

Summer Orientation

Student Employment/Career Services Session for Parents/Families

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will my son/daughter get behind if they are undecided about their major?

Because Ohio State has General Education Curriculum (GEC) requirements that apply to majors across the board, most students can take these classes, along with their math and English, during their first year and be in good shape. However, there are some exceptions in the more competitive programs where certain classes are needed for admission and students may be applying to those programs during their freshman year. For example, students interested in Nursing apply in January during spring semester of their freshman year, and need to take some chemistry, anatomy and biology classes to be able to be accepted. If your son/daughter is even considering certain majors they should check out the requirements and admissions policies.

2. What advice do you have if my son/daughter is totally undecided about a major?

Here are some tips:

- Encourage them to be in touch with their academic advisor so they schedule classes that could apply to multiple areas
- Encourage them to attend their freshman survey class, which will address career exploration issues
- Encourage them to go to Career Counseling and Support Services to work with a career counselor
- Students can also take a career exploration class (for credit) which includes self-assessment and career exploration activities; an example of such a class is ESCE 2272.

3. Will Ohio State help my son/daughter get an internship?

Every academic program at Ohio State is unique. Some programs, like most of those in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Science, require internships, so they are integrated into the curriculum. Some programs, mostly in the health care field, have clinical experience as part of the academic curriculum. Other programs, such as business and engineering, do not require experience as part of the curriculum, but students are strongly encouraged to do internships or co-ops. Most colleges have a career services office that assists students with their internship/co-op search. Some academic departments have staff that coordinate internships. It is best to look at the colleges of the programs your son/daughter has an interest in, starting with their web sites, to find specific information about internships or co-ops.

4. What's the difference between a co-op and an internship?

Both types of experiences are intentionally designed to help students gain skills related to their major and often provide a realistic job preview of typical entry level positions in the field. Technically, a co-op is alternating semesters of full-time work experience with semesters of full-time school. For example, a student would work fall semester, go to school spring semester, and work summer semester. Often students will do 2-3 co-op rotations with the same or different companies. An internship is a one-time, full-time work experience, usually 3 months, but can vary greatly in duration. Also, many local companies hire students on a part-time basis for internships during the school year.

5. Are internships paid?

We work with employers who offer both paid and unpaid internships. There is a lot of variation, depending on the field and industry. Many non-profit and government agencies offer both paid and unpaid internships. Most for profit businesses pay their interns, but there are exceptions to that as well. Several industries where the supply exceeds the demand, such as the sports and entertainment industries, often do not offer paid internships. We work with employers to make sure that they are complying with the Fair Labor Standards Act. We encourage students to consider all kinds of internships – as long as they are well designed to help them develop skills – as an investment into their future. Internships do increase the marketability of students when they seek full-time career positions.

6. Are internships required?

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7. When do students intern?

There are variations in when students do internships, but in general, the more competitive, paid internships related to specific majors are done between the junior and senior year. This is often due to employer preference – the employers like students to have more of the advanced classes in their major and often the internship experience leads to full-time offers. The average offer rate to interns for full-time employment is 72.7%.¹ Many students also find and do internships earlier in their academic career – the internships are often more general in nature. Because co-op experiences alternate between school and work and many employers want the student to do several rotations with them, they may start earlier.

8. What kinds of international opportunities can students get while in school?

The University's Office of International Affairs coordinates many study abroad opportunities for Ohio State students. In addition, several colleges and departments have study abroad or exchange programs – so students should always check with their advisor once they are in a degree-granting college. Some programs may also have internship-based experiences abroad. Student organizations can also be great resources for connecting students to international opportunities.

9. Will an internship or study abroad program delay their graduation?

It depends. With good academic planning in conjunction with an advisor, a student can have multiple extracurricular experiences and still graduate in 4 years. However, there are many reasons why a student might delay their graduation for one or two semesters and many students do not actually graduate in 4 years. This is not something that employers would look down upon – they'd prefer to see students whose resumes are rich with learning experiences both in and outside the classroom.

¹ National Association of Colleges and Employers Executive Summary, Internship and Co-op Survey, May 2016.

10. What are the “placement rates” for full-time jobs? For internships?

This is a tricky question to answer, as there will be a great deal of variation among colleges and departments. With a decentralized system of career services, the responsibility for collecting employment data usually falls within the college or department. Some of the larger colleges, like Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Engineering and Business, compile employment data – and rely on students to provide that information. So, in some cases data is not based on 100% of the students who graduate. We have recently started collecting first destination data university wide via the Undergraduate Graduation Survey which is administered 3 times per academic year. The survey is administered by the Office of Student Life to all graduating undergraduate students at the end of each term and gathers information about the experiences, satisfaction and career and education plans of graduating students, as well as their permanent contact information.²

11. What do employers look for when hiring for full-time positions?

There are many surveys that ask what employers are looking for when they hire college students – and the results are often very consistent across majors. Some of the common themes we have seen in survey findings about what employers value when considering candidates for full-time positions include:

- internship or related experience
- competitive GPA
- leadership
- ability to work in a team
- the ability to get along with diverse people
- communication skills—written and verbal
- problem solving skills
- strong work ethic
- initiative

12. What are the typical starting salaries for OSU graduates?

This is another area where there will be a great deal of variation among colleges and departments – and even among majors within the same college! With a decentralized system of career services, the responsibility for collecting salary data usually falls within the college or department. Some of the larger colleges, like Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Engineering, and Business, collect salary data and will post it on their web site. Some of the smaller colleges may not systematically collect and/or publish salary data. This is another example where it’s best to pose these questions to the specific college in which your son/daughter will eventually be enrolled.

² *The full Undergraduate Students Destinations report may be requested.

*College specific data may be available on the college’s web site.