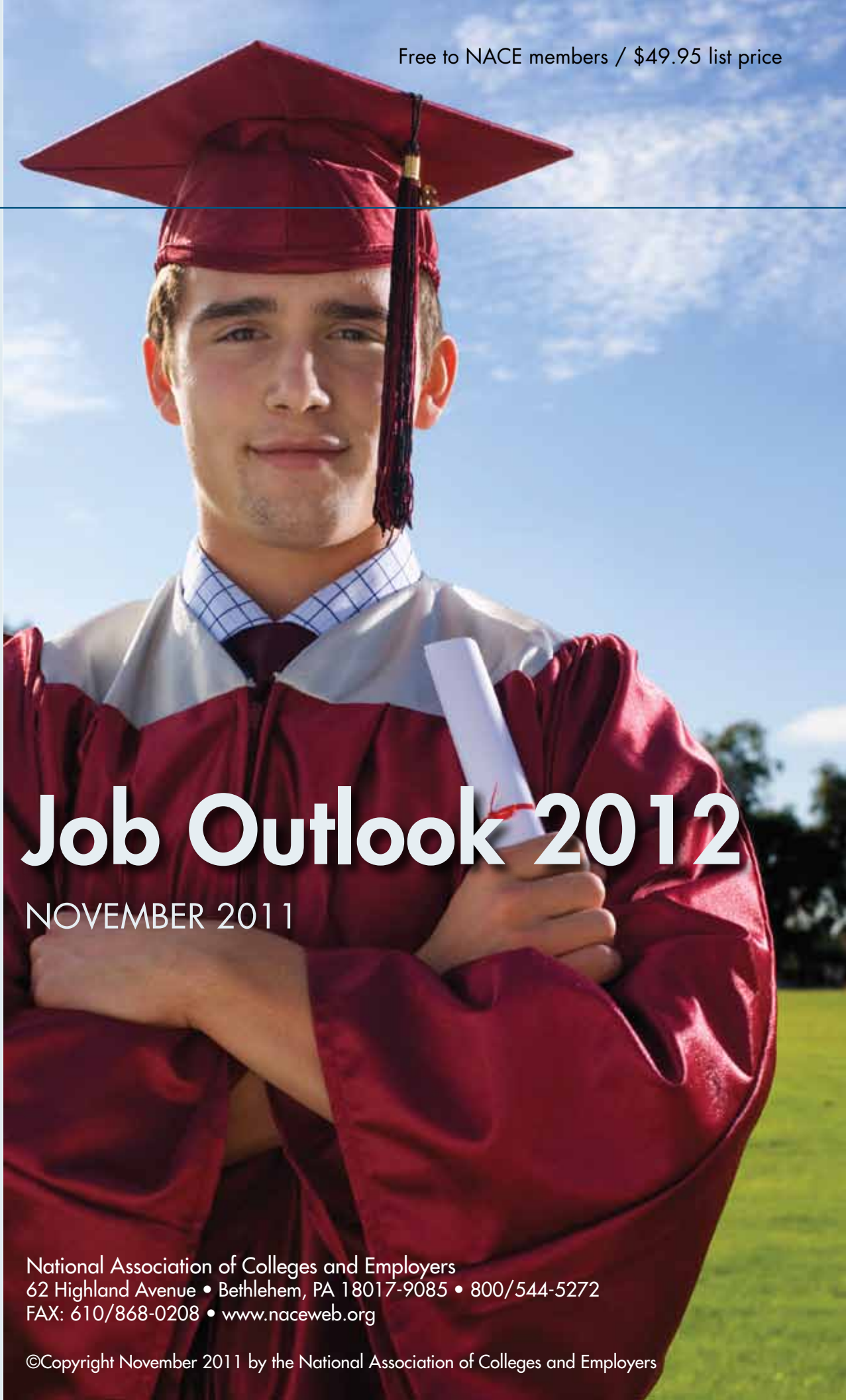


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Job Outlook 2012

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ABOUT THE *JOB OUTLOOK 2012 SURVEY*

The *Job Outlook* survey is a forecast of employers' intentions to hire new college graduates. Each year, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) surveys its employer members about their hiring plans and other employment-related issues in order to project the job market for the current class of new college graduates and to assess a variety of conditions that may influence that market.

In prior years, NACE typically conducted a *Job Outlook Fall Preview* survey from late July through the end of August to gain an initial look at employers' college hiring projections for the upcoming class. This year, however, the *Job Outlook 2012 Fall Preview* questionnaire was incorporated into the *Job Outlook 2012* survey.

From August 3, 2011, through September 23, 2011, data was collected for the *Job Outlook 2012* survey. A total of 244 surveys were returned—a 26.8 percent response rate.

Among the respondents, 13.1 percent were from the West, 23.4 percent were from the Northeast, 25 percent were from the Midwest, and 38.5 percent were from the Southeast. For a list of respondents by industry and size, and a partial list of organizations that supplied data for this report, see page 34.

Please note that totals throughout the report may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

NACE expects to provide a formal update of job market information once more during the 2011-12 academic year: The *Job Outlook 2012 Spring Update* survey (data collected in February-March) will give NACE members a final update on hiring for 2011-12 graduates. Results will be available in early April.

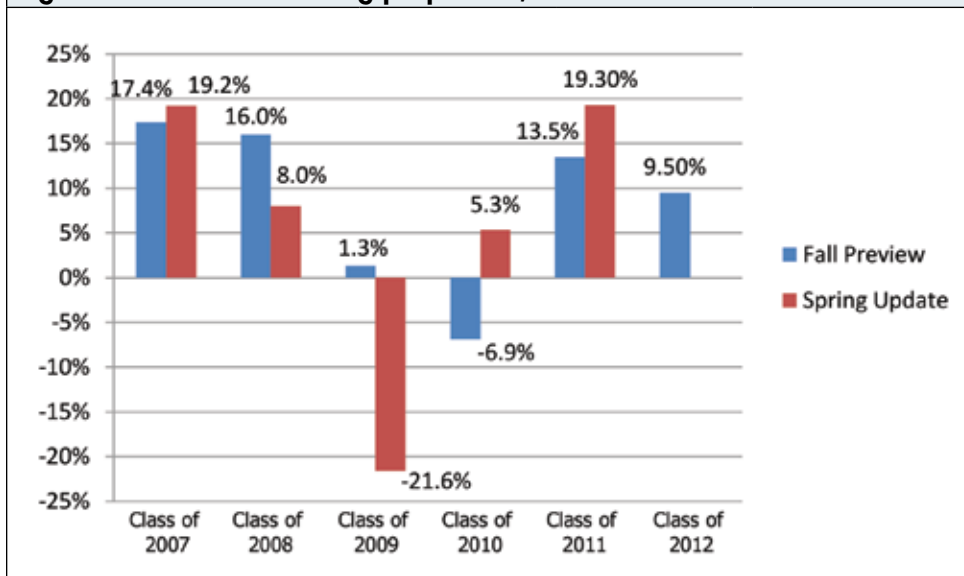
RESEARCH:

Director of Strategic & Foundation Research: Edwin Koc
Employment Information Manager: Andrea Koncz

EMPLOYERS PROCEED WITH CAUTION FOR THE CLASS OF 2012

Employers are approaching new college graduate hiring with caution.

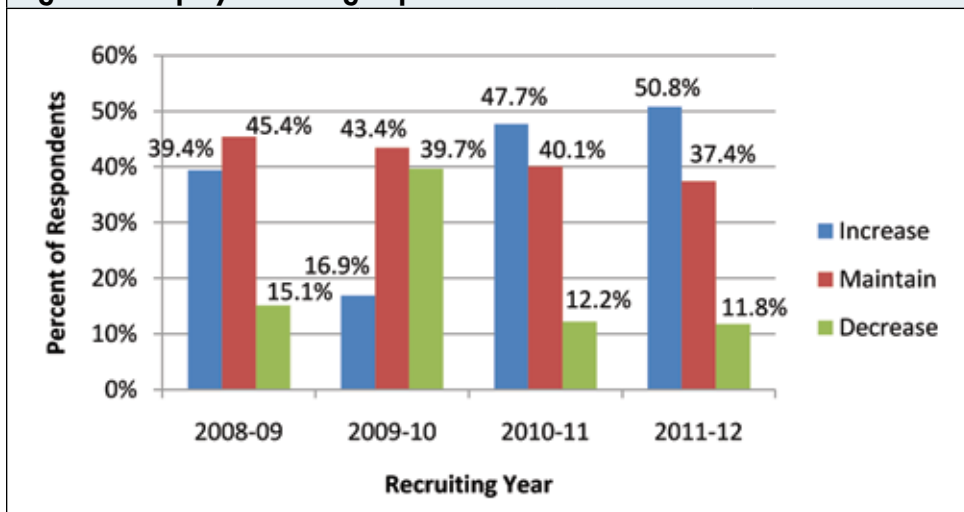
Figure 1: Job Outlook hiring projections, 2007-2012



Employers responding to the *Job Outlook 2012* survey plan to hire 9.5 percent more new graduates in 2011-12 than they did in 2010-11. In comparison, last year employers anticipated double-digit hiring increases. (See Figure 1.)

Although the overall increase isn't as high the increases projected last year, other factors indicate a positive job market for the current class. For example, slightly more than half of respondents have plans to increase their individual number of hires from last year. This follows a positive trend illustrated in Figure 2, where the percentage of employers planning to increase their number of hires continues to grow, while the percentage with plans to decrease their number of hires continues to shrink. Thus, it appears that college hiring is moving in the right direction.

Figure 2: Employers' hiring expectations



Among employers with plans to increase hiring, more than half indicated that either their companies have more business or they are experiencing company growth. Another 20 percent cited the need to replace retiring workers, their aging work force, and increasing attrition rates. Still others reported the need to build their pipeline of new college graduates, as some organizations explained that they are too “top heavy.”

Of employers with plans to maintain their individual hiring numbers, most cited similar business conditions and demand as last year. Others pointed to budget limits, low attrition rates, and high retention rates.

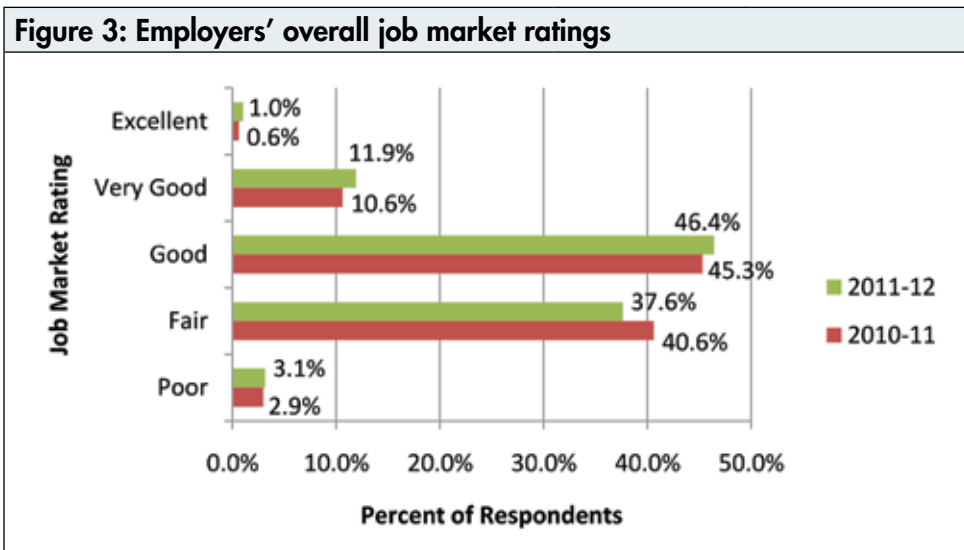
The nearly 12 percent of employers with plans to decrease their college hiring numbers indicated that they have budget concerns or no openings for new college graduates this year.

When asked about the total number of positions that were available for 2010-11 graduates, 165 respondents reported a total of 24,356 positions, an average of 148 positions per organization.

These same employers reported that 1,172 positions available to new college graduates went unfilled in 2010-11. This averages out to slightly more than seven unfilled positions per organization. Nearly two-thirds of respondents left no positions unfilled for 2010-11 graduates.

Job Market Ratings

Overall, employers rate the job market for Class of 2012 graduates as “good,” the same overall rating as last year. However, in the current survey, the categories of “excellent,” “very good,” and “good” have slightly larger groups of respondents than was the case a year ago, although the percentage choosing the worst rating—“poor”—also rose slightly. (See Figure 3.)



Employers to Keep a Close Eye on Hiring Needs

Employers' cautious approach to hiring may be most evident in their plans to reassess their college hiring needs. The largest group of respondents will reassess those needs on a quarterly basis. (See Figure 4.)

Fall vs. Spring Recruiting

One reason that students should start their job searches early is that employers continue to prefer recruiting in the fall as opposed to spring. This year, respondents report that they will conduct 65 percent of their college recruiting in Fall 2011, with the remaining 35 percent to be done in Spring 2012. (See Figure 5.)

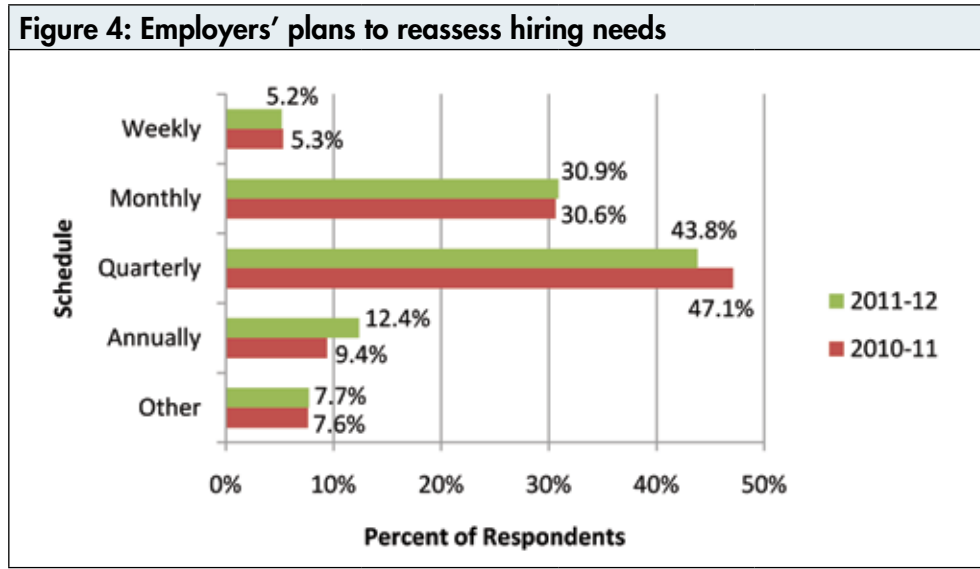


Figure 5: Percentage of college recruiting conducted in fall vs. spring, 2008-2012

Job Outlook Fall Preview Year	Fall	Spring
2012	65%	35%
2011	64%	36%
2010	60%	40%
2009	63%	37%
2008	58%	42%

Just over one-third of the employers that plan to be on campus recruiting in spring 2012 have firm plans in place. (See Figure 6.) This is down from last year when 40 percent had firm plans to recruit on campus during Spring 2011.

Further indication of employer caution can be seen when looking at employers that have tentative plans for or are unsure of their Spring 2012 recruiting. Last year, not quite one-third were tentative or unsure of their Spring 2011 recruiting plans. This percentage is now approaching almost half of respondents (46.9 percent). The good news is that less than 1 percent of respondents are reporting that they won't be on campus in Spring 2012 because they are not hiring.

Figure 6: On-campus recruiting plans, spring 2010 - spring 2012, by percent of respondents

Recruiting Plans	Spring 2012	Spring 2011	Spring 2010
Firm plans in place	34.4%	40.0%	29.9%
Tentative plans in place	31.8%	19.4%	28.4%
All recruiting in Fall	18.2%	24.1%	19.4%
Unsure	15.1%	12.9%	15.9%
Not hiring	0.5%	3.5%	6.5%

Changes in Recruiting

When asked about the difference in recruiting methods used to hire Class of 2012 graduates as opposed to those from the Class of 2011, the majority of respondents cited the use of technology. More than half of respondents reported that they will use more technology in general and/or social networking than they have in the past. (See Figure 7.)

The change over last year is notable, but compared to results from *Job Outlook 2010* reports, the difference illustrates how technology has truly become a larger influence on college recruiting than in the past.

The percentage of respondents who plan a change in branding may also be a by-product of increased technology use. Just 14.2 percent of respondents planned a change in branding in 2010; that number has swelled to 41.7 percent for 2012.

Another positive finding here is the percentage of respondents that plan to attend more career fairs and do more travel. In 2010, just 2.5 percent of respondents indicated that they would attend more career fairs. That number is up to more than 42 percent this year. Moreover, in 2010, no respondents planned more travel; this year, almost one-quarter have plans to do more traveling.

The bulk of the 13.1 percent of respondents that reported “other” changes in recruiting methods said that they will attend more on-campus events, e.g. information sessions and interviewing. Others explained that they will attend more targeted events, which also includes information sessions and networking events, or will connect more with student organizations (one respondent plans to sponsor a student organization) and perform more outreach directly to professors and advisers.

Figure 7: Changes in recruiting methods, 2010 - 2012, by percent of respondents

Change	% of 2012 respondents	% of 2011 respondents	% of 2010 respondents
Using more technology in general	58.3%	42.6%	13.7%
Using more social networks	57.1%	41.1%	23.9%
Attending more career fairs	42.3%	28.4%	2.5%
Change in branding	41.7%	33.5%	14.2%
Attending fewer career fairs	27.4%	28.9%	27.9%
More travel	22.3%	15.2%	0.0%
Less travel	18.3%	19.3%	20.3%
Other	13.1%	18.3%	---

Analysis by Industry

When examining the hiring projections by industry in the *Job Outlook 2012* report, it's important to do so with a great deal of caution due to the fairly small number of respondents in each category.

With this in mind, the news at this early juncture is encouraging. Hiring projections by industry indicate positive movement nearly across the board. With the exception of just one industry, all of those with five or more respondents are reporting an overall increase in hiring, which continues a turnaround begun last year. (See Figure 8.)

In 2011, all but two industries (government and finance) reported overall increases in college hiring, a marked improvement from the 2010 report, when all but three industries had overall plans to decrease college hiring.

Figure 8: Total change in hiring, by industry

Industry	# of 2012 projected hires	# of 2011 actual hires	% change	# of respondents
Oil & Gas Extraction	1,585	1,327	19.4%	n=10
Utilities	301	299	0.7%	n=9
Construction	454	362	25.4%	n=8
Chemical (Pharmaceutical) Mfg.	1,395	1,664	-16.2%	n=12
Computer & Electronics Mfg.	1,833	1,632	12.4%	n=20
Misc. Mfg.	1,296	1,092	18.7%	n=16
Retail Trade	1,325	1,079	22.8%	n=8
Information	375	370	1.4%	n=6
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	8,324	8,074	3.1%	n=23
Accounting Services	8,434	7,776	8.5%	n=8
Engineering Services	886	745	18.9%	n=5
Management Consulting	1,587	1,339	18.5%	n=14
Misc. Prof. Services	1,878	1,603	17.2%	n=15
Government	1,161	872	33.1%	n=6

(Only industries with 5 or more respondents are represented here.)

Oil and gas extraction firms may be one of the best bets for Class of 2012 college graduates. In addition to their overall planned hiring increase of 19.4 percent, 90 percent of respondents in this industry are increasing their individual hiring numbers, with the remaining 10 percent maintaining their numbers. Also, as a group, they have 70 percent of respondents with firm or tentative plans for Spring 2012 recruiting, with the remaining 30 percent conducting all of their recruiting in Fall 2011. (See Figure 9.)

Figure 9: Spring 2012 on-campus recruiting plans, by industry

Industry	Firm plans in place	Tentative plans	All recruiting in fall 2011	Not hiring	Unsure	# of respondents
Oil & Gas Extraction	40.0%	30.0%	30.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10
Utilities	27.3%	54.5%	18.2%	0.0%	0.0%	11
Construction	22.2%	44.4%	22.2%	0.0%	11.1%	9
Chemical (Pharmaceutical) Mfg.	26.7%	20.0%	33.3%	0.0%	20.0%	15
Computer & Electronics Mfg.	54.5%	22.7%	4.5%	0.0%	18.2%	22
Misc. Mfg.	43.8%	31.3%	12.5%	0.0%	12.5%	16
Retail Trade	37.5%	37.5%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8
Information	33.3%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	6
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	32.0%	28.0%	28.0%	4.0%	8.0%	25
Accounting Services	28.6%	28.6%	28.6%	0.0%	14.3%	7
Engineering Services	40.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	40.0%	5
Management Consulting	21.4%	64.3%	7.1%	0.0%	7.1%	14
Misc. Prof. Services	25.0%	37.5%	12.5%	0.0%	25.0%	16
Misc. Support Services	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5
Government	28.6%	28.6%	14.3%	0.0%	28.6%	7

Furthermore, oil and gas extraction companies give the highest overall rating to the job market specific to their industry. (See Figure 10.)

Driving the overall hiring decrease for chemical (pharmaceutical) manufacturing firms may be the fact that 58 percent of respondents are planning increases in hiring, while the remaining 42 percent are planning decreases. Two of the individual decreases are significant—28.5 percent and 37.5 percent. With a small number of respondents, this helps illustrate how the data from a few can skew the overall picture for a group.

Despite the fact that the overall job market rating for chemical (pharmaceutical) manufacturing firms falls above “good,” the respondents that indicate their college hiring will decrease cite the market conditions and the economy as the catalysts.

Figure 10: Job market ratings, by industry

Industry	Average rating*	# of respondents
Oil & Gas Extraction	4.10	10
Accounting Services	3.75	8
Information	3.50	6
Management Consulting	3.43	14
Chemical (Pharmaceutical) Mfg.	3.33	15
Utilities	3.27	11
Retail Trade	3.25	8
Misc. Prof. Services	3.19	16
Computer & Electronics Mfg.	2.91	22
Engineering Services	2.80	5
Misc. Support Services	2.80	5
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	2.68	25
Construction	2.67	9
Misc. Mfg.	2.65	17
Government	2.50	8

(*5-point scale, where 1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Very good, 5=Excellent)

Analysis by Region

Hiring projections by geographic region are also positive across the board, with Midwestern employers anticipating the largest increase for Class of 2012 graduates. (See Figure 11.) Employers in the Western region are also planning a double-digit increase, while Southeastern and Northeastern employers have smaller increases planned.

Figure 11: Total change in hiring, by region

Region	# of 2012 projected hires	# of 2011 actual hires	% change	# of respondents
Northeast	14,253	13,334	6.9%	n=44
Southeast	11,815	10,882	8.6%	n=62
Midwest	5,187	4,378	18.5%	n=48
West	2,301	2,063	11.5%	n=25

The individual employer responses by region may explain why the overall hiring in the Northeast is the lowest of the regions. Figure 12 shows that Northeastern employers have the lowest percentage of respondents with plans to increase their hiring numbers and the largest percentage with plans to decrease their hiring numbers.

In addition, the Midwestern region contains almost half of the oil and gas extraction companies, which, as noted previously, have the brightest outlook of the job market for Class of 2012 graduates.

Figure 12: Hiring expectations by region, by percent of respondents

Region	Increase	Maintain	Decrease
Northeast	46.9%	36.7%	16.3%
Southeast	50.7%	40.8%	8.5%
Midwest	50.0%	40.0%	10.0%
West	60.0%	24.0%	16.0%

Midwestern employers also have the most active recruiting plans for Spring 2012. Nearly one-quarter of them will do all their recruiting in Fall 2011, with 64 percent that have either firm or tentative plans for Spring 2012 recruiting. Only 12 percent of Midwestern employers are unsure of their spring 2012 recruiting plans, and no respondents from this region indicated they will not be on campus in spring 2012 because they are not hiring. (See Figure 13.)

Figure 13: Spring 2012 recruiting plans, by region

Recruiting Plans	Northeast	Southeast	Midwest	West
Firm plans in place	28.9%	26.8%	34.0%	65.4%
Tentative plans in place	24.4%	46.5%	30.0%	7.7%
All recruiting in fall	20.0%	14.1%	24.0%	15.4%
Unsure	26.7%	12.7%	12.0%	7.7%
Not hiring	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%

WHO'S IN DEMAND?

Year after year, employers continue to look to hire graduates in certain fields—business, engineering, and computer sciences—more often than others. (See Figure 14.) This is true again this year, and it also holds throughout degree levels. The only interruption of these degrees as the top three comes at the doctorate level, where sciences are ahead of business as the third most-desired degree.

Figure 14: Top degrees in demand, by degree level and broad category

Degree Level	Broad category	# of respondents who will hire	% of total respondents who will hire (n=194)
Bachelor's	Business	161	83.0%
	Engineering	145	74.7%
	Computer Sciences	115	59.3%
	Sciences	92	47.4%
	Liberal Arts	49	25.3%
	Communications	47	24.2%
	Agriculture & Natural Resources	22	11.3%
Master's	Business	113	58.2%
	Engineering	88	45.4%
	Computer Sciences	73	37.6%
Doctorate	Engineering	46	23.7%
	Computer Sciences	28	14.4%
	Sciences	26	13.4%
	Business	17	8.8%
	Humanities & Social Sciences	5	2.6%
	Education	1	0.5%

In terms of the most sought after majors at the bachelor’s degree level, finance graduates edge out all others this year to top the list, with accounting and computer and information sciences majors close behind. (See Figure 15.)

Figure 15: Top degrees in demand (bachelor’s degree level)

Major	# of respondents who will hire	% of respondents who will hire
Finance	119	61.3%
Accounting	115	59.3%
Computer & Information Sciences	115	59.3%
Electrical Engineering	100	51.5%
Mechanical Engineering	97	50.0%
Business Administration/Mgmt.	94	48.5%
Management Information Systems	85	43.8%
Computer Engineering	84	43.3%
Economics	66	34.0%
Logistics/Materials Management	66	34.0%

Figures 16 through 20 illustrate the demand for each major relative to the others in the same broad category. Of those employer respondents hiring any business degrees, nearly three-quarters will hire finance graduates, with accounting graduates right behind them (Figure 16). Within the engineering field, electrical engineering graduates top the list (Figure 17). Meanwhile, more than half of respondents that will hire science graduates will be

looking specifically for mathematics majors (Figure 18), and, of those with plans to hire liberal arts degrees, more than 70 percent will seek graduates in the political science/government and psychology fields (Figure 19).

Figure 16: Top business degrees in demand

Major	# of respondents who will hire	% of respondents hiring business degrees (n=161)
Finance	119	73.9%
Accounting	115	71.4%
Business Administration/ Mgmt.	94	58.4%
Management Info Systems	85	52.8%
Economics	66	41.0%
Logistics/Materials Management	66	41.0%
Marketing	63	39.1%
International Business	30	18.6%

Figure 17: Top engineering degrees in demand

Major	# of respondents who will hire	% of respondents hiring engineering degrees (n=145)
Electrical Engineering	100	69.0%
Mechanical Engineering	97	66.9%
Computer Engineering	84	57.9%
Chemical Engineering	60	41.4%
Civil Engineering	51	35.2%

Figure 18: Top science degrees in demand

Major	# of respondents who will hire	% of respondents hiring science degrees (n=92)
Mathematics (incl. Statistics)	53	57.6%
Chemistry	35	38.0%
Construction Science/Management	28	30.4%
Biological Sciences/Life Sciences	27	29.3%
Physics	24	26.1%
Geological & Related Sciences	19	20.7%

Figure 19: Top liberal arts degrees in demand

Major	# of respondents who will hire	% of respondents hiring liberal arts degrees (n=49)
Political Science/Government	35	71.4%
Psychology	35	71.4%
English	23	46.9%
Sociology	23	46.9%
History	16	32.7%

Figure 20: Top communications degrees in demand

Major	# of respondents who will hire	% of respondents hiring communications degrees (n=47)
Communications	45	95.7%
Public Relations	25	53.2%
Advertising	16	34.0%

At the master’s degree level, M.B.A. graduates are most in demand, while computer and information science graduates are most sought after at the doctorate level. (See Figures 21 and 22.)

Figure 21: Top degrees in demand (master’s degree level)

Major	# of respondents who will hire	% of respondents who will hire
M.B.A.	97	50.0%
Computer & Information Sciences	73	37.6%
Electrical Engineering	67	34.5%
Accounting	57	29.4%
Computer Engineering	56	28.9%
Mechanical Engineering	56	28.9%
Chemical Engineering	32	16.5%

Figure 22: Top degrees in demand (doctorate degree level)

Major	# of respondents who will hire	% of respondents who will hire
Computer & Information Sciences	28	14.4%
Electrical Engineering	27	13.9%
Mechanical Engineering	27	13.9%
Computer Engineering	22	11.3%
Chemical Engineering	21	10.8%

Figures 23 through 26 provide regional demand for individual bachelor's degree majors.

Figure 23: Top five undergraduate majors – Northeast

Major	% of Northeast respondents who will hire	% of respondents who will hire
Accounting	56.1%	47.1%
Finance	52.6%	48.8%
Mechanical Engineering	43.9%	39.8%
Computer & Information Sciences	42.1%	47.1%
Business Administration/Mgmt.	36.8%	38.5%

Figure 24: Top five undergraduate majors – Southeast

Major	% of Southeast respondents who will hire	% of respondents who will hire
Computer & Information Sciences	41.5%	47.1%
Electrical Engineering	41.5%	41.0%
Finance	41.5%	48.8%
Accounting	37.2%	47.1%
Business Administration/Mgmt.	37.2%	38.5%

Figure 25: Top five undergraduate majors – Midwest

Major	% of Midwest respondents who will hire	% of respondents who will hire
Accounting	59.0%	47.1%
Computer & Information Sciences	55.7%	47.1%
Finance	55.7%	48.8%
Management Information Systems	47.5%	34.8%
Mechanical Engineering	47.5%	39.8%

Figure 26: Top five undergraduate majors – West

Major	% of West respondents who will hire	% of respondents who will hire
Computer & Information Sciences	56.3%	47.1%
Finance	50.0%	48.8%
Business Administration/Mgmt.	46.9%	38.5%
Computer Engineering	43.8%	34.4%
Electrical Engineering	43.8%	41.0%

Examining the demand for individual majors by industry shows that chemical (pharmaceutical) manufacturing firms and utilities companies have the most interest in the top five degrees in demand. (See Figure 27.) By region, Midwestern employers have the most interest in four of the top five specific majors in demand. (See Figure 28.)

Figure 27: Who’s hiring, by industry (bachelor’s degree level)

Major	Most interested industries	% of industry respondents
Finance	Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	89%
	Chemical (Pharmaceutical) Mfg.	73%
	Retail Trade	70%
Accounting	Accounting Services	89%
	Chemical (Pharmaceutical) Mfg.	80%
	Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	71%
Computer & Information Sciences	Chemical (Pharmaceutical) Mfg.	73%
	Utilities	73%
	Computer & Electronics Mfg.	67%
Electrical Engineering	Utilities	100%
	Computer & Electronics Mfg.	82%
	Chemical (Pharmaceutical) Mfg.	80%
Mechanical Engineering	Utilities	100%
	Chemical (Pharmaceutical) Mfg.	87%
	Oil & Gas Extraction	64%

Figure 28: Who's hiring, by region (bachelor's degree level)

Major	Most interested regions	% respondents by region
Finance	Midwest	56%
	Northeast	53%
	West	50%
	Southeast	41%
Accounting	Midwest	59%
	Northeast	56%
	West	38%
	Southeast	37%
Computer & Information Sciences	Midwest	56%
	West	56%
	Northeast	42%
	Southeast	41%
Electrical Engineering	West	44%
	Midwest	43%
	Southeast	41%
	Northeast	37%
Mechanical Engineering	Midwest	48%
	Northeast	44%
	Southeast	34%
	West	34%

International and Associate Degree Student Hiring

The demand for international and associate degree students appears to be rebounding slightly for the Class of 2012. Almost one-quarter of respondents have plans to hire international degree graduates from this year's class and nearly as many have plans to hire graduates with associate degrees. These percentages are up from employer projections over the last two years. (See Figures 29 and 30.)

Employers who expressed demand in hiring international graduates will be looking mainly for those earning degrees in the various engineering fields and computer science/information technology.

For associate degree graduates, the demand also lies in the engineering and computer technology fields, with a handful of employers that will also seek graduates in the design/drafting areas.

Figure 29: International student hiring plans, 2006-2012



Figure 30: Associate degree student hiring, 2006-2012



By industry, information employers have the most interest in hiring international graduates. Employers in this sector include software publishers, telecommunication firms, and Internet service providers; 100 percent of these respondents plan on hiring these graduates. (See Figure 31.)

Demand by industry at the associate degree level comes mainly from miscellaneous support services, e.g. administrative and support services (employment services, credit bureaus, collection agencies) and waste management and remediation services. (See Figure 32.)

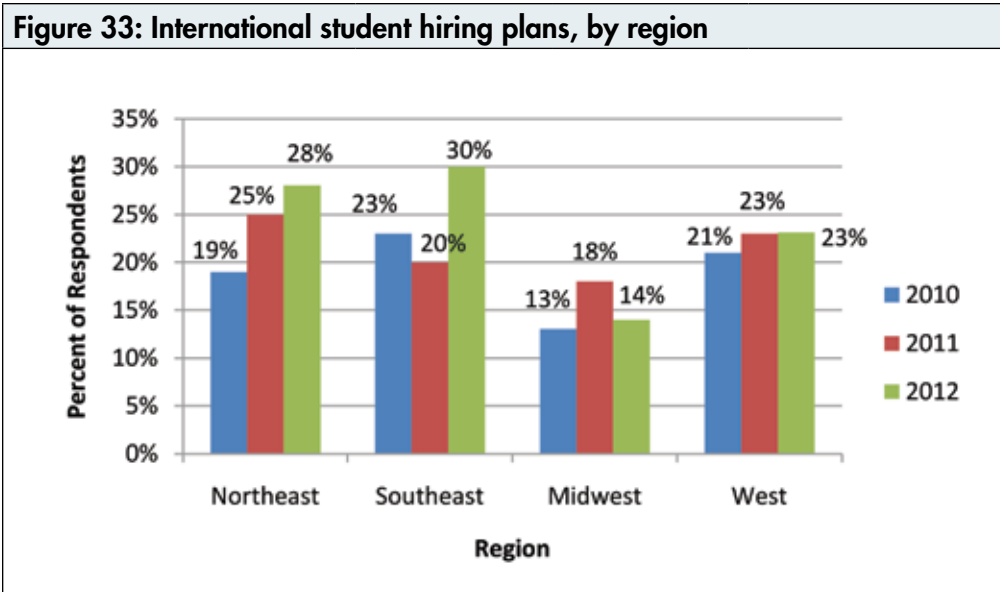
Figure 31: International student hiring plans, by industry

Industry	% of respondents who will hire
Information	100.0%
Computer & Electronics Mfg.	40.9%
Engineering Services	40.0%
Misc. Support Services	40.0%
Accounting Services	37.5%
Misc. Prof. Services	37.5%
Oil & Gas Extraction	30.0%
Management Consulting	21.4%
Utilities	18.2%
Chemical (Pharmaceutical) Mfg.	13.3%
Construction	12.5%
Retail Trade	12.5%
Government	12.5%
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	12.0%
Misc. Mfg.	5.9%

Figure 32: Associate degree student hiring, by industry

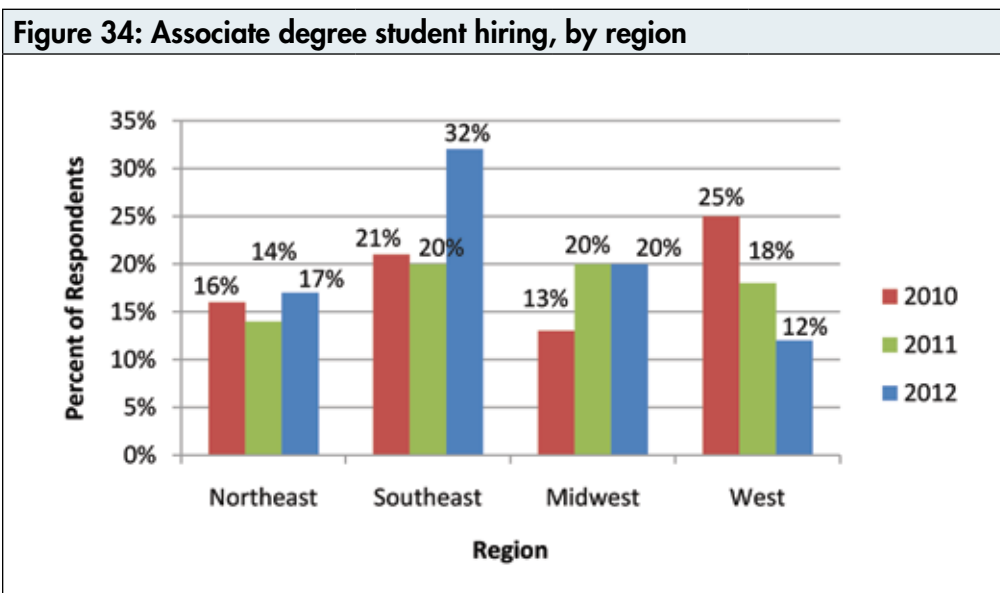
Industry	% of respondents who will hire
Misc. Support Services	40.0%
Construction	33.3%
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	32.0%
Oil & Gas Extraction	30.0%
Utilities	30.0%
Retail Trade	25.0%
Misc. Mfg.	23.5%
Computer & Electronics Mfg.	22.7%
Management Consulting	21.4%
Misc. Prof. Services	18.8%
Accounting Services	12.5%
Government	12.5%
Chemical (Pharmaceutical) Mfg.	6.7%

By geographic region, the demand for international graduates has been maintained or increased in all regions, except the Midwest. (See Figure 33.)



Compared to last year's demand for associate degree hires, interest has only waned among Western employers, with the other three regions holding the same or more interest in these particular graduates. (See Figure 34.)

In both cases, employers in the Southeastern region are significantly increasing their projections: a jump of 10 percent over last year for international graduates and of 12 percent over last year for associate degree graduates.

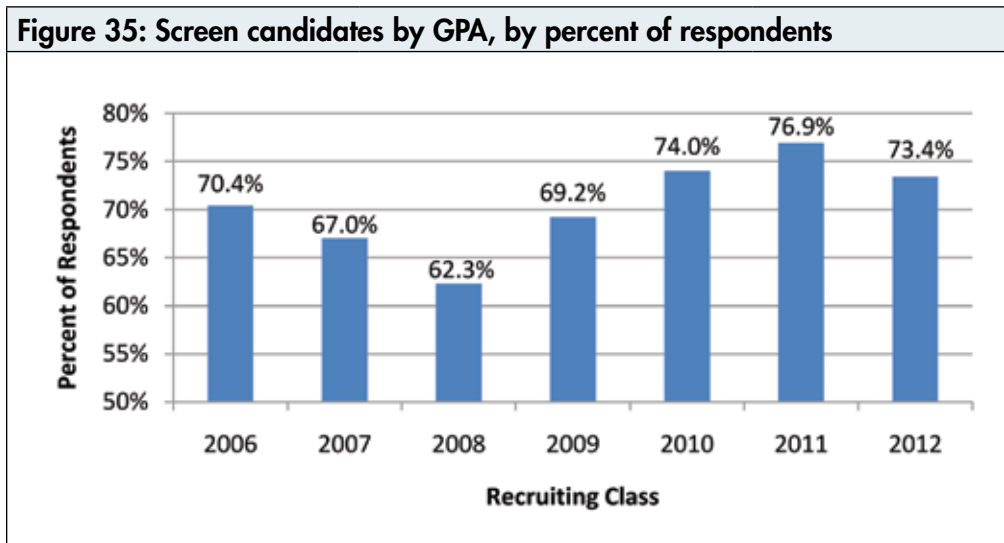


EMPLOYERS' VIEW OF CANDIDATES

Regardless of the state of the economy, employers seem to follow certain criteria in their hiring process for new college graduates.

GPA Screening

The group of respondents that reported plans to screen candidates by GPA hit an all-time high at 76.9 percent last year in the *Job Outlook 2011* survey; that number has receded slightly to 73.4 percent in this year's survey. (See Figure 35.)



Sixty-five percent of employers that reported their cutoff GPA use 3.0. When it comes to providing responses about screening candidates by GPA, nearly all industries are represented in this report. The 3.0 cutoff is most prevalent across industries, with the exception of engineering services employers, which use a higher cutoff, and utilities, government, and miscellaneous support services employers, which all have slightly lower cutoffs. (See Figure 36.)

It's important to note that, while engineering services firms may appear to have a higher standard when it comes to screening by GPA, a very small number of respondents in this industry reported their cutoff amounts, making their industry's cutoff appear significantly higher than that of other industries.

Figure 36: Screen candidates by GPA, by industry

Industry	% of respondents	GPA cutoff (reported median)
Accounting Services	100.0%	3.00
Utilities	90.9%	2.85
Computer & Electronics Mfg	90.9%	3.00
Chemical (Pharmaceutical) Mfg	86.7%	3.00
Oil & Gas Extraction	80.0%	3.00
Management Consulting	78.6%	3.00
Misc. Prof. Services	73.3%	3.00
Information	71.4%	3.00
Government	71.4%	2.75
Misc. Mfg.	70.6%	3.00
Retail Trade	62.5%	3.00
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	60.0%	3.00
Engineering Services	60.0%	3.50
Misc. Support Services	40.0%	2.88
Construction	37.5%	3.00

For students who make the GPA cutoff, what are other key attributes employers seek in candidates they are considering for openings? Major is obviously important when hiring for specific skill sets, and employers are also highly influenced by a candidate’s leadership experience.

Even though the influence ratings are slightly lower across the board this year, all attributes listed show at least “somewhat of an influence” on employers’ hiring decisions, especially when deciding between two equally qualified candidates. (See Figure 37.)

Figure 37: Influence of attributes

Attribute	2012 average influence rating*	2011 average influence rating*
Major	3.9	4.1
Has held leadership position	3.9	4.1
Has been involved in extracurricular activities (clubs, sports, student government, etc.)	3.7	3.8
High GPA (3.0 or above)	3.6	3.8
Has done volunteer work	3.1	3.2
School attended	3.0	3.2

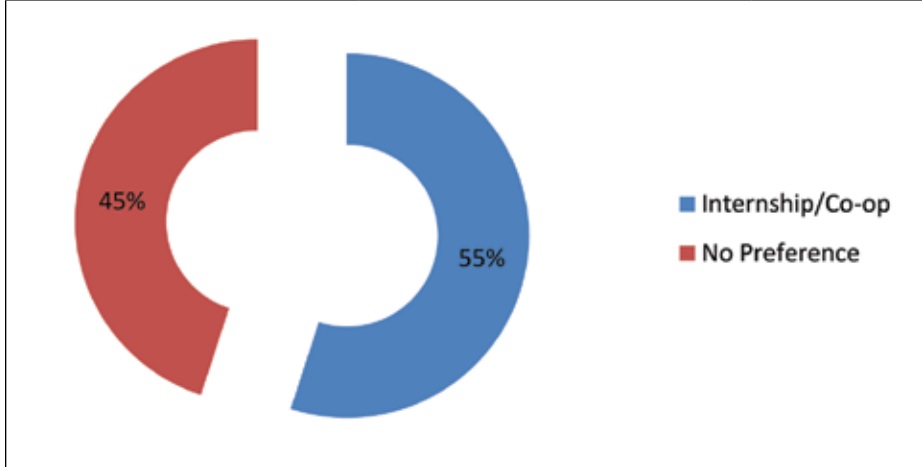
*5-point scale, where 1=No influence at all, 2=Not much influence, 3=Somewhat of an influence, 4=Very much influence, and 5=Extreme influence

Having relevant work experience also stands high on employers’ wish list for candidate attributes, with almost three-quarters of respondents indicating they prefer this type of experience in their candidates. (See Figure 38.) Just less than 18 percent of respondents indicated they prefer work experience of any type, regardless of the source.

Figure 38: Employers’ hiring preferences relative to experience, by percent of respondents

Hiring preference	2012	2011	2010
I prefer to hire candidates with relevant work experience	73.7%	72.4%	76.6%
I prefer to hire candidates with any type of work experience (doesn’t matter if it’s relevant or not, just some type of experience)	17.5%	17.6%	15.9%
Work experience doesn’t typically factor into my decision when hiring a new college graduate	4.1%	5.3%	2.5%
Other	4.6%	4.7%	5.0%

Figure 39: Employers' preference for work experience, by percent of respondents



Given a preference for any work experience, more than half of respondents prefer that it comes from an internship or co-op assignment. (See Figure 39.)

Candidate Skills and Qualities

When reviewing the resume, what skills and qualities do employers seek evidence of? What are the looking for the resume to illustrate?

Evidence of teamwork, leadership, and written communication skills topped the list, and were cited by more than three-quarters of respondents. (See Figure 40.)

Figure 40: Attributes employers seek on a candidate's resume

Attribute	% of respondents
Ability to work in a team	79.8%
Leadership	77.2%
Communication skills (written)	75.6%
Problem-solving skill	74.1%
Strong work ethic	73.1%
Analytical/quantitative skills	72.0%
Communication skills (verbal)	67.4%
Initiative	65.3%
Technical skills	61.1%
Detail-oriented	57.5%
Flexibility/adaptability	56.0%
Computer skills	55.4%
Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)	54.9%
Organizational ability	50.8%
Strategic planning skill	29.0%
Friendly/outgoing personality	29.0%
Creativity	22.3%
Entrepreneurial skills/risk-taker	21.8%
Tactfulness	21.2%

When it comes to the importance of candidate skills/qualities, it is clear that employers are looking for team players. Not only are teamwork skills the most sought-after skills on a student’s resume, but they are also rated of highest importance on the overall list of skills/qualities. (See Figure 41.)

Figure 41: Employers rate the importance of candidate skills/qualities

Skill/Quality	Weighted average rating*
Ability to work in a team structure	4.60
Ability to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization	4.59
Ability to make decisions and solve problems	4.49
Ability to obtain and process information	4.46
Ability to plan, organize and prioritize work	4.45
Ability to analyze quantitative data	4.23
Technical knowledge related to the job	4.23
Proficiency with computer software programs	4.04
Ability to create and/or edit written reports	3.65
Ability to sell or influence others	3.51

*5-point scale, where 1=Not important; 2=Not very important; 3=Somewhat important; 4=Very important; and 5=Extremely important

The current survey provided responding employers with a list of candidate skills/qualities that was modified from the list offered in previous years. In particular, respondents were given more-detailed information by which to judge verbal and written communication skills, which have traditionally appeared at (verbal) or near (written) the top of the list.

Employers were asked to judge verbal communication skills within the framework of the candidate’s ability to communicate with others inside and outside of the organization. Although verbal communication skills headed

the list in the *Job Outlook 2011* survey, this year they placed second, just edged out by “ability to work in a team structure.”

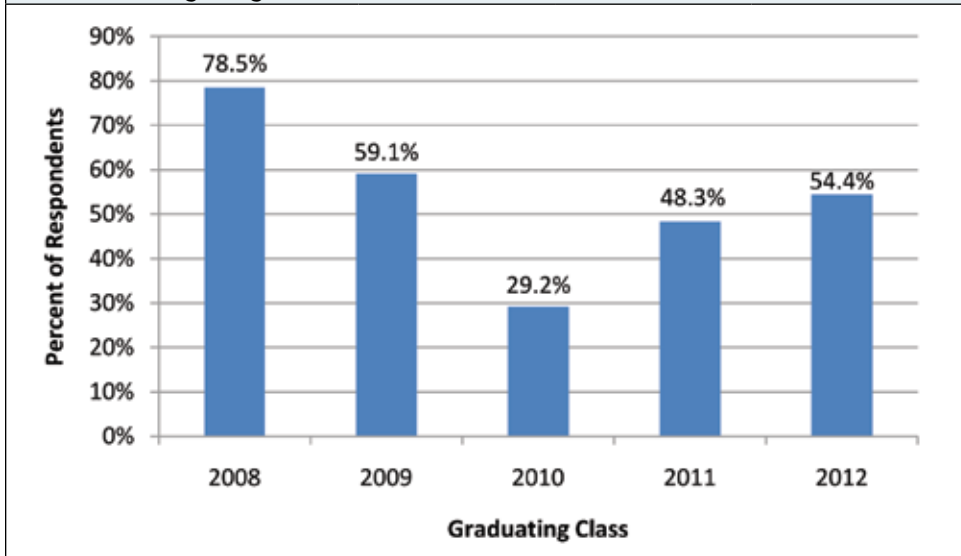
Employers were asked to look at written communication skills as “the ability to create and/or edit written reports.” While written communication skills earned an importance rating of 4.48 in the last survey, their rating fell to 3.65 in the current survey—a rating that equates to “somewhat important.” Note, however, that when employers were asked to identify skills in relationship to the candidate’s resume, more than three-quarters of employers cited written communication skills.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Salary Plans

More than half of responding employers have plans to increase starting salaries to Class of 2012 graduates, up from less than half of respondents last year. (See Figure 42.)

Figure 42: Employers with plans to increase starting salaries to bachelor's degree graduates



Of those with plans to increase bachelor's degree salaries, the projected average increase is 3.3 percent, exactly what employers projected last year. The median projected increase falls at 3 percent, with 28 percent increasing salaries by 3 percent and almost one-quarter projecting a 2 percent bump.

Nearly half of respondents plan to increase salaries for students earning master's degrees. The average planned increase this year is 3.7 percent, up slightly from 3.4 percent last year. The median increase projected for master's degree graduates is 3 percent, but more than 27 percent of respondents are planning an increase of 5 percent.

Figure 43: Employers with plans to increase starting salaries, by industry

Industry	# of respondents w/plans to increase bachelor's salaries	# of respondents by industry	% of respondents by industry
Utilities	4	5	80.0%
Computer & Electronics Mfg.	12	16	75.0%
Oil & Gas Extraction	6	8	75.0%
Retail Trade	3	4	75.0%
Accounting Services	6	8	75.0%
Misc. Professional Services	5	9	55.6%
Chemical (Pharmaceutical) Mfg.	6	11	54.5%
Construction	3	6	50.0%
Misc. Mfg.	6	12	50.0%
Management Consulting	6	12	50.0%
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	7	17	41.2%
Government	0	5	0.0%

Of the industries with five or more respondents, only government employers have no respondents with plans to increase starting salaries to bachelor's degree graduates. (See Figure 43.) With the exception of employers in the finance, insurance, and real estate sector, all remaining industries have at least half of their respondents planning increases in salaries to bachelor's degree graduates.

By region, Midwestern employers are the group with the largest percentage of respondents planning to increase salaries to bachelor’s degree graduates. However, their average projected increase is 2.9 percent, the lowest of all regional projections. (See Figure 44.)

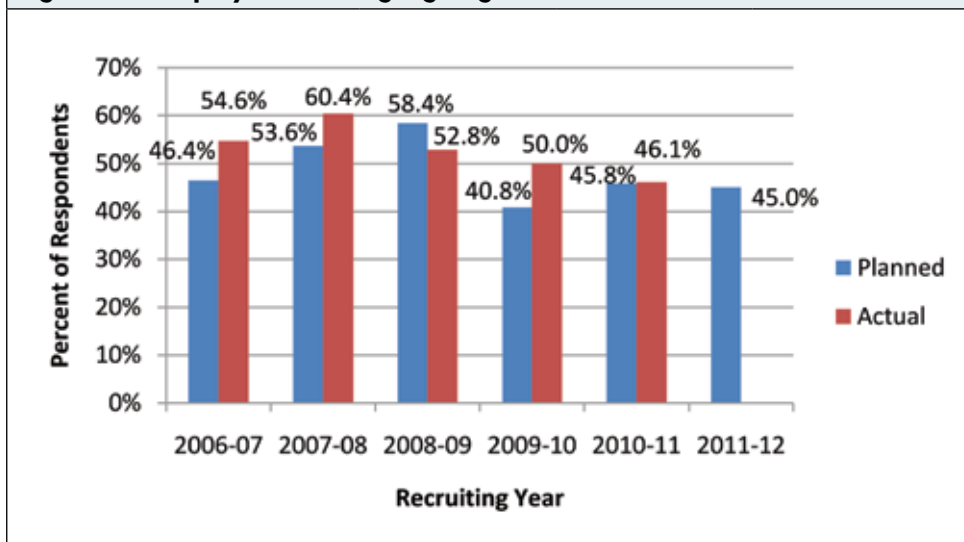
Figure 44: Employers with plans to increase starting salaries, by region

Region	# of respondents w/plans to increase bachelor’s salaries	# of respondents by region	% of respondents by region	Average projected increase
Northeast	15	32	46.9%	3.4%
Southeast	22	50	44.0%	3.7%
Midwest	26	37	70.3%	2.9%
West	11	17	64.7%	3.3%

Signing Bonuses

Another indication of the cautious approach employers are taking: the lack of growth in the percentage of respondents that plan to offer signing bonuses to Class of 2012 graduates. Last year, 45.8 percent of employers had plans to offer them to 2011 graduates—nearly identical to the percentage that actually ended up doing so. (See Figure 45.) This year, 45 percent have plans to offer them to Class of 2012 graduates.

Figure 45: Employers offering signing bonuses



Of those with plans to offer signing bonuses to new graduates, two-thirds plan to offer them only to selected graduates from the Class of 2012 as opposed to all of them. This may also indicate that more employers are taking a conservative approach to signing bonuses, as 58 percent of respondents last year offered them to only selected graduates.

By industry, oil and gas extraction firms are most likely to offer signing bonuses to their new college graduate hires. (See Figure 46.) Even though chemical (pharmaceutical) manufacturing is the only industry showing an overall decrease in hiring, nearly three-quarters of these employers still plan to make offers that include signing bonuses.

Figure 46: Percent of employers offering signing bonuses to 2011-12 graduates, by industry

Industry	% offering signing bonuses	# of respondents
Oil & Gas Extraction	80.0%	10
Chemical (Pharmaceutical) Mfg.	73.3%	15
Management Consulting	71.4%	14
Misc. Prof. Services	57.1%	14
Computer & Electronics Mfg.	54.5%	22
Retail Trade	50.0%	8
Engineering Services	40.0%	5
Accounting Services	37.5%	8
Utilities	36.4%	11
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	36.0%	25
Information	33.3%	6
Government	28.6%	7
Construction	25.0%	8
Misc. Mfg.	23.5%	17
Misc. Support Services	20.0%	5

Not only are Midwestern employers most likely to offer bachelor's degree graduates a salary increase, they are most likely to offer a signing bonus. (See Figure 47.)

Figure 47: Percent of employers offering signing bonuses in 2011-12, by region

Region	% who plan to offer signing bonuses in 2011-12	% who planned to offer signing bonuses in 2010-11
Northeast	44%	29%
Southeast	46%	26%
Midwest	50%	32%
West	35%	13%

Among respondents that plan to offer signing bonuses to all graduates, the average bonus amount is \$4,373, slightly higher than last year's average projected bonus amount of \$4,347. Nearly one-quarter of this year's respondents have plans to offer \$5,000 signing bonuses to Class of 2012 graduates.

A small number of respondents provided signing bonus data by major at the bachelor's degree level; the results are outlined in Figure 48.

Figure 48: Average signing bonus, by major (bachelor's degrees)*

Major	2011-12 average bonus (projected)	# of respondents 2011-12	2010-11 average bonus (projected)	# of respondents 2010-11
Finance	\$3,900	5	\$3,250	8
Engineering – not specified	\$3,833	9	\$3,278	9
Accounting	\$3,286	7	\$2,775	10
Computer Science	\$2,083	6	\$4,000	5

*where 5 or more data points were provided.

At the master's level, just a handful of respondents reported signing bonus data for M.B.A. graduates. The average bonus is shown in Figure 49, however the range was quite extensive, starting at \$1,500 and going as high as \$25,000, with no data points the same.

Figure 49: Average signing bonus, by major (master's degrees)*

Major	2011-12 average bonus (projected)	# of respondents 2011-12	2010-11 average bonus (projected)	# of respondents 2010-11
M.B.A.	\$15,143	7	\$12,857	14

*where 5 or more data points were provided.

Benefits

The benefits and policies that employers expect to offer 2012 college graduates remains largely unchanged from those they offered 2011 graduates. (See Figure 50.)

Last year, the percentage of employers offering more expensive benefits—tuition reimbursement, bonus/commission plans, and stock options—dropped. With the exception of stock options, it appears that the group of respondents offering these benefits to 2011-12 graduates remains consistent.


The good news for 2012 graduates is that the benefits they rated as most important in NACE's *2011 Student Survey* report, such as medical insurance, annual salary increases, and tuition reimbursement, are high on the list of benefits offered by respondents. 

Figure 50: Benefits and policies, Class of 2012 vs. Classes of 2011 and 2010

Benefit/policy	% of respondents who will offer in 2011-12	% of respondents who offered in 2010-11	% of respondents who offered in 2009-10
Life insurance	100.0%	98.8%	99.1%
Medical insurance	99.0%	100.0%	98.7%
Dental insurance	98.9%	98.2%	98.7%
401(k) retirement plan	98.4%	98.2%	98.7%
Employee assistance/counseling program	95.3%	96.4%	91.2%
Annual salary increases	94.0%	97.0%	97.3%
Casual dress policy	87.1%	87.5%	81.6%
Tuition reimbursement	84.5%	83.9%	90.8%
Planned social activities	79.0%	73.2%	73.6%
Frequent performance reviews (more than one per year)	75.4%	77.2%	62.1%
Bonus/commission plans	71.6%	69.1%	79.0%
Benefits to domestic partners	67.9%	73.6%	60.1%
Family-friendly benefits	64.5%	67.1%	62.1%
Flextime	63.4%	66.9%	60.9%
More than two weeks vacation	56.5%	54.5%	52.2%
On-site fitness center	48.6%	53.6%	44.1%
Pension plan	40.0%	42.4%	38.7%
Telecommuting	38.9%	43.0%	32.7%
Stock options	25.9%	20.2%	25.6%
Company car	10.3%	10.3%	11.9%
Day care facilities	9.8%	9.9%	10.5%
Payback of existing student loans	2.2%	1.3%	1.8%

APPENDIX

Respondents by Industry and Size

Figure 51: Respondents by industry

Industry	# of respondents	% of respondents
Agriculture	1	0.4%
Oil & Gas Extraction	11	4.5%
Utilities	11	4.5%
Construction	10	4.1%
Food & Beverage Mfg	4	1.6%
Chemical (Pharmaceutical) Mfg	15	6.1%
Computer & Electronics Mfg	27	11.1%
Motor Vehicle Mfg	4	1.6%
Misc. Mfg.	26	10.7%
Wholesale Trade	2	0.8%
Retail Trade	10	4.1%
Transportation	6	2.5%
Information	11	4.5%
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	28	11.5%
Accounting Services	9	3.7%
Engineering Services	12	4.9%
Management Consulting	15	6.1%
Misc. Prof. Services	21	8.6%
Social Services	3	1.2%
Recreation & Hospitality	3	1.2%
Misc. Support Services	5	2.0%
Government	10	4.1%

Figure 52: Respondents by size of department/business unit

Number of Employees	% of respondents
Fewer than 500	17.6%
500 - 1,000	7.0%
1,001 - 2,500	15.6%
2,501 - 5,000	12.3%
5,001 - 10,000	15.6%
More than 10,000	32.0%

Participating Organizations

Below is a list of the organizations that responded to the *Job Outlook 2012* survey. (Please note: Although 244 organizations responded, the list below includes 176, as 68 organizations preferred not to be listed.)

- Adtran, Inc.
- Advanced Micro Devices, Inc.
- Agilent Technologies, Inc.
- Akamai Technologies
- Albemarle Corporation
- Alcatel-Lucent
- Allscripts
- American Airlines Inc.
- American Electric Power
- American Income Life Insurance Company
- American Institute of Certified Public Accountants
- Amica Mutual Insurance Company
- Amway Corporation
- ARAMARK
- ARCADIS US Inc.
- ArcelorMittal USA
- Arup & Partners
- Athenahealth, Inc.
- Avanade Holdings LLC
- BBVA Compass Bank
- Bechtel Corporation
- Bell Helicopter Textron Inc.
- BP America
- Brady Corp.
- Broadcom Corporation
- Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc.
- CB Richard Ellis
- CGI Federal
- Chesapeake Energy Corporation
- Chevron Phillips Chemical Company LP
- Citrix Systems, Inc.
- Cliffs Natural Resources
- Compass Group North America
- comScore, Inc.
- Con-way Freight
- ConAgra Foods, Inc.
- ConocoPhillips
- Consolidated Graphics
- Cree, Inc.
- Crestron Electronics
- Crossmark
- Crowe Horwath LLP
- CST of America
- Deere & Company
- Dick's Sporting Goods
- Discover Financial Services
- Dominion Resources Services, Inc.
- Dow Corning Corporation
- DuPont
- Eaton Corporation
- EchoStar
- Ecolab Inc.
- Edward Jones
- Emerson Climate Technologies
- Emerson Process Management - Fisher Controls Division
- Energy Services, Inc.
- Enterprise Products, Inc.
- Ernst & Young LLP
- Farm Credit Bank of Texas
- FDM Group Inc.
- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
- Federal Reserve Bank of New York
- Fifth Third Bank
- Foster Wheeler AG
- Freddie Mac
- GAP Inc.
- Gaylord Entertainment
- General Electric Company
- Global Tax Management, Inc.
- Goodman Networks
- Goodrich Corporation
- Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Company
- Hajoca Corporation
- Harris Corporation
- HCL Technologies
- HDR Inc.
- Heico Construction Group LLC
- Hitachi Consulting

Informatica Corporation
Integrus Energy Group, Inc.
Jacobs Technology Inc.
JCPenney Company, Inc.
Johnson Controls, Inc.
Kearney & Company
Kennedy & Coe LLC
KPMG LLP
L-3 Communications Integrated
Systems
Lafarge North America
Lennox International Inc.
Levi Strauss & Co.
Liberty Mutual Insurance Company
Link-Belt Construction Equipment Co.
Lowe's Companies, Inc.
Lutron Electronics Co. Inc.
Macy's, Inc.
Mars Chocolate US
Maxim Healthcare Services, Inc.
McKesson Corporation
MeadWestvaco Corporation
Meijer, Inc.
Mercer
Merck & Co., Inc.
Messer Construction Co.
Met-Pro Corporation
Michelin North America
Milliken & Company
Modern Woodmen of America
Moss Adams LLP
NASA - John C. Stennis Space Center
National Instruments
Naval Acquisition Career Center

Naval Air Systems Command
(NAVAIR) - NAVAIR - Patuxent River
NetApp
Newfield Exploration Company
Newmont Mining Corporation
Northrop Grumman - Newport News
Northrop Grumman Corporation
Oregon Department of Transportation
Owens Corning
Owens-Illinois Inc.
Pacific Gas and Electric Company
ParenteBeard
Pariveda Solutions Inc.
Parsons
Pennsylvania Transformer
Technology, Inc.
Philips North America
Phillips Plastics Corporation
PPG Industries, Inc.
PrimeSource Building Products, Inc.
Procter & Gamble Co.
Progress Energy Service Co.
Progressive Insurance
PSEG
Questar Corporation
Ralcop Holdings, Inc.
Raytheon Company
Robert Bosch LLC
Rogers Corporation
ROHM Semiconductor USA, LLC
Rosetta
Sabre Holdings
Sapient Corporation
Savannah River Nuclear Solutions

Schlumberger Oilfield Services
Sears Holdings Corporation
Selden Fox LTD
Sensata Technologies
Siemens Corporation
Southeastern Cooperative Educational
Programs (SECEP)
State Street Corporation
Suffolk Construction Company, Inc.
SWIFT
TE Connectivity
Tennessee Valley Authority
Teradata Corporation
The Dow Chemical Company
The Hertz Corporation
The Northern Trust Company
The Timken Company
Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc.
Tindall Corporation
Tokyo Electron U.S. Holdings, Inc.
Total Quality Logistics, Inc.
Towers Watson
Triage Consulting Group
TriTek Solutions, Inc.
TTX Company
Turner Broadcasting System, Inc.
Turner Construction Company
U.S. Coast Guard
U.S. Comptroller of the Currency
Union Bank
W.W. Grainger, Inc.
Watson Pharmaceuticals, Inc.
Westat Inc.
Wipro Technologies



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