



High Impact Undergraduate Experiences and How They Matter Now

Survey of College Graduates Age 18-34

June 7-12th, 2019

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Key Findings

The Elon University Poll, in collaboration with the Center for Engaged Learning, conducted a survey of 1,575 college graduates, age 18-34, living in the United States.

The purpose of this survey was three-fold:

- (1) To explore how commonly graduates experienced high impact undergraduate experiences, including meaningful relationships with faculty, undergraduate research, internships, and more.
- (2) To investigate what skills and competencies are the most important in their day-to-day lives now, and whether they developed those skills in college.
- (3) To establish the most common types of writing college graduates do for their jobs, and whether college prepared them to do this writing.

Common College Experiences

Survey participants were provided with a list of common college experiences and asked to report how frequently they encountered them. The full list of experiences can be found in the topline results reported below.

The most commonly reported undergraduate experience was receiving feedback from faculty or staff on a submitted, final project. 72% of those surveyed reported experiencing this kind of feedback multiple times, and only 7% reported never having this experience.

The least commonly reported experiences were meaningful relationships with faculty or staff, and opportunities to reflect on how the different parts of their college experience fit together. 52% of graduates reported having meaningful relationship with faculty or staff multiple times, and 17% reported never having such a relationship. Similarly, 55% reported having opportunities to reflect on how the different parts of college fit together and 17% reported never having this opportunity.

Survey participants were also provided with a list of high impact college experiences, commonly studied in higher education, and asked whether they took part in any of them. From this list, the most commonly reported high impact experience was an internship or work placement; 52% of those surveyed took part in one. The least commonly reported high impact experience was an ePortfolio; 18% completed one.

Skills Used Now

The Center for Engaged Learning developed a list of skills thought to be important for success after college. This list was inspired by the AAC&U LEAP Essential Learning Competencies, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Competencies, and the contributions of CEL seminar participants.

Managing time emerged as the most important skill to recent graduates. 79% of those surveyed reported that managing time is very important to their day-to-day lives, and 77% said that they developed this skill in college.

Of those listed for survey participants, the least important skill was engaging with their local government. 27% of graduates said this is very important in their day-to-day lives. 36% said this is a skill they developed in college.

Researching and understanding the answers to complex questions was the most commonly named skill that graduates said they developed in college (83%). Yet only 60% reported that this skill is very important in their day-to-day lives. Writing effectively was the second most commonly named skill that graduates said they developed in college (82%), and 64% reported that writing effectively is very important in their current day-to-day lives.

Writing After College

Emails are the most common kind of writing that graduates do for their job; 70% report doing so on a weekly basis. The next most common kinds of writing were client correspondence (36%), reports (32%), and social media posts (31%). The full list of writing types, and their frequencies, can be found in the topline results below.

Writing a type of document that they have not encountered before was the most commonly named writing challenge facing recent graduates. 20% named this as their biggest writing challenge since graduating from college.

83% of graduates at least somewhat agreed with the statement, “My college prepared me well for the work-related writing I have done since graduating.” Only 9% disagreed with this statement.

Satisfaction with College Experiences

Overall graduates report that their college experience was rewarding. 52% said it was very rewarding, and 36% said it was somewhat rewarding. Only 3% said college was a “not at all rewarding” experience.

Similarly, a majority of graduates (51%) said that even after considering both the costs and benefits of their college experiences, attending college was definitely “worth it.” 11% said it was probably not worth it, and 5% said it was definitely not worth it.

Topline Results

Note: In this section of the report, table entries are row percents, with the number of respondents in parentheses. Due to differential response rates to individual questions, the number of respondents listed in each row do not always sum to 1,575. Due to rounding, the percents in each row do not always sum perfectly to 100%.

Common College Experiences

During your college/university experience, to what extent did you encounter the following?

| | <i>Never</i> | <i>Once</i> | <i>Multiple Times</i> |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Faculty who asked you to draw on prior experiences when you learned new things | 14.5 % (227) | 26.6 % (418) | 58.9% (926) |
| Feedback from faculty/staff on a submitted, final project | 7.1% (111) | 21.1% (332) | 71.8% (1127) |
| Feedback from faculty/staff to guide your work before you submitted a final version | 9.90% (155) | 24.0% (376) | 66.1% (1037) |
| Feedback from peers to guide your work before you submitted a final version | 14.0% (220) | 28.0% (440) | 58.0% (909) |
| Meaningful relationships with faculty or staff | 17.3% (271) | 30.7% (482) | 52.0% (816) |
| Meaningful relationships with other students | 11.5% (181) | 21.8% (342) | 66.6% (1046) |
| Opportunities to reflect on how the different parts of your college experience fit together | 17.2% (270) | 27.6% (433) | 55.2% (867) |
| Opportunities to reflect on how what you were learning would apply to your future | 10.8% (170) | 23.2% (365) | 65.9% (1035) |
| Practice with real- world applications of what you were learning | 12.2% (191) | 26.6% (417) | 61.3% (962) |

High Impact Experiences

Did you take part in any of the following during college? Select all that apply.

| | <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| An internship or work placement | 51.7% (813) | 48.3% (759) |
| Service-learning or community-engaged learning course | 35.4% (556) | 64.6% (1016) |
| Capstone project or experience | 31.7% (499) | 68.3% (1073) |
| Independent undergraduate research project | 31.6% (497) | 68.4% (1075) |
| Study abroad experience | 19.3% (303) | 80.7% (1269) |
| ePortfolio | 17.5 % (275) | 82.5% (1297) |

Undergraduate Research Experiences

Note: These questions were asked only of respondents who reported having undergraduate research experience above (n=497).

| | <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> |
|---|----------------|---------------|
| Was your undergraduate research a required project for one of your courses? | 80.3% (399) | 19.7% (98) |
| Was your undergraduate research conducted outside of a normal class, but under the supervision of faculty or staff? | 81.7% (406) | 18.3% (91) |
| Was your undergraduate research an original contribution to your field of study? | 84.1% (417) | 15.9% (79) |

Skills Used Now, and Were They Developed in College

Below you'll find a list of skills thought to be important for success after college.

| | For each skill, please indicate whether it is something important to your day-to-day life . | | | Which of these skills did you develop, at least somewhat, while in college ? | |
|--|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| | <i>Very important</i> | <i>Somewhat important</i> | <i>Not particularly important</i> | <i>Developed in college</i> | <i>Did not develop in college</i> |
| Applying your existing skills to a new problem | 70.0% (1098) | 4.3% (68) | 25.7% (404) | 76.7% (1204) | 20.4% (320) |
| Connecting with people from different cultural backgrounds | 57.4% (901) | 9.8% (154) | 32.7% (513) | 70.3% (1102) | 29.7% (466) |
| Engaging with your local government | 27.4% (430) | 31.2% (490) | 41.4% (650) | 36.6% (575) | 63.4% (994) |
| Giving feedback to others | 50.2% (787) | 8.9% (140) | 40.8% (639) | 67.5% (1059) | 32.5% (510) |
| Keeping up with the news | 36.3% (569) | 17.1% (268) | 46.6% (730) | 43.3% (678) | 56.7% (888) |
| Making decisions on behalf of a team or organization | 49.0% (769) | 10.1% (159) | 40.9% (641) | 62.3% (978) | 37.7% (591) |
| Making ethical choices | 68.9% (1083) | 6.2% (97) | 24.9% (392) | 62.2% (974) | 37.8% (592) |

For each skill, please indicate whether it is something important to your **day-to-day life**.

Which of these skills did you develop, at least somewhat, **while in college**?

| | <i>Very important</i> | <i>Somewhat important</i> | <i>Not particularly important</i> | <i>Developed in college</i> | <i>Did not develop in college</i> |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Managing time | 78.9% (1236) | 4.5% (70) | 16.7% (261) | 75.9% (1188) | 24.1% (378) |
| Meeting deadlines | 73.1% (1147) | 5.6% (88) | 21.3% (334) | 78.2% (1224) | 21.8% (341) |
| Persisting in the face of setbacks | 67.6% (1059) | 5.4% (84) | 27.0% (424) | 69.3% (978) | 30.7% (481) |
| Researching and understanding the answers to complex questions | 59.7% (938) | 7.4% (116) | 32.9% (516) | 83.0% (1281) | 17.0% (267) |
| Speaking persuasively | 50.9% (797) | 9.3% (146) | 39.8% (623) | 68.1% (1068) | 31.9% (502) |
| Using and/or interpreting data | 58.2% (912) | 7.7% (121) | 34.1% (534) | 79.6% (1246) | 20.4% (320) |
| Volunteering in your local community | 31.5% (495) | 22.2% (349) | 46.3% (728) | 46.1% (723) | 53.9% (845) |
| Working with a team to accomplish goals | 62.6% (985) | 7.1% (112) | 30.2% (475) | 75.1% (1180) | 24.9% (391) |
| Writing effectively | 63.6% (996) | 6.4% (101) | 29.9% (468) | 81.8% (1281) | 18.2% (285) |

Writing After College

Below you'll find a list of different kinds of writing that you may or may not do for your job. For each one, please indicate how often you do this kind of writing.

| | <i>Never</i> | <i>Less than monthly</i> | <i>Monthly</i> | <i>Weekly</i> |
|---|----------------|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Advertising or promotional materials | 44.5% (697) | 21.4% (335) | 19.4% (304) | 14.7% (231) |
| Articles (e.g. news articles, trade publication articles, etc.) | 44.1% (690) | 21.9% (342) | 18.7% (292) | 15.4% (241) |
| Client correspondence | 28.3% (441) | 16.9% (263) | 19.3% (301) | 35.5% (553) |
| Emails | 6.3% (98) | 9.1% (143) | 14.1% (221) | 70.4% (1102) |
| Instructions (e.g. user guides, etc.) | 22.8% (357) | 24.0% (376) | 28.2% (442) | 25.0% (391) |
| Legal documents (e.g. contracts, legislative acts, etc.) | 43.5% (680) | 22.5% (351) | 17.2% (269) | 16.9% (264) |
| Memos | 27.0% (423) | 19.8% (311) | 23.5% (367) | 29.7% (465) |
| Multimedia writing (e.g. videos) | 39.9% (627) | 23.6% (370) | 18.7% (294) | 17.8% (279) |
| Presentations | 27.2% (426) | 24.7% (387) | 27.4% (428) | 20.6% (323) |
| Project management documents (e.g. schedules) | 29.4% (459) | 21.6% (337) | 24.3% (378) | 24.7% (386) |

| | <i>Never</i> | <i>Less than monthly</i> | <i>Monthly</i> | <i>Weekly</i> |
|--|----------------|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Proposals (e.g. business proposals, grant proposals, etc.) | 38.3% (601) | 25.6% (401) | 22.6% (354) | 13.6% (213) |
| Reports (e.g. expense reports, progress reports, white papers, etc.) | 21.7% (340) | 18.9% (296) | 27.6% (432) | 31.8% (498) |
| Social media | 36.5% (572) | 15.6% (244) | 17.0% (266) | 30.9% (484) |
| Summaries or abstracts | 30.9% (483) | 21.1% (330) | 25.1% (393) | 22.9% (358) |
| Teaching materials (e.g. lesson plans, assignment guidelines, etc.) | 38.3% (601) | 20.1% (315) | 17.0% (267) | 24.6% (386) |
| Web content | 37.6% (585) | 18.1% (282) | 20.0% (311) | 24.4% (379) |

Writing Challenges

Please select the biggest writing challenge you have encountered since graduating college:

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Writing a type of document I had not encountered before | 19.6% (308) |
| Adapting to my readers' expectations and needs | 16.0% (251) |
| Writing in a concise and direct manner | 12.8% (201) |
| Getting useful feedback on my writing from others | 11.2% (176) |
| Organizing my writing effectively | 10.7% (169) |
| Producing documents quickly | 10.4% (164) |
| Revising my writing | 10.4% (164) |
| Writing with technologies I'm not familiar with | 8.9% (140) |

Satisfaction with College Experiences

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

“My college prepared me well for the work-related writing I have done since graduating.”

| <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Somewhat agree</i> | <i>Neither</i> | <i>Somewhat disagree</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 31.7% (499) | 29.7% (467) | 21.5% (337) | 7.7% (122) | 4.5% (71) | 2.3% (37) | 2.5% (40) |

Overall, how would you rate your college experience?

| <i>Very rewarding</i> | <i>Somewhat rewarding</i> | <i>Slightly rewarding</i> | <i>Not at all rewarding</i> |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 51.7% (813) | 35.8% (563) | 9.8% (154) | 2.7% (42) |

Considering both the costs and benefits of your college experience, would you say attending college was “worth it” for you personally?

| <i>Definitely yes</i> | <i>Probably yes</i> | <i>Probably not</i> | <i>Definitely not</i> |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 50.7% (798) | 33.3% (525) | 11.2% (176) | 4.9% (77) |

Demographics

Age

| <i>18-24</i> | <i>25-34</i> |
|--------------|--------------|
| 20.0% | 80.0% |
| (315) | (1260) |

Gender

| <i>Male</i> | <i>Female</i> |
|-------------|---------------|
| 44.0% | 56.0% |
| (693) | (882) |

Race and Ethnicity

| <i>White (non-Hispanic)</i> | <i>Black (non-Hispanic)</i> | <i>Hispanic or Latinx</i> | <i>Other</i> |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| 67.0% | 11.0% | 12.0% | 10.0% |
| (1055) | (173) | (189) | (158) |

Region

| <i>Northeast</i> | <i>Midwest</i> | <i>South</i> | <i>West</i> |
|------------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
| 21.0% | 21.0% | 34.0% | 24.0% |
| (331) | (331) | (535) | (378) |

Income

| <i>Less than \$20k</i> | <i>\$20-49.9k</i> | <i>\$50-99.9k</i> | <i>\$100-\$149.9k</i> | <i>\$150k or more</i> |
|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 9.0% | 27.4% | 42.2% | 15.7% | 5.6% |
| (142) | (432) | (665) | (248) | (89) |

Employment status

| <i>Employed full time</i> | <i>Employed part time</i> | <i>Unemployed looking for work</i> | <i>Unemployed not looking for work</i> | <i>Other</i> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--------------|
| 69.3% | 14.5% | 5.6% | 3.8% | 0.4% |
| (1089) | (228) | (88) | (60) | (6) |

First generation college student

| <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> |
|------------|-----------|
| 38.0% | 62.0% |
| (597) | (975) |

Amount in student loans

| <i>None</i> | <i>Less than \$10k</i> | <i>\$10k-19.9k</i> | <i>20-40k</i> | <i>40k or more</i> |
|-------------|------------------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 29.0% | 11.7% | 17.2% | 25.4% | 16.8% |
| (454) | (183) | (269) | (397) | (263) |

Lived on campus for one or more years

| <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> |
|------------|-----------|
| 59.4% | 40.6% |
| (928) | (635) |

College Characteristics

Size of College

| <i>Small (<4k undergraduate students)</i> | <i>Medium (4-15k undergraduate students)</i> | <i>Large (More than 15k undergraduate students)</i> |
|--|--|---|
| 23.7% (373) | 47.1% (741) | 29.1% (458) |

Did you take most of your undergraduate classes online or in-person?

| <i>Online</i> | <i>In-person</i> |
|----------------|------------------|
| 14.4% (225) | 85.6% (1341) |

Did most students at your college live on campus (or in student housing near campus) or did most commute to campus?

| <i>Most lived on or near campus</i> | <i>Most commuted to campus</i> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 64.9% (1020) | 35.1% (551) |

Crosstabulations

Note: In this section of the report, table entries are column percents. Due to rounding, the percents in each column do not always sum perfectly to 100%. Additionally, the credibility interval for any observed sub-group comparison is wider, due to the smaller sample sizes.

Common College Experiences

During your college/university experience, to what extent did you encounter the following:

| | Overall | First Generation | | Type of degree earned | | | Classes mostly... | | Students lived... | | Was going to college worth it? | | | |
|--|---------|------------------|----|-----------------------|------|------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|----------|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| | | Yes | No | 2-yr | 4-yr | Grad | Online | On campus | On campus | Commuted | Def. yes | Prob. yes | Prob. not | Def. not |
| Faculty who asked you to draw on prior experiences when you learned new things | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Never | 14 | 15 | 14 | 23 | 13 | 8 | 17 | 14 | 13 | 17 | 11 | 15 | 19 | 34 |
| Once | 27 | 28 | 26 | 26 | 27 | 27 | 35 | 25 | 27 | 26 | 24 | 32 | 24 | 22 |
| Multiple Times | 59 | 57 | 60 | 51 | 60 | 65 | 48 | 61 | 60 | 57 | 65 | 53 | 57 | 45 |
| Meaningful relationships with faculty or staff | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Never | 17 | 19 | 16 | 23 | 17 | 11 | 27 | 16 | 15 | 21 | 12 | 17 | 26 | 48 |
| Once | 31 | 31 | 30 | 29 | 32 | 29 | 28 | 31 | 31 | 30 | 25 | 37 | 42 | 23 |
| Multiple Times | 52 | 50 | 53 | 48 | 51 | 60 | 45 | 53 | 54 | 48 | 63 | 45 | 31 | 29 |
| Meaningful relationships with other students | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Never | 12 | 14 | 10 | 18 | 11 | 7 | 24 | 10 | 8 | 17 | 7 | 13 | 21 | 32 |
| Once | 22 | 21 | 23 | 25 | 21 | 21 | 28 | 21 | 21 | 24 | 19 | 26 | 21 | 19 |
| Multiple Times | 67 | 65 | 67 | 56 | 69 | 72 | 49 | 70 | 71 | 59 | 74 | 61 | 58 | 49 |
| Feedback from peers to guide your work before you submitted a final version | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Never | 14 | 15 | 14 | 19 | 13 | 11 | 20 | 13 | 13 | 16 | 10 | 15 | 24 | 27 |
| Once | 28 | 31 | 26 | 28 | 29 | 26 | 34 | 27 | 29 | 27 | 27 | 31 | 26 | 30 |
| Multiple Times | 58 | 54 | 60 | 54 | 58 | 63 | 46 | 60 | 58 | 58 | 63 | 54 | 51 | 44 |
| Feedback from faculty/staff to guide your work before you submitted a final version | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Never | 10 | 11 | 9 | 13 | 10 | 6 | 15 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 6 | 11 | 19 | 21 |
| Once | 24 | 24 | 24 | 25 | 24 | 23 | 29 | 23 | 23 | 25 | 22 | 27 | 21 | 32 |
| Multiple Times | 66 | 65 | 67 | 62 | 66 | 71 | 57 | 68 | 67 | 65 | 72 | 62 | 60 | 47 |

| | Overall | First Generation | | Type of degree earned | | | Classes mostly... | | Students lived... | | Was going to college worth it? | | | |
|--|---------|------------------|----|-----------------------|------|------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|----------|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| | | Yes | No | 2-yr | 4-yr | Grad | Online | On campus | On campus | Commuted | Def. yes | Prob. yes | Prob. not | Def. not |
| Feedback from faculty/staff on a submitted, final project | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Never</i> | 7 | 6 | 8 | 12 | 6 | 4 | 9 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 10 | 16 |
| <i>Once</i> | 21 | 21 | 21 | 22 | 21 | 18 | 35 | 19 | 21 | 21 | 18 | 26 | 17 | 24 |
| <i>Multiple Times</i> | 72 | 73 | 71 | 66 | 72 | 78 | 56 | 74 | 72 | 71 | 77 | 65 | 74 | 59 |
| Practice with real- world applications of what you were learning | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Never</i> | 12 | 15 | 11 | 16 | 12 | 8 | 18 | 11 | 11 | 14 | 8 | 10 | 25 | 41 |
| <i>Once</i> | 27 | 23 | 28 | 23 | 28 | 25 | 32 | 26 | 27 | 25 | 24 | 31 | 27 | 17 |
| <i>Multiple Times</i> | 61 | 62 | 61 | 61 | 59 | 66 | 51 | 63 | 61 | 61 | 68 | 58 | 48 | 41 |
| Opportunities to reflect on how the different parts of your college experience fit together | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Never</i> | 17 | 22 | 14 | 22 | 17 | 13 | 23 | 16 | 15 | 22 | 11 | 18 | 29 | 45 |
| <i>Once</i> | 28 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 26 | 32 | 27 | 29 | 25 | 27 | 30 | 26 | 15 |
| <i>Multiple Times</i> | 55 | 51 | 57 | 50 | 55 | 61 | 46 | 57 | 56 | 53 | 62 | 51 | 44 | 40 |
| Opportunities to reflect on how what you were learning would apply to your future | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Never</i> | 11 | 12 | 10 | 14 | 11 | 8 | 14 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 6 | 12 | 20 | 32 |
| <i>Once</i> | 23 | 23 | 24 | 23 | 24 | 22 | 29 | 22 | 25 | 20 | 20 | 27 | 25 | 23 |
| <i>Multiple Times</i> | 66 | 65 | 66 | 63 | 66 | 71 | 57 | 67 | 65 | 68 | 74 | 61 | 55 | 45 |

High Impact Experiences

Did you take part in any of the following during college? Select all that apply.

| | Overall | First Generation | | Type of degree earned | | | Classes mostly... | | Students lived... | | Was going to college worth it? | | | |
|--|---------|------------------|----|-----------------------|------|------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|----------|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| | | Yes | No | 2-yr | 4-yr | Grad | Online | On campus | On campus | Commuted | Def. yes | Prob. yes | Prob. not | Def. not |
| An internship or work placement | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 52 | 49 | 52 | 42 | 51 | 60 | 37 | 53 | 52 | 48 | 57 | 46 | 44 | 38 |
| No | 48 | 51 | 48 | 58 | 49 | 40 | 63 | 47 | 48 | 52 | 43 | 54 | 56 | 62 |
| Service-learning or community-engaged learning course | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 35 | 33 | 37 | 33 | 35 | 38 | 38 | 35 | 38 | 30 | 42 | 31 | 24 | 17 |
| No | 65 | 67 | 63 | 67 | 65 | 62 | 62 | 65 | 62 | 70 | 58 | 69 | 76 | 83 |
| Capstone project or experience | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 32 | 29 | 33 | 20 | 31 | 46 | 34 | 31 | 34 | 27 | 36 | 28 | 28 | 21 |
| No | 68 | 71 | 67 | 80 | 69 | 54 | 66 | 69 | 66 | 73 | 64 | 72 | 72 | 79 |
| Independent undergraduate research project | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 32 | 27 | 35 | 21 | 34 | 41 | 29 | 33 | 34 | 29 | 37 | 29 | 24 | 28 |
| No | 68 | 73 | 65 | 79 | 66 | 59 | 71 | 67 | 66 | 71 | 63 | 71 | 76 | 72 |
| Study abroad experience | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 19 | 16 | 21 | 14 | 19 | 26 | 21 | 19 | 22 | 14 | 24 | 17 | 9 | 8 |
| No | 81 | 84 | 79 | 86 | 81 | 74 | 79 | 81 | 78 | 86 | 76 | 83 | 91 | 92 |
| ePortfolio | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 16 | 22 | 23 | 17 | 19 | 16 | 21 | 14 | 13 | 19 |
| No | 82 | 82 | 82 | 82 | 84 | 78 | 77 | 83 | 81 | 84 | 79 | 86 | 87 | 81 |

Selected Skills Used Now

Below you'll find a list of skills thought to be important for success after college. Please indicate whether it is something important to your **day-to-day life**.

| | Overall | First Generation | | Type of degree earned | | | Classes mostly... | | Students lived... | | Was going to college worth it? | | | |
|---|---------|------------------|----|-----------------------|------|------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|----------|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| | | Yes | No | 2-yr | 4-yr | Grad | Online | On campus | On campus | Commuted | Def. yes | Prob. yes | Prob. not | Def. not |
| Applying your existing skills to a new problem | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Very important</i> | 70 | 70 | 70 | 69 | 68 | 75 | 67 | 70 | 69 | 71 | 77 | 61 | 63 | 72 |
| <i>Somewhat important</i> | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 8 |
| <i>Not particularly important</i> | 26 | 25 | 26 | 26 | 27 | 22 | 26 | 26 | 27 | 24 | 20 | 33 | 33 | 21 |
| Giving feedback to others | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Very important</i> | 50 | 50 | 50 | 49 | 48 | 58 | 50 | 50 | 51 | 50 | 57 | 43 | 44 | 45 |
| <i>Somewhat important</i> | 9 | 8 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 6 | 10 | 14 | 22 |
| <i>Not particularly important</i> | 41 | 43 | 40 | 40 | 43 | 35 | 40 | 41 | 41 | 41 | 37 | 48 | 42 | 34 |
| Meeting deadlines | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Very important</i> | 73 | 76 | 71 | 71 | 73 | 77 | 65 | 75 | 72 | 74 | 85 | 72 | 76 | 69 |
| <i>Somewhat important</i> | 21 | 5 | 6 | 20 | 22 | 20 | 24 | 21 | 22 | 20 | 12 | 22 | 21 | 22 |
| <i>Not particularly important</i> | 6 | 18 | 23 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 12 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 9 |
| Using and/or interpreting data | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Very important</i> | 58 | 57 | 59 | 53 | 58 | 65 | 58 | 58 | 56 | 62 | 66 | 49 | 47 | 58 |
| <i>Somewhat important</i> | 8 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 10 | 16 |
| <i>Not particularly important</i> | 34 | 34 | 34 | 38 | 34 | 29 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 32 | 27 | 43 | 43 | 27 |
| Writing effectively | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Very important</i> | 64 | 64 | 63 | 59 | 63 | 70 | 58 | 64 | 64 | 63 | 70 | 57 | 55 | 59 |
| <i>Somewhat important</i> | 6 | 8 | 6 | 10 | 6 | 4 | 9 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 11 |
| <i>Not particularly important</i> | 30 | 28 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 26 | 33 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 25 | 35 | 36 | 30 |

Satisfaction with College Experiences

| | Overall | First Generation | | Type of degree earned | | | Classes mostly... | | Students lived... | | Was going to college worth it? | | | |
|---|---------|------------------|----|-----------------------|------|------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|----------|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| | | Yes | No | 2-yr | 4-yr | Grad | Online | On campus | On campus | Commuted | Def. yes | Prob. yes | Prob. not | Def. not |
| “My college prepared me well for the work-related writing I have done since graduating.” | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Strong agree</i> | 32 | 27 | 35 | 32 | 29 | 40 | 45 | 29 | 35 | 26 | 47 | 20 | 8 | 9 |
| <i>Agree</i> | 30 | 30 | 30 | 26 | 30 | 34 | 20 | 31 | 31 | 28 | 30 | 34 | 22 | 16 |
| <i>Agree some</i> | 21 | 24 | 20 | 20 | 24 | 16 | 20 | 22 | 20 | 25 | 15 | 30 | 28 | 13 |
| <i>Neither</i> | 8 | 8 | 8 | 12 | 8 | 3 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 9 | 18 | 14 |
| <i>Disagree some</i> | 5 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 12 | 14 |
| <i>Disagree</i> | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 10 |
| <i>Strong disagree</i> | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 23 |
| Overall, how would you rate your college experience? | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Very rewarding</i> | 52 | 47 | 54 | 48 | 50 | 61 | 51 | 52 | 55 | 45 | 78 | 32 | 11 | 3 |
| <i>Some rewarding</i> | 36 | 37 | 35 | 37 | 36 | 33 | 32 | 36 | 34 | 40 | 19 | 58 | 50 | 24 |
| <i>Slight rewarding</i> | 10 | 13 | 8 | 10 | 12 | 5 | 13 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 2 | 10 | 34 | 33 |
| <i>Not at all</i> | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 40 |
| Considering both the costs and benefits of your college experience, would you say attending college was “worth it” for you personally? | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Definitely yes</i> | 51 | 44 | 54 | 45 | 49 | 62 | 46 | 51 | 53 | 46 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Probably yes</i> | 33 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 34 | 29 | 40 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Probably not</i> | 11 | 15 | 9 | 11 | 12 | 7 | 8 | 12 | 10 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 |
| <i>Definitely not</i> | 5 | 8 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 |

Methodological Information

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Mode: | Online |
| Population: | U.S. college graduates, ages 18-34 |
| Dates in the field: | June 7-12 th , 2019 |
| Sample size: | 1575 |
| Weighting variables: | Age, Gender, Race, Census region, Highest degree earned |
| Credibility interval: | +/- 2.53 points |

Procedure

For this survey, the Elon University Poll used an online opt-in sample provided by Lucid, LLC. Respondents were recruited for this sample from many sample providers in the Lucid marketplace. Respondents received small amounts of compensation in exchange for their opinions. More information about the Lucid marketplace and quality tests are available [here](#).

Our sample was designed to represent 18 to 34-year-olds in the United States with at least a two-year degree. This population consists of approximately 24 million individuals. We defined our eligible population as those classified by the U.S. Census as having an Associate's, Bachelor's, or Graduate or Professional graduate degree. The survey software, Qualtrics, screened respondents out of the sample if they self-reported having less than this level of education.

This survey used both quotas prior to data collection and weights after data collection to match sample demographics to population demographics of age, race, sex, highest degree and Census region. A raking algorithm in Stata generated weights.

Credibility Interval

Unlike a traditional random digit-dial telephone survey, online opt-in surveys do not have traditional margin of errors because they do not adhere to assumptions of random selection. To account for uncertainty inherent in any sample-based research design, we provide credibility intervals. More information about this technique can be found [here](#). The credibility interval was calculated by inflating traditional confidence intervals by design effects means. In this survey, the interval was calculated as follows: $(1.023 * 2.469) = 2.53$

Support for Transparency

The Elon University Poll supports transparency in survey research and is a charter member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research Transparency Initiative, which is a program promoting openness and transparency about survey research methods and operations among survey research professionals and the industry. All information about the Elon University Poll that we release to the public conforms to reporting conventions recommended by the American Association for Public Opinion Research and the National Council on Public Polls.

Weighting Information

The table below presents population parameters, unweighted sample parameters and weighted sample parameters:

| | | Population | Unweighted Value | Weighted Value |
|-----------------------|----------------------|------------|------------------|----------------|
| Age | 18-24 | 20% | 20.1% | 20% |
| | 25-34 | 80% | 79.9% | 80% |
| Gender | Male | 44% | 36.4% | 44% |
| | Female | 56% | 63.6% | 56% |
| Race | White (non-hispanic) | 67% | 66.1% | 67% |
| | Black (non-hispanic) | 11% | 12.6% | 11% |
| | Other (non-hispanic) | 10% | 8.7% | 10% |
| | Hispanic | 12% | 12.7% | 12% |
| Census Region | Northeast | 21% | 20.5% | 21% |
| | Midwest | 21% | 22.6% | 21% |
| | South | 34% | 37.2% | 34% |
| | West | 24% | 19.7% | 24% |
| Highest Degree Earned | 2-year | 23% | 21.8% | 23% |
| | 4-year | 57% | 56.9% | 57% |
| | Graduate | 20% | 21.2% | 20% |

We were unable to locate exact parameters for our population of interest, recent college graduates, age 18-34. To create the above parameters, we made assumptions based on several sources of federal data. Data on race and highest degree earned are limited to those between 20 and 34 in the labor force, not all residents 18 to 34. Furthermore, our sample does not reflect those 18-34-year-old degree holders who lack internet access. Despite these limitations, we believe our sample is as reflective of the population as possible.

For age, sex, and highest degree earned, and region, we relied on American Community Survey (U.S. Census) 2017 Table B15001 “Sex by Age by Educational Attainment for The Population 18 Years and Over.” For race, we used Table EEO-ALL07R-N1 “Educational Attainment (6) by Younger Age Groups, Sex, and Race/Ethnicity (Part I) for Residence Geography, Total Population, Number Universe: Civilian labor force 20 years and over “(2010) from U.S. Census Bureau Fact Finder. We obtained percentages for each demographic group by dividing subcategory population counts by category overall population counts

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who pays for the Elon University Poll?

Elon University fully funds the Elon University Poll. The poll operates under the auspices of the College of Arts and Sciences at Elon University, led by Dean Gabie Smith. The Elon University administration, led by Dr. Connie Ledoux Book, president of the university, fully supports the Elon University Poll as part of its service to the community. Because of this generous support, the Elon University Poll does not engage in any contract work. This permits the Elon University Poll to operate as a neutral, non-biased, non-partisan resource.

2. What did respondents know about the survey before agreeing to take the survey?

During survey recruitment, respondents saw a title that the survey was about higher education. In the introductory screen, respondents read, “We are hoping to understand what aspects of the college experience matter most for life outcomes.”

3. Did you randomize response options?

Yes. The order of college experiences and writing habits were randomized.

4. Did you weight the data?

Yes. We applied weights to the data according to U.S. Census information about this demographic group. For more details, see the Weighting Information above.

5. What are the advantages and disadvantages of online opt-in surveys over traditional random digit dial surveys?

Traditional telephone surveys have a clear advantage over online surveys such as this in that assumptions of equal probability of selection are more appropriate. Furthermore, online surveys do not capture opinions of respondents who lack internet access.

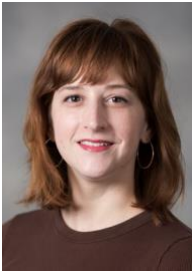
However, our opinion is that [declining telephone response rates](#) and the growth in online sample pool sizes have narrowed quality differences between the two modes. Additional information about opt-in surveys in general is available from AAPOR and the [Pew Research Center](#).

About the Elon University Poll

The Elon University Poll conducts statewide, regional, and national surveys on issues of importance to North Carolinians as well as other southern states. Information from these polls is shared with media, citizens and public officials to facilitate informed public policy making through the better understanding of citizens' opinions and attitudes. By conducting several public opinion surveys annually, the Elon University Poll is easily recognized as the "poll of record in North Carolina."



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For more information on the Elon University Poll, visit elon.edu/elonpoll

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About the Center for Engaged Learning

The Center for Engaged Learning brings together international leaders in higher education to develop and to synthesize rigorous research on central questions about student learning. The center offers multi-institutional research and practice-based initiatives, conferences, and seminars; and shares related resources for faculty and faculty developers on high-impact practices for engaged learning.



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