

# Class of '18: STEM majors in demand, soft skills too

With a tight labor market and skills shortages squeezing many industries, employers are sure to embrace the nearly 3 million college students who will graduate this May. The issue will be whether they have the skills required for the jobs available, according to the annual College Grad Outlook by outplacement coaching firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas.

Employers plan to hire 4% more college graduates than they did last year, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers' Job Outlook 2018 report. The survey also found 43.6% of companies plan to increase hiring, up from 36% who planned to increase hiring among college graduates in 2017.

Meanwhile, a study from Michigan State University found that employers plan to increase hiring 17 percent over last year in all degree levels. According to a study by Deloitte, 3.5 million jobs are expected to be created in manufacturing, but only 1.5 million will be filled due to skills shortages. These industries are in need of engineers, MBAs, and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) majors.

The Michigan State study found a lack of soft skills was a serious concern for hiring companies. In-demand soft skills include enthusiasm, drive, creativity, critical thinking ability, initiative and oral and written communication skills. To prove themselves as sustainable producers, candidates must show both business and emotional intelligence.