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The Co-Op Model

The Co-op Model: How Wentworth Leads in Preparing Future-Ready Students

Today's college students are looking for an educational experience that prepares them for success in both their professional and personal lives. Meanwhile, employers are seeking next-generation talent that's educated and equipped to navigate future challenges.

For 50 years, Wentworth Institute of Technology has been meeting the needs of both students and employers through its successful co-op model.

100%

**of Wentworth students
are required to complete two
co-ops prior to graduation.**

Nationally, 4.6 million college students wanted to complete an internship in 2023 but couldn't secure one,¹ while nearly all Wentworth students participate in two fully immersive experiences.

93%

**of Wentworth's Class of 2023
were employed in their field or
in graduate school six months
after graduation.²**

And 60% of the Class of 2023 received a job offer from their co-op employer.³

\$71,000

is the median starting salary for
Wentworth graduates from the
Class of 2023.⁴

The median advertised salary for all job postings between February 2024 and February 2025 was \$57,300.⁵ That means a Wentworth education boosts average earning potential by 24%.



What Employers Need From Future Professionals and the Institutions That Educate Them

Companies and their leaders are looking for educated—and *tested*—talent to power their futures.

Data from early 2025 shows that 77% of unique STEM job postings mention a bachelor's degree or higher.⁶ The remainder of the job market is soon to follow; by 2031, 72% of jobs in the U.S.—regardless of their industry—will require postsecondary education and/or training.⁷ As of 2023, only 44.1% of the labor force ages 25-64 had a postsecondary degree or sub-baccalaureate credential.⁸

But like most data, there's nuance to the call for bachelor's and advanced degrees.



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96%

value external
co-op with
industry
experience

What companies actually want goes beyond coursework. When recruiting for entry-level professionals, 96% of employers said they value an “external co-op with industry experience”—more than community service, undergraduate research or study abroad.⁹

57%

value
community
service

57%

value
undergraduate
research

45%

value study
abroad

As of now, there's a gap between what employers want and what recent grads are bringing to the table. In fact, when asked to rate recent graduates on career readiness, employers scored them below a four (out of five) on both communication and professionalism.¹⁰

In the STEM job market, the disconnect is clear, as well: Communication skills show up in 40% of job postings—but only 11% of student profiles. Problem-solving appears in 23% of job postings, but just 5% of profiles.¹¹

This isn't a pipeline problem. It's a preparation problem.

Business leaders are echoing that same concern. Justin Howe, a former vice president and creative director at Under Armour and Wentworth alumnus, says what stands out isn't just technical skill—but how students approach learning itself: “I notice—and consistently invest time in supporting the development of—the students who humbly and fearlessly embrace the opportunities in front of them.”

Wentworth alumnus Randy George, vice president of technology operations and information security at the Boston Red Sox, uses a familiar metaphor to describe his hiring priorities: “When we're hunting for talent for the Red Sox IT team, we're looking for ‘good athletes’ and ‘great clubhouse personalities.’ We overuse sports metaphors in this business, but good athletes to us refers to someone with natural technology talent and an aptitude to learn quickly. Great clubhouse personalities are the ones who show up, support teammates, and keep growing.”

Across industries, the message is the same: Students with real experience and the ability to continue learning stand out.



“A deep level of humble curiosity to ask thoughtful questions is something we could see more of from students looking to enter the professional space.”

Justin Howe, Industrial Design '01 | Former VP and Creative Director of Footwear Design, Under Armour

“When we’re hunting for talent for the Red Sox IT team, we’re looking for ‘good athletes’ and ‘great clubhouse personalities.’”

Randy George, Computer Engineering Technology '98 | VP of Technology Operations, Boston Red Sox



“My co-ops gave me early, hands-on exposure to the realities of architectural practice and allowed me to apply design concepts to real-world problems while building confidence in professional environments.”

Danyson Tavares, Architecture '11, M. Arch. '12 | Executive Director, Boston Society for Architecture





“I wanted to supervise, and I needed to know how things worked from the ground up.”

Rose Conti, Construction Management '12 |
Vice President, Lee Kennedy Company

Consider the Co-op Model

Co-op education delivers compelling results for both students and employers by embedding real-world work directly into the college experience.

Students alternate between classroom learning and full-time work—often paid—in their field of study. Frequently, they leave with something more than a degree: A job offer that reflects their chosen major.

At **Wentworth Institute of Technology** in Boston, co-ops are central to the student experience.

| Every student connects with a career advisor in their first semester, and they get lifetime access even post-graduation.

| Mandatory co op prep courses start in the second year.

| Co op terms last a full semester at 30+ hours/week, under a field-expert supervisor.

| On average, students earn \$10,000 during their co op.

| Students can also choose entrepreneurial co ops, where they receive funding (up to \$11,500 total) and work with faculty mentors to build their own businesses.

| The curriculum enables students to complete their academic and co op experiences within four years.

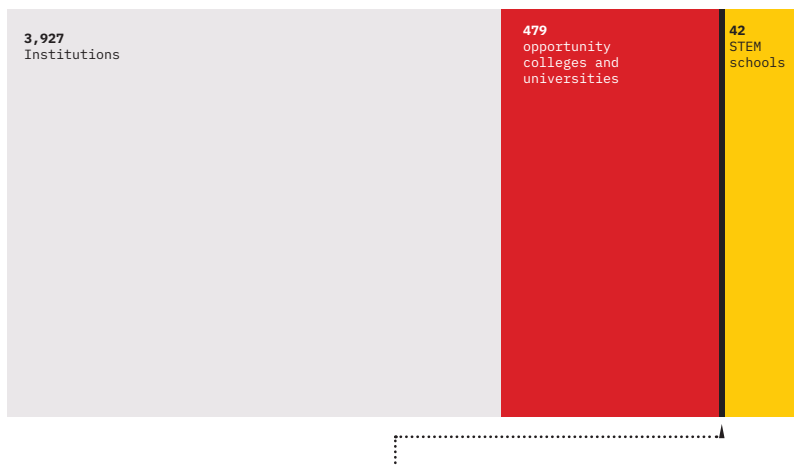
The model works.

87%

of co-op employers rate Wentworth students as **“above average”** or better; half call them **“outstanding.”**¹² Students are equally appreciative of the added educational value of their co-ops—90% give their experience top marks.¹³

More importantly, it pays off. Wentworth's Class of 2023 reported a median starting salary of \$71,000—well above the national median of \$57,300.¹⁴ By mid-career, that figure rises to \$138,100.¹⁵ Over a 20-year period, CEW Georgetown ranks Wentworth in the top 4% of U.S. colleges for return on investment. At 40 years post-grad, the ROI hits \$2.7 million.¹⁶

These numbers prove that a Wentworth education is life-changing, a fact recently substantiated by the 2025 Carnegie Classifications.



Wentworth was **one of only five schools** nationwide—fewer than 1% of nearly 4,000 institutions—to be designated as both a “Special Focus: Technology, Engineering and Sciences institution” *and* an “Opportunity College and University - Higher Access, Higher Earnings.”

With its co-op program and focus on hands-on learning, Wentworth is proud to be the University of Opportunity.

For many alumni, co-op experiences were significant turning points. Danyson Tavares, executive director at the Boston Society for Architecture, recalls how his co-ops shaped both his technical fluency and leadership style:

“They gave me early, hands-on exposure to the realities of architectural practice and allowed me to apply design concepts to real-world problems while building confidence in professional environments. Those experiences gave me a deeper understanding of collaboration, project delivery and how the built environment directly impacts communities.”

Rose Conti, now a vice president at Lee Kennedy Company—a major construction firm—believes that co-ops establish clear connections between coursework and professional aspirations: “I wanted to supervise, and I needed to know how things worked from the ground up.” Through hands-on experience in welding, carpentry and masonry, she cultivated the confidence to lead, adding, “I believe that the formal educational training I received at Wentworth laid the groundwork for my success in construction and executive leadership.”



Wentworth Students Work and Learn at Innovative Companies

AECOM

amazon



BOSE

BostonDynamics 



Google



Johnson&Johnson



LINCOLN LABORATORY
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY



moderna



NOKIA

Perkins&Will

P&G




SHAWMUT



The **WALT DISNEY** Studios

Further Reading Powered By Wentworth: Improving Outcomes for All

Colleges and universities must continue to re-examine how they prepare students to be future-ready. Considering that students seek an education that prepares them for real-world success—and that employers demand both credentials and readiness—the co-op model delivers.



Learn more at wit.edu





1 Hanover Research, *Trends in Higher Education*, 2025.

2 Wentworth Institute of Technology, 2024.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Lightcast [URL: lightcast.io], April 2025.

6 Ibid.

7 Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce (CEW Georgetown), 2023.

8 Lumina Foundation, 2023.

9 Wentworth Institute of Technology, 2024.

10 National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), *Job Outlook*, 2025.

11 Lightcast [URL: lightcast.io], April 2025.

12 Wentworth Institute of Technology, 2024.

13 Ibid.

14 Lightcast [URL: lightcast.io], April 2025.

15 PayScale, 2024.

16 CEW Georgetown, 2023.