

the condition of education 2002



INDICATOR 37

Perceived Impact of Work on Postsecondary Learning

The indicator and corresponding tables are taken directly from *The Condition of Education 2002*. Therefore, the page numbers may not be sequential.

Additional information about the survey data and supplementary notes can be found in the full report. For a copy of *The Condition of Education 2002*, visit the NCES web site (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2002025>) or contact ED PUBs at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

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NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement



Learning Opportunities

Perceived Impact of Work on Postsecondary Learning

Undergraduates who work but identify themselves primarily as students are more likely to report that working negatively affects their academic performance as the number of hours worked per week increases.

Eighty percent of undergraduates at 4- and less-than-4-year institutions worked during the 1999–2000 school year: 48 percent of undergraduates identified themselves primarily as students working to meet school expenses and 32 percent as employees who decided to enroll in school. The remaining 20 percent of undergraduates did not work. Students who identified themselves as working to meet expenses worked an average of 26 hours per week, whereas those who considered themselves to be employees worked an average of 40 hours per week (see supplemental table 37-1).

Working can pay for or help offset some costs of schooling, but working can also limit students' opportunities to learn and have a negative effect on their grades. As the number of hours worked per week increased for those who identified themselves as primarily students, so did the likelihood of students indicating that work had a negative impact on their academic performance and that it limited their number of classes, class schedule, access to the library, and class choice. As an illustration, among students working to help pay for school expenses, 16

percent of those working 1 to 15 hours per week in 1999–2000 indicated that working had a negative effect on their grades. Thirty percent of students who worked 16 to 20 hours a week said the same, as did close to half of those who worked 35 or more hours (48 percent).

Of those who considered themselves primarily students, the percentage borrowing to pay for their education decreased as the number of hours worked per week increased. Almost half of students who worked 1 to 15 hours per week borrowed (49 percent), compared with 32 percent of students who worked 35 or more hours. Thus, students appear to be working as a substitute for borrowing.

Other research (NCES 98–088) has found a negative relationship between hours worked and persistence. Consequently, students must find an appropriate balance between working and studying. While borrowing to pay for education can leave students with a large debt, working long hours reduces the amount of time students have for studying and may decrease the likelihood that these students will finish their postsecondary education.

NOTE: Includes students at 4- and less-than-4-year institutions.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:2000).

EFFECTS OF WORKING: Among undergraduates who considered themselves primarily students but worked to help pay for school expenses, the percentage reporting various effects of work on their schooling and the percentage who borrowed, by average hours worked per week: 1999–2000

Hours worked per week	Effects of working					
	Limited number of classes	Limited class schedule	Limited access to library	Reduced class choice	Negative effect on grades	Borrowed to pay for education
Total	38.6	46.1	30.1	32.9	34.6	39.4
1–15	14.5	19.6	12.2	12.1	16.2	48.8
16–20	29.0	37.4	23.3	25.6	30.2	41.3
21–34	41.3	50.7	32.4	35.7	39.9	37.8
35 or more	63.3	70.0	47.9	53.0	47.9	31.7



FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Supplemental Note 1
Supplemental Table 37-1
NCES 98–084,
NCES 98–088

Perceived Impact of Work on Postsecondary Learning

Table 37-1 Percentage distribution of undergraduates according to hours worked per week and average hours worked, by how they identified their primary role, their attendance intensity, and type of institution: 1999–2000

Characteristic	Total	Hours worked per week					Average hours per week*
		Did not work	1–15	16–20	24–34	35 or more	
Total	100.0	19.9	12.0	11.6	17.2	39.3	31.6
Primary role							
Student who works	48.4	0	23.0	21.1	28.7	27.1	25.8
Employee who studies	31.6	0	2.5	4.4	10.6	82.6	40.4
Student only (does not work)	20.0	100.0	0	0	0	0	0
Attendance intensity							
Exclusively full-time	52.3	26.2	18.3	15.3	20.5	19.7	25.5
Exclusively part-time	34.9	11.8	2.7	5.4	10.8	69.3	39.5
Mixed	12.8	16.3	11.4	13.7	21.7	37.0	30.9
Type of institution							
Public 4-year	35.8	22.9	17.0	15.3	19.3	25.5	27.3
Private not-for-profit 4-year	16.0	22.8	25.1	11.6	12.0	28.5	26.5
Public 2-year	48.2	15.8	4.4	9.0	17.1	53.8	36.0

*For those who worked.

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100.0 due to rounding. In all rows, except those related to type of institution, students in types of institutions not shown here are included. See *Supplemental Note 1* for information on primary role/employment status.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES. National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:2000).

Perceived Impact of Work on Postsecondary Learning

Table S37 Standard errors for the percentage reporting various effects of work on their schooling, and the percentage who borrowed, of undergraduates who considered themselves primarily students but worked to help pay for school expenses, by average hours worked per week: 1999–2000

Hours worked per week	Effects of working					Borrowed to pay for education
	Limited number of classes	Limited class schedule	Limited access to library	Reduced class choice	Negative effect on grades	
Total	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.6
1–15	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.9
16–20	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.1
21–34	1.1	1.0	0.8	1.0	1.0	1.0
35 or more	1.0	0.9	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.0

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES. National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:2000).

Perceived Impact of Work on Postsecondary Learning

Table S37-1 Standard errors for the percentage distribution of undergraduates according to hours worked per week and average hours worked, by how they identified their primary role, their attendance intensity, and type of institution: 1999–2000

Characteristic	Total	Hours worked per week				35 or more	Average hours per week
		Did not work	1–15	16–20	24–34		
Total	(t)	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.2
Primary role							
Student who works	0.5	(t)	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.2
Employee who studies	0.5	(t)	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.2
Student only (does not work)	0.4	(t)	(t)	(t)	(t)	(t)	(t)
Attendance intensity							
Exclusively full-time	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.2
Exclusively part-time	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.2
Mixed	0.3	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.8	1.1	0.3
Type of institution							
Public 4-year	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.2
Private not-for-profit 4-year	0.4	0.7	0.9	0.5	0.6	1.2	0.5
Public 2-year	0.8	0.7	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.2

†Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES. National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:2000).