is \$87,000. However, with a top-end hourly pay of around \$75 per hour, it's easy for man-

agers to earn into six figures.

• **Elevator installer and repairer:** This career is listed as a top-earner. These employees can earn anywhere from \$74,000 to \$105,000 per year. Elevators are in demand as urban centers increase, so this career has staying potential.

• **Rotary drill operator:** The oil and gas industry relies on rotary drill operators to

extract oil or natural gas from underground sources. Salaries for these jobs can range from \$30 to \$40 per hour.

• **Dental hygienist:** Cleaning teeth and inspecting mouths for disease is an important role. Job growth is still hovering around 20 percent, and hygienists can expect to earn up to \$98,000.

• **Electricians and plumbers:** Electricians

and plumbers are continually in demand. With a short amount of trade school and apprenticeship, it's possible to earn up to \$90,000 per year.

These are just a few of the many skilled professions that vocational schools prepare their students for. Scholarships and funding programs are available to help make vocational training an affordable possibility.

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