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<https://www.wsj.com/articles/salaries-soar-for-the-class-of-2017-1494581404>

## MANAGEMENT & CAREERS

# Salaries Soar for the Class of 2017

Average pay for new college graduates hits \$49,785, highest in at least a decade



'This has been the best year for students that I've seen since coming here' in 2008, says one university career-services director. PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

By *Kelsey Gee*

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This spring's crop of college graduates has an extra reason to celebrate: Not only are new grads entering one of the strongest job markets in recent history, but starting salaries are rising, too.

The average base pay for college grads this year ticked to the highest level in at least a decade, to \$49,785, according to an analysis of more than 145,000 entry-level positions by executive-search firm Korn/Ferry International, [KFY -0.36% ▼](#) up 3% from last year.

Adjusted for inflation, today's salaries are 14% higher than those of students who graduated in 2007 before the start of the recession, and reflect overall strength in hiring as the national unemployment rate hovers at a 10-year low. The firm has analyzed entry-level pay from just the past decade, but a spokeswoman said that given longer-term salary trends, this year's grads will likely be the highest earning class in recent history.

"This has been the best year for students that I've seen since coming here," said Thomas Ward, executive director of the career-services center at Adelphi University, in Garden City, N.Y., who joined the school in 2008. Some students at the school are fielding multiple job offers, allowing students to be choosier about where they ultimately land, he said. "It's very rewarding."

Starting salaries in software-development roles climbed 5% in the past year to \$65,232, while engineers are expected to earn \$63,036 on average, up 1%. Also near the top of this year's list of highest-earning grads are actuaries, at \$59,212, and entry-level scientists and researchers, at \$58,773.

While graduates who make their way to jobs in San Francisco and New York are expected to take home higher paychecks than their peers in Los Angeles, Chicago and

Atlanta, all major metro areas saw big jumps in average salary for entry-level degree-holders, according to the Korn/Ferry research.

Ben Collins, a senior set to graduate Sunday from Saint Bonaventure University in New York, is starting as a tax analyst at accounting firm Ernst & Young next month. The 22-year-old finance major declined to say what salary he was offered but said it was on par with his friends' and peers' entry-level pay packages.

"Almost everyone I know has a job, which feels good," said Mr. Collins.

However, not all students have a job in hand on graduation day. A survey of Adelphi seniors shows that two-thirds have received at least one job offer, but Mr. Ward cautioned that only 30% of the class had responded to the survey so far. He said it takes most graduates six months to land a full-time gig. A separate survey of 1,000 college seniors by consulting firm Accenture PLC released this week found only 15% had received a job offer before graduating.

Young Americans without a college diploma face a tougher career path. College graduates over 25 earn about twice as much as adults with a high-school diploma or some college, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## What Some Majors Are Making

TYPICAL GRADUATE JOB ^	CORPORATE FUNCTION	GRADUATE BASE SALARY
Average Graduate Base Salary	All	\$49,785
Accountant	Finance & Accounting	\$45,430
Actuary	Actuarial	\$59,212
Buyer	Logistics, Supply Chain	\$44,247
Call Center Specialist	Call Center	\$41,158
Category Assistant	Category Management	\$35,592
Claims Examiner	Claims	\$37,508
Customer Service Representative	Customer Service	\$35,848
E-Commerce Analyst	Marketing	\$48,003
Engineer	Engineering	\$63,036

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