

# Punishing Women for Being Smart

**IHE** [insidehighered.com/news/2018/03/21/study-finds-female-college-graduates-newly-job-market-are-punished-having-good](https://insidehighered.com/news/2018/03/21/study-finds-female-college-graduates-newly-job-market-are-punished-having-good)



Study hard, earn good grades and career success will follow.

Actually, a new study finds that this common advice given to college students isn't true.

The grades of new college graduates who are men don't appear to matter much in their job searches, according to a new study. And female graduates may be punished for high levels of academic achievement. The study comes at a time of growing evidence that female students are outperforming their male counterparts academically in college (after also having done so in high school).

The new research will appear in the April issue of *The American Sociological Review*.

Natasha Quadlin, author of the study and assistant professor of sociology at Ohio State University, did an "audit study," submitting 2,106 applications for various jobs appropriate for new graduates. She varied the job applicants' grades, gender and undergraduate major. For men, grade point average didn't seem to matter. The key finding was that women applying for jobs benefited from moderate academic achievement but not high levels of achievement.

Of the applications she submitted from equally high-achieving male and female personas, men received calls for further discussion twice as often as did women with equal grades. In science and technology fields, the ratio favored men by three to one.

Quadlin said that the finding on STEM jobs was particularly of concern in light of the great efforts at many colleges and universities to recruit more women into studying the sciences.

In a related study also described in the article, Quadlin surveyed those who make hiring decisions on the qualities on which they focused with various applicants. She found that employers value competence and commitment in considering male applicants. But when evaluating female applicants, they focus on "perceived likeability." This finding, combined with stereotypes many men have about smart women, may explain the findings about high-achieving female graduates not receiving the same job market attention as those of moderate achievement.