RECRUITING TRENDS
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BRIEF 4

Hiring by Academic Degree

Key findings from 2016-17 are presented in this research brief. We have broken the release of employer information into a series of short briefs that will be made available over the next six weeks. You can download the briefs from the Collegiate Employment Research Institute.

Meet the Completers

We generated this convenience sample from employers currently seeking college talent through their interactions with college and university career services offices. Nearly 200 career service centers from around the country invited their employers to participate in this study. Approximately 4,350 employers provided information useful for understanding recruiting trends and practices. We will use information provided by those recruiting talent for full-time positions, internships, and co-ops for these research briefs. Readers can use the following key sample characteristics to determine how applicable our survey results are for their campus employer base.

Company Size		
Very small	> 9 employees	9%
Fast-growth	10-100 employees	30%
Small	101–500 employees	23%
Midsize	501–3,999 employees	20%
Large	4,000–25,000 employees	10%
Very large	> 25,000 employees	8%

Active Recruiting by Region	
International	5%
Entire U.S.	25%
Regional recruiting only	69%

Role in College Recruiting	
Full-time positions	71%
Internship or co-op positions only	12%
Short-term hiring	7%
Experienced hiring	10%

Key States	
Massachusetts	10%
Michigan	9%
Arizona, California, Florida, Ohio & Texas	6%

Institutions Where Companies Recruit Talent	
Two-year public college	28%
Four-year public college	53%
Four-year private college	40%
Two- & four-year for-profit institution	22%
Institution with bachelor's & advanced degree programs	69%
Institution with advanced degrees only	10%
Historically black college & university	17%
Hispanic-serving institution	15%
Asian, Asian-Pacific serving institutions	14%

Key Economic Sectors	
Professional, business & scientific services	22%
Manufacturing	13%
Educational services	10%
Finance & insurance	8%
Government	7%
Healthcare & social assistance	7%
Nonprofits	7%

We have been experimenting with different ways of presenting hiring information by academic major. The traditional list of hot or most requested majors does not reveal much; it is dominated by business, engineering, and computer science due to the heavy on-campus presence of companies seeking these majors. To gain some understanding of the composition of an organization's candidate pool, we asked respondents to select the percent of hires expected from different academic disciplines such as business, arts and humanities, engineering, and physical and biological sciences. Respondents could indicate that they expected to hire 100 percent from one group or spread their hires proportionally across multiple groups. We followed this question by asking how willing respondents were to consider candidates regardless of their academic discipline and offered several categories from which to choose, as shown in the tables. For example, if an employer was looking for candidates with specific majors such as aerospace, child or family development, linguistics, or parks and recreation, we gave them a checklist from which they could choose as many specific academic majors as they wished.

Composition of the hiring pool

Business majors are the most likely to be included in an employer's hiring pool, with 55 percent of employers indicating they would hire at least one business graduate. Completing the business example, we found 7 percent of employers expect to fill their entire hiring quota with business graduates; another 8 percent will hire business grads for 60-94 percent of their open positions; 22 percent expect to have business grads comprise 20-59 percent of their hires; and 16 percent will fill 19 percent or less of their quota with business grads. In addition, 57 percent of employers seeking to hire a business major will consider applicants from all majors. The reader can observe similar trends for the other major categories in the tables.

This exercise revealed

◆ the majority of employers come to campus seeking business, computer science, and engineering graduates; this fact is well known. We were surprised, however, to find how diverse these employers can be as they expand recruiting to include a variety of other majors. Employers seeking business and engineering graduates tend to have hiring targets that comprise more of these majors: engineers (23%) and business (25%).

◆ the challenge for arts, communications, humanities, and social science majors is the proportionally smaller number of employers seeking candidates with talents specific to these majors compared to the professional fields. Their advantage is that employers who are willing to consider all majors pull candidates from these academic programs, especially candidates willing to think outside the box.

Hiring targets across academic majors

Thirty percent of respondents indicated that they would consider all majors in their candidate pool. For specific groupings such as business and technical degrees, employers were more likely to seek specific majors than ask for all majors from that group.

Hiring appears strong across all major groups. Health sciences majors are experiencing slower growth than the other categories. All business (up 27%) and all arts, humanities, social science and physical and biological science (up 25%) are reporting the strongest gains. When we looked at all majors combined and all engineering majors, growth was just shy of 20 percent.

Hiring intentions for specific majors

We looked at the range of disciplines employers selected based on major groupings. For example, we grouped employers who selected at least one or more business disciplines and did the same for the top academic majors employers are seeking. From these groupings we analyzed the hiring projections for each major group.

◆ Business employers selected from a broad range of majors, but at least 10 percent of employers selected from 27 majors. The majors most frequently selected were from business or computer science, with the exception of communications.

◆ Engineering employers selected from a narrower group of majors, but at least 10 percent of employers also selected from 27 majors. They heavily recruited engineering and computer science majors but chose a few business degrees from the most frequently selected academic majors.

◆ Computer science employers show a similar pattern to engineering employers; 10 percent or more of employers selected from 26 disciplines. Many of the most sought-after degrees were from computer engineering, computer science, and electrical engineering. They also sought several business and communications degrees.

Distribution of Majors Considered for Employment

Category[a]	Will not hire from this group (%)	Will consider 95-100% from this group (%)	Will consider 60 – 94% of all hires from this group (%)	Will consider 20 – 59% of all hires from this group (%)	Will consider 1 – 19% of all hires from this group (%)	Will consider candidates from all majors (%)
Agriculture & natural resources	88	1	2	3	7	63
Arts, humanities & liberal arts	74	0	2	9	15	78
Business	47	7	8	22	16	57
Communications (pr, advertising)	72	0	3	9	17	72
Computer science	65	3	5	11	17	51
Engineering & technical	64	9	7	11	9	33
Health sciences	85	3	2	4	7	57
Science & math	81	1	1	5	12	60
Social science	82	1	2	6	11	75
a. The organization is seeking at least one candidate from the category.						

- Communications employers were more diverse than employers hiring business and technical degrees; 10 percent or more selected from 31 disciplines. In addition to communications majors, these employers sought a mix of business, computer science, and English candidates.

- Physical and biological science employers tended to look broadly; more than 10 percent selected from 48 academic majors. Chemistry and math were the most frequently sought science degrees. These employers were also seeking business degrees, English, and several social science degrees (which fell slightly short of making the list for most frequently requested majors.)

- Arts, humanities, and liberal arts employers had a smaller focus; only 10 percent of employers selected from 39 majors. These employers had a healthy mix of business, communications, humanities, and social science among the most frequently selected majors.

- Agriculture and natural resource employers selected from the widest pool of possible majors; at least 10 percent of employers selected from 58 majors. Environmental science and agriculture business majors were highly sought from among this group. In addition the mix included majors from all the other categories.

The hiring outlook for each of the major groups and each academic grouping showed positive growth in opportunities. Hiring is expected to increase by more than 20 percent for employers selecting arts, business, communications, humanities, liberal arts, and media studies majors. Computer science, engineering, and physical and biological sciences will increase just shy of 20 percent (17-18%). Education will increase opportunities by 12 percent; agriculture and natural resources and health sciences will increase by about half that amount.

Employers Hiring Selected Academic Majors — Bachelor's Degrees				
Degree	Employers reporting hiring projects (no.)	Employers seeking (%)	Number of hires per company 2016-17 (avg.)	Change year over year (%)
All majors	918	30	64.6	19
All technical majors (engineering, computer science, & IT)	669	22	34.3	18
All business majors	592	19	45.1	27
All arts, communications, sciences, humanities & social science majors	387	13	52.2	25
All health science majors	221	7	29.5	5

Academic Majors Selected by Employers Seeking at Least One Business Degree — Bachelor's Degree	
Degree	Academic majors selected (%)
Accounting	34
Finance	33
Marketing	32
MIS (business)	26
Computer science	25
CIS	24
HR/LIR	23
Economics	21
Computer programming	21
Communications	20
MIS (IT)	18
Supply chain	17

Academic Majors Selected by Employers Seeking at Least One Computer Science or IT Degree — Bachelor's Degree	
Degree	Academic majors selected (%)
Computer science	50
Computer programming	44
CIS	42
Software development	34
MIS (IT)	32
Information security systems	30
Accounting	29
Finance	29
Marketing	26
Computer engineering	25
HR/LIR	24
Communications	20
Multimedia design	20
Electrical engineering	18

Academic Majors Selected by Employers Seeking at Least One Engineering Degree — Bachelor's Level	
Degree	Academic majors selected (%)
Electrical engineering	37
Computer science	31
Mechanical engineering	31
Computer programming	27
CIS	26
Engineering technology	26
Accounting	23
Computer engineering	22
Software design	22
Industrial engineering	21
Finance	21
Information security systems	20
Marketing	19
MIS (IT)	19
Civil engineering	19
General engineering	15

Academic Majors Selected by Employers Seeking at Least One Communications Degree — Bachelor's Level	
Degree	Academic majors selected (%)
Communications	32
Computer engineering	32
Accounting	29
Finance	29
Public relations	28
Electrical engineering	27
Computer sciences	26
Marketing	26
Human resources	24
CIS	23
Advertising	21
Computer programming	21
Engineering technologies	19
English	18
Economics	18

Academic Majors Selected by Employers Seeking at Least One Physical or Biological Science Degree — Bachelor's Degree	
Degree	Academic majors selected (%)
Computer science	34
Computer programming	28
CIS	26
Electrical engineering	25
Finance	24
Accounting	24
Chemistry	23
Computer engineering	23
Management information systems (B)	23
Mathematics	22
Marketing	22
Communication	22
Economics	21
Software development	21
English	19
Physics	17
Statistics	16
Biology	16

Academic Majors Selected by Employers Seeking at Least One Arts, Humanities, or Social Science Degree — Bachelor's level	
Degree	Academic majors selected (%)
Marketing	30
Communications	29
English	25
Psychology	24
Finance	24
Public relations	23
Accounting	23
Management information systems (B)	22
Computer science	21
Human resources	21
Sociology/anthropology	20
Economics	20
CIS	19
Political science	17
Advertising	17

Academic Majors Selected by Employers Seeking at Least One Agriculture or Natural Resources Degree — Bachelor's Degree	
Degree	Academic majors selected (%)
Accounting	28
Computer science	26
Finance	26
Marketing	25
Human resources	25
CIS	25
Computer programming	24
Communications	24
Management information systems (B)	23
Environment science (college of ag. and n.r.)	22
Environment science (college of natural science)	21
Environmental/geological engineering	20
Chemistry	19
Agricultural business	17