


Poll Finds Nearly Half of Students in Canada Are Not Getting Paid Work Experience in Their Field

 casa-acae.com/poll_finds_nearly_half_of_students_in_canada_are_not_getting_paid_work_experience_in_their_field

Posted by Lindsay Boyd on July 04, 2018

OTTAWA, July 4, 2018 – The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) released a [poll](#) today, revealing that while paid work placements related to a student’s field of study are seen as the best form of experience to help new graduates get a good job, nearly half of students still are not able to participate in them.

Experiential learning – a term that refers to the type of on-the-job learning that often occurs through co-ops, apprenticeships, and internships – is increasingly becoming recognized as an essential part of post-secondary education. These experiences complement a student’s formal education by giving them the practical skills they need to succeed in the workforce, the experience that most entry-level jobs now require, and the income they so often need to afford their education.

Despite the importance of experiential learning in one’s education, CASA’s poll shows that 49% of students aren’t able to secure a paid work placement, primarily because such placements are not accessible through their program.

“Although the number of paid work placements available to students has increased over the years, CASA believes that it’s still far from enough,” says CASA’s Executive Director, Manjeet Birk.

Students understand the importance of gaining career-centered work experience. Due to the lack of paid work placements available for students, more and more are choosing to take on unpaid work placements instead. In fact, 57% of current students reported having participated in an unpaid work placement during their studies, compared to 43% of graduates.

“Unpaid work placements are not only less valuable when it comes to helping you find a job after graduation, but they also contribute to rising student debt,” continues Ms. Birk. “CASA believes that all students should have access to work placements that complement their in-classroom learning, and that no student should be put in a position where they have to choose between paying for essentials or getting important work experience.”

To help increase access to paid work placements for post-secondary students, CASA advocates that the federal government:

- Expand the Canada Summer Jobs program to provide relevant work opportunities for an additional 10,000 students in all fields of study;
- Create a new part-time job program, from September to April, for students who do not follow the traditional study schedule or who need to work during their studies;

- Invest in programs that connect Indigenous and marginalized youth with employers and the labour market;
- Increase access to apprenticeships and to Vocational Education and Training;
- Increase access to career education for youth; and
- Develop a well-coordinated and highly visible school-to-work transition strategy.

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About CASA:

Established in 1995, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) is a non-partisan, not-for-profit, national student organization composed of 22 student associations representing 270,000 post-secondary students from coast to coast. Through its partnership with the Quebec Student Union (QSU) and its 8 members representing 79,000 students, CASA presents a national student voice to the federal government. CASA advocates for a Canadian post-secondary education system that is accessible, affordable, innovative, and of the highest quality.

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