



Career Readiness

Results from the 2019 Student Life Survey

Center for the Study of Student Life

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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF STUDENT LIFE

INTRODUCTION

The central purpose of this research report is to explore the general career-related experiences of both undergraduate students and graduate/professional students at Ohio State. This report specifically focuses on how undergraduate and graduate/professional students differ on various aspects of job preparation, including engagement in career-related activities and events. Such activities included using Handshake¹, searching for or completing an internship or job opportunity, visiting a career services office or website, attending a career/internship fair or career-related event, participating in a mock interview, job shadow or informational interview, and creating a resume or having a resume reviewed. Additionally, this report examines how students hear about different career-related resources and what feedback they have from their experiences in the workforce as students. In so doing, this report aims to offer a more complete image of how students navigate career development and what steps can be taken to enhance students' experience in this area.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Out of 11 job-related activities, the most frequently completed activity was creating a resume. Over **90%** of both undergraduate and graduate/professional students have created a resume.
- Open-ended feedback from respondents who completed internships and career-related opportunities suggested that students gained an assortment of skills. Below are percentages of both undergraduate and graduate/professional students who stated they gained each of the skills listed:
 - Technical skills (**38.4%**)
 - Solidifying future career plans (**24.6%**)
 - Industry and networking experience (**17.0%**)
 - Soft skills (**16.1%**)

METHODS

The Student Life Survey is administered annually by the Center for the Study of Student Life to examine trends in student engagement, sense of belonging and satisfaction with the college experience, as well as to improve institutional practices and to address current issues affecting students at Ohio State. This year, the Student Life Survey also included measures related to philanthropy, careers and the third-year experience.

The 2019 Student Life Survey was administered to random samples of 4,000 undergraduate students and 1,000 graduate and professional students on the Columbus campus during spring semester. A total of 906 students responded to the survey, for an overall response rate of 18.1%. The response rate was 18.7% among undergraduate students and 15.9% among graduate/professional students. Although 747 undergraduates responded to the survey, the final analytic sample for this report is 727 undergraduate students due to excessive missing data for some cases. It was not necessary to remove any cases in the graduate/professional data (there were 159 total graduate/professional student responses). See Appendix A for a summary of respondents' demographic and academic characteristics.

¹Handshake is Ohio State's job position-posting system where students can search for various position opening and employers can post positions for which they are seeking applications.

This report focuses on the 886 undergraduate and graduate/professional students who took the survey. The term 'Academic Career' refers to the participant's standing as either an undergraduate or a graduate/professional student. In the case of participation in certain activities and access to resources, undergraduate students were further differentiated by year of study (i.e., first-year, second-year, third-year and fourth-year and beyond).

Analyses in this report include frequencies and descriptive analytics for demographic information, along with chi-square analyses as a way of identifying statistically significant differences between undergraduate and graduate/professional students. For open-ended questions, responses were categorized based on common themes and concepts.

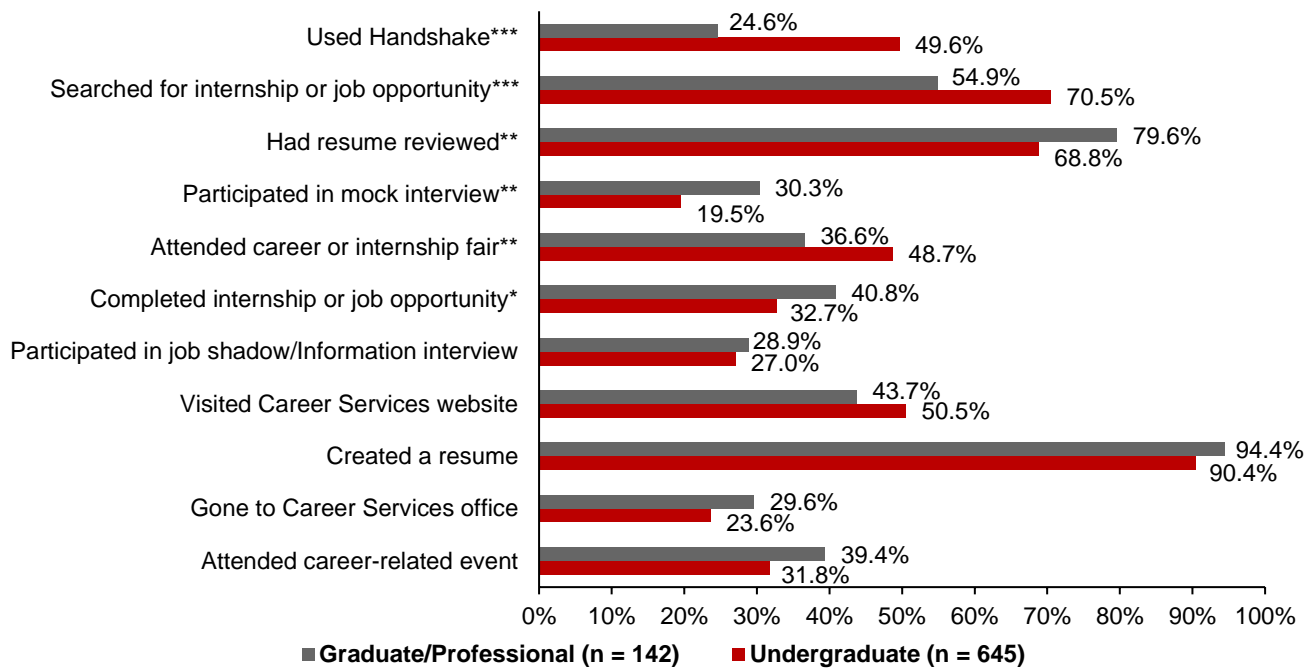
FINDINGS

JOB-RELATED ACTIVITIES

Both undergraduate and graduate/professional students were asked whether or not they had engaged in 11 job-related activities (listed below). Results indicate that **97%** of both undergraduate and graduate/professional students participated in at least one of the activities listed.

- 1) Used Handshake (the university's online career-posting board)
- 2) Searched for an internship or job opportunity
- 3) Had their resume reviewed
- 4) Participated in mock interviews
- 5) Attended career or internship fairs
- 6) Completed internships or job-related opportunities
- 7) Participated in job shadowing or informational interviews
- 8) Visited career services websites
- 9) Created resumes
- 10) Gone to career services offices
- 11) Attended career-related events

Job-Related Activities by Academic Career



Note. Graph represents percentage who selected each option within either undergraduate and graduate/professional students. Respondents could select more than one option.

Undergraduate students were more likely than graduate/professional students to use Handshake, search for internships or job opportunities and to attend a career or internship fair.

Graduate/professional students were more likely than undergraduate students to have their resumes reviewed, participate in mock interviews and complete an internship or job opportunity.

% Engaged in activity	First-Year (n = 153)	Second-Year (n = 162)	Third-Year (n = 157)	Fourth-Year & Beyond (n = 173)	Graduate/ Professional (n = 142)
Used Handshake	45.1%	45.7%	57.3%	50.3%	24.6%
Searching for internship or job opportunity	55.6%	69.8%	77.7%	78.0%	54.9%
Had resume reviewed	52.3%	66.7%	77.7%	77.5%	79.6%
Participated in mock interview	11.1%	19.1%	21.7%	25.4%	30.3%
Attended career or internship fair	35.9%	51.2%	55.4%	51.4%	36.6%
Completed internship or job opportunity	7.8%	22.2%	40.1%	57.8%	40.8%
Participated in job shadow/information interview	18.3%	21.6%	31.2%	35.8%	28.9%

Visited career services website	35.9%	49.4%	55.4%	60.1%	43.7%
Created a resume	79.1%	92.0%	93.0%	96.5%	94.4%
Gone to Career Services office	10.5%	20.4%	26.8%	35.3%	29.6%
Attended career-related event	19.6%	29.0%	35.7%	41.6%	39.4%
Other	0.0%	1.9%	1.3%	1.7%	1.4%
Other responses:					
a) Cover letter					
b) Work full-time					
c) Adjunct faculty					
d) Previous work experience					
e) Self-employed					

INTERNSHIP AND CAREER-RELATED JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Based on responses to the 11 activities, the 269 students who indicated that they participated in an **internship or job opportunity** were asked how they found out about this experience. Respondents were given six potential choices and asked to select all that applied to their situation. There were no statistically significant differences between undergraduate and graduate/professional students.

% Selected Resource	First-Year (<i>n</i> = 10)	Second-Year (<i>n</i> = 35)	Third-Year (<i>n</i> = 62)	Fourth-Year & Beyond (<i>n</i> = 99)	Graduate/ Professional (<i>n</i> = 57)
Buckeye Careers or College-specific career services	0.0%	11.4%	21.0%	16.2%	17.5%
Organization's website	0.0%	25.7%	32.3%	42.4%	22.8%
Ohio State faculty or staff member	20.0%	22.9%	24.2%	19.2%	26.3%
Personal network (e.g., friends or family)	80.0%	51.4%	40.3%	31.1%	52.6%
Other	0.0%	14.3%	14.5%	17.2%	14.0%

Other responses:

- a) Job website (e.g., Indeed, LinkedIn) (*n* = 8)
- b) Career fair (*n* = 8)
- c) A different university (*n* = 3)
- d) During undergraduate career (*n* = 3)
- e) Fraternity (*n* = 2)
- f) High school (*n* = 2)
- g) Company reached out to student
- h) Fisher Dean's Leadership Academy
- i) Required for coursework
- j) Through previous internship

Note. Table represents percentage who selected each option within either undergraduate and graduate/professional students and the *n* is the total number of responses within each academic career.

OUTCOMES OF INTERNSHIP OR CAREER-RELATED JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Those students who indicated that they participated in an internship or career-related job opportunity ($n = 269$) were also asked to expand on their experience in open-ended response. These participants answered the following question:

What did you learn or gain from participating in your internship or career-related job opportunity?

There were a total of 224 responses (graduate/professional $n = 46$ and undergraduate $n = 178$); the answers were classified into six job-related categories. These categories were: 1) Technical Skills and Experience; 2) Solidifying Future Career Interests; 3) Industry Culture and Networking; 4) Soft Skills (i.e., transferable skills that can be used in various employment contexts); 5) Other; and 6) No Suggestions or Feedback. It should be noted that some comments included more than one theme. In these cases, the more dominant theme was selected for categorization purposes. A selection of comments is provided in the following section and in Appendix B. Please note that all comments included are verbatim.

- Technical Skills and Experience (Graduate/Professional $n = 23$; Undergraduate $n = 63$)
- Solidifying Future Career Interests (Graduate/Professional $n = 14$; Undergraduate $n = 41$)
- Industry Culture and Networking (Graduate/Professional $n = 4$; Undergraduate $n = 34$)
- Soft Skills (Graduate/Professional $n = 4$; Undergraduate $n = 32$)
- Other (Undergraduate $n = 6$)
- No Suggestions or Feedback (Undergraduate $n = 3$)

Learning Outcome	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Technical Skills and Experience	86	38.4%
Solidifying Future Career Interests	55	24.6%
Industry Culture and Networking	38	17.0%
Soft Skills	36	16.1%
Other	6	2.7%
No Suggestions or Feedback	3	1.3%
Total	224	100%

Internship or Career-Related Job Opportunity Feedback

The following are excerpts from selected comments provided by participants regarding their experience with internships or career-related job opportunities. A greater selection of comments for each section may be found in Appendix B.

Technical Skills and Experience ($n = 86$)

- “I have learned special lab working skills and know how to collaborate with lab mates.” (Undergraduate)

- “I gained insight on the differences between school and workforce environments. I improved skills in program evaluation development.” (Graduate/Professional)

Solidifying Future Career Interests (*n* = 55)

- “I gained intensive experience that helped me realize more about myself and will help me secure my future career.” (Undergraduate)
- “I learned that I had a passion for working with children with disabilities and how to pursue a career working with children.” (Graduate/Professional)

Industry Culture and Networking (*n* = 38)

- “I gained skills necessary for my career, networked with professionals at both Ohio State as well as other institutes, and validation that I'm in the right field.” (Undergraduate)
- “I learned a lot about engineering project management and that it seems like companies want you to learn different things than what school taught you.” (Graduate/Professional)

Soft Skills (*n* = 36)

- “I gained a lot of interpersonal skills, and a lot of time management skills. Balancing academics with my internship was difficult but a very good experience.” (Undergraduate)
- “Knowledge, growth, leadership, presenting skills, inter-office skills.” (Graduate/Professional)

CONCLUSION

This report provides a comprehensive perspective on how students utilize career-related resources at Ohio State. Specifically, undergraduate students were more likely to search for internships or job opportunities, attend career or internship fairs and use Handshake than graduate/professional students were. However, graduate/professional students were more likely than undergraduate students to have their resumes reviewed, participate in mock interviews and complete an internship or job opportunity. The findings in this report, including feedback about internship and career experiences, may offer insight regarding what students find useful and important in a student employment experience as they prepare to enter the workforce.

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

	Undergraduate Students		Graduate/Professional Students	
	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent
Total	727	100.0%	159	100.0%
Gender				
Agender	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Genderqueer/Gender Fluid	2	0.3%	2	1.3%
Man	263	36.2%	57	35.8%
Trans Man	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Trans Woman	0	0.0%	1	0.6%
Woman	452	62.3%	97	61.0%
Preferred identity or more than one identity	2	0.3%	1	0.6%
Prefer not to disclose	6	0.8%	1	0.6%
Race/Ethnicity				
African American/Black/African	38	5.2%	4	2.5%
Asian	76	10.5%	35	22.2%
Hispanic and/or Latinx	19	2.6%	7	4.4%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Native American/American Indian	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Middle Eastern/Arab American	6	0.8%	2	1.3%
White	542	74.6%	95	60.1%
Two or more races	38	5.2%	11	7.0%
Other race	1	0.1%	2	1.3%
Prefer not to answer	7	1.0%	2	1.3%
Citizenship				
Domestic student	684	94.1%	125	78.6%
International student	43	5.9%	34	21.4%

Note. All data were self-reported by the student on the survey instrument, with the exception of citizenship status, which was collected from the Student Information System.

APPENDIX B: INTERNSHIP AND CAREER-RELATED JOB OPPORTUNITY FEEDBACK

Note. For readability, each category includes eight comment (four each for undergraduate students and graduate/professional students). The first half of comments in each topic are from undergraduate students and the second half are from graduate/professional students.

Comments: Technical Skills and Experience
a) I gained confidence in my abilities and a better understanding of what kind of career I would like to have. I also gained valuable technical skills that I could use in the future and in a "real world" setting/experience.
b) I learned many on the job skills specific to engineering on top of the overall business aspect of a job. This has helped define what's important to me in my search for a job after graduation.
c) I learned more about my field than I could possibly learn in my classes.
d) I learned what it actually means to produce software in industry, as opposed to producing software in classes.
e) Internship is a required part of my degree. My current internship has really taught me a lot and I have developed my clinical skills and am able to use what I learn in class in practice at my internship.
f) More experience in Pharmacy which will hopefully translate to getting a residency or job after school.
g) On the job training in a one of a kind environment.
h) The most important take away was that the point of college education is not learning the material, it is to learn how to learn. For the most part, the specific technical material covered in my OSU courses didn't (and still don't) transition well into the real world, however, the ability or skill to quickly learn and apply technical information has been extremely beneficial. I also learned how irrelevant all of my GECs have been. Utter waste of tuition and time.

Comments: Solidifying Future Career
a) Better understanding of what kind of hospital I want to work in after graduation.
b) Everything. The Internship is the most important part of any persons' degree. It allows you to see what you potentially could be doing and you can evaluate what you are interested in now. Also, you can strengthen your technical skills 10 fold compared to what you learn in class.
c) I learned that I had a passion for working with children with disabilities and how to pursue a career working with children.
d) I learned what I wanted to get out of a career and that there is more to it than what is on the surface.
e) A better understanding of what I want for my career.
f) Cemented my career goals and helped to expand my ideas around that career.
g) I learned that it was not a job I wanted to turn into a career in the future.
h) Honestly wasn't a good internship. I did however learn the struggles of running a startup.

Comments: Industry Culture and Networking
a) I learned about a professional setting, how to network better, and that I have found a job that I really like.
b) I learned the most about corporate structure and a little bit about what skills are valued out in the field.
c) Industry is quite different from academia.
d) Leadership skills, office etiquette, career experience etc.
e) How to navigate the professional world, sustainability/environmental issues and details I did not previously take coursework on, and how to effectively network in a higher-level corporate environment.
f) How to network and communicate with other companies along with the design and production process.
g) I gained skills necessary for my career, networked with professionals at both Ohio State as well as other institutes, and validation that I'm in the right field.
h) I learned how to innovate within a large corporation and keep good communication channels between my colleagues.

Comments: Soft Skills
a) How to mentor as well as care about the work that I do.
b) I learned a lot about what type of veterinary practice I would ideally like to work for, what type of people I would love to learn from when I graduate from veterinary school, How I hope to conduct myself as a practicing veterinarian, expanded my network, and so many other things. What I have learned is incomparable and amazing to what you can only learn in school.
c) Knowledge, growth, leadership, presenting skills, inter office skills.
d) Transferrable skills like communication.
e) Experience in the business world, presentation skills, working in teams.
f) Gained leadership skills, people skills, interviewing skills.
g) I gained a lot of interpersonal skills, and a lot of time management skills. Balancing academics with my internship was difficult but a very good experience.
h) I gained better leadership skills and better public speaking skills. I feel like I am more comfortable being in front of a group of my peers.