

# Job market for grads ticks slightly upward

May 13 2013, by Jonathan Morales

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Students graduating during May's Commencement ceremony will be greeted with some good news: employers plan to hire slightly more of them.

Companies plan to hire two percent more new college graduates this year than they did in 2012, according to the annual job outlook report provided by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). That number is down, however, from the 10 percent increase seen in 2012, the report added, and from the 12 percent increase the NACE predicted in the fall.

The news also comes with a warning, says SF State Professor of Management John Sullivan.

"Unfortunately, with the high local [unemployment rate](#), recent grads must still compete head-to-head with grads that already have significant work experience," he said. [Students](#) without experience should obtain internships, even online, project-based "virtual internships," to beef up their resume, he said, as 40 percent of interns end up transitioning to a permanent job.

An on-campus resource for students is the Student Involvement and Career Center, which provides a variety of services including career counseling, resume writing tips, career fairs and job and internship listings.

"These services are available to current students and remain available for

six months following graduation," said Sarah Bauer, director of the Student Involvement and Career Center. Alumni Association members also have access to some Student Involvement and Career Center services, she added.

The most in-demand majors, according to the NACE report, are business, engineering, computer science, finance and information sciences. For students not from those sought-after fields, Sullivan suggests compiling an electronic portfolio of their work to post online, or create "how-to" videos on YouTube that cover popular, functional topics.

"Smart students complete professional projects, solve problems, post pictures of their designs and then thoughtfully place these work samples on the Internet and on social media where they can be easily seen by professionals," Sullivan said. "Because many firms now search social media and Internet sites for powerful profiles, work samples or resumes, it is essential that students build effective profiles and make themselves and their work highly visible."

Technology is becoming a larger and larger part of the job search process. Around 60 percent of companies surveyed for the report said they plan to increase their use of technology to recruit, and the same amount said they plan on using social media like Facebook and LinkedIn.

"Online networking works both ways," said Associate Professor of Psychology Chris Wright, who has studied [unorthodox job interview questions](#) and [pre-employment tests](#). "Job seekers can find out more information about a company than ever before, and that works to their advantage. But companies can also find out more information about job seekers than they've ever been able to. Establishing an online footprint through sites like LinkedIn is critical, as is being cautious on other [social](#)

[media](#) sites like Facebook and Twitter."

When applying for a job online, Wright added, job seekers should make sure they include in their resume key words from the job description, since many companies automate their initial screening and reject applications that do not contain the desired terms.

But while much of the job search process has gone digital, Sullivan cautions students not to discount the personal. Students should utilize their network to build relationships with employees at their targeted companies, attend meetings of local professional organizations and acquire mentors who can offer advice and connect them with potential employers.

"An approach that is often overlooked by students is getting hired through an employee referral," Sullivan said. "Referrals are the largest source of all hires, with nearly 30 percent of all corporate hires coming through employee referral programs."

Provided by San Francisco State University

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