



The Student Employment Experience (SEE)

A Research Report from the
2022 Student Life Survey

Center for the Study of Student Life

June 2022



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

This report compares the experiences of employed students enrolled at The Ohio State University's Columbus campus, based on location of employment, including the number of jobs worked, reasons for employment, hours worked and wages. Students who reported working on campus through the Student Employment Experience (SEE students), students who worked on campus but not through SEE (non-SEE students) and students employed outside the university (off campus students) were included in this report. The Student Employment Experience (SEE) is a program through the Office of Student Life that communicates expectations for student employee growth and development so that managers can be active participants in developing student employees. Students employed through SEE are led, by their supervisors, to reflect on what they have learned through their employment and how that can be connected to both class work and future careers. Data for this report are from the 2022 Student Life Survey. In January 2022, a sample of 6,741 undergraduate students were invited to take the survey, and 14.4% responded ($n = 970$). The sample for this report was limited to the 422 students who indicated that they were employed. Data were weighted to be representative of the Ohio State Columbus campus population.

KEY FINDINGS

- **50.1%** of employed respondents were employed on campus, while **49.9%** were employed off campus
- Students were asked to report various reasons for seeking employment
 - SEE students most often reported seeking employment to have extra spending money for activities or purchases not considered basic needs
 - The most common reason for seeking employment reported by non-SEE students and off-campus students was to pay for basic needs
- **68.5%** of surveyed SEE students reported contributing 0-10% of their income towards tuition or fees, which was also true for **65.6%** of non-SEE students and **57.1%** of off campus students
- The average hourly wage among SEE students was **\$10.11**, and they worked an average of **15.9** hours a week
- The average hourly wage among non-SEE students was **\$11.91**, and they worked an average **14.4** hours a week

METHODS

The Student Life Survey is administered annually by the Center for the Study of Student Life to examine trends in student engagement, sense of belonging and satisfaction with the college experience. The 2022 Student Life Survey was administered to a stratified, random sample of 11,701 Ohio State students at the beginning of spring semester (January 2022). This sample comprised 6,741 undergraduate students, 3,795 graduate and 1,100 professional students, all on the Columbus campus. A total of 1,639 students responded to the survey. Three respondents were removed for mischievous or careless response patterns, resulting in a final sample of 1,636 respondents and an overall response rate of 14.0%. The response rate was 14.4% among undergraduate students, 14.5% among graduate students and 10.4% among professional students. This report pertains specifically to undergraduate students. See Appendix A for a summary of undergraduate respondents' demographic and academic characteristics.

Students who reported being employed on campus *or* off campus were included in this report. Those students who reported working multiple jobs but whose jobs were not all in one job category (i.e., SEE, non-SEE or off campus) were excluded from this report. Students who did not respond to the

items used for this report were also removed from analyses, resulting in an unweighted sample size of 422 students for this report. Demographics of the students included in this report did not substantially vary from the overall Student Life Survey undergraduate sample.

A chi-square test of independence was used to determine if agreement with reasons for employment differed between students in different employment contexts. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) determined whether students in different job contexts worked different numbers of hours and earned different hourly wages. Logistic regression was used to calculate odds ratios that determined differences in likelihoods of students in different work contexts endorsing specific reasons for employment.

WEIGHTING PROCEDURE

Responses were weighted to address differences between the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents compared to the general student population at Ohio State in the spring semester of 2022. Weights were adjusted so the survey data are representative of the student population at Ohio State. For example, 63.1% of the survey respondents in the Student Life Survey were female, but 52.3% of the total population at Ohio State was female. The rake weight procedure adjusts for the over-representation of female students in the data to make responses more reflective of the student population, thus making the data more generalizable to Ohio State students. The procedure adjusted the base weight to the demographic data available on the sampling frame using sex, race/ethnicity and student status (i.e., undergraduate, graduate student or professional student). Reported sample sizes for items are unweighted, but percentages associated with item response options are weighted. Weighted and unweighted demographic data for survey respondents is available in the Appendix.

FINDINGS

RECENT EMPLOYMENT

Students who reported working during the school year were asked whether they were currently working in an on- or off-campus job. About an equal number of students worked on campus compared to off campus. 51 students who reported working multiple jobs but whose jobs were not all in one job category (i.e., SEE, non-SEE or off campus) were excluded from this report.

Table 1: Where do you currently work? Select all that apply. (n = 371)

	Spring semester 2022
On-campus	50.1%
Off-campus	49.9%

Students who reported working during the spring 2022 semester were asked how many jobs they held. The majority of students reported holding one job; around one fifth of included students reported working more than 1 job during the spring 2022 semester.

Table 2: How many jobs do you currently work?

	On campus, SEE (n = 63)	On campus, non-SEE (n = 123)	Off campus (n = 185)
1 job	81.7%	80.4%	76.0%
2 jobs	18.3%	18.9%	21.5%
3 or more jobs	0.0%	0.7%	2.4%

Students who reported working in an on-campus role during the spring 2022 semester were asked where in the university they were employed. The most common places of employment on campus for SEE students were the Office of Student Life (96.7% of SEE students) and Facilities, Operations and Development (3.3% of SEE students). The most common places of on campus employment for non-SEE students were the College of Arts and Sciences (16.4% of non-SEE students) and the College of Engineering (16.4% of non-SEE students). Zero SEE-employed students and 22.2% of non-SEE students reported working in a unit or department not listed.

Table 3: Under which units at Ohio State are you currently employed?

	SEE (n = 83)	Non-SEE (n = 149)
Office of Student Life	96.7%	0.0%
College of Arts and Sciences	0.0%	25.9%
College of Engineering	0.0%	16.4%
College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences	0.0%	11.2%
College of Medicine	0.0%	4.9%
University Libraries	0.0%	4.3%
Max M. Fisher College of Business	0.0%	3.5%
Office of Student Academic Success – Office of Academic Enrichment	0.0%	3.9%
Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI)	0.0%	3.1%
John Glenn College of Public Affairs	0.0%	1.4%
College of Education and Human Ecology	1.4%	0.0%
Facilities, Operations, and Development (FOD)	3.3%	0.0%
College of Veterinary Medicine	0.0%	0.7%
College of Public Health	0.0%	0.7%
College of Optometry	0.0%	0.7%
Moritz College of Law	0.0%	0.0%
College of Dentistry	0.0%	0.0%
College of Nursing	0.0%	0.0%
College of Pharmacy	0.0%	0.0%
College of Social Work	0.0%	0.0%
OSU Alumni Association	0.0%	0.0%
A unit or department that is not listed here	0.0%	22.2%

	SEE (n = 83)	Non-SEE (n = 149)
Unsure	0.0%	6.4%

Note. The sum of percentages exceeds 100% because students were allowed to select more than one option.

Students who selected “A unit or department that is not listed here” were provided with a write-in box. See Appendix B for a full list of write-in responses.

REASONS FOR EMPLOYMENT

Employed students were provided with six distinct reasons for why they might work and one write-in option. Percentages of students who said ‘yes’ to each reason are displayed in Table 3 below by employment context.

No differences were observed between students regarding working to pay for tuition, university fees or student loans; for educational or professional development purposes; to gain a sense of meaning or fulfillment or for spending money unrelated to basic needs ($p > .05$). Off campus students were twice as likely to report working to pay for basic needs compared to SEE students ($p < .001$), while SEE students were 1.13 times more likely to report working to pay for basic needs compared to non-SEE students ($p < .01$). SEE students were 2.1 times more likely to report working in order to build relationships with coworkers than off campus students ($p < .001$). No such difference regarding work relationships was observed between SEE and non-SEE students ($p > .05$).

Table 4: Why did you seek employment? Select all that apply.

	On campus, SEE (n = 61)	On campus, non-SEE (n = 123)	Off campus (n = 180)
To pay for tuition, university fees or student loans	45.0%	49.7%	54.4%
To pay for food, rent or other basic needs***	67.9%	63.8%	82.4%
For educational or professional development purposes	30.0%	46.6%	42.7%
To build relationships with coworkers, supervisors or colleagues**	40.0%	34.2%	23.8%
To gain a sense of personal meaning or fulfillment	29.6%	25.5%	25.1%
To have extra spending money for activities or purchases outside of basic needs	72.5%	57.0%	70.0%
Other (please specify)***	1.3%	1.4%	9.2%

Note. The sum of percentages exceeds 100% because students were allowed to select more than one option.

Students who selected “Other” were provided with a write-in box. The most common write-in response, submitted by 27.0% of those who selected “Other,” was to save money for the future. For a full list of write-in responses, see Appendix B.

PAY, HOURS WORKED AND AMOUNT PAID TOWARD TUITION AND FEES

Employed students were asked for the hourly wage associated with their job, the number of hours they worked per week and their own estimate of the percentage of their monthly net pay that they spent on tuition and fees. Those who reported working multiple jobs were asked for the hourly wage and number of working hours for each of their jobs. An average wage for undergraduate students working multiple jobs was computed by dividing the sum of the amount of money they earned across

all jobs per week by the sum of the hours they worked per week for each job. Students who worked more than one job were only included in this analysis if all jobs were in the same category.

Off campus students reported working an average of 21.9 hours per week, the most of the three groups. On average, they worked six more hours per week than SEE students ($p < .001$) and 7.5 hours more than non-SEE students ($p < .001$). SEE students and non-SEE students did not differ meaningfully in the number of hours worked.

Table 5: Hours worked per week by employment type

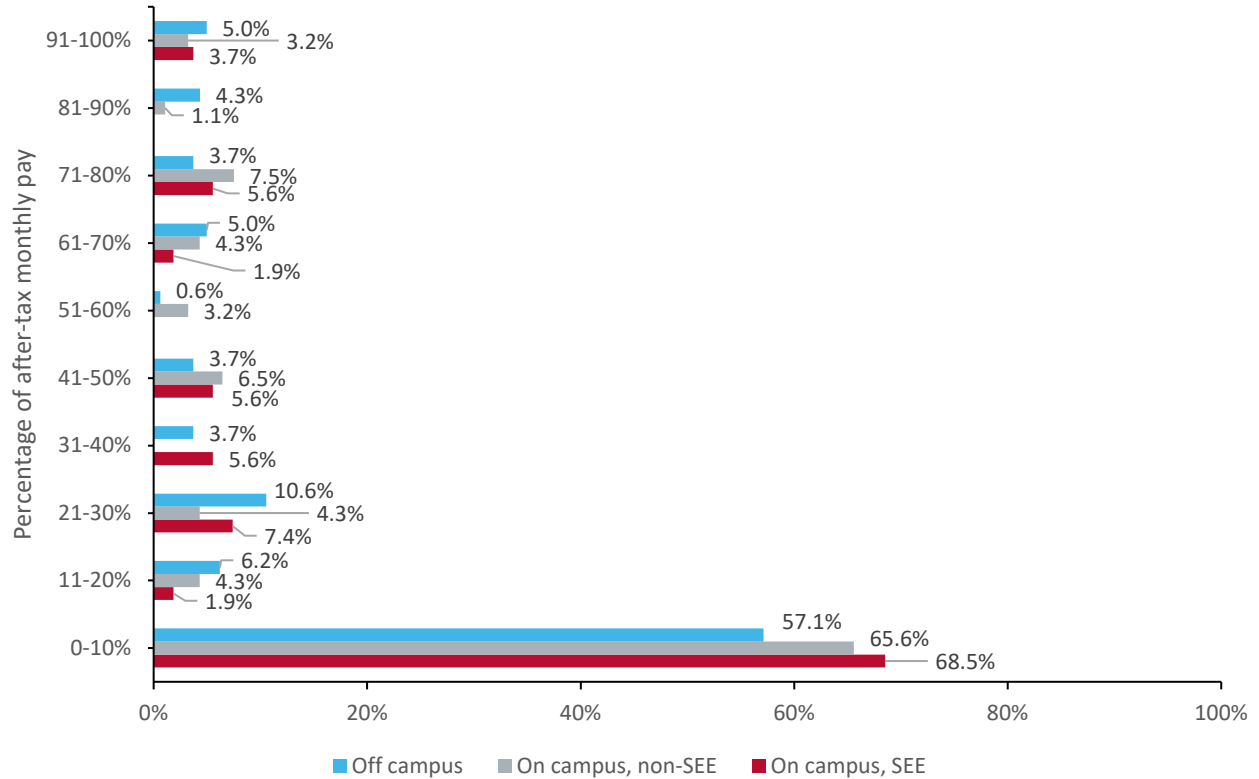
	Mean	Standard Deviation
On campus, SEE ($n = 63$)	15.9	8.6
On campus, non-SEE ($n = 123$)	14.4	8.9
Off campus ($n = 185$)	21.9	12.6

Hourly wage significantly differed between students of different employment types ($p < .001$) as did hours worked per week ($p < .001$). Off campus students reported the highest average wages of \$15.35 per hour, which is \$5.24 more than SEE students ($p < .001$) and \$3.43 more than non-SEE students ($p < .001$). Non-SEE students reported an average hourly wage of \$11.91, which was \$1.80 more than SEE students' average hourly wage of \$10.11 ($p < .001$). Percentage of net monthly pay allocated towards tuition or fees did not differ between employment contexts ($p > .05$).

Table 6: Hourly wage by employment type

	Mean	Standard Deviation
On campus, SEE ($n = 63$)	\$10.11	2.6
On campus, non-SEE ($n = 123$)	\$11.91	4.1
Off campus ($n = 185$)	\$15.35	5.5

Figure 1: Approximate percentage of after-tax monthly pay contributed towards tuition or fees by employment type ($n = 235$)



CONCLUSION

Students work on and off campus jobs in roughly equal numbers. Students in the Student Employment Experience (SEE) worked predominantly, but not exclusively, in the various units of the Office of Student Life, while students who worked on campus but not through SEE worked for the various academic colleges throughout the university.

Students worked while pursuing university education for a variety of reasons. A clear difference was observed between the motivations for SEE students and off campus students. SEE students reported pursuing work in order to develop relationships with their coworkers more often than off campus students, who reported working to pay for basic needs more often than SEE students. Their choices in job environment make sense when one sees that off campus students worked 6 more hours a week and made \$5.24 more an hour on average than SEE students. That extra \$31.44 a week on average can make a difference when attempting to pay for basic needs such as food and rent.

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

	<i>n</i>	Unweighted Percent	Weighted Percent
Total	422		
Academic Level	422		
First-year undergraduate	51	12.1%	11.7%
Second-year undergraduate	109	25.8%	25.7%
Third-year undergraduate	129	30.6%	30.9%
Fourth-year undergraduate	98	23.2%	23.0%
Fifth-year or beyond undergraduate	35	8.3%	8.8%
Gender Identity	422		
Man	119	28.2%	38.1%
Woman	288	68.2%	57.5%
Another identity not listed	13	3.1%	4.0%
Prefer not to say	2	0.5%	0.4%
Gender Congruence	416		
Transgender	5	1.2%	1.4%
Cisgender	405	97.4%	97.0%
Not sure	5	1.2%	1.3%
Prefer not to say	1	0.2%	0.3%
Race/Ethnicity	422		
African American or Black	21	5.0%	7.9%
Asian or Asian American	46	10.9%	10.6%
Latinx or Hispanic	12	2.8%	2.7%
Middle Eastern or Arab American	4	0.9%	0.9%
White or European American	332	78.7%	76.3%
Prefer not to answer	5	1.2%	1.2%
Another identity not listed	2	0.5%	0.4%
Biracial or Multiracial	0	0.0%	0.0%
Sexual Orientation	419		
LGBQ+	125	29.8%	28.6%
Heterosexual/straight	285	68.0%	68.9%
Prefer not to say	9	2.1%	2.5%
Generational Status	422		
First-generation student	103	24.4%	25.1%
Continuing-generation student	319	75.6%	74.9%
Disability Status	419		
Has a disability	54	12.9%	12.5%

	<i>n</i>	Unweighted Percent	Weighted Percent
Does not have a disability	349	83.3%	83.5%
Prefer not to say	16	3.8%	4.0%
Education Route	422		
Campus change	33	7.8%	8.9%
Transfer student	90	21.3%	22.2%
Continuing Ohio State student	299	70.9%	68.9%
Residence	421		
University residence hall	117	27.8%	27.1%
University-owned apartment or house (on- or off-campus)	4	1.0%	1.1%
Sorority or fraternity housing	6	1.4%	1.4%
Off-campus, non-university-owned housing	294	69.8%	70.4%

APPENDIX B: WRITE-IN RESPONSES

What is your reason(s) for not working? Select all that apply.

Other comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Always it's just "help" not works
<input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety prevents me from feeling comfortable doing something new
<input type="checkbox"/> Being an athlete is already quite time consuming unfortunately
<input type="checkbox"/> Due to Covid-19 I was forced to stop my work and decided to go back to school. I am now looking for employment or research at OSU in a field I am studying.
<input type="checkbox"/> I am currently student teaching from 8:00am-4:00pm 5 days a week
<input type="checkbox"/> I dont work at osu or near I work back home
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm getting my websites set up right now.
<input type="checkbox"/> In between jobs.
<input type="checkbox"/> Looking for a job
<input type="checkbox"/> mental illness
<input type="checkbox"/> Not interested in jobs that require employees to wear masks. Will work when that's over
<input type="checkbox"/> Unpaid research position
<input type="checkbox"/> Visa status makes it so I can't work

Under which units at Ohio State are you currently employed?

A unit or department that is not listed here
Spring semester 2022
<input type="checkbox"/> Administrator & Planning (JON covid testing)
<input type="checkbox"/> Bookstore
<input type="checkbox"/> Buckeye Wellness
<input type="checkbox"/> CABS driver (2)
<input type="checkbox"/> Department of Athletics (3)
<input type="checkbox"/> Driving Simulation Lab
<input type="checkbox"/> Heirloom Cafe
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources
<input type="checkbox"/> McCorkle
<input type="checkbox"/> ODEE
<input type="checkbox"/> Office of International Affairs
<input type="checkbox"/> Office of the President
<input type="checkbox"/> OSU James
<input type="checkbox"/> OTDI (OCIO)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other but unwilling to specify for anonymity's sake
<input type="checkbox"/> Post-Grad Research Assistance
<input type="checkbox"/> The James Cancer Hospital

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- The Lantern
 - Schottenstein Center (5)
 - Undergraduate Admissions
 - University Admissions
 - Video Production
 - Wexner Center for the Arts
 - Wexner Medical Center (4)
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Note. Each response corresponds to one respondent, unless otherwise specified.

Why did you seek employment? Select all that apply.

Other comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Car troubles, I have a dog as well ▪ Continued internship, moving to full-time this summer ▪ federal work study ▪ I could save up money ▪ I only worked in the Summer of '21 ▪ I was invited to be a TA for a class I did well in. ▪ I work at my mother's business because she needs the help ▪ I'm national guard - this is a form of service and character building. It also pays tuition. I don't have an hourly rate or how much I work a week to list below for it. ▪ Internship ▪ Saving up for my future ▪ To save money for when I have more bills and responsibility