

The 50 degrees that are most likely to land you a job in 2016

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Choosing a major is not something to take lightly. There are many factors to weigh when deciding which [degree program](#) is the right fit for you and your professional goals. After all, college is an investment. And like any investment, it's important to have a good idea of what you stand to gain before taking the plunge.

With that in mind, OnlineDegrees.com launched an investigation to find which majors offered students the best potential return on their educational investment. In an effort to help students get the most “bang for their buck” when it comes to getting a degree, we ranked every degree field in the U.S. based on a number of cost-benefit factors. The goal was to find which degrees had the best employment opportunities in today's economic climate while still remaining on the affordable end of higher education.

Degrees that fared best were those with relatively low tuition costs, but a high number of related careers with good employment projections and high average salaries. Some majors offered great growth rates and low tuition, but lost points because they're only available at a select number of schools, making them harder for the average student to obtain.

It's no surprise that tech and business majors continue to dominant top positions. However, shifts in the economic landscape have contributed to some interesting changes since last year's study. Old standbys like entrepreneurship and network administration have fallen out of the top 10, while emerging fields such as geotechnical engineering and informatics are making their list debut this year. Check out the entire top 50 ranking, as well as a detailed breakdown of our methodology, below.

Methodology

We ranked 1,248 majors on six criteria, using data from the National Center for Education Statistics and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Each degree was evaluated on a 10-point scale, and we used the weights specified below to come up with our final scores:

- Number of occupations matched to each degree(National Center for Education Statistics, 2010): **25%**
- Average annual salary for all occupations matched to each degree (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014): **20%**
- Average projected job growth rate, 2014-2024, for all occupations matched to each degree (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015): **20%**
- Average concentration of jobs per 1,000 for all occupations matched to each degree (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014): **15%**
- Number of schools offering programs at any level for each degree (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014): **10%**
- Average in-state tuition for all schools offering programs for each degree (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014): **10%**

Based on that analysis, here are the 50 majors that offer the best potential return on investment:

1. Information Technology

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$104,954
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 21%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 675
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$10,897
- Position in last year's ranking: 4

2. Business/Commerce

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$102,290
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 12%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 1,083
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$9,554
- Position in last year's ranking: 7

3. Business Administration and Management

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$102,290
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 12%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 2,743
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$11,023
- Position in last year's ranking: 9

4. Marketing/Marketing Management

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$107,116
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 15%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 1,033
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$10,071
- Position in last year's ranking: 13

5. Computer and Information Sciences

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$95,725
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 14%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 1,073
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$9,232
- Position in last year's ranking: 14

6. Computer Science

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$93,040
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 16%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 792
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$14,126
- Position in last year's ranking: 69

7. Computer Programming

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$83,968
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 15%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 591
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$8,213
- Position in last year's ranking: 12

8. Mathematics

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$89,180
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 14%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 1,466
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$8,394
- Position in last year's ranking: 126

9. Computer and Information Systems Security/Information Assurance

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$92,797
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 17%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 587
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$12,944
- Position in last year's ranking: 10

10. Finance

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$101,202
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 11%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 720
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$13,563
- Position in last year's ranking: 53

11. Network and System Administration

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$94,900
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 17%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 267
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$11,624
- Position in last year's ranking: 3

12. Management Science

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$117,395
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 15%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 130
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$13,520
- Position in last year's ranking: 27

13. Entrepreneurship/Entrepreneurial Studies

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$124,213
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 10%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 486
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$8,085
- Position in last year's ranking: 2

14. Information Science/Studies

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$104,354
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 14%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 477
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$12,850
- Position in last year's ranking: 11

15. Computer Engineering

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$109,610
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 14%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 276
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$20,864
- Position in last year's ranking: 43

16. Computer Systems Networking and Telecommunications

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$86,443
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 21%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 907
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$10,089
- Position in last year's ranking: 8

17. Psychology

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$88,102
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 19%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 1,653
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$12,024
- Position in last year's ranking: 89

18. Computer Software Engineering

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$111,575
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 15%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 106
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$16,511
- Position in last year's ranking: 37

19. Science Teacher Education

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$79,364
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 12%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 358
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$10,458
- Position in last year's ranking: 124

20. Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Engineering

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$108,433
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 14%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 6
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$5,333
- Position in last year's ranking: 218

21. Operations Management and Supervision

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$88,830
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 10%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 251
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$11,870
- Position in last year's ranking: 25

22. Computer Programming, Specific Applications

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$96,090
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 17%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 179
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$8,577
- Position in last year's ranking: 1

23. Information Technology Project Management

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$105,903
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 15%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 30
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$12,796
- Position in last year's ranking: 35

24. Applied Economics

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$88,210
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 17%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 49
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$12,939
- Position in last year's ranking: 235

25. Public Health

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$77,518
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 26%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 271
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$12,974
- Position in last year's ranking: 140

26. Social Science Teacher Education

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$75,363
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 13%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 134
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$11,118
- Position in last year's ranking: 102

27. Nursing Practice

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$90,487
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 25%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 185
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$14,902
- Position in last year's ranking: 68

28. Construction Engineering

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$97,708
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 14%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 32
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$11,511
- Position in last year's ranking: 92

29. Family Practice Nursing

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$79,477
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 30%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 228
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$12,544
- Position in last year's ranking: 151

30. Computer Software Technology

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$96,090
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 17%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 19
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$2,190
- Position in last year's ranking: 5

31. Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$79,477
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 30%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 59
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$8,551
- Position in last year's ranking: 256

32. Physics

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$100,895
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 9%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 869
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$11,405
- Position in last year's ranking: 141

33. Mechanical Engineering

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$99,980
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 11%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 350
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$17,460
- Position in last year's ranking: 87

34. International Business/Trade/Commerce

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$128,880
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 11%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 556
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$13,554
- Position in last year's ranking: 26

35. Computational and Applied Mathematics

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$97,640
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 18%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 22
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$3,750
- Position in last year's ranking: 490

36. Economics

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$93,088
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 13%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 821
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$12,797
- Position in last year's ranking: 191

37. Marketing Research

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$87,393
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 19%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 25
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$9,947
- Position in last year's ranking: 142

38. Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$88,213
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 30%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 149
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$6,624
- Position in last year's ranking: 108

39. Political Science and Government

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$98,960
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 14%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 1,197
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$9,728
- Position in last year's ranking: 91

40. Informatics

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$106,257
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 20%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 31
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$11,814
- Position in last year's ranking: 96

41. Biology/Biological Sciences

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$87,834
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 8%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 1,580
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$9,525
- Position in last year's ranking: 170

42. Biostatistics

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$100,298
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 16%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 65
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$20,268
- Position in last year's ranking: 210

43. Public Administration

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$96,636
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 5%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 508
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$12,540
- Position in last year's ranking: 44

44. Computer Systems Analysis/Analyst

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$83,725
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 15%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 137
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$13,384
- Position in last year's ranking: 20

45. Biology Teacher Education

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$67,083
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 13%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 321
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$8,963
- Position in last year's ranking: 176

46. Medical Radiologic Technology/Science

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$84,723
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 27%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 346
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$9,694
- Position in last year's ranking: 23

47. Communication Sciences and Disorders

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$88,213
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 30%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 119
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$7,516
- Position in last year's ranking: 76

48. Accounting and Finance

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$92,523
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 11%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 102
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$13,686
- Position in last year's ranking: 17

49. Financial Planning and Services

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$86,923
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 18%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 71
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$14,763
- Position in last year's ranking: 180

50. Electrician

- Average annual salary, 2014: \$55,875
- Average projected job growth, 2014-24: 14%
- Number of schools offering programs in the field: 468
- Average tuition cost, 2014-15: \$3,887
- Position in last year's ranking: 66