



Annual Survey 2016-17

Introduction

Interns Australia is the support and advocacy body for Australians undertaking internships and work placements.

We passionately believe that internships can and should be a mutually beneficial opportunity for Australian workers and employers: assisting young Australians' transition from study to work through vocational training, and assisting employers' on-boarding capacities and talent retention.

Unfortunately, at the time of the release of this Survey, our vision is not the reality. Interns Australia Annual Survey 2016-17 is delivered at a time of growing awareness of the problem with Australia's culture of unpaid internships: a parade of internship-related wage scandals,¹ scathing Departmental reports on widespread exploitation of interns,² and a Commonwealth government intent on making unpaid internships a reality for Australia's poorest workers,³ reflect a labour market and industrial relations system requiring urgent reform.⁴

It is in this context that we release the only grassroots research being conducted into Australian workers' quantitative and qualitative experiences as interns.

¹ Ben Schneiders, 'Grand prix under fire for offering 'opportunity' to work for nothing' *The Age* (25 March 2017); Anna Patty 'More than half of young Australians do unpaid work' *The Canberra Times* (18 January 2017).

² Commonwealth Department of Employment, 'Unpaid Work Experience in Australia: prevalence, nature and impact' (December 2016).

³ Clara Jordan-Baird, 'All work, no pay: Turnbull's flawed plan for Australia's intern army' *The Sydney Morning Herald* (23 October 2016).

⁴ Interns Australia, submission to the Productivity Commission Review of the Workplace Relations Framework (September 2015).

Survey respondents and methodology

There were 184 respondents (63% women, 35% men, 2% non-binary), with almost all respondents being between the ages of 20-29, and almost all respondents having a bachelor's or master's degree. The survey included quantitative and qualitative questions relating to respondents' attitudes towards and experience of internships. The survey was advertised on the Interns Australia website, sent out to the Interns Australia mailing list and advertised on social media including Facebook and Twitter.

Highlights from the survey

1. 75% of respondents believed that they performed productive work as an intern that added value to the organisation.
2. 67% of respondents did not receive remuneration of any kind for their internship, and 62% of respondents' finances were negatively affected by their internship.
3. 68% of respondents believe that performing an internship plays a very important role in gaining a graduate role in their preferred industry, yet 82% of respondents' internships did not lead to a job with the same organisation.
4. 87% of respondents believed that interns who were not working for a charity, non-for profit or for University credit should be entitled to be paid a minimum wage.
5. 92% of respondents believe greater efforts need to be made to protect interns' rights at work, and 79% of respondents believe University-sponsored internships need to be better regulated.

About the researchers

Gemma Briffa is in her final year studying an LLB (Hons) and has an undergraduate degree in psychology. She currently works at the Australian Labour Law Association and is undertaking labour law research for Monash University. She has worked as a research assistant for a criminal law barrister and has worked in an administrative capacity for a union.

Jack Kenchington-Evans is a practising lawyer and union official. He has worked in labour law in private legal practice, has worked for unions in advocacy and research roles, and has delivered seminars and papers on labour law and labour markets.

Contact details

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Media enquiries: 0432 905 793

Respondents were asked their gender and age:

Gender	%
Man	37%
Woman	61%
Non-binary	2%
Total	100%

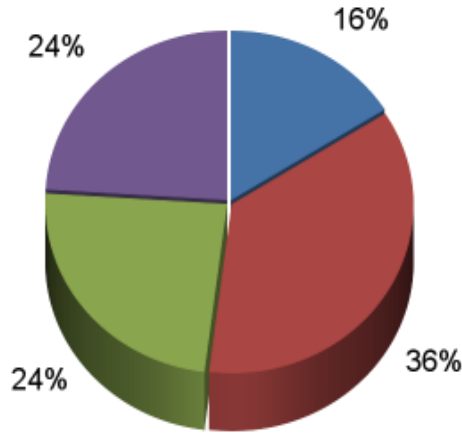
Age	%
Under 18 years old	0%
18-21	36%
22-25	44%
26-29	17%
30-34	3%
34+	1%
Total	100%

Regarding the formal arrangements of their internships, respondents provided the following information:

Question	Yes	No
Did you receive university course credit for the internship?	29%	71%
Did you complete the internship with a charity or not-for-profit organisation?	19%	81%
Did your internship lead to a job with the the same organisation?	31%	69%

The follow graph shows the number of internships respondents have completed

0 1 2 3+

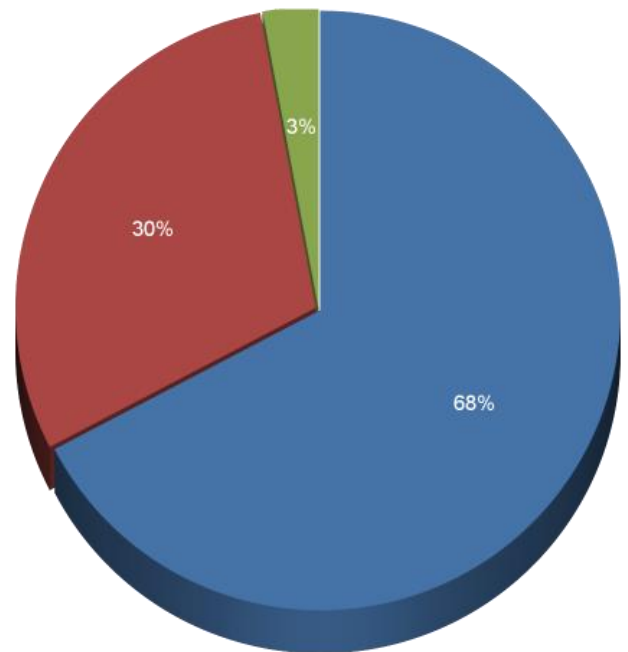


Answer	%
0	16%
1	36%
2	24%
3+	24%
Total	100%

The following graph indicates the degree of importance respondents believe performing an internship plays in getting a graduate-level job in their preferred industry

Very important As important as other forms Not very important

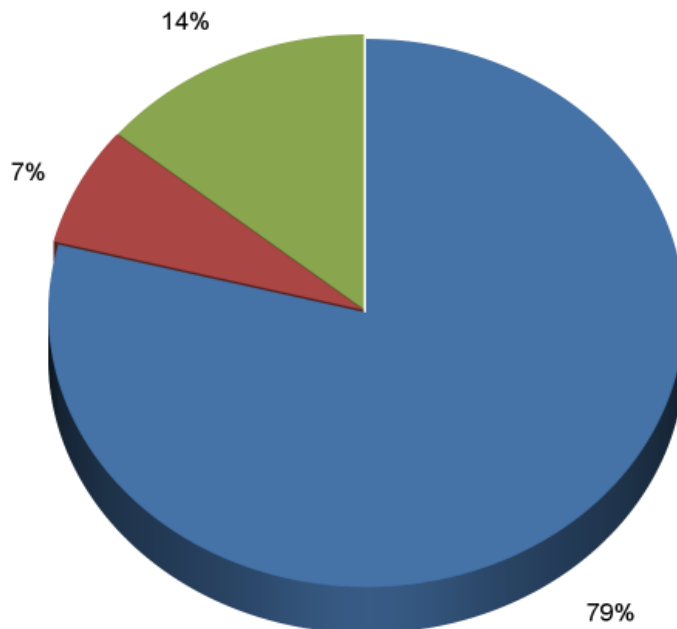
Answer	%
Very important	68%
Only as important as other forms of work experience and academic performance	30%
Not very important	3%
Total	100%



There is currently no regulator overseeing the quality of internships completed as part of a university course. Respondents were asked: should university-related internships be better regulated regarding their quality and learning outcomes?

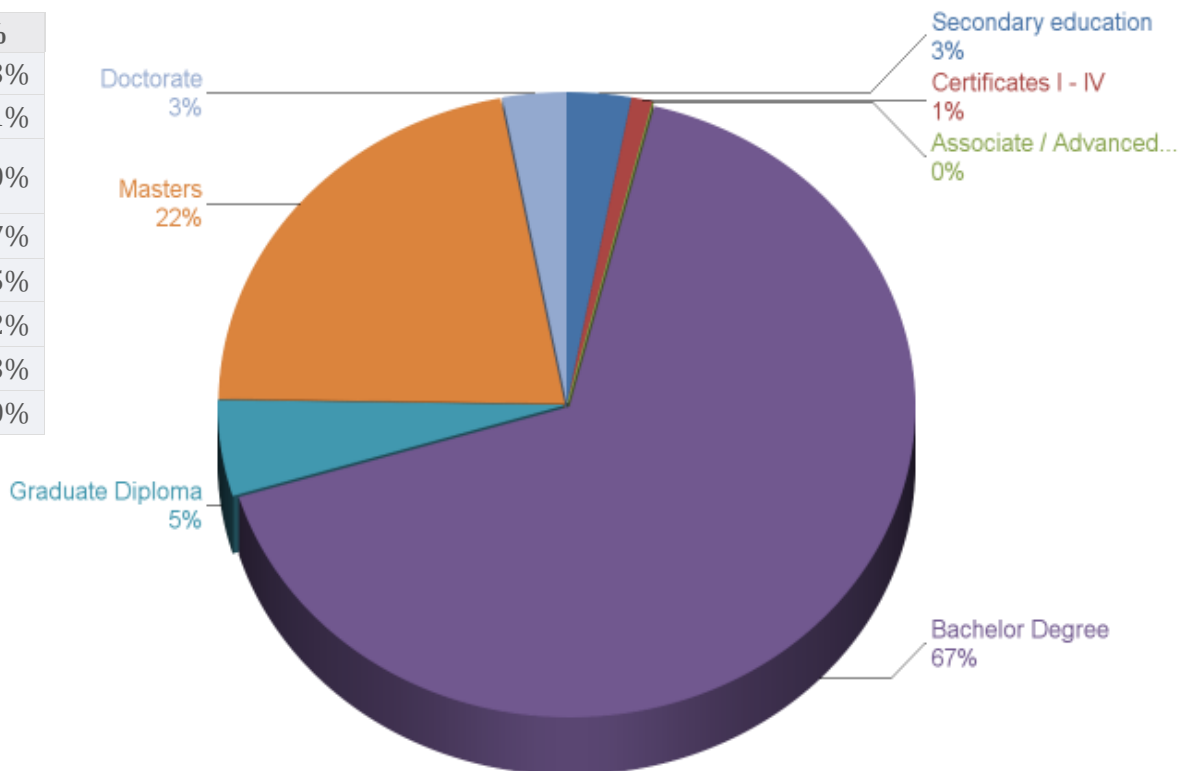
■ Yes ■ No ■ Not sure

Answer	%
Yes	79%
No	7%
Not sure	14%
Total	100%



The following graph indicates respondents' highest level of education:

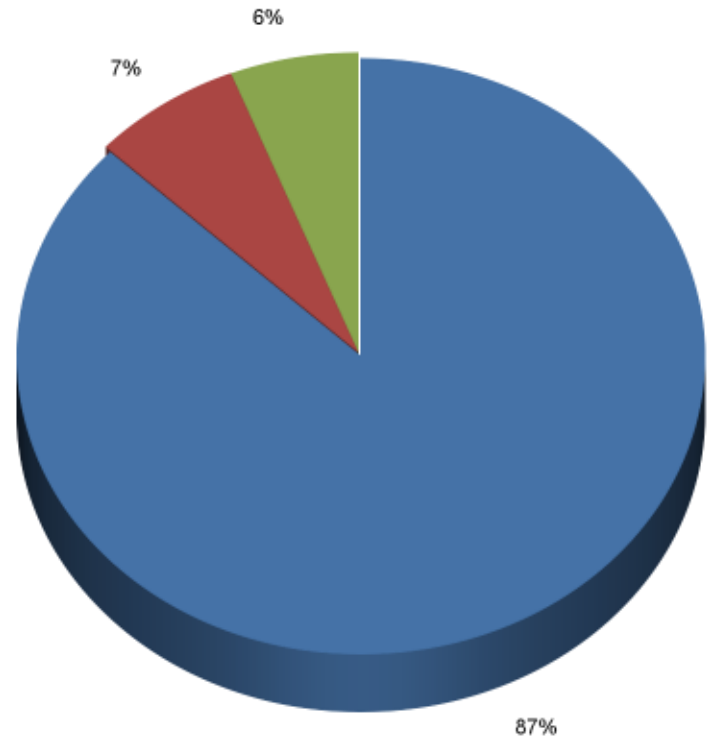
Answer	%
Secondary education	3%
Certificates I - IV	1%
Associate Degree / Advanced Diploma	0%
Bachelor Degree	67%
Graduate Diploma	5%
Masters	22%
Doctorate	3%
Total	100%



Respondents were advised that unless an intern receives course credit, or is a volunteer for a charity, interns must be paid their industry's minimum wage. They were asked if it fair that most interns must be paid a minimum wage:

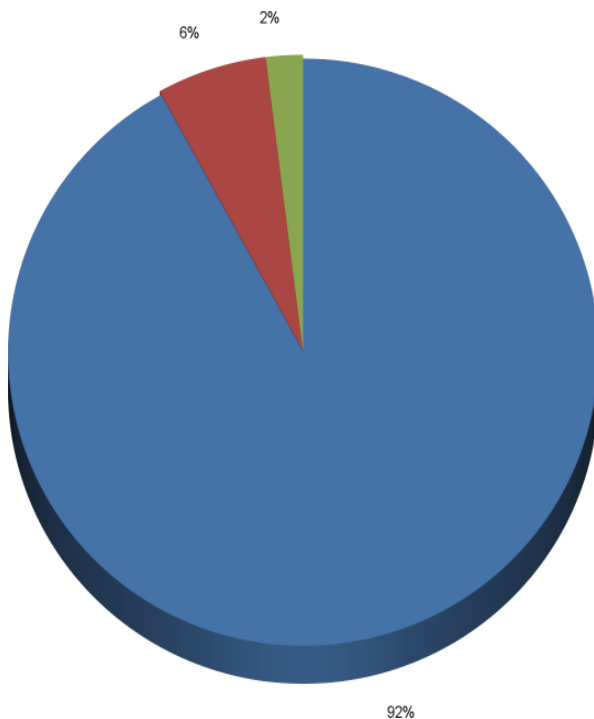
■ Yes ■ No ■ Not sure

Answer	%
Yes	87%
No	7%
Not sure	6%
Total	100%



Respondents were informed that Interns Australia's research indicates that, on average, interns are unlawfully unpaid or underpaid \$6,000 per internship. Respondents were asked if they believe greater efforts need to be made to protect interns' rights at work:

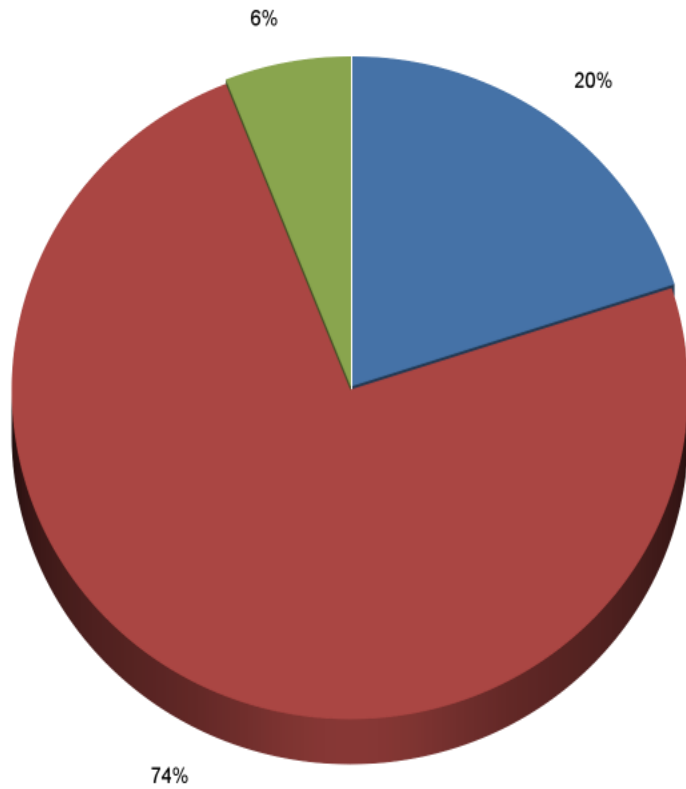
■ Yes ■ No ■ Not sure



Answer	%
Yes	92%
No	6%
Not sure	2%
Total	100%

Respondents were asked if they believe unpaid internships are fair:

■ Yes ■ No ■ Not sure

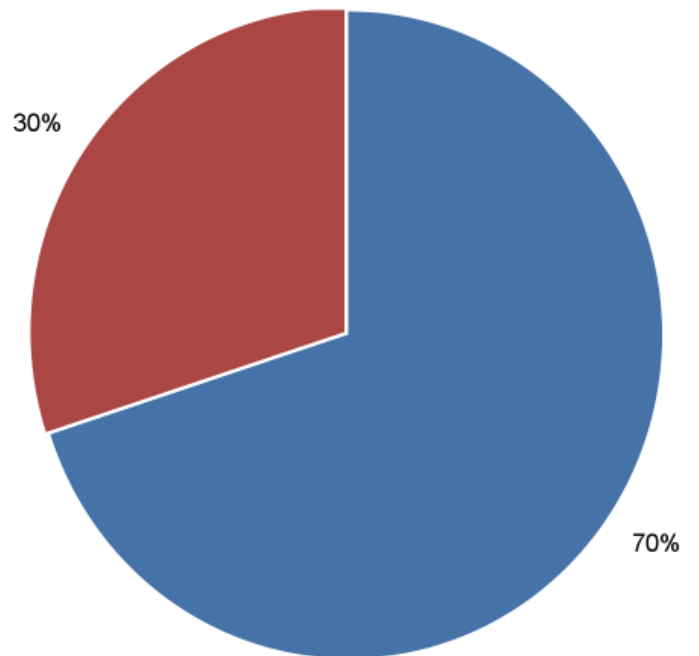


Answer	%
Yes	20%
No	74%
Not sure	6%
Total	100%

Respondents were asked if they were satisfied with their internship experience overall?

■ Yes ■ No

Answer	%
Yes	70%
No	30%
Total	100%



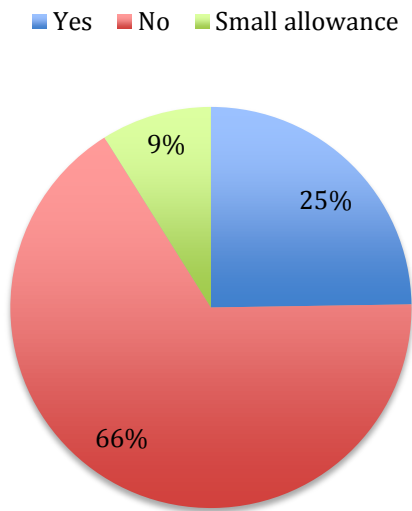
Respondents were asked what their hourly rate of pay was, if they received pay at all.:

From this open-ended question, the researchers have calculated the average hourly rate of pay given to the minority of interns who received payment for their work.

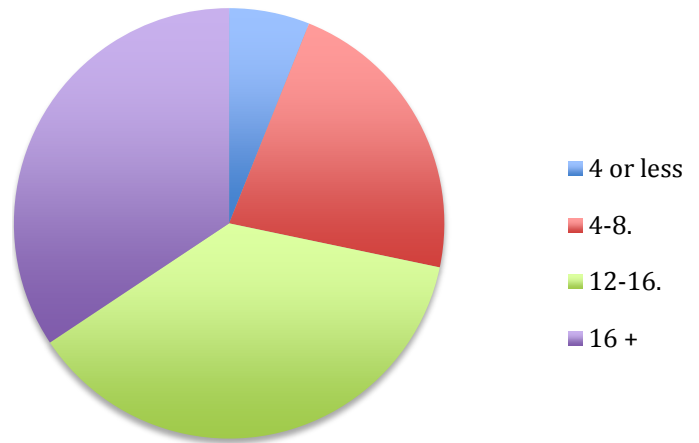
The average hourly rate of pay for paid internships was \$24.25 per hour.

Regarding respondents' internships, respondents provided the following information:

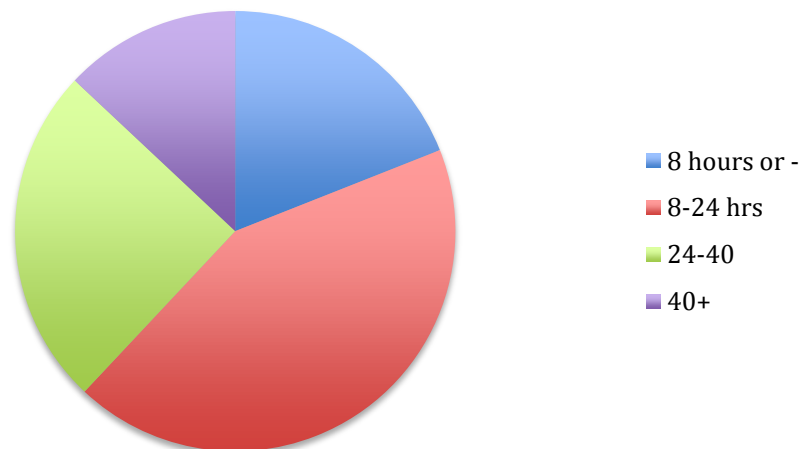
Was the internship paid?



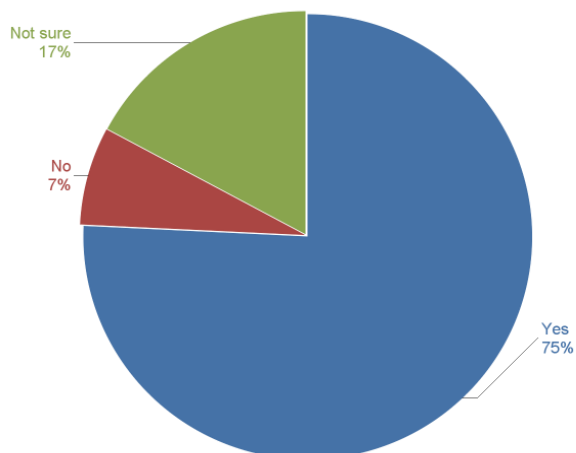
Total number of weeks worked



Average number of hours worked per week



Respondents were asked if they believed the work they performed during this internship was productive, adding value to the organisation's activities?

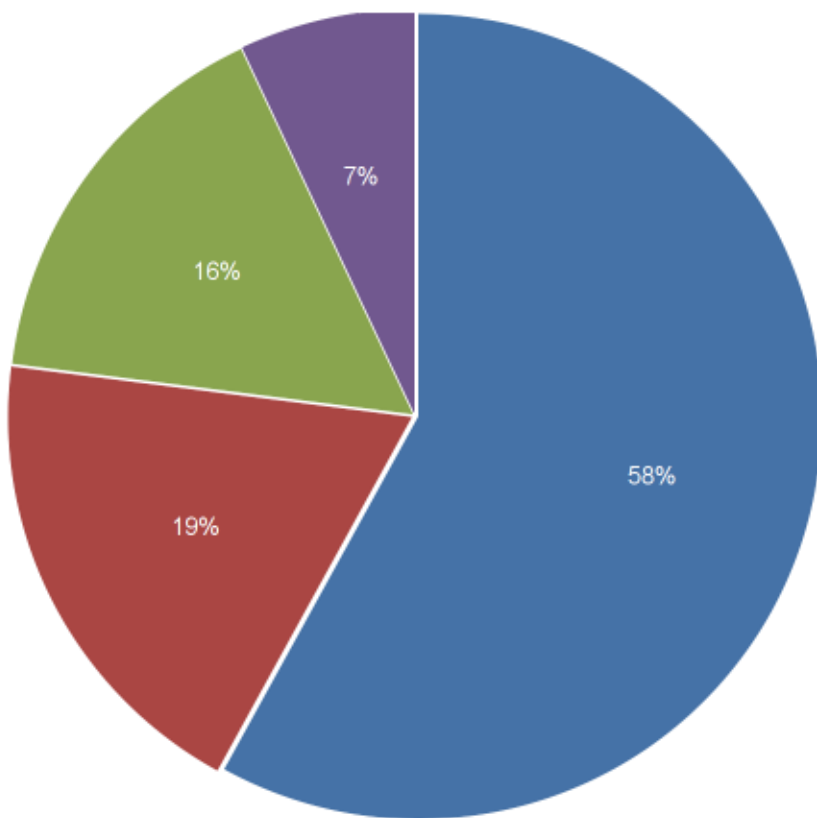


Answer	%
Yes	75%
No	7%
Not sure	17%
Total	100%

Respondents were asked if they received course credit for any internship(s), overall, how would you rate the educational quality of your internship(s) in comparison to normal coursework subjects?

■ Did not receive course credit
 ■ Higher educational value co...
 ■ About the same educational ...
 ■ Lower educational value com...

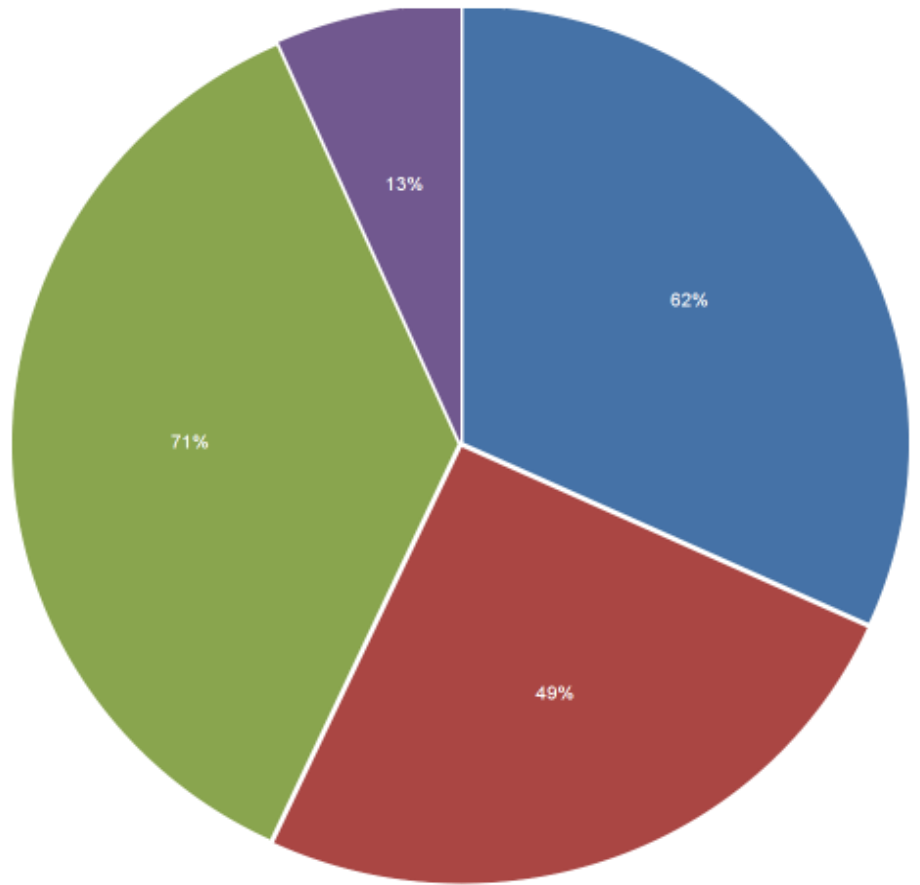
Answer	%
Did not receive course credit	58%
Higher educational value compared to normal coursework subjects	19%
About the same educational value compared to normal coursework subjects	16%
Lower educational value compared to normal coursework subjects	7%
Total	100%



Respondents were asked if overall they believed their finances, study or free time were negatively impacted while undertaking their internship(s)?

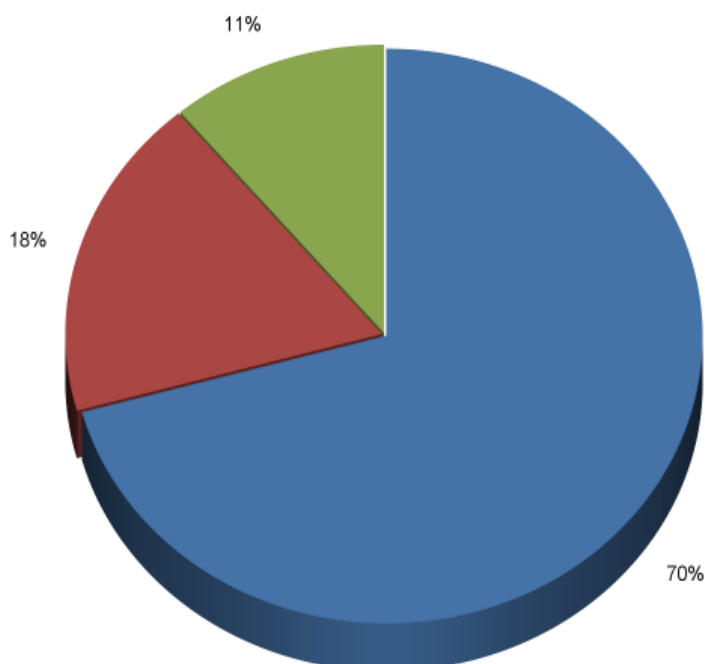
■ Finances ■ Study ■ Free time ■ None

Answer	%
Finances	62%
Study	49%
Free time	71%
None	13%
Total	100%



Respondents were asked if they believed the work they performed during their internship was productive, adding value to the organisation's activities

■ Yes ■ No ■ Not sure



Answer	%
Yes	70%
No	18%
Not sure	11%
Total	100%

Respondents' were asked: what makes a positive internship experience?

