

Men Women Starting Salaries WSJ 070922

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/gender-pay-gap-college-11659968901>Data Show
Gender Pay Gap Opens Early Updated Aug. 8, 2022 11:30 am ET

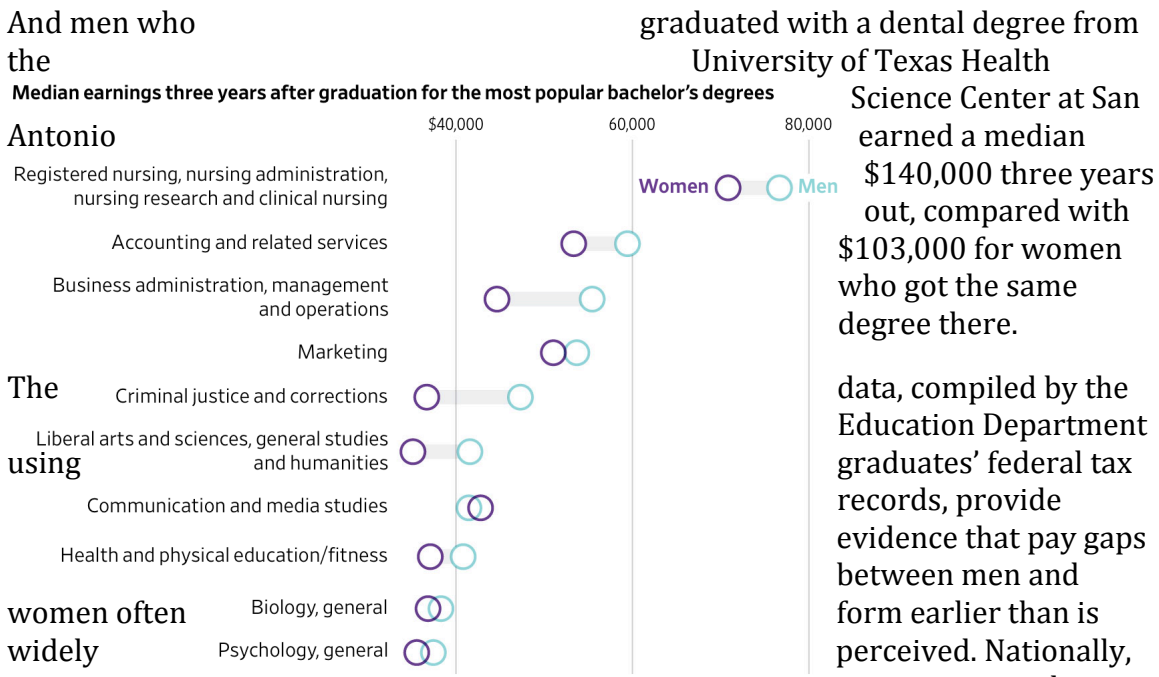
Disparities among male and female college graduates appeared within three years, a WSJ analysis of federal data for 2015 and 2016 graduates shows

Melissa Korn, Lauren Weber and Andrea Fuller

The data, which cover about 1.7 million graduates, showed that median pay for men exceeded that for women three years after graduation in nearly 75% of roughly 11,300 undergraduate and graduate degree programs at some 2,000 universities. In almost half of the programs, male graduates' median earnings topped women's by 10% or more, a Wall Street Journal analysis of data from 2015 and 2016 graduates showed.

At Georgetown University, men who received undergraduate accounting degrees earned a median \$155,000 three years after graduation, a 55% premium over their female classmates (\$99,000), the analysis showed.

Men who completed law degrees from the University of Michigan earned a median \$165,000 three years after graduation, compared with \$120,000 for women.



Note: Reflects the top 10 bachelor's degrees, ranked by the number of programs with salary data. Median figures shown are based on individual program medians, weighted by the number of students whose salary data was tracked.
 Source: Education Department

average of 82.3 cents for every dollar a man earns, according to the Labor Department.

Economists who have long examined pay gaps between men and women cite the so-called motherhood penalty—referring to the perception that mothers are less committed to their jobs—and say this affects hiring, promotions and salaries.

Determining why those gaps appear earlier isn't simple. The federal data don't account for such factors as recipients of the same degrees seeking different types of jobs and career paths, some of which pay far more than others. Studies have shown that men tend to negotiate salaries more aggressively than women, and women at times shy away from ambitious goals for fear of being unprepared. Even when women and men have identical academic credentials, women sometimes choose lower-paying career paths, pursuing a passion rather than a high paycheck.

The median pay for men from the California State University, Fullerton, nursing master's program, for instance, was \$199,000 three years after graduation, compared with \$115,000 for women. The school said that is largely because women in the program gravitated toward nurse midwifery, which pays less than specialties like anesthesiology.

Researchers also say that discrimination, despite laws against it, remains a factor in the gender pay gap at all career levels.

The data don't cover every student. **Nationwide, about 55% of undergraduates, 40% of master's students and 70% of professional school students receive federal loans or grants,** Education Department data show. While that represents a large share of graduates at some schools, it covers only a fraction at other programs—particularly bachelor's degrees from wealthy universities with generous scholarship aid. The Education Department also didn't release figures for many small programs.

The data, compiled by the Education Department using graduates' federal tax records, provide evidence that pay gaps between men and women often form earlier than is widely perceived. Nationally, **women across the workforce earn an of 82.3 cents for every dollar a man earns,** according to the Labor Department.

Still, the Journal identified early-career pay disparities across a range of fields, including those dominated by men, such as business, and those dominated by women, such as teaching. **At every degree level, the majority of programs had higher median earnings for men than for women.**

"We need executives taking note of this," said Shawn VanDerziel, executive director of the National Association of Colleges and Employers, a trade group for career-services officers and recruiters.

The Education Department numbers break out male and non-male students, meaning women and the very small number of people who didn't select a gender on financial-aid forms. They aren't broken out by race. Students who received multiple degrees may be counted twice.

Among those with undergraduate degrees, women out-earned men in just four of the 20 most popular areas of study, including design and communications, the Journal found. The Education Department data included information about the early-career median pay for individual programs. The Journal used those figures to calculate estimates of median salaries across broad fields.

Women who studied English out-earned their male peers by about 6%, the widest disparity favoring women. Men's pay topped women's by at least 10% in eight of the popular fields, including business, the most common undergraduate major.

Across those 20 fields, men and women's pay came closest to parity in economics, where women earned 1.4% more than men.

"There is no neat, tidy explanation" for the early-pay disparities, said Francine Blau, a Cornell University labor economist.

Researchers say women choosing careers sometimes internalize societal expectations about which jobs suit them. Well-intentioned advisers and employers can steer women toward less lucrative options, based on assumptions about their aspirations.

Graduates of petroleum-engineering programs, among the highest-paying undergraduate majors in the country, often take jobs either as field engineers or data analysts. Career-service advisers and graduates said women are more represented in the latter roles, which are based in an office, involve more regular work hours and can pay less.

Four of the five petroleum-engineering programs in the U.S. for which figures were broken out by gender showed men earning more than women.

At the University of Houston, men who got a bachelor's degree in petroleum engineering earned a median \$86,000 three years after graduation, compared with \$73,000 for women—a gap of nearly 19%.

When Roxanne Marino was finishing her petroleum-engineering degree at Houston in 2018, she wanted to work in an oil field, alongside roustabouts and drill operators.

The recruiters she spoke to at a job fair were skeptical, she said. "You know that means very little free time. And long hours," she said the recruiters—some of them women—told her. "None of it implied directly, 'Well, you won't get to wear your makeup up there,' but it definitely felt like they were trying to steer you away from it."

She said she would tell them she thought it was important to get field experience, both for better pay and to be a well-rounded engineer.

Ms. Marino, 26 years old, currently works in the field for Schlumberger Ltd. in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, maintaining a schedule of three weeks on and three weeks off.

After two promotions, she now earns a base salary around \$77,000, with annual bonuses that can exceed \$30,000.

Monica Thompson, executive director of university career services at the University of Houston, said her team regularly warns recruiters about implicit bias and addresses what she calls “the F word,” or fit.

Ms. Thompson said some recruiters justify not hiring certain individuals because they aren’t the right fit. What they really mean, she said, is “that student didn’t look like the person they are used to hiring for that type of work.”

Different job tracks also can explain part of the pay gap at Michigan’s law school, where men earned a median income that was 37% higher than women’s three years out.

The school said that in the classes of 2015 and 2016, 237 men took jobs at law firms, while 158 women did. Fourteen men headed into public-interest jobs, whereas three times as many women did. The classes those years had slightly more men than women.

Several women said in interviews that the mission-driven work appealed to them, outweighing the draw of a higher law-firm salary.

“With corporate law, I could make all the money in the world, but I’d rather get some kind of fulfillment from my job,” said 2018 Michigan Law graduate Selena Alonzo, a public defender who earns \$86,000 in Seattle.

Ramji Kaul, assistant dean for career planning at the law school, said he would be concerned if he learned there was a pay gap within a particular job or at a specific employer. It would also be problematic, he said, if he was trying to engineer results for the class by steering anyone to particular types of work. “If I’m doing my job correctly, I’m not directing anybody anywhere,” he said.

The programs exhibiting the biggest gaps in early-career earnings were largely offered by Bible colleges and schools with large Mormon populations, including Brigham Young University and Utah Valley University, the data show. The federal median-pay figures included people who earned no salary who weren’t still enrolled in higher education. As a result, the data could reflect that some women from those schools don’t pursue careers right after graduation.

“One possible explanation for the wage gap may be that women are taking roles that provide flexibility for family formation,” said a BYU spokeswoman. A Utah Valley spokeswoman said the school has grown significantly since the years covered by the federal data, including its population of female students.

Even excluding those who earn no salary after finishing school, male graduates nationwide usually had higher median earnings than their female counterparts, according to other figures in the same data set that tracked graduates just one year

out of school. And male graduates from 73% of programs at schools without any religious affiliation had higher median pay than their female counterparts, three years out.

After graduating from the dentistry program at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio in 2017, Anisa Maredia completed a residency, then worked at dental practices in the Houston area. As a job applicant and as a participant in hiring other dentists, she said, she saw some interviewers refer to or ask about female candidates' marital status and family situations. She believes the interviewers were concerned about female dentists' commitment to their careers.

"When the male dentists apply for jobs, they get picked up faster than female dentists," she said. Wanting more control over her income and career path, Dr. Maredia said, she opened her own dental practice last fall and is already earning more than she did when she worked for other clinics.

Several women who graduated from the San Antonio program noted that male classmates launched their own practices—generally a more lucrative path—sooner after graduation than female classmates, who often completed residencies and worked for other dentists before buying or starting a practice.

When informed of the Education Department figures about graduates' pay, many schools, including UT Health Science Center at San Antonio, said it isn't their job to collect data on how students fare after they leave. Some also noted that they can't control what employers pay.

The pay gaps existed even in some programs that led to relatively narrow career choices, such as special education. At all but two of the 25 master's programs in special education with published data, men had higher income than women three years after graduation.

Tameika Mitchell finished her master's degree in special education at Long Island University in 2018 and has spent the past four years teaching at a high school in Norwalk, Conn. She is interested in taking on an administrative role, like being a department head. "But I still feel like I don't have enough experience," she said.

Ms. Mitchell said some men she knows with the same number of years in the classroom have already made that leap. "I've never heard them talk about experience being a factor," she said.

Men who graduated from Ms. Mitchell's program at LIU earned a median \$77,000 three years out, roughly \$10,000 more than women.

Representatives from LIU didn't respond to requests for comment.

Many women the Journal interviewed said confidence played a role in their early career decisions. Research indicates that women are less aggressive than men in

negotiating salaries or raises, worrying they will come across as too demanding. If they don't do so early on, it can be harder to achieve pay equity later.

At Stephen F. Austin State, men earned 31% less than women.

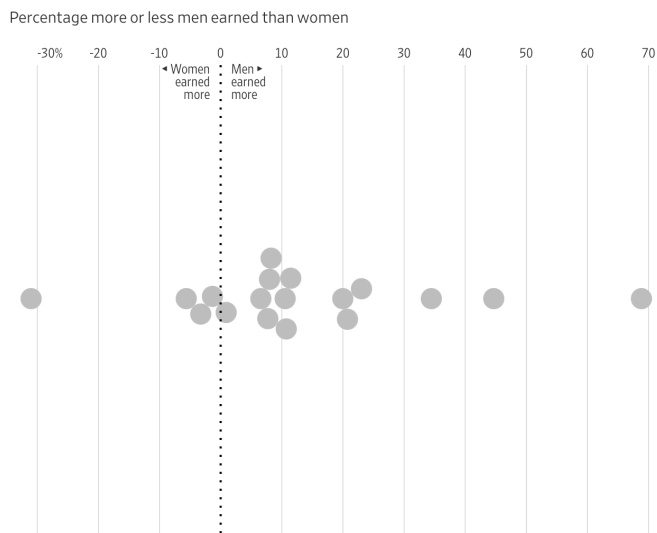
Danielle Lomas, a 2015 graduate of Georgetown University's undergraduate accounting program, said her instructors talked about the importance of negotiating pay. But Ms. Lomas said two early employers told her their salary offers weren't negotiable.

She recently negotiated a \$10,000 salary bump at her current firm. She said the company's quick approval makes her think she should have aimed higher.

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SCHOOL	MEN'S EARNINGS	WOMEN'S EARNINGS	PERCENT DIFFERENCE
University of Illinois Chicago	\$48,470	\$28,709	68.8%
Michigan State University	\$53,901	\$37,258	44.7%
University of Washington-Seattle Campus	\$40,313	\$29,982	34.5%
California State University-Fullerton	\$55,234	\$44,890	23.0%
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	\$46,623	\$38,615	20.7%
University of Massachusetts-Amherst	\$60,411	\$50,350	20.0%
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	\$32,906	\$29,522	11.5%

A spokeswoman said the school surveys students and tracks initial earnings based on those who respond, and the 2021 figures showed roughly equal pay for men and women accounting majors. "However," she said, "the trajectory of a woman's career remains a nuanced issue, with ongoing factors that continue to play a major role in salary discrepancies."

After seven years in the field, Ms. Lomas said, she still makes less than that \$99,000 figure.

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NOTE: sample search by program. Text has some mixture from divergent postings on line. EEC