Salaries in astronomical telescopes and instrumentation

Scientists and engineers who develop ground and space-based telescopes, instrumentation, and supporting technology.

Presented by SPIE.


How happy are astronomical instrumentation scientists and engineers, and how do their salaries break down across organizations, degrees, and countries?

How satisfied are people working in astronomical telescopes and instrumentation?

- 96% Find their work meaningful
- 96% Enjoy their work
- 84% Would recommend their field to a friend or their child
- 66% Say they have an excellent work/life balance
- 65% Are happy with the amount they are paid

“What engineering degrees are most popular in astronomical telescopes and instrumentation?

- 26% Electrical
- 20% Mechanical
- 17% Optical
- 12% Aerospace or Aeronautical
- 11% Computer Science or Engineering

What do countries compare?

- United States: $125,068
- Germany: $109,295
- Canada: $98,214
- Netherlands: $97,151
- Australia: $81,866
- Chile: $74,317
- United Kingdom: $61,288
- France: $55,862
- Spain: $48,575
- Japan: $48,131
- Italy: $42,504
- Mexico: $20,384

Half of astronomical telescopes and instrumentation workers earn over $89,432 per year, with the top 25% earning over $132,000.

I love my current job in optics and can’t wait to pursue a career in it!”

“Astronomy is an international environment, and we do work together.”

Where do astronomical instrumentation scientists and engineers work?

- 55% (39,208) Academic Institutions
- 31% ($45,362) Government/Military
- 14% ($98,575) For-profit companies

Median salaries

Median salaries by country