

Student Loan Game Plan

Your Choices. Your Success.

Student's Guide to Borrowing Levels by Major

When you're reviewing your financial aid award letter and applying for a loan, think about the total amount of money you will borrow for all your years in college and especially how that total loan amount will relate to your expected starting salary. Follow these steps to make the right choices for you.

1. **Find your major and the associated average starting salary** earned by graduates with a bachelor's degree in that specific college major¹. If your major is not listed, the one that is the most similar to your chosen major will give you a good estimate.
2. **Look at the maximum student loan range.** The suggested maximum cumulative student loan amounts include federal student loans with future monthly payments² of 8% to 12% of monthly gross starting salaries and some borrowing through private student loans. Borrowing more than these amounts over your college career could make it difficult to repay your student loans after you graduate.

Agriculture and Natural Resources	Annual Starting Salary	Maximum Student Loan Range	
		8%	12%
Agriculture Economics	\$38,848	\$22,656	\$33,984
Agriculture Production and Management	\$35,206	\$20,532	\$30,798
Animal Sciences	\$26,708	\$15,576	\$23,364
Food Science	\$43,704	\$25,488	\$38,232
Forestry	\$42,490	\$24,780	\$37,170
General Agriculture	\$33,992	\$19,824	\$29,736
Miscellaneous Agriculture	\$35,206	\$20,532	\$30,798
Natural Resources Management	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Plant Science and Agronomy	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Soil Science	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860

Arts	Annual Starting Salary	Maximum Student Loan Range	
		8%	12%
Commercial Art and Graphic Design	\$31,564	\$18,408	\$27,612
Drama and Theater Arts	\$26,708	\$15,576	\$23,364
Film, Video and Photographic Arts	\$29,136	\$16,992	\$25,488
Fine Arts	\$30,350	\$17,700	\$26,550
Miscellaneous Fine Arts	\$26,708	\$15,576	\$23,364
Music	\$30,350	\$17,700	\$26,550
Studio Arts	\$24,280	\$14,160	\$21,240
Visual and Performing Arts	\$27,922	\$16,284	\$24,426

¹ Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2012 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample File.

Starting salary data is based on 15th percentile salary information (inflation-adjusted to 2012 dollars) for U.S. civilians with a highest academic degree of a bachelor's degree, age 18 – 64 (inclusive), who work full-time and full-year. Salaries are adjusted based on the 2013 state cost of living index for New Jersey as calculated by The Council for Community and Economic Research.

² Assumes an average interest rate of 6.65% and an average loan term of 10 years.

Biology and Life Science	Annual Starting Salary	Maximum Student Loan Range	
		8%	12%
Biochemical Sciences	\$32,778	\$19,116	\$28,674
Biology	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Botany	\$41,276	\$24,072	\$36,108
Cognitive Science and Biopsychology	\$29,136	\$16,992	\$25,488
Ecology	\$32,778	\$19,116	\$28,674
Environmental Science	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Genetics	\$26,708	\$15,576	\$23,364
Microbiology	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Miscellaneous Biology	\$31,564	\$18,408	\$27,612
Molecular Biology	\$27,922	\$16,284	\$24,426
Neuroscience	\$29,136	\$16,992	\$25,488
Pharmacology	\$18,210	\$10,620	\$15,930
Physiology	\$30,350	\$17,700	\$26,550
Zoology	\$33,992	\$19,824	\$29,736

Business	Annual Starting Salary	Maximum Student Loan Range	
		8%	12%
Accounting	\$42,490	\$24,780	\$37,170
Actuarial Science	\$52,202	\$30,444	\$45,666
Business Economics	\$41,276	\$24,072	\$36,108
Business Management and Administration	\$38,848	\$22,656	\$33,984
Finance	\$43,704	\$25,488	\$38,232
General Business	\$37,634	\$21,948	\$32,922
Hospitality Management	\$31,564	\$18,408	\$27,612
Human Resources and Personnel Management	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
International Business	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Management Information Systems and Statistics	\$48,560	\$28,320	\$42,480
Marketing and Marketing Research	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Miscellaneous Business and Medical Administration	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Operations Logistics and E-Commerce	\$38,848	\$22,656	\$33,984

Communications and Journalism	Annual Starting Salary	Maximum Student Loan Range	
		8%	12%
Advertising and Public Relations	\$33,992	\$19,824	\$29,736
Communications	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Journalism	\$35,206	\$20,532	\$30,798
Mass Media	\$31,564	\$18,408	\$27,612

Computers and Mathematics	Annual Starting Salary	Maximum Student Loan Range	
		8%	12%
Applied Mathematics	\$46,132	\$26,904	\$40,356
Communication Technologies	\$31,564	\$18,408	\$27,612
Computer Administration, Management and Security	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Computer and Information Systems	\$48,560	\$28,320	\$42,480
Computer Engineering	\$60,700	\$35,400	\$53,100
Computer Networking and Telecommunications	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Computer Programming and Data Processing	\$33,992	\$19,824	\$29,736
Computer Science	\$50,988	\$29,736	\$44,604
Information Sciences	\$48,560	\$28,320	\$42,480
Mathematics	\$41,276	\$24,072	\$36,108
Mathematics and Computer Science	\$80,124	\$46,728	\$70,092

Education	Annual Starting Salary	Maximum Student Loan Range	
		8%	12%
Art and Music Education	\$31,564	\$18,408	\$27,612
Early Childhood Education	\$24,280	\$14,160	\$21,240
Educational Administration and Supervision	\$52,202	\$30,444	\$45,666
Elementary Education	\$30,350	\$17,700	\$26,550
General Education	\$32,778	\$19,116	\$28,674
Language and Drama Education	\$30,350	\$17,700	\$26,550
Library Science	\$33,992	\$19,824	\$29,736
Mathematics Teacher Education	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Miscellaneous Education	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Physical and Health Education Teaching	\$33,992	\$19,824	\$29,736
School Student Counseling	\$18,210	\$10,620	\$15,930
Science and Computer Teacher Education	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Secondary Teacher Education	\$33,992	\$19,824	\$29,736
Social Science or History Teacher Education	\$30,350	\$17,700	\$26,550
Special Needs Education	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Teacher Education: Multiple Levels	\$30,350	\$17,700	\$26,550

Engineering	Annual Starting Salary	Maximum Student Loan Range	
		8%	12%
Aerospace Engineering	\$61,914	\$36,108	\$54,162
Architectural Engineering	\$48,560	\$28,320	\$42,480
Architecture	\$42,490	\$24,780	\$37,170
Biological Engineering	\$41,276	\$24,072	\$36,108
Biomedical Engineering	\$38,848	\$22,656	\$33,984
Chemical Engineering	\$54,630	\$31,860	\$47,790
Civil Engineering	\$54,630	\$31,860	\$47,790
Electrical Engineering	\$61,914	\$36,108	\$54,162
Electrical Engineering Technology	\$48,560	\$28,320	\$42,480
Engineering and Industrial Management	\$48,560	\$28,320	\$42,480
Engineering Mechanics, Physics and Science	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Engineering Technologies	\$37,634	\$21,948	\$32,922
Environmental Engineering	\$46,132	\$26,904	\$40,356
General Engineering	\$46,132	\$26,904	\$40,356
Geological and Geophysical Engineering	\$64,342	\$37,524	\$56,286
Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering	\$48,560	\$28,320	\$42,480
Industrial Production Technologies	\$48,560	\$28,320	\$42,480
Materials Engineering and Materials Science	\$61,914	\$36,108	\$54,162
Mechanical Engineering	\$60,700	\$35,400	\$53,100
Mechanical Engineering Related Technologies	\$40,062	\$23,364	\$35,046
Metallurgical Engineering	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Mining and Mineral Engineering	\$29,136	\$16,992	\$25,488
Miscellaneous Engineering	\$44,918	\$26,196	\$39,294
Miscellaneous Engineering Technologies	\$42,490	\$24,780	\$37,170
Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering	\$61,914	\$36,108	\$54,162
Nuclear Engineering	\$42,490	\$24,780	\$37,170
Petroleum Engineering	\$61,914	\$36,108	\$54,162

Health	Annual Starting Salary	Maximum Student Loan Range	
		8%	12%
Communication Disorders Sciences and Services	\$29,136	\$16,992	\$25,488
Community and Public Health	\$32,778	\$19,116	\$28,674
General Medical and Health Services	\$33,992	\$19,824	\$29,736
Health and Medical Administrative Services	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Health and Medical Preparatory Programs	\$35,206	\$20,532	\$30,798
Medical Assisting Services	\$37,634	\$21,948	\$32,922
Medical Technologies Technicians	\$47,346	\$27,612	\$41,418
Miscellaneous Health Medical Professions	\$29,136	\$16,992	\$25,488
Nursing	\$48,560	\$28,320	\$42,480
Nutrition Sciences	\$35,206	\$20,532	\$30,798
Pharmacy, Pharmaceutical Sciences and Administration	\$58,272	\$33,984	\$50,976
Treatment Therapy Professions	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860

Humanities and Liberal Arts	Annual Starting Salary	Maximum Student Loan Range	
		8%	12%
Anthropology and Archeology	\$29,136	\$16,992	\$25,488
Area Ethnic and Civilization Studies	\$30,350	\$17,700	\$26,550
Art History and Criticism	\$30,350	\$17,700	\$26,550
Composition and Speech	\$27,922	\$16,284	\$24,426
English Language and Literature	\$31,564	\$18,408	\$27,612
Foreign Language Studies	\$32,778	\$19,116	\$28,674
History	\$33,992	\$19,824	\$29,736
Humanities	\$24,280	\$14,160	\$21,240
Intercultural and International Studies	\$29,136	\$16,992	\$25,488
Liberal Arts	\$33,992	\$19,824	\$29,736
Linguistics and Comparative Language and Literature	\$29,136	\$16,992	\$25,488
Multi- and Interdisciplinary Studies	\$32,778	\$19,116	\$28,674
Other Foreign Languages	\$31,564	\$18,408	\$27,612
Philosophy and Religious Studies	\$30,350	\$17,700	\$26,550
Physical Fitness, Parks, Recreation and Leisure	\$30,350	\$17,700	\$26,550
Theology and Religious Vocations	\$27,922	\$16,284	\$24,426
United States History	\$38,848	\$22,656	\$33,984

Industrial Arts and Consumer Services	Annual Starting Salary	Maximum Student Loan Range	
		8%	12%
Construction Services	\$43,704	\$25,488	\$38,232
Cosmetology Services and Culinary Arts	\$24,280	\$14,160	\$21,240
Electrical and Mechanic Repairs and Technologies	\$24,280	\$14,160	\$21,240
Family and Consumer Sciences	\$29,136	\$16,992	\$25,488
Military Technologies	\$31,564	\$18,408	\$27,612
Transportation Sciences and Technologies	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860

Law and Public Policy	Annual Starting Salary	Maximum Student Loan Range	
		8%	12%
Court Reporting	\$15,782	\$9,204	\$13,806
Criminal Justice and Fire Protection	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Pre-Law and Legal Studies	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Public Administration	\$38,848	\$22,656	\$33,984
Public Policy	\$42,490	\$24,780	\$37,170

Physical Sciences	Annual Starting Salary	Maximum Student Loan Range	
		8%	12%
Astronomy and Astrophysics	\$37,634	\$21,948	\$32,922
Atmospheric Sciences and Meteorology	\$31,564	\$18,408	\$27,612
Chemistry	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Geology and Earth Science	\$40,062	\$23,364	\$35,046
Geosciences	\$26,708	\$15,576	\$23,364
Materials Science	\$46,132	\$26,904	\$40,356
Multi-Disciplinary or General Science	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Nuclear, Industrial Radiology and Biological Technologies	\$37,634	\$21,948	\$32,922
Oceanography	\$42,490	\$24,780	\$37,170
Physical Sciences	\$30,350	\$17,700	\$26,550
Physics	\$38,848	\$22,656	\$33,984

Psychology and Social Work	Annual Starting Salary	Maximum Student Loan Range	
		8%	12%
Clinical Psychology	\$30,350	\$17,700	\$26,550
Counseling Psychology	\$25,494	\$14,868	\$22,302
Educational Psychology	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Human Services and Community Organization	\$30,350	\$17,700	\$26,550
Industrial and Organizational Psychology	\$40,062	\$23,364	\$35,046
Miscellaneous Psychology	\$29,136	\$16,992	\$25,488
Psychology	\$31,564	\$18,408	\$27,612
Social Psychology	\$33,992	\$19,824	\$29,736
Social Work	\$31,564	\$18,408	\$27,612

Social Sciences	Annual Starting Salary	Maximum Student Loan Range	
		8%	12%
Criminology	\$33,992	\$19,824	\$29,736
Economics	\$42,490	\$24,780	\$37,170
General Social Sciences	\$36,420	\$21,240	\$31,860
Geography	\$33,992	\$19,824	\$29,736
Interdisciplinary Social Sciences	\$33,992	\$19,824	\$29,736
International Relations	\$32,778	\$19,116	\$28,674
Miscellaneous Social Sciences	\$35,206	\$20,532	\$30,798
Political Science and Government	\$37,634	\$21,948	\$32,922
Sociology	\$32,778	\$19,116	\$28,674
Statistics and Decision Science	\$43,704	\$25,488	\$38,232