2021 INTERNSHIP & CO-OP SURVEY REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
ABOUT THE SURVEY

When reading this report, it is critical to consider the timing for context. The data reported here are reflective of what internship and co-op programs became in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. NACE believes it is important to provide data during the pandemic to illustrate how college internship programs were impacted and what is to come for the future of these programs and college recruiting efforts.

The 2021 Internship & Co-op Survey Report explores key aspects of employers’ internship and co-op programs, including hiring projections, conversion and retention rates, compensation data (wages and benefits), recruiting strategies, and information about program structure. This report also includes historical analyses of the data.

Data collection took place from December 9, 2020, to February 5, 2021. There were 227 NACE member respondents, representing 25.7% of eligible member respondents. The survey was also distributed to nonmember companies from which an additional 39 responses were received. Those employers that chose to be listed as survey respondents appear in the Appendix.

A few notes regarding the data presented in this report:

• For each question, overall figures are calculated based on the number of respondents answering that question.

• Survey items that yielded a particularly low response rate should be considered with caution.

• The sum of displayed breakdowns of percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding or, in cases where the sum substantially exceeds 100, because respondents were permitted to provide multiple responses.

• Within the figures, empty fields indicate that no data were collected for that item in that year.

Respondents were provided with the following definitions of internships and co-ops:

• Internships are typically one-time work or service experiences related to the student’s major or career goal. The internship plan generally involves students working in professional settings under the supervision and monitoring of practicing professionals. Internships can be paid or unpaid, and the student may or may not receive academic credit for performing the internship.

• Cooperative education programs, or co-ops, provide students with multiple periods of work in which the work is related to the student’s major or career goal. The typical program plan is for students to alternate terms of full-time classroom study with terms of full-time, discipline-related employment. Since the program participation involves multiple work terms, the typical participant will work three or four work terms, thus gaining a year or more of career-related work experience before graduation. Virtually all co-op positions are paid, and the vast majority involve some form of academic credit.
• Overall, intern hiring for 2021 is expected to fall about 0.5%, and, for co-ops, hiring is projected to fall about 3%. Given the broad effects the pandemic has had on the workforce and labor market, the decreases—and especially the slight decrease in intern hiring projections—can be taken as a sign of the strategic value of these programs to hiring organizations.

• Among employers who held an internship during the summer of 2020, approximately 72% did so virtually. Not surprisingly, those who held virtual internships reported that the quality of the networking and interactions with interns typically found in internships suffered.

• Overall, however, most reported that the quality of their cohort’s work performance did not suffer, but was consistent between in-person and virtual experiences.

• Overall, men account for the majority of interns and co-ops of responding organizations, and the majority of those taking part in such programs are white. This is inconsistent with employer priorities around an inclusive workforce.

• Conversion rates for Class of 2020 interns (66.4%) and co-ops (61.4%) were significantly higher than was the case in the past. In general, significantly higher offer rates to both groups account for the jump in conversion. Acceptance rates among interns remained relatively unchanged and actually fell a little among co-ops.

• The average hourly wage for interns is $20.76. The average hourly wage for co-ops is $20.20.

• For both interns and co-ops, planned social activities and paid holidays are the most commonly offered benefits.

• Among respondents, 56% reported offering relocation assistance to interns, 21.6% offered it to co-ops. Among those providing relocation assistance, providing a lump sum to compensate their interns/co-ops for housing was most common.

• Signing bonuses are not typically used to woo interns or co-ops: Just about 14% of employers reported that they offer them.

• On average, employers begin the recruitment process for interns eight and a half months prior to the start date and seven months prior for co-ops.

• Employers most commonly source interns from open applications.

• If an employer must decide between two equally qualified candidates for an internship/co-op position, whether the student held a leadership position is the most commonly used tie breaker.

• Interns (60%) and co-ops (70%) spend the bulk of their time on analytical/problem-solving work and performing project management duties.
APPENDIX

RESPONDING ORGANIZATIONS
A total of 267 organizations took part in the survey on which the 2021 Internship & Co-op Survey Report is based. Those who chose to be listed as respondents appear here.

Abbott Laboratories  
ABM Industries  
Activision Blizzard  
Adidas  
Aetna & CVS Health  
Ahern  
Altria Client Services LLC  
American Family Insurance  
Amherst Holdings  
Amtrak  
Ancestry  
Andersen Corporation  
ANSYS, Inc  
Appian Corporation  
ArcelorMittal USA  
Arizona Public Service  
ASML  
ATA Engineering, Inc.  
Avanade Inc.  
Avery Dennison Corporation  
Ball Aerospace  
Barry-Wehmiller Design Group  
BASF Corporation  
Becton Dickinson & Company  
Bimbo Bakeries USA  
BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina  
Bon Secours Mercy Health  
Bose Corporation  
Burlington Stores  
Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc.  
CalAmp/LoJack  
Cambridge Associates LLC  
Canadian National Railway Company  
Cargill, Inc.  
Catalent Pharma Solutions  
Chevron Corporation  
CIGNA Corporation  
CliftonLarsonAllen LLP  
CohnReznick  
Con Edison  
ConocoPhillips Company  
Consumers Credit Union  
COUNTRY Financial  
Crowe Horwath LLP  
CSL Behring  
Dell Technologies  
Dick’s Sporting Goods  
Discover Financial Services  
Dot Foods  
Draper Laboratory  
Eaton Corporation  
Echo Global Logistics  
Ecolab Inc.  
Elligo Health Research  
EOG Resources, Inc.  
Equifax  
Etegent Technologies Ltd  
Expedia Group  
Farmers Insurance Group  
Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago  
Fifth Third Bank  
Forum One Communications  
Fresenius Kabi USA  
Gannett Fleming, Inc.  
Garver  
GATX Corporation  
GE Appliances, a Haier company  
GE Transportation - a Wabtec Company
General Dynamics Electric Boat
General Electric Company
Greif
Greystar
Guidehouse
HNTB Companies
Hubbell Incorporated
Illumina, Inc.
INEOS
Infineum USA L.P.
Ingevity Corporation
Ingredion
Intuitive Surgical
ITC Holdings, Inc.
ITW
Johnson Controls, Inc.
Kearney & Company
Kellogg Company
Kiewit Corporation
Kimberly-Clark Corporation
Klein Tools, Inc.
Knoxville Utilities Board
KPMG LLP
Leggett & Platt
Leonardo DRS
Liberty Mutual Insurance Company
Lincoln Electric
Link-Belt Construction Equipment Co.
Loram Maintenance of Way
Macy’s, Inc.
Magellan Midstream Partners, L.P.
Mark Anthony Services Inc.
Mars, Incorporated
Marsh & McLennan Agency
Medtronic, Inc.
Meijer, Inc.
Merck & Co., Inc.
Merrick & Company
MicroVention-Terumo
Moffatt & Nichol
Mohawk Industries
Motorola Solutions, Inc.
MPR Associates, Inc.
MSA, The Safety Company
National Instruments
NETGEAR Inc.
Newell Brands
Nokia
North Carolina Department of Transportation
North Carolina Office of State Human Resources
Northrop Grumman Corporation
NTT DATA Services
Nucor Corporation
Oshkosh Corporation
OSIsoft, LLC
Pariveda Solutions Inc.
Parsons Corporation
Paylocity
PenFed Credit Union
PennyMac
PepsiCo
Phillips 66
Plante & Moran, PLLC
Polaris Industries, Inc.
PPL Corporation
Principal Financial Group
Protiviti Inc.
RTI International
Ryan, LLC
Schneider Electric
Seagate Technology
Selden Fox LTD
Shure Incorporated
Sierra Nevada Corporation
Sikich LLP
SkyWater Technology, Inc.
Sonoco Products Company
Southern Company
Southern Vermont AHEC
Southwest Airlines Co.
Spectrum
Speedway LLC
Sprinklr
SRS Distribution Inc.
SS&C Technologies
STAPLES Inc.
Starbucks
Steelcase Inc.
Steele Consulting Inc.
Synchrony
Tata Consultancy Services
TC Energy
Tenneco
Texas Instruments Incorporated
Textron Inc.
The Aerospace Corporation
The Heico Companies, LLC
The Kroger Company
The MITRE Corporation
The Travelers Companies, Inc.
The Vanguard Group
The Walsh Group
TIAA
T-Mobile USA, Inc.
Tokio Marine HCC
Topco Associates
Trane Technologies
Traylor Bros., Inc.
TTX Company
Tucson Unified School District
Uline
University Federal Credit Union
Verisk
Verizon
Viasat, Inc.
Walbridge
Wellington Management Company, LLP
Wells Fargo
Workday