

DECIDING ON A MAJOR? CONSIDER WHERE THE JOBS ARE

For most students, earning a degree means a better shot at survival in the working world. Deciding what to study often stems from personal interests, but "major decisions" are also driven by the job market and demographics. Thus, when employers are snatching up graduates in specific fields, that's also where you'll find new students lining up for a degree.

On the horizon

According to the federal government, a whopping 18.9 million jobs will have been created between 2004 and 2014. What may come as a surprise is that 18.7 million of those are expected to arise in service-providing industries, not goods and manufacturing. This may be a tribute to our technologically sophisticated society, a national focus on education and healthcare, and an aging population in need of increased health services.

Want to know where the most jobs are for the next eight years or so? Take a look!

Education and health services

With an estimated 30.6 percent growth anticipated, three out of every ten new jobs will fill the need for educators, healthcare practitioners, and social welfare workers. As America's senior citizen population grows bigger and lives longer, there will be a need for an estimated 4.3 million new jobs!

Professional and business services

Overall growth among the many sectors of this industry is anticipated to be around 27.8 percent, but in our high-tech business world, the most rapid growth areas will be in management, scientific, and technical consulting services — to the tune of 60.5 percent!

Leisure and Hospitality

Americans enjoy their leisure time, so it's not too surprising that this industry expects overall growth of 17.7 percent. However, for all you aspiring actors, screenwriters, and river guides — good news! Growth in the arts, entertainment, and recreation areas is expected to hit 25 percent — roughly equivalent to 460,000 new jobs!

Other Services (besides government)

A slightly generic category, expected growth is 14 percent overall, but the increase in some areas will be much higher. Auto repair and maintenance, for example, should see the most explosive growth at a rate of 30.7 percent. Another interesting point to note: One out of every four jobs in this overall category will likely be within a religious organization.

Information Services

Approximately 364,000 new jobs are expected in this area, with an anticipated 11.6 percent increase for the overall industry. However, with a nation that's wired, 60.7 percent growth is expected in some of the fastest growing jobs around — software publishing, Internet publishing, Internet service, and Web search, just to name a few.

Financial Services

Some say the economy and real estate market are slowing down, but 10.5 percent growth is still expected. Real estate will continue to be strong, with an estimated 16.9 percent growth rate, or 353,000 new jobs.

Trade, Transportation, and Utilities

Growing populations and bigger paychecks will help fuel continued growth in many areas, including the retail and trade industries. Trucking and warehouse storage will also be in demand as manufacturers increasingly contract out for product transportation and storage. Overall growth throughout these areas and others like them is anticipated to occur at a rate of 10.3 percent.

Government

With the ever-increasing need for better public education and healthcare, government will not be getting smaller but will instead enjoy a steady 10 percent increase, resulting in two million plus jobs.

What's a student to do?

Still tossing around ideas about what you want to study in college or graduate school? Consider two top job market elements: service and technology. With these in mind, it may come as no surprise that some of the most sought-after graduates hold degrees in the following:

- Business Management and Administration
- Computer Science
- Computer Engineering
- Marketing/Marketing Management
- Chemical Engineering
- Computer Engineering
- Information Systems and Sciences
- Accounting

Going against the flow

Alright, so perhaps you still want to major in some obscure field that totally interests you but has a poor job outlook? No sweat! Pursue your dream and study what's important to you.

Remember that in the long run, simply having a college degree is a huge plus when it comes to landing a job — even if it isn't in the field that you're shooting for. Everyone has to start somewhere and a degree, as well as a foot-in-the-door job, will get you on your way to the future you envision for yourself. It might not get you on the fast track quite as quickly, but that degree will certainly get you further than none at all.

