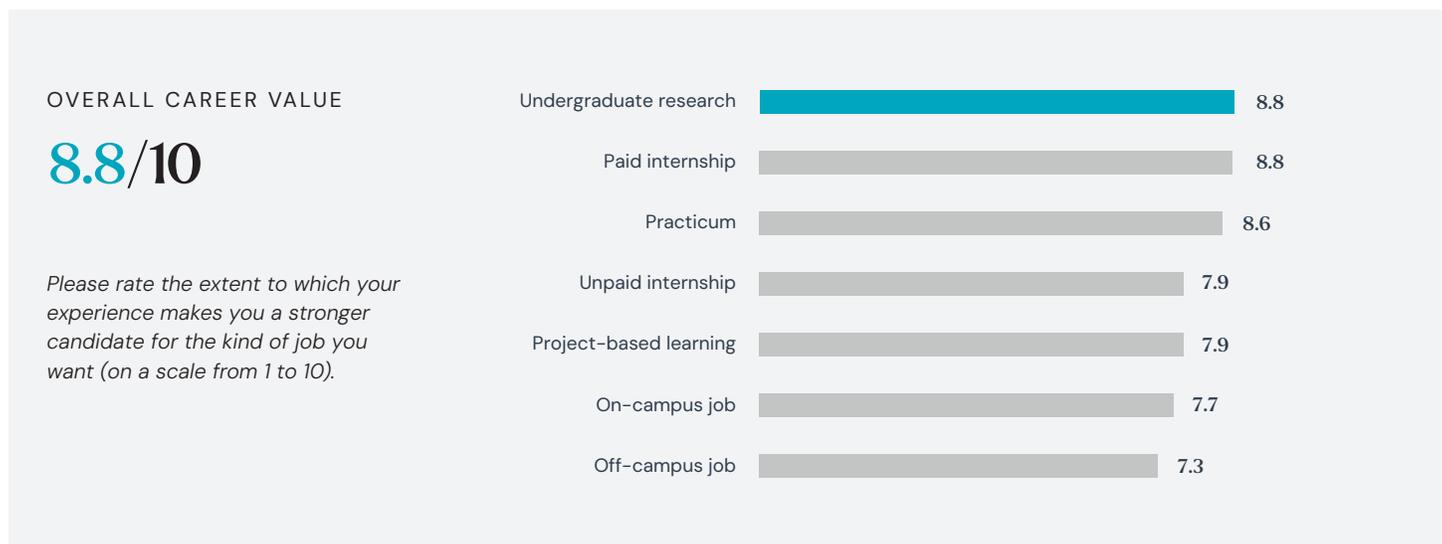


# The Career Value of Work-Based Learning

## A Closer Look: Undergraduate Research

Undergraduate research provides students with the opportunity to participate in ongoing scholarly investigations alongside faculty mentors, contributing to new knowledge in a specific field.

The National Survey of Work-Based Learning is a nationally representative sample of seniors enrolled at public four-year universities and colleges. Students responded to questions about seven different models that blend academic learning and authentic or work-based experiences.



### TOP MAJORS

Students majoring in these fields were the most likely to report having an undergraduate research experience:

- Biology
- Psychology
- Engineering

### DURATION

Research experiences were almost a year long, on average.

For how many weeks did/will you participate in the experience?



Most students spent 10 or fewer hours a week in their research activities.

In a typical week, how many hours did/will you participate in the experience?



PAY

**40% of students received pay for at least one of their research experiences.**

TECHNICAL SKILLS

**Two-thirds of students said they experienced meaningful development of their technical skills.**

*Please rate the following aspect of your experience using the scale below: This experience helped me to develop technical skills relevant to my career goals.*



SOCIAL CAPITAL

**Six in 10 students reported they substantially expanded their professional networks.**

*To what extent do you think your experience expanded your professional network?*



**Half of students met people they felt would help their career opportunities.**

*How helpful do you think people you met in your experience will be for career opportunities?*



ACADEMIC CREDIT

**58% of students received academic credit for at least one of their research experiences.**

BROAD SKILLS

**Two-thirds of students said they experienced meaningful development of skills broadly relevant to career opportunities.**

*Please rate the following aspect of your experience using the scale below: This experience helped me to develop broad skills relevant to a range of different careers.*



MENTORSHIP

**Three-quarters of students reported high levels of career-focused mentorship.**

*To what extent did your supervisor provide mentorship to support your career goals?*



Figures in this document are in reference to the single work-based learning experience students selected as their most valuable; if they only had one experience, these figures are in reference to that experience. The majors section is an exception: these are the most common work-based learning experiences pursued within each major.

Percentages referenced in this document may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

The National Survey of Work-Based Learning is a 15-minute online survey fielded to a sample of seniors enrolled at public four-year universities and colleges from October to December 2024 (n=2,131). The survey is nationally representative by race/ethnicity, gender, and field of study, and was developed in partnership between Strada Education Foundation and the Center for College Workforce Transitions (CCWT) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.