

UW-MADISON UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC ENHANCEMENT EXPERIENCES ANNUAL UPDATE¹

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How many of our undergraduates have studied abroad? How many worked with faculty members on research projects? How many ever lived in one of the residential learning communities? Questions about academic enhancement experiences like these are frequent. The purpose of this study is to show how many of our graduates participated in these types of academic enhancement experiences. Ideally, every student will be able to take advantage of at least one of these opportunities. **Results measuring the experiences that are identifiable through official records show that more than 4 in 5 (84%) bachelors degree recipients in 2005-06 had at least one academic enhancement experience, up from 69% in 2002-03 when we first started tracking these experiences. Fifty-seven percent (57%) had two or more.**

DEFINING AND QUANTIFYING ACADEMIC ENHANCEMENT EXPERIENCES

Linking experiences inside and outside the classroom, increasing student exposure to diversity, applying classroom knowledge to real-life experiences, conducting research with faculty members, working with faculty members in small groups, exploring individual areas of interest and living in a residential learning community are all believed to affect many outcome measures of interest to the higher education community such as persistence, degree attainment, interest in post-baccalaureate study, marketability after graduation, preparation for work and educational satisfaction².

This study's purpose is to measure those experiences that are objectively quantifiable through student academic records, course descriptions/titles, or other official records. The number of students having these types of experiences is likely higher than those able to be counted for this study because not all such experiences are part of a student's official record.

For the purposes of this study, "academic enhancement experiences" are defined as:

- Studying abroad
- Living in a residential learning community
- Participating in a FIG (first-year interest group)
- Taking a service-learning course
- Having an undergraduate research experience – measured by participation in the Research Fellows, Research Scholars, McNair, or Med Scholars programs, or taking a research or thesis course
- Participating in an "internship" type experience for academic credit
- Working closely with a faculty member in a seminar course, honors course, or independent study (including Hilldale Fellowship and Holstrom Scholarship recipients).

Specific definitions of the activities measured and the methodology used can be found at the end of this report.

¹ See www.apa.wisc.edu/CLH/2005_Academic_Enhancement_Experiences_Report.pdf for the 2005 Academic Enhancement Report.

² Astin, A. *What Matters in College*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.

PERCENT OF GRADUATES WITH ACADEMIC ENHANCEMENT EXPERIENCES

In the 2005-06 academic year, 6,256 students completed undergraduate degrees. Of these graduates, 84% had at least one academic enhancement experience as defined for this analysis. Fifty-seven percent (57%) had two or more such experiences.

**Table 1
Number of Academic Enhancement Experiences for Bachelors Degree Recipients in 2005-06**

	Percent of Graduates by School/College									
	ALS	BUS	EDU	EGR	HEC	L&S	MPH	NUR	PHM	Total
Zero	12	24	7	18	3	19	0	0	0	16
One	26	33	20	35	14	27	2	36	0	27
Two	25	22	36	28	33	24	26	30	50	26
Three	22	13	23	12	32	17	50	22	21	18
Four	11	6	11	6	11	9	17	9	29	9
Five or more	4	2	3	1	7	4	6	3	0	4
<i>Total one or more</i>	88	76	93	82	97	81	100	100	100	84
Total Degrees	527	606	509	631	249	3,518	54	148	14	6,256

Over the last four academic years, the percentage of graduates with at least one of these academic enhancement experiences has increased from 69% to 84%. The percentage of graduates having none of these experiences decreased from 31% to 16% over these same years. An increasing percentage of graduates are having more than one of these experiences. Over the last four years, the percentage of graduates with more than one academic enhancement experience has risen from 34% to 57%.

**Table 1A
Trend in Number of Academic Enhancement Experiences for Bachelors Degree Recipients**

	Percent of Graduates by Year			
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Zero	31	27	20	16
One	35	28	28	27
Two	22	22	24	26
Three	8	15	16	18
Four	3	6	8	9
Five or more	1	3	4	4
<i>Total one or more</i>	69	73	80	84
<i>Total two or more</i>	34	46	52	57
Total Degrees	6,102	6,144	6,289	6,256

TYPES OF ACADEMIC ENHANCEMENT EXPERIENCES

The most frequent academic enhancement experience of these types (shown in bold) is taking at an independent study course. Forty-three percent (43%) of graduates took at least one independent study course and 38% took at least one seminar course. Twenty-five percent (25%) took at least one honors course and 22% had some kind of field work experience (internship, practicum, co-op etc.).

Thirteen percent (13%) of graduates lived in a residential learning community at some point as an undergraduate and 13% had at least one type of undergraduate research experience. Sixteen percent (16%) of graduates in 2005-06 studied abroad through a UW-Madison program and five percent (5%) studied abroad through an academic program at another institution (and transferred credit back to UW-Madison). This is the first year that we have measured the degree of participation in first-year interest groups because this is the first graduating class for whom FIGs were generally available when the majority of them first enrolled as freshmen. Three percent (3%) of graduates can be identified as having participated in the early years of the FIG program.

There are differences by school/college in participation rates for the various academic enhancement experiences. For example, graduates receiving degrees from the School of Business had high study abroad participation rates (23%) but the lowest participation rates in seminar courses (10%). Graduates receiving degrees from the School of Education had high rates of participation in field work (74%) but lower participation in undergraduate research (2%).

Table 2
Types of Academic Enhancement Experiences for Bachelors Degree Recipients in 2005-06

	Percent of Graduates by School/College									
	ALS	BUS	EDU	EGR	HEC	L&S	MPH	NUR	PHM	Total
Study Abroad (Unduplicated)	13	23	12	10	21	25	4	7	7	21
UW-Madison Program	11	19	10	10	14	18	4	7	0	16
Other Institution's Program	2	5	2	0	8	7	0	1	7	5
Residential Learning Comm.	14	8	10	15	4	14	6	11	14	13
First-Year Interest Grp. (FIG)	1	1	5	0	5	3	2	2	7	3
Service Learning Course	14	21	18	3	49	8	57	4	0	12
Research Exp. (Unduplic.)	11	30	2	3	8	15	2	19	0	13
Research "Programs"*	5	1	1	1	0	3	0	3	0	2
Research Course	3	28	1	<1	6	6	2	6	0	7
Thesis Course	5	0	0	1	2	7	0	11	0	5
Field Work (Unduplicated)	18	14	74	42	74	4	98	100	0	22
Co-op	<1	0	0	42	0	<1	0	0	0	4
Student Teaching	0	0	50	0	2	1	0	0	0	4
Practicum	4	<1	69	0	2	1	98	100	0	10
Internship	15	14	6	0	72	3	2	0	0	8
Honors Course	27	11	10	18	4	32	15	22	50	25
Independent Study	60	32	41	46	53	41	65	24	100	43
Seminar Course	49	10	46	19	38	43	50	22	100	38
Total Degrees	527	606	509	631	249	3,518	54	148	14	6,256

*Research programs includes Research Fellows, Research Scholars, McNair and Medical Scholars

Over the past four years, with one exception, participation in each of these activities has increased. In other words, the overall increase in the proportion of graduates with at least one academic enhancement experience is not being driven by increases in one particular experience. The only exception is a slight decrease in the proportion of graduates participating in independent study. Participation in independent study has ranged from 36% in 2003-04 to 46% in 2004-05 with the 2005-06 percentage at 43%.

Table 2A
Trend in Types of Academic Enhancement Experiences for Bachelors Degree Recipients

	Percent of Graduates by Academic Year			
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Study Abroad (Unduplicated)	14	14	18	21
UW-Madison Program	14	14	14	16
Other Institution's Program	*	*	4	5
Residential Learning Community	11	11	12	13
First-Year Interest Grp. (FIG)	*	*	*	3
Service Learning Course	4	6	8	12
Research Exp. (Unduplicated)	8	10	11	13
Research "Programs"	2	2	2	2
Research Course	3	5	7	7
Thesis Course	5	5	5	5
Field Work (Unduplicated)	20	19	20	22
Co-op	5	4	4	4
Student Teaching	3	4	2	4
Practicum	7	9	8	10
Internship	8	7	8	8
Honors Course	18	19	22	25
Independent Study	41	35	46	43
Seminar Course	32	34	35	38
Total one or more experiences	69	73	80	84
Total Degrees	6,102	6,144	6,289	6,256

* Notation of study abroad experiences at other institutions was recently added to students' official academic records and first evident for graduates in 2004-05. The extent to which students participated in study abroad at other institutions prior to 2004-05 is not known. Participation in a FIG was first measured for the 2005-06 graduates. This is the first group of graduates who had FIGs available to them when the majority of them were freshmen.

GRADUATES WITH ONE ACADEMIC ENHANCEMENT EXPERIENCE

The graduates with one and only one type of academic enhancement experience were most likely to have taken an independent study course (27%). The next most common experiences for graduates with one experience was taking a seminar course (19%) and field work or studying abroad (16% each).

The most common experiences by school/college are highlighted in **bold** and show differences by school/college. Even though independent study is the most common sole experience overall, CALS is the only school/college where it is the most common sole experience. The School of Business is the only school where research (coursework) is the most common sole experience. In both Letters and Science and Medicine/Public Health, taking a seminar course is the most common sole experience. For all others, a field work experience is most common.

Table 3
Bachelors Degree Recipients in 2005-06 with One Academic Enhancement Experience

	Percent of Graduates by School/College									
	ALS	BUS	EDU	EGR	HEC	L&S	MPH	NUR	PHM	Total
Study Abroad	3	6	6	3	0	14	0	0	---	16
Resid. Learning Community	6	4	1	5	3	5	0	0	---	5
First-Year Interest Grp. (FIG)	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	---	1
Service Learning Course	12	18	4	2	3	4	0	0	---	6
Research Experience	2	32	0	1	6	3	0	0	---	6
Field Work	7	20	52	40	49	2	0	100	---	16
Honors Course	7	6	1	10	0	15	0	0	---	11
Independent Study	48	10	35	32	37	26	0	0	---	27
Seminar Course	15	1	1	7	3	30	100	0	---	19
Total with One Experience	136	201	101	220	35	936	1	54	---	1,684

ACADEMIC ENHANCEMENT PARTICIPATION FOR TARGETED MINORITY AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

This is the first year we have looked specifically at the percentage of targeted minority students and transfer students who participated in academic enhancement activities. Ideally, targeted minority students would participate in these activities in at least the same proportion as non-targeted students. A recent report on the 2006 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) results shows that participation in these types of activities was particularly beneficial in terms of retention and degree attainment for minority and other underrepresented students³.

Because transfer students have been at UW-Madison for less time than students who started as freshmen and some of these experiences are offered primarily to freshmen, we do not necessarily expect graduates who started as transfer students to participate at the same rate. Transfer students have been the focus of several recent initiatives to improve and streamline the transfer experience. Measuring participation rates for transfer students will give one benchmark against which to measure the effects of these initiatives.

Table 4 shows the academic enhancement participation rates of targeted minority students compared to non-targeted students. Eighty-three percent (83%) of non-targeted bachelor's degree recipients participated in at least one of the academic enhancement experiences measured in this report. A higher proportion of targeted minority degree recipients, 89%, participated in at least one of these experiences.

³ Indiana University, Center for Postsecondary Research. 2006. *Engaged Learning: Fostering Success for All Students*. School of Education. Indiana University Bloomington.

Table 4
Bachelor's Degree Recipients in 2005-06 with at Least One Academic Enhancement Experience
By Targeted Minority Status

	Number of Graduates		Percent of Graduates with at Least One Academic Enhancement Experience	
	Non-Targeted	Targeted*	Non-Targeted	Targeted*
ALS	507	20	87	100
BUS	597	9	76	100
EDU	485	24	93	88
EGR	608	23	81	91
HEC	235	14	97	100
L&S	3,311	207	81	86
MPH	52	2	100	100
NUR	141	7	100	100
PHM	14	0	100	---
Total	5,950	306	83	89

*Note: Targeted minorities include African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian and Southeast Asian students. Non-targeted students include all other groups – White, International, and non-targeted Asian students as well as those who chose not to report a race/ethnicity at the time of application.

Table 5 shows the academic enhancement participation rates of students who started as new freshmen at UW-Madison compared to those who started as transfer students. Overall, 85% of freshman starts participated in at least one academic enhancement experience. Overall, transfer students participated at slightly lower rates – 77%.

Table 5
Bachelor's Degree Recipients in 2005-06 with at Least One Academic Enhancement Experience
By Type of Entrance to UW-Madison (Freshman or Transfer)

	Number of Graduates		Percent of Graduates with at Least One Academic Enhancement Experience	
	Freshman Start	Transfer Start	Freshman Start	Transfer Start
ALS	420	107	89	84
BUS	492	114	78	69
EDU	388	121	95	87
EGR	510	121	84	71
HEC	194	55	97	98
L&S	2,825	693	83	73
MPH	35	19	100	100
NUR	91	57	100	100
PHM	9	5	100	100
Total	4,964	1,292	85	77

DEFINITION OF TERMS AND TECHNICAL NOTES

Graduates with multiple occurrences of the same experience are counted once in all of these tables. For example, a graduate who did two internships would be in the “one experience” category. A graduate who did 2 internships and also studied abroad would be in the “2 experiences” category.

Study Abroad

Definition: Bachelors degree recipients who had a record indicating at least one semester abroad. Until the 2004-05 academic year, only students who studied abroad through UW-Madison-sponsored programs were included. Starting in 2004-05, we were able to identify students who studied abroad through programs at other institutions. The 5% of graduates with records indicating a non-UW-Madison abroad experience is likely underreported because some 2005-06 graduates may have studied abroad before the procedures to capture these activities were implemented.

In the 2005-06 Undergraduate Survey conducted in spring 2006, students were asked if they had ever studied abroad. Almost 18% of seniors replied “yes”. This percentage is lower than the 21% of graduates who can be identified as studying abroad through our own records. One reason for this discrepancy is that students who were abroad at the time the sample was drawn and/or when the survey was administered were unavailable to be surveyed.

Source: UW.RETENTION_SEMESTER_HISTORY data view (UW-Madison programs). ISIS table U_SR_TSCRPT_TXT (non UW-Madison programs).

Residential Learning Community

Definition: Bachelors degree recipients who had a University Housing record indicating they had ever lived in one of the following residential learning communities: Bradley Learning Community, Chadbourne Residential College, International Learning Community, Multicultural Learning Community, Women in Science and Engineering (WISE).

For the 2005-06 graduates, we identify 13% of graduates who ever lived in a residential learning community. This is lower than the almost 17% of seniors who responded to the 2005-06 Undergraduate Survey that they had lived in a residential learning community.

Source: Division of University Housing records.

Service Learning Course

Definition: Bachelors degree recipients who ever took a course (or course section) that was indicated to have some kind of service learning, volunteer, community service or other such experience.

Source: ISIS CLASS_NOTES Table, UW.RETENTION_COURSE_HISTORY data view.

Comments: This only encompasses *courses* identified as having a service learning component – there are numerous non-course-based opportunities for students to engage in service learning and/or community service. In this analysis, 12% of bachelors degree recipients can be identified as having taken such a class.

There is no searchable field in the Timetable for service learning courses. Students are notified of a service-learning component in the class footnote section of the Timetable and it is this field that was used to develop the list of service learning courses for this analysis. There are several examples of courses that are believed to have a service learning component that are not identified as such in the Timetable (such as all of the Engineering ePIC courses). For this reason, we supplemented the list of courses identified in the Timetable with additional courses identified by the Morgridge Center for Public Service. The Provost’s Office and Morgridge Center for Public Service are working with the Registrar’s Office to determine the feasibility of implementing a better means of identifying service learning courses for students. Since service learning courses often have a significant time commitment outside of class, it is important that students understand this commitment when registering. Furthermore, students who are

seeking a service learning course currently must look through the Timetable for notes about classes – there is no searchable field. Once a better system of identifying these courses is implemented, the analytical opportunities for examining service-learning course participation will also be enhanced.

For the 2005-06 graduates, we identify 12% of graduates who have taken a class with a service learning component. This is much lower than the almost 31% of seniors who responded to the 2005-06 Undergraduate Survey that they had lived taken such a course. Some of the differences in responses might be due to differing understandings of what constitutes a service learning course (i.e. a direct tie to the curricular content of the course) but another likely reason is that this course attribute is not identifiable in the Timetable and therefore not included in this analysis.

Undergraduate Research Experience (non course-based)

Definition: Bachelors degree recipients who have a student group record showing participation in one of the many undergraduate opportunities for research with faculty members outside of class. The groups included in this analysis were participants in the Undergraduate Research Fellows, Undergraduate Research Scholars, McNair, and Medical Scholars programs.

Source: <http://www.provost.wisc.edu/undergradresearch/>, UW.RETENTION_STDNT_GROUP_HIST data view

Comments: In this analysis, 2% of bachelors degree recipients can be identified as having such an experience. This is much lower than the 21% of seniors that reported in the 2005-06 Undergraduate Survey that they had worked on a research project with a faculty member outside of class. Many of the experiences that students may have identified on the survey are the types of experiences that are not part of their official student records such as student hourly employment in research labs.

Undergraduate Research Course (non-thesis)

Definition: Bachelors degree recipients who ever took a course with the term “research” in the title/description where research/lab opportunities with faculty members are highlighted.

Source: UW.RETENTION_COURSE_HISTORY data view

Undergraduate Thesis Course

Definition: Bachelors degree recipients who ever took a course identified by a course type of “independent” with “thesis” in the course title. These are generally courses numbered 681, 682, 691 and 692.

Source: UW.RETENTION_COURSE_HISTORY data view

Field Work

Definition: Bachelors degree recipients who ever took a course with the term internship, co-op, practicum etc, in the title/description and courses of this nature identified by a course type of “field work” in the Timetable.

Source: UW.RETENTION_COURSE_HISTORY data view.

Comments: In this analysis, 22% of bachelors degree recipients can be identified as having taken such a class. This is much lower than the 46% of seniors who reported on the 2005-06 Undergraduate Survey that they had had such as experience. The Undergraduate Survey question did not specifically ask about “for credit” experiences and this may be one reason for the difference. Students who have paid internships in the summer may still identify these as such when asked even though they are not often part of their official records.

Independent Study Course

Definition: Bachelors degree recipients who ever took a course identified by the section type as independent study (except those with "thesis" in the name and those that are really field work). These are generally courses that end in "89", "98" and "99" including 100 and 200-level courses. Some internships and co-op sections are coded as independent study rather than field work. Regardless of how coded, all internships and other field work have been included in those categories and not in independent study.

Source: UW.RETENTION_COURSE_HISTORY data view.

Seminar Course

Definition: Bachelors degree recipients who ever took a course identified by the section type as a seminar.

Source: UW.RETENTION_COURSE_HISTORY data view.

Honors Course

Definition: Bachelors degree recipients who ever took a course section for honors credit. These sections were identified by the presence of an "8" as the middle digit of the course or section number.

Source: UW.RETENTION_COURSE_HISTORY data view

First-year Interest Group

Definition: Bachelors degree recipients who have a student-group record indicating participation in a FIG. The student groups that indicate FIG participation include "FIG 2001 Students", "FIG 2002 Students" and "FIG 2003 students".

Source UW.RETENTION_STDNT_GROUP_HIST data view