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LIFE & WORKJOURNAL REPORTS: COLLEGE RANKINGS

Top Colleges for High-Paying Jobs in Software

A new salary-based ranking shows Stanford atop the list and Berkeley leading public universities

By *Demetria Gallegos* [Following](#)

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UCLA graduates in the software industry average some of the highest salaries in the field. PHOTO: CAROLINE BREHMAN/EPA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Graduates of Stanford University who enter the software industry are out-earning their peers from other schools, according to a salary-based ranking of

colleges. Among public schools, graduates from the University of California, Berkeley make the highest pay in software.

The ranking of salaries over the first 10 years in a given field focuses on the impact one's choice of undergraduate school can make. It was created by Burning Glass, a nonprofit that researches employment trends, and is based on data about experience and pay from Lightcast, a labor-market data firm, and Glassdoor, which rates companies. In all, nine industries were evaluated, including law, management consulting and engineering. Graduates don't have to have majored in the fields they eventually entered.

The software ranking includes software engineers and computer scientists in any industry, according to Matt Sigelman, president of Burning Glass. It is differentiated from the technology ranking, which spans all job titles employed exclusively in the tech industry, and the data and applied science analysis, which includes specific data-centric roles across all industries, he says.

A Stanford-educated software worker is earning an average of \$146,911 annually over 10 years, a premium of \$43,557 a year above the median college graduate's salary of \$103,354 in software, the analysis shows. Princeton University, Harvard University and the California Institute of Technology are close behind the Stanford premium.

Graduates of Berkeley are earning a \$35,617 premium, or an average of \$138,971 in each of their first 10 years in the industry, which puts it first on the public-school list, followed by the University of California, Los Angeles, the University of Washington-Seattle Campus and the University of California, Davis.

“Where you go matters,” says Mr. Sigelman, citing an annual premium of around \$40,000 as an example. “You multiply that over a 30-year career, that’s a \$1.2 million difference for going to the top schools versus going to a median-earning school.”

He says this ranking demonstrates “just how strong the magnetic pull of the software industry has been for graduates. It’s not surprising, given how well these jobs pay. Increasingly, the world of software has become a black hole that is consuming an outsize share of our top talent.”

Top 20 Private Colleges for Software Salaries

These graduates earn higher pay than the median graduate in software development

RANK	COLLEGE	ANNUAL SALARY PREMIUM	SOFTWARE DEVELOPER % OF GRADUATES	AVERAGE YEARLY SALARY	2019-2020 AVERAGE NET PRICE
11	Franklin W Olin College of Engineering	\$31,306	35.03%	\$134,660	\$34,297
12	Columbia University in the City of New York	\$30,922	8.85%	\$134,276	\$22,126
13	University of Pennsylvania	\$30,414	5.85%	\$133,768	\$24,167
14	Cornell University	\$29,630	9.30%	\$132,984	\$27,522
15	Duke University	\$29,450	8.35%	\$132,804	\$26,932
16	Dartmouth College	\$28,928	6.79%	\$132,282	\$24,525

RANK	COLLEGE	ANNUAL SALARY PREMIUM	SOFTWARE DEVELOPER % OF GRADUATES	AVERAGE YEARLY SALARY	2019-2020 AVERAGE NET PRICE
17	Claremont McKenna College	\$26,951	4.08%	\$130,305	\$22,004
18	Williams College	\$26,946	5.02%	\$130,300	\$22,356
19	Mount Holyoke College	\$26,697	3.34%	\$130,051	\$31,165
20	Amherst College	\$24,462	4.58%	\$127,816	\$18,832

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Average Net Price reflects the cost of attendance including tuition, required fees, expenses and room and board for the 2019-2020 school year minus the average total grant and scholarship aid received from government sources and the institution. For public colleges, in-state or in-district tuition and fees are used in the calculation.

Source: Burning Glass analysis of data from Lightcast and Glassdoor; IPEDS (average net price)

Top 20 Public Colleges for Software Salaries

These graduates earn higher pay than the median graduate in software development

RANK	COLLEGE	ANNUAL SALARY PREMIUM	SOFTWARE DEVELOPER % OF GRADUATES	AVERAGE YEARLY SALARY	2019-2020 AVERAGE NET PRICE
1	University of California-Berkeley	\$35,617	12.13%	\$138,971	\$19,329
2	University of California-Los	\$21,424	7.20%	\$124,778	\$16,474

RANK	COLLEGE	ANNUAL SALARY PREMIUM	SOFTWARE DEVELOPER % OF GRADUATES	AVERAGE YEARLY SALARY	2019-2020 AVERAGE NET PRICE
	Angeles				
3	University of Washington-Seattle Campus	\$18,700	9.61%	\$122,054	\$9,661
4	University of California-Davis	\$18,307	6.97%	\$121,661	\$17,026
5	University of California-San Diego	\$18,232	11.79%	\$121,586	\$15,222
6	San Jose State University	\$17,419	6.58%	\$120,773	\$15,995
7	University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign	\$16,759	8.95%	\$120,113	\$13,517
8	University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	\$16,354	8.93%	\$119,708	\$17,832
9	University of California-Santa Cruz	\$16,104	8.34%	\$119,458	\$18,338
10	California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo	\$15,684	9.40%	\$119,038	\$20,491

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Average Net Price reflects the cost of attendance including tuition, required fees, expenses and room and board for the 2019-2020 school year minus the average total grant and scholarship aid received from

government sources and the institution. For public colleges, in-state or in-district tuition and fees are used in the calculation.

Source: Burning Glass analysis of data from Lightcast and Glassdoor; IPEDS (average net price)

Methodology

Rankings are determined by a Burning Glass Institute analysis of experience and pay data from Lightcast, a labor-market data firm, and Glassdoor, a company-ratings website. For each college, an annual salary premium was calculated using the difference between the earnings of the school's graduates in their first 10 years after graduation and the median graduate in the field. To filter for graduates working in software development, the Burning Glass Institute analyzed only the roles relevant to the profession as classified by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Standard Occupational Classification codes and the U.S. Census Bureau's North American Industry Classification System.

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*

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By Demetria Gallegos

May 2, 2023 at 1:00 PM ET

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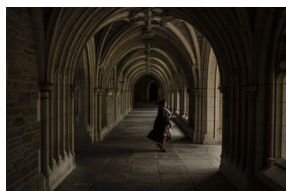


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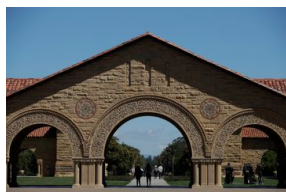


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