

# CANADIAN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

## IMPACT OF CO-OP EDUCATION PROGRAMS



Ipsos Reid

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## CANADIANS VALUE CO-OP EDUCATION PROGRAMS

**Vancouver, BC** – An Ipsos Reid online poll of 1,493 adult Canadians reveals the vast majority of Canadians who enrolled in co-op education programs as part of their post-secondary experience, felt their work term had a significant impact on their career choice, getting their first job, their workplace integration, and their academic learning. Half of those who did not do a co-op program say they would have liked to do so.

### *One-in-Seven Canadians With Post-Secondary Education Studied in a Co-op Program; Half Wished they Had Done So*

A total of 17% of Canadians with post-secondary experience said they studied or are currently enrolled in a co-op education program. Among the 83% of Canadians with post-secondary education who did not participate in a co-op program, fully half (50%) say they would have liked to study in this type of program, knowing what they know now about their education and work experience. Just 23% say they would not have liked to study in a co-op program, while 27% are “not sure”.

Ontario appears to be the “hot bed” of co-op education participation. A full quarter of Ontarians with post-secondary experience (24%) say they’ve been in a co-op program. This is more than three times as many as in Quebec (7%), and close to twice as many as in Western Canada (16%), or the Atlantic provinces (14%).

A full 50% of Canadians with post-secondary experience who *did not* participate in a co-op education program say they wish they had, based on what they know now about their education and their work experience. Another 23% are content that they did not enroll in a co-op program, but 27% are not sure.

There are no statistically significant differences across regional or socio-demographic population groups.

## ***Vast Majority of Co-op Students Believe their Work Term Had an Impact on their Career, Employment, and Learning***

A significant majority of Canadians who enrolled in co-op programs say their work term made a significant difference in their future work and educational pursuits. Fully 79% feel their co-op program influenced at least somewhat their decision about what career they would choose. This includes a full 63% who said it influenced them a “great deal” or “a lot”. For 83%, the co-op program improved their integration into the workplace when they started work (62% “a great deal” or “a lot”). Almost the same number – 84% - feel their co-op work term assisted them with their academic learning (61% “a great deal” or “a lot”). And, 59% of those who took part in a co-op program say this helped lead to their first job (46% “a great deal” or “a lot”).

*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between October 20<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009. For this survey, a national sample of 1,493 adults from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an un-weighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of  $\pm 2.5$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.*

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1. As part of your post-secondary education program or studies, did you ever study in or are you currently studying in a Co-op program? That is, where you did a work term as part of the program.

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Total Canadian Population</b>                  |            |
| <b>Yes</b>  | <b>13%</b> |
| <b>No</b>   | <b>63%</b> |
| <b>Not sure</b>                                   | <b>3%</b>  |
| <b>Don't know what Co-op program is</b>           | <b>5%</b>  |
| <b>Didn't pursue post-secondary studies</b>       | <b>17%</b> |
|   |            |
| <b>Among those with Post-Secondary Experience</b> |            |
| <b>Yes</b>  | <b>17%</b> |
| <b>No</b>   | <b>83%</b> |

2. Knowing what you know now about your education and/or work experience, would you have liked to study in a Co-op program?

|                             |            |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| <b>Answered "No" to Q.1</b> |            |
| <b>Yes</b>                  | <b>50%</b> |
| <b>No</b>                   | <b>23%</b> |
| <b>Not sure</b>             | <b>27%</b> |

- 3.

4. To what degree, if any, did your Co-op work term do each of the following?

| Answered "Yes" to Q.1   |              |       |          |               |            |            |
|---|--------------|-------|----------|---------------|------------|------------|
|   | A great deal | A lot | Somewhat | Not very much | Not at all | Don't Know |
| Influence your decision about what career you would pursue        | 38%          | 25%   | 16%      | 12%           | 8%         | 2%         |
| Lead to your first job  | 32%          | 14%   | 13%      | 12%           | 26%        | 3%         |
| Improve your integration into the workplace when you started work | 43%          | 19%   | 21%      | 10%           | 4%         | 2%         |
| Assist you in your academic learning                              | 39%          | 22%   | 23%      | 10%           | 4%         | 2%         |