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Pay Gap Between Men and Women Begins Immediately After Graduation, Study Says

By [PAULA WASLEY](#)

The salary gap between men and women emerges immediately after college and continues to widen throughout their careers, says a report released on Friday by the American Association of University Women Educational Foundation.

The report, based on new research, says that women now make up the majority of college students. And women's GPA's are on average higher than men's across all majors, including those in mathematics and the sciences. But women's salaries still lag behind men's, the report says, despite the significant gains that women have made in higher education over the last three decades.

One year after graduation, women earn 80 percent of what their male counterparts earn, the report says. Ten years after graduation, the disparity is even greater, with women earning 69 percent of what men earn. But women are also more likely than men to complete some form of graduate education within the first 10 years out of college.

The research also shows that women who attended highly selective colleges earn less than men from either highly or moderately selective colleges, and about the same as men from minimally selective colleges.

The report suggests that some of the inequities originate with the choice of college major. Female students tend to be concentrated in majors associated with lower-paying fields, such as education, health, and psychology, while men tend to dominate the higher-paying fields of engineering, mathematics, and physical sciences. But wage gaps occur even within majors that attract similar numbers of men and women. Within the mixed-gender major of biological sciences, for example, women earn only 75 percent as much as men do.

Disparities may also stem from differences in early career choices. The study found that women are more likely than men to work in the nonprofit and local-government sectors, where wages are typically lower than in the for-profit and federal-government sectors that male graduates gravitate to.

But the report says that, even when comparisons are controlled for factors such as hours, occupation, and parenthood, women still earn less than men.

"Too often, both women and men dismiss the pay gap as simply a matter of different choices, but even women who make the same occupational choices that men make will not typically end up with the same earnings," says the report.

The report, "Behind the Pay Gap," will be available today on the association's [Web site](#).

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