

USNews

Money

On Careers

## 10 Career Facts You'll Learn After College

By [LINDSAY OLSON](#)

September 13, 2012



[Lindsay Olson](#)

Our career paths seem so cut and dry when we're children. When asked what we want to be when we grow up, our responses are simple: teacher, firefighter, doctor. But as we grow up and head to college, we're exposed to all sorts of other [career options](#) in fields we never have had exposure to in a direct way. While we work to earn degrees in fields we're interested in pursuing, we're still left a bit unprepared for the corporate world upon graduation.

Here are 10 facts your college degree didn't prepare you for when graduating:

- 1. You're not limited to jobs in the field you got your degree in.** If you have a degree in journalism, you might assume that means your only option is becoming a journalist. But armed with great communications skills, you could also qualify for jobs in PR, marketing, or [business administration](#). It's all how you play your cards and where you get your experience.
- 2. Your degree isn't always that important to employers.** Despite what you'd like to believe, many employers won't care where you went to school, or even what you earned your degree in. They'll focus instead on your skills: whether or not you seem trainable enough for the job you've applied for. They'll also look at experience. You'll have the hardest time in regards to experience just out of college, as you won't yet have much detail on your resume. Focus on getting internships and volunteer positions to round out the experience employers will be looking for.
- 3. Some employers won't even require you to have a degree.** This can be an eye-opener to anyone who's spent four-plus years earning a degree, but again, employers look for experience and trainability. And while having a college degree does display your ability to be taught, it's not the only path to a professional career.

4. **There are jobs you've never even heard of in your field.** Like many college grads, you probably received a brochure listing all the amazing careers you could consider in your field. But there are often many more beyond that list. If you have a [degree](#) in English, you've likely already considered the obvious option of teaching or writing, but publishing, proofreading, speech-writing, or becoming a paralegal might not have crossed your mind.

5. **Grades don't matter.** It is highly unlikely an employer will ask for your transcript, at least not to check out your grades. That's not to dissuade current college students from trying their hardest, but the fact is: employers don't care about grades.

6. **College is about networking.** Make the most out of your alumni network and see what opportunities there are for you professionally. [Speak to professors](#) in your department about what they'd recommend for you career-wise.

7. **Some degrees pay better than others.** And liberal arts degrees aren't at the top of the list. Biomedical engineering, math, and science, however, are. Something to consider when planning the massive amounts of money you'll make ... with your philosophy degree.

8. **College does not prepare you for a job.** Nothing but job experience can do that. And, of course, you need job experience to get a job. It's a vicious cycle to which you've got to find your own solution.

9. **Employers don't want to train you to do a job.** That's why they're more likely to hire people not fresh out of college. Do yourself a favor and take on [an internship](#) or two during college so that you've already gone through the experience of being in a work environment and having some experiences to help guide you. This will make you more hireable after graduation.

10. **It's okay to change your mind.** Many graduates start working in their field of choice only to find out it wasn't what they expected when they were cracking the books on the subject. It's okay (see no. 1). You don't necessarily need to start over and get another degree; just open your mind to other career options your degree might make you eligible for in the future.

***Lindsay Olson** is a founding partner and public relations recruiter with [Paradigm Staffing](#) and [Hoojobs.com](#), a niche job board for public relations, communications, and social media jobs. She blogs at [LindsayOlson.com](#), where she discusses recruiting and job search issues.*