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Now that spring is officially here, college students all over the U.S. are getting their caps and gowns prepared for graduation. But what's the outlook for them finding a job when school's done? According to a new survey from CareerBuilder, 74 percent of employers say they plan to hire recent college graduates this year, up from 67 percent last year and the highest outlook since 2007. Half (50 percent) plan to offer recent

college graduates higher pay than last year (compared to 37 percent last year), and 39

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in the last 10 years,” said Rosemary Haefner, chief human resources officer for CareerBuilder. “In the current environment, where job unemployment continues to decrease and there’s continued competition for sought-after skills, employers are especially attracted to college graduates, and the fresh perspective and skills they can bring to the workforce.”

Most Sought After Majors for College Grads

While employers are looking to hire candidates across various education backgrounds, some majors stand out more than others. Employers hiring recent college graduates this year state the following majors are the most in-demand at their firms:

- Business – 30 percent
- Engineering – 26 percent
- Computer and Information Sciences – 23 percent
- Engineering Technologies – 16 percent
- Communications Technologies – 13 percent
- Math and Statistics – 11 percent
- Construction Trades – 11 percent
- Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences – 10 percent
- Science Technologies – 9 percent
- Architecture and Planning – 8 percent
- Communication and Journalism – 7 percent
- Mechanic and Repair Technologies – 7 percent
- Social Sciences – 6 percent
- Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities – 6 percent
- Law and Legal Studies – 5 percent
- Education – 5 percent

Information technology (33 percent) and customer service jobs (24 percent) top the

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Three in five of these employers (60 percent) say they will make offers to students before they graduate. Expected starting salaries for recent graduates break down as follows:

- Under \$30,000: 23 percent
- \$30,000 to less than \$40,000: 21 percent
- \$40,000 to less than \$50,000: 18 percent
- \$50,000 and higher: 39 percent

The majority of employers (70 percent) say they are willing to negotiate salary offers when extending a job offer to a recent college graduate and most employers hiring recent college graduates this year start recruiting candidates during their senior year (45 percent) versus junior year (16 percent), sophomore year (6 percent) or freshman year (8 percent). A quarter of employers hiring recent college graduates this year (24 percent) are recruiting candidates during graduate school.

Are Grads More or Less Prepared to Enter the Workforce?

While they're eager to hire the best and brightest, some employers are concerned that new college grads may not be ready for the workforce. Seventeen percent do not feel academic institutions are adequately preparing students for roles needed within their organizations, a decrease from 24 percent last year. When asked where academic institutions fall short, these employers cited the following concerns:

- Too much emphasis on book learning instead of real-world learning: 44 percent
- I need workers with a blend of technical skills and those skills gained from liberal arts: 38 percent
- Entry-level roles within my organization are more complex today: 23 percent
- Technology is changing too quickly for an academic environment to keep up: 17 percent

- Not enough focus on internships: 17 percent

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- Leadership: 38 percent
- Written communication: 35 percent
- Creative thinking: 34 percent
- Project management: 26 percent
- Research and analysis: 17 percent
- Computer and technical: 17 percent
- Math: 14 percent

Of those who are not hiring college graduates this year, more than a quarter (27 percent) say they need more experienced workers.

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder among 2,380 hiring and human resource managers (employed full-time, not self-employed, non-government) between February 16 and March 9, 2017 (percentages for some questions are based on a subset, based on their responses to certain questions). With a pure probability sample of 2,380, one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 2.01 percentage points. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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