

# 2020 Fall Recruiting Student Sentiment Survey



# Executive Summary

To help companies and colleges prepare for the unique circumstances of recruiting during a pandemic, Parker Dewey surveyed students currently enrolled for fall semester to understand ways they wish to engage with prospective employers.

Key findings indicate a strong preference for “Experiential Recruiting” to help them explore career opportunities, demonstrate skills, and build relationships with employers to secure the right job after graduation.

In particular, more than 86% of students rated “real work experience” as their preferred method of engagement with employers, allowing them to learn about potential roles they may not have otherwise considered. And with just over half of students expecting virtual career fairs to be an effective way to engage them, talent acquisition teams will need to look beyond virtual versions of traditional tactics to ensure successful engagement, diversity, and conversion outcomes.

Moreover, when asked about what students value most in their career preparation, earning course credit was ranked lowest, with only 27% of students placing value on credits. While being paid for work experience ranked higher, with 65% of students placing value on pay, the overall top response was simply having “opportunities to explore careers hands-on by working on a project,” with 81% of students rating these opportunities as most important and valuable overall.



# Key Findings: The Importance of Early Career Exploration

As universities across the country limit opportunities for on-campus activities during the pandemic, recruiters have been forced to shift from in-person to virtual tactics. To help companies and colleges prepare for this unique situation, Parker Dewey surveyed students currently enrolled for fall semester to understand ways they wish to engage with prospective employers given the constraints of COVID-19.

To help me secure a job after graduation, in the next 6-months I need:

More experiences to build my resume and get my foot in the door with employers.

78%

A better understanding of who is hiring and what their open positions entail.

67%

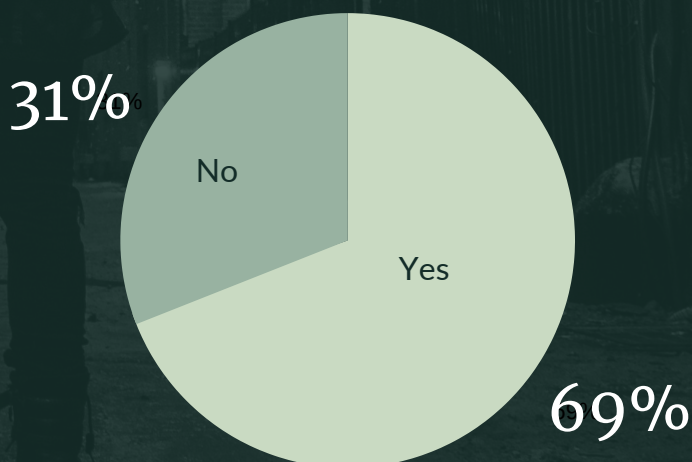
More information about job opportunities and how to apply.

59%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80%

80% rated “opportunities to explore careers hands-on by working on a project” as the number one activity most important to their career preparation.

Were your summer plans disrupted due to COVID-19?



# The Importance of Early Career Exploration

For many students, the shift to online learning was just the beginning, with 69% of all college students reporting COVID-19 disrupted summer plans ranging from canceled or abbreviated internships to rescinded summer job offers (n.b., while the other data was consistent across both undergraduate and graduate students, 78% of undergraduates reported an impact in this area).

As a result, when asked what they needed in the next six-months to help secure a job after graduation, more than 77% of students are seeking “more experiences to build my resume and get my foot in the door with employers.”

The data further highlights that students are most concerned about the impact that canceled internships and disrupted career development plans will have on their future job prospects.



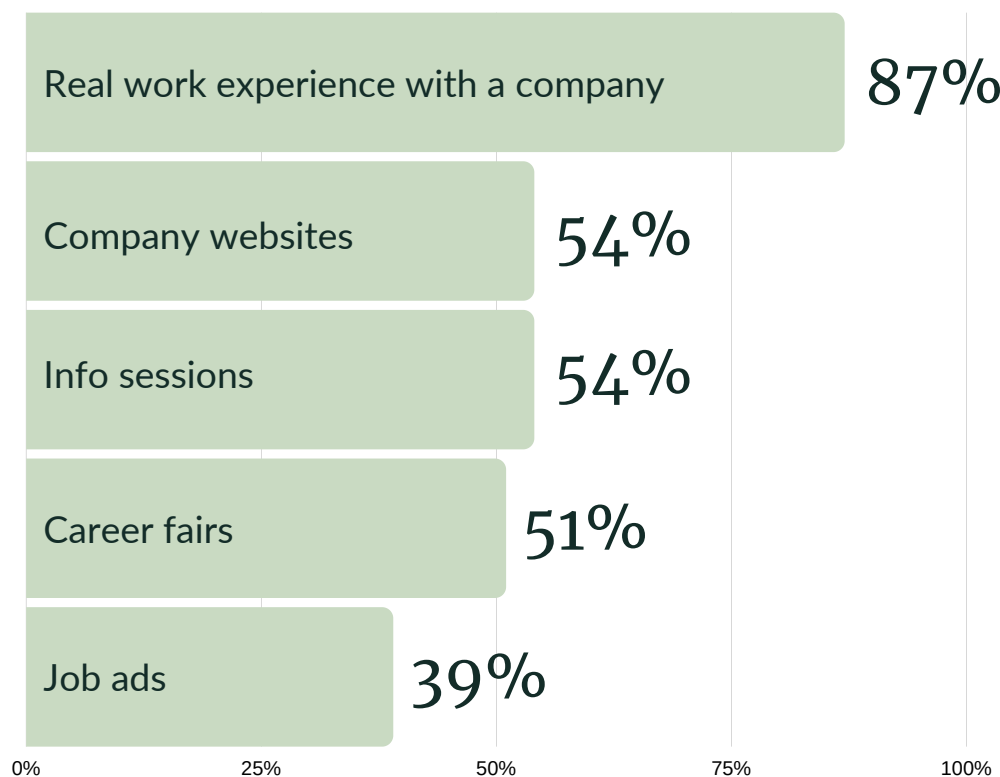


# Beyond the (Virtual) Booth

For campus recruiters looking to build a strong employer brand, students have highlighted that offering plentiful opportunities to gain experience and explore careers will make a lasting impression over a well-polished virtual career booth or info session.

Specifically, when asked which campus recruiting tactics were most important and valued to students given current campus closures and limitations, more than 86% of students rated “real work experience with a company” as the most important tactic to engage them while also helping them to secure a job or internship in the future; in comparison, only 51% of students rated virtual career fairs as a valuable way to engage with them.

Rate the importance of popular campus recruiting tactics with consideration to the current impacts of COVID-19 and how you would most like to engage with employers:



# What Matters Most in an Economic Downturn

Those in higher education will also want to take a close look at employer engagement plans to best support their students.

When asked about activities and support most important to preparing for careers, more than 80% rated “opportunities to explore careers hands-on by working on a project” as the top activity for career preparation. This was followed closely behind with more than 77% rating “opportunities to connect with professionals in fields that interest me and learn more about how entry-level projects support company objectives” as important.

Perhaps most surprising to university professional staff may be that less than 27% of respondents rated “earning course credit when working on a project” as important.

Given the inherent challenges facing today’s students, those enrolled for fall are focused on participating in meaningful, hands-on experiences with professionals over informational or course-work related opportunities they may have attended in the past.

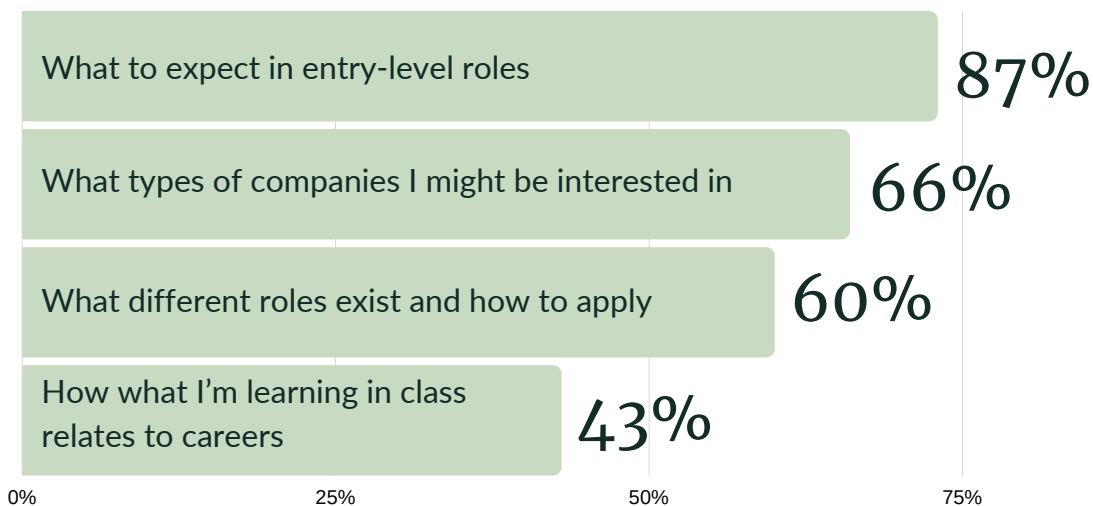
In addition, while “being paid for my time when working on a project” had a lower level of importance to most students than the value of the project itself, previous data from Parker Dewey has shown that students from underrepresented populations are often excluded from professional development opportunities due to the need to generate income from their work.

# Hope for the Future

For many students, COVID-19 and its effects have highlighted areas of uncertainty in career readiness preparation. When asked what areas they were still unsure of, more than 73% stated they were unsure of “what to expect in entry-level roles (types of projects, responsibilities, etc.),” while more than 65% were unsure of “what types of companies I might be interested in.”

Similar to how students responded when asked about their needs, these data points underscore a need for more opportunities to explore careers, shop different employers and industries, and gain experiences to help them to decide where they might thrive after graduation.

## When it comes to securing a job after graduation, I'm still unsure of:



Overall, this survey reveals students are hungrier than ever before to work directly with employers in order to evaluate for potential fit, gain resume enhancing experience, and connect with professionals.

While adapting info sessions for web and placing job ads may be a quick win for campus recruiters rapidly shifting to remote tactics, students are looking for real-work experience before moving forward in the application process.

# About Parker Dewey

Parker Dewey offers the largest network of highly motivated college students and recent graduates who are excited to complete short-term, paid, professional assignments. While executing these Micro-Internships, Career Launchers demonstrate their skills and grit, and exceed expectations as they seek the right full-time role or internship. Not only do professionals get immediate support, Micro-Internships also help companies identify and evaluate prospective job candidates for internships or full-time needs when they arise. As a result, organizations improve hiring effectiveness, enhance diversity, and drive retention.

Since 2016, Micro-Internships have allowed companies to engage online with diverse, highly motivated, driven candidates on short-term projects. The result is better-qualified candidates through a collaborative hiring process that delivers meaningful experiences to candidates and actionable insights to recruiters without travel costs.

To learn more, visit [parkerdewey.com](https://parkerdewey.com)