

# The Career Value of Work-Based Learning

## A Closer Look: Project-Based Learning Activity

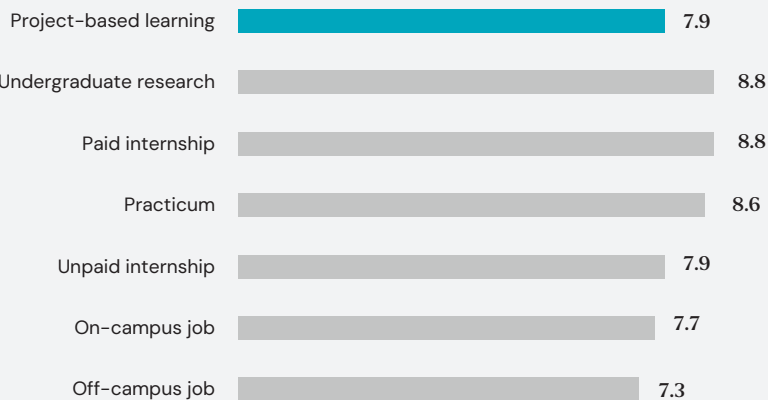
Project-based learning involves participating in real industry projects that help students apply classroom knowledge and help employers fulfill short-term needs.

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.

### OVERALL CAREER VALUE

**7.9/10**

*Please rate the extent to which your experience makes you a stronger candidate for the kind of job you want (on a scale from 1 to 10).*



### TOP MAJORS

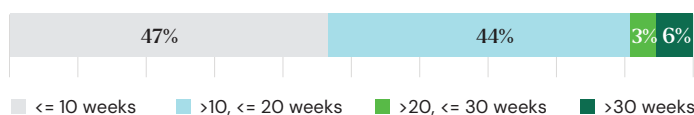
Students majoring in these fields were the most likely to report having a project-based learning activity:

- Computer science
- Engineering
- Liberal arts and social sciences

### DURATION

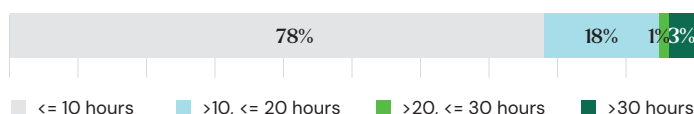
Almost half of project-based learning experiences were completed in fewer than 10 weeks.

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



Over three-quarters of students spent 10 or fewer hours a week in their project-based learning activities.

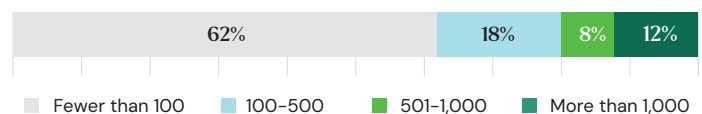
*In a typical week, how many hours did/will you participate in the experience?*



### EMPLOYER CHARACTERISTICS

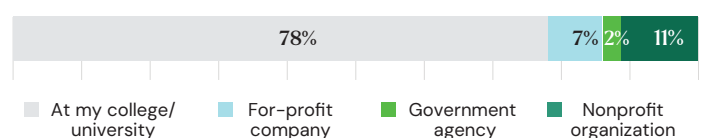
**Size:** Students identified small employers as the most likely connection with their project-based learning experience.

*About how many employees work at the organization where you had your experience?*



**Organization type:** Most students participated in project-based learning activities at their colleges or universities.

*At what type of organization was the experience?*



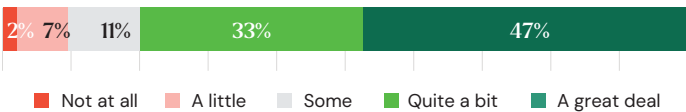
PAY

3% of students reported they were paid for at least one of their project-based learning activities.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Eight in 10 students said they experienced meaningful development of their technical skills.

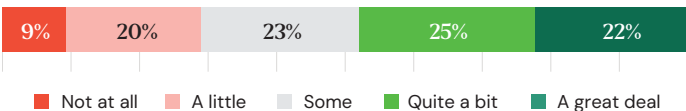
Please rate the following aspect of your experience using the scale below: This experience helped me to develop technical skills relevant to my career goals.



SOCIAL CAPITAL

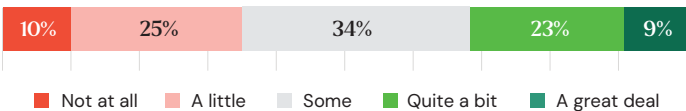
Almost half of students reported they substantially expanded their professional networks.

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



A third 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?



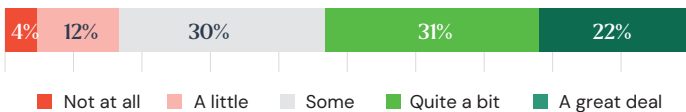
ACADEMIC CREDIT

Virtually all students reported they received academic credit for their project-based learning activities.

BROAD SKILLS

Over half of students said they experienced meaningful development of skills broadly relevant to career opportunities.

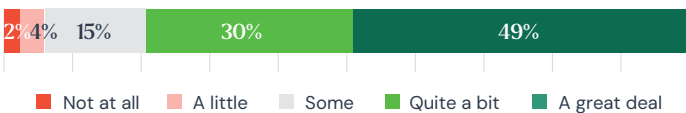
Please rate the following aspect of your experience using the scale below: This experience helped me to develop broad skills relevant to a range of different careers.



MENTORSHIP

Eight in 10 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.