

New-age Skills Giving Engg Grads an Extra Edge

Graduates with AI, machine learning or IoT skills getting hired by cos more effectively, being offered higher salaries

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New Delhi: 'Extra' is now the new byword in hiring of engineering freshers as campus recruiters vie for candidates who have that little extra topping on their plain vanilla B.Tech degree.

This topping could be a skill in emerging technologies like AI, ML or IoT, or an apprenticeship or internship at some firm.

This is being reflected even in pay packets, which have remained stagnant for plain B.Tech graduates in the last few years but have risen by 10% over the last year for those who have acquired that something extra, said staffing and recruitment services firm TeamLease.

"Those who have proactively upskilled in emerging technologies or pursued apprenticeships are not only getting absorbed into organisations more effectively but also commanding higher pay," Krishna Vij, business head-IT staffing at TeamLease Digital, told ET.

While the average salary for fresher engineers is ₹3.8-4.5 lakh

per annum, it is in the range of ₹7-10 lakh per annum for B.Tech graduates with new emerging technology skills.

Campuses are also resonating with this trend.

"In the prevailing scenario, the IT, manufacturing and consultancy sectors are looking for knowledgeable and well-trained B.Tech and M.Tech technocrats," said Harish Kumar, head-mechanical and aerospace engineering at National Institute of Technology, Delhi.

These are candidates who have either interned for 6-12 months on a full-time basis or have undergone specialised training or completed real-time projects in data sciences, AI/ML, additive manufacturing, CAD/CAM, business analytics or very-large-scale integration (VLSI) etc. Such candidates are being offered 75% to 150% more on average in comparison to the technocrats without such exposure, said Kumar.

At Amity University, demand for students with exposure to skills like AWS, ServiceNow, cybersecurity and Sales Force is quite high this

Hiring Spree

Graduates with these extra qualifications have seen a **10%** salary hike, while pay for plain B.Tech remains stagnant

Avg salary for regular B.Tech is **₹3.8-4.5 LPA**, while those with new tech skills earn **₹7-10 LPA**



IT, mfg, and consultancy sectors highly value graduates with practical experience or specialised training in areas like data science, cybersecurity, and business analytics

IT cos have increased apprenticeship hiring 10X in 2024 compared to 2023



Over the last decade, the avg salary for fresher engineers has seen only a slight increase

year: "Students from B.Tech (Cybersecurity) are getting CTC of over ₹15 lakh, whereas general B.Tech average salary is ₹6 to 6.5 lakh per annum," said its technical placement head Anjani Bhatnagar.

So goes for SRM Institute of Science and Technology. Its Career Centre director N Venkata Sastry told ET that global capability centres are recruiting B.Tech students in high

numbers this year, especially those who have specialisation in new technologies. "The salaries are also relatively higher for these students and hence these skills are a differentiator for employability," he said.

Data findings from staffing and recruitment services firms like Xpheno and Qness, shared with ET, also support this trend.

"The increase in apprenticeship

hiring is largely driven by the industry's focus on reducing workforce costs, creating a skilled talent pool, and fostering staff loyalty and retention," said Kapil Joshi, deputy CEO at Qness IT Staffing. There has been a 10X increase in hiring through the apprenticeship route by IT companies in the eight months to August 2024 vs the same period in 2023, according to a Qness analysis.

In the last 10 years, average salary for fresher engineers has slightly gone up from ₹3-3.4 lakh per annum in 2013-14 to ₹3.8-4.5 lakh per annum in 2023-24, according to a Xpheno study shared with ET.

"Average fresher salaries in the Indian IT sector remain in the sub-₹5 lakh per annum range. Offers ranging from ₹3.8 to 4.5 lakh per annum are the most common band, while offers in sub-₹3.5 lakh per annum are not a rarity," said Prasadh M S, head of workforce research at Xpheno.