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## MANAGEMENT & CAREERS

# For English Majors, a Formula for Employment After Graduation

One good GPA plus at least two internships equals a job, research suggests



The odds of getting a job improve for students who have three or more internships on their résumés before graduating, according to research. PHOTO: SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

By *Kelsey Gee*

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Landing a good job after college can feel like a daunting process, but new research suggests the formula is pretty simple. Get excellent grades and take as many internship experiences as possible.

A team of researchers at Mount Holyoke College analyzed the career outcomes of around 1,800 students who graduated from the South Hadley, Mass.-based liberal arts school from 2013 to 2015. They set out to determine which activities most closely corresponded with improved odds in the job market. Unsurprisingly, a high grade point average—above 3.75—is strongly related to job market success.

In addition to exceptional grades, the study, published this week by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, also found that students who spent two summers working in internship positions were significantly more likely to have jobs six months after receiving their diploma, compared with recent graduates with just one, and twice as likely to be employed than those with none. The odds of getting a job improve further for students who had three or more internships on their résumés before graduating.

Roughly 61% of students across the nation in 2017 had an internship during college, according to a separate survey of around 23,000 students by NACE. Even one internship experience can improve the chances that a student will quickly find work or gain admission to a graduate program, said Liz Lierman, Mount Holyoke's director of career services and a co-author of the study.

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More is better when it comes to internships, said Ms. Lierman, because accumulating a variety of work experiences deepens students' skill sets, and

helps them rule out careers and jobs that aren't a good fit.

"We see students coming back from internships with a better understanding of whether or not they want to continue in a field, but also knowing what skills they need to build" to secure a job, said Ms. Lierman.

The study didn't examine the effect a student's major or career interests had on his or her chances of gaining multiple internships, but Ms. Lierman said she suspects there are industry differences in the number of internships available to college students. Mount Holyoke launched a program in 2014 to ensure funding for all students who secure educational internships, which she said has correlated to an uptick in the number of students graduating with multiple experiences on their résumés.

Other colleges and universities have made internships and cooperative educational programs a graduation requirement for students. At Endicott College in Beverly, Mass., where students are required to complete at least three internships, more than 90% of students in each class land jobs in their field of study after graduation, said Laura Rossi-Le, undergraduate dean.

"That's very reassuring to parents, but importantly it also means that students are able to make connections between what they're learning in the classroom and the real world," said Ms. Rossi-Le.

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