



2020 Pilot National Study of College Internships: Focus on Impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic & Online Internships

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the purpose of this study?

The Center for Research on College-Workforce Transitions (CCWT) is currently engaged in a 17-site longitudinal mixed-methods study of internships called the College Internship Study. This study was launched because internships and related forms of work-based learning (WBL) are widely seen as “high-impact practices” that contribute to students’ academic, social and career success, yet no national studies on internships exist that focus on issues of access, program structure (e.g., quality of intern mentoring) and student outcomes. In addition, few colleges or universities have the data infrastructure to closely track and understand their students’ experiences with internships, which is essential for supporting faculty, career services professionals, and campus leaderships’ data-based decisions about how to improve internships.

The need for data about student experiences with internships became even more important with the Covid-19 pandemic, as internships were cancelled or moved online, and students faced unprecedented disruptions to their academic and career goals. In response, CCWT will be launching a national study of internships and WBL in the Spring of 2021, which will follow a pilot phase in the Fall of 2020. The newly revised core survey also includes questions about the impacts of the pandemic and/or protests against police violence and discrimination on students’ career goals and job-seeking behaviors.

The pilot study will take place with approximately 20 colleges and universities that represent a diversity of institutions (e.g., community colleges, research universities, HBCUs, HSIs) and regions of the U.S. We expect that the results from the study will be of particular interest for those engaged in designing and implementing experiential education programs at their colleges.

Our goal with the pilot study is to test-run the survey instrument, different modalities for incorporating qualitative data, and to refine administrative procedures and deliverables for participating institutions. At the end of the pilot study, CCWT will interview institutional representatives to obtain feedback about their experiences with the study and how to improve research instruments and procedures for the larger national study in the Spring of 2021.

2. What will colleges receive for participating?

Each college will receive three deliverables: (1) a customized summary report that includes students’ survey responses (and potentially some qualitative data), a brief analysis of the regional internship labor market, and recommendations for program improvement, (2) an [interactive Tableau data dashboard](#) for its students’ survey responses (de-identified), and (3) a copy of the summary report for all participating institutions. These reports will be delivered in early 2021. Thus, participating institutions will not only be able to provide critical feedback for the national study but will also receive high-quality data in the process. Due to IRB considerations we cannot share raw data, but the report and especially the data dashboard will provide you and your institution with an in-depth understanding of the dataset.

3. How is this study being funded?

Costs associated with this pilot study will be covered by CCWT and grants from the National Science Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. For the larger national study in 2021 a fee will be involved for participating institutions to help cover part of the costs for administering the survey.

4. When will the study take place?

Colleges will need to register by **Friday October 30, 2020** by sending an email to the CCWT Program Manager Amy Rivera (arivera3@wisc.edu) that includes the **institution's name** and a **primary point-of-contact** for the project. The survey will be fielded towards mid-November 2020 and analysis of data and the preparation of institution-specific reports and the aggregated dataset report will begin in December 2020, and CCWT anticipates releasing both institution-specific and the main report in early 2021.

5. What are participating colleges in this study expected to do?

Participating institutions will be expected to do the following: (1) identify 1-2 staff who can be the main points of contact between CCWT staff and each institution, (2) provide written evidence that the local IRB office does not need to review the study since no local personnel will be involved in the project – we can provide a copy of the UW-Madison IRB approval (for an exempt study) upon request, (3) **have a recognized campus leader send a recruitment email** to enrolled students for participation in the study (plus 2 reminder emails), (4) provide contact information for 2-3 faculty and/or career services staff who can participate in a short phone interview about the landscape of internship programs at the institution, and (5) and main points of contact completing a brief survey about their thoughts and experiences about the study.

6. What type of data will be collected at my institution?

For the pilot study, CCWT will be experimenting with different ways to incorporate qualitative data into the study, since student stories and narratives are important to contextualize and bring-to-life findings from the survey. The different modes of data collection will be assigned to participating institutions and will include the following options: (1) survey only (with some open-ended text-based questions), (2) survey with approximately 10 brief interviews with student volunteers. The two different options are being used so that CCWT can evaluate the costs associated with adding a small qualitative feature to the study. Overall, the type of data collected at each institution will include a survey of students, brief interviews with 2-3 faculty, staff or leadership, and potentially brief interviews with approximately 10 students.

In addition, the core survey includes approximately 45 questions for this study addresses internship participation and experiences. Additional modules that address issues including psychosocial outcomes (e.g., self-efficacy), students' career-related social networks, and other topics can be added based on institutional interests. In other words, the survey can be customized to meet local needs.

7. Will there be help available during survey administration?

CCWT staff will provide technical assistance to participating colleges throughout recruitment, registration, and survey administration via a project website and individual assistance with CCWT staff. Specifically, CCWT staff will provide the institution's point of contact with the anonymous link for the survey, recruitment language for survey distribution (and 2 reminders), and other assistance as needed.

8. Do we need to submit this survey to our IRB?

As noted above UW-Madison's IRB has approved this study as an "exempt" study. As a result, we are asking participating institutions to provide written confirmation that their IRB office does not need to review the study since no local college personnel are engaged in research. CCWT staff will be able to provide documentation of the approval for the study by the UW-Madison IRB office upon request.

9. Do we need to collect any data for this study?

No. CCWT staff will collect the survey data via the Qualtrics online platform.

10. How is student confidentiality being protected?

Students will complete the survey on the UW-Madison Qualtrics website which is a secure, online survey platform. Survey data will be securely transferred to CCWT, where it will be stored on secure servers managed by UW Madison information technology specialists. Only CCWT researchers involved in this study will have access to survey data. The national report with aggregated data and individual institutional reports will only contain summary measures of student responses.

11. How will the student incentives work?

In order to increase response rates for students to take the survey for the pilot study, CCWT will be providing \$300 for six \$50 gift cards to be provided to student participants. The 6 students will be randomly selected from a pool of email addresses that they can provide at the end of their surveys. Students are *not* required to provide an email in order to complete the survey, although only those who provide an email address can be eligible for the incentive drawing. CCWT will then disburse the award funds. Colleges will not be provided with any survey data for those winning students. For later administrations of this national survey, participating institutions will be expected to provide funds for student incentives.

12. If we have questions, who can we contact?

Please feel free to contact the CCWT Program Manager Amy Rivera at arivera3@wisc.edu.

13. What is the Center for Research on College-Workforce Transitions (CCWT)?

The Center for Research on College-Workforce Transitions (CCWT) is the nation's first Center for studying student experiences with the transition from college to the workforce in order to inform information policies, programs, and practices that promote academic and career success for all learners. CCWT is dedicated to conducting and supporting applied research that amplifies students' voices and experiences related to college-workforce transitions. The Director of CCWT is Dr. Matthew T. Hora, an Assistant Professor of Adult and Higher Education in the Department of Liberal Arts and Applied Studies and Educational Policy Studies at UW-Madison, and a research scientist at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research. For more information, please see <http://ccwt.wceruw.org>.