

Employers covet grads with real-world experience, survey finds

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The results of a national survey by the Chronicle for Higher Education and American Public Radio's Marketplace reinforce the value of Northeastern's experiential-learning model. Above, Northeastern students Geri-Ann Quinlivan (left) and Nick Davis (right) work with Wayne Dooks (center) at idGroup, an architecture, engineering and planning firm in Boston. Credit: Mary Knox Merrill

A new national [survey](#) has found that employers consider meaningful professional experience a must for recent college graduates—a

conclusion that aligns with Northeastern's leadership in experiential education that integrates classroom learning with real-world experience.

In the survey, commissioned by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and the American Public Media's *Marketplace* and published this week, employers indicated that internship experience is the single most important credential employers look for. Furthermore, more than half of employers reported they had trouble finding recent graduates qualified enough to fill positions at their companies or organizations.

The findings reinforce the extraordinary impact of Northeastern's experiential-learning model, including its signature global co-op program. In fact, more than 7,000 [students](#) participate in co-op each year at more than 2,900 employers worldwide. Students do co-op, study abroad, faculty-led study abroad, and research in 92 countries and on all continents.

"What sets Northeastern apart is our absolute commitment to integrating the experiential aspects of our global co-op program with the uncompromising quality of our academics," said Bruce Ronkin, Northeastern's vice provost for undergraduate education. "Students prepare for co-op in the classroom—intellectually and professionally. Then they head out across the globe for six months of professional work experience. When students return to school they bring back a world of experiences into the classroom that enrich and guide their continued development as innovators, entrepreneurs, artists, and professionals."

The *Chronicle-Marketplace* survey is not the only [national poll](#) gaging what employers are looking for in an applicant pool of recent graduates. The National Association of Colleges and Employers' 2013 Job Outlook Survey found that about 60 percent of employers surveyed favor experience gained through an internship or co-op. Northeastern's own national opinion poll found recently that the overwhelming majority of

respondents believe that cooperative education better prepares students for professional careers.

Susan Ambrose, vice provost for teaching and learning and professor of education, emphasized how co-op and other experiential-learning venues serve help students achieve both intellectual and professional goals.

"True learning is the ability to use what you know—facts, concepts, approaches, theories—flexibly in new contexts, and experiential learning provides opportunities to

do just this," Ambrose said. "We promote and create the conditions for robust, deep, and flexible learning that will prepare our students for a life of fulfillment and accomplishment in a world that is continually changing."

Northeastern has been praised in recent years for its success in preparing students to pursue meaningful careers. Ninety percent of the university's graduates are employed full-time or enrolled in graduate school nine months after graduation. Eighty-seven percent of full-time employed graduates are doing work that is related to their major. Within that group, 50 percent received a job offer from a previous co-op employer. Furthermore, Northeastern's Career Services were [ranked](#) best in the country by *The Princeton Review*.

Provided by Northeastern University

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