

APRIL 2021



# 2021 INTERNSHIP & CO-OP SURVEY REPORT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND EMPLOYERS  
[www.naceweb.org](http://www.naceweb.org)

# 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.

## 2021 GUIDE TO COMPENSATION FOR INTERNS & CO-OPS

The companion to the *2021 Internship & Co-op Survey Report* features detailed information about wages and benefits for interns and co-ops, provided by major, degree, year of study, company size, industry, and region. For more information, see the NACE Store at [www.naceweb.org/store.aspx](http://www.naceweb.org/store.aspx).

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# KEY BENCHMARKS AND INSIGHTS

- 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	Catalent Pharma Solutions
ABM Industries	Chevron Corporation
Activision Blizzard	CIGNA Corporation
Adidas	CliftonLarsonAllen LLP
Aetna & CVS Health	CohnReznick
Ahern	Con Edison
Altria Client Services LLC	ConocoPhillips Company
American Family Insurance	Consumers Credit Union
Amherst Holdings	COUNTRY Financial
Amtrak	Crowe Horwath LLP
Ancestry	CSL Behring
Andersen Corporation	Dell Technologies
ANSYS, Inc	Dick's Sporting Goods
Appian Corporation	Discover Financial Services
ArcelorMittal USA	Dot Foods
Arizona Public Service	Draper Laboratory
ASML	Eaton Corporation
ATA Engineering, Inc.	Echo Global Logistics
Avanade Inc.	Ecolab Inc.
Avery Dennison Corporation	Elligo Health Research
Ball Aerospace	EOG Resources, Inc.
Barry-Wehmiller Design Group	Equifax
BASF Corporation	Etegent Technologies Ltd
Becton Dickinson & Company	Expedia Group
Bimbo Bakeries USA	Farmers Insurance Group
BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina	Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago
Bon Secours Mercy Health	Fifth Third Bank
Bose Corporation	Forum One Communications
Burlington Stores	Fresenius Kabi USA
Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. Inc.	Gannett Fleming, Inc.
CalAmp/LoJack	Garver
Cambridge Associates LLC	GATX Corporation
Canadian National Railway Company	GE Appliances, a Haier company
Cargill, Inc.	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



