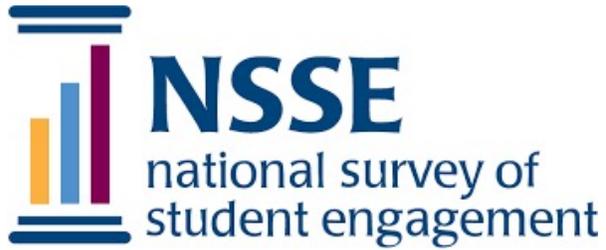




EDUCATION
NETWORK

Public Viewpoint:
**Examining Undergraduates' Career
Preparation Experiences**

December 8, 2021

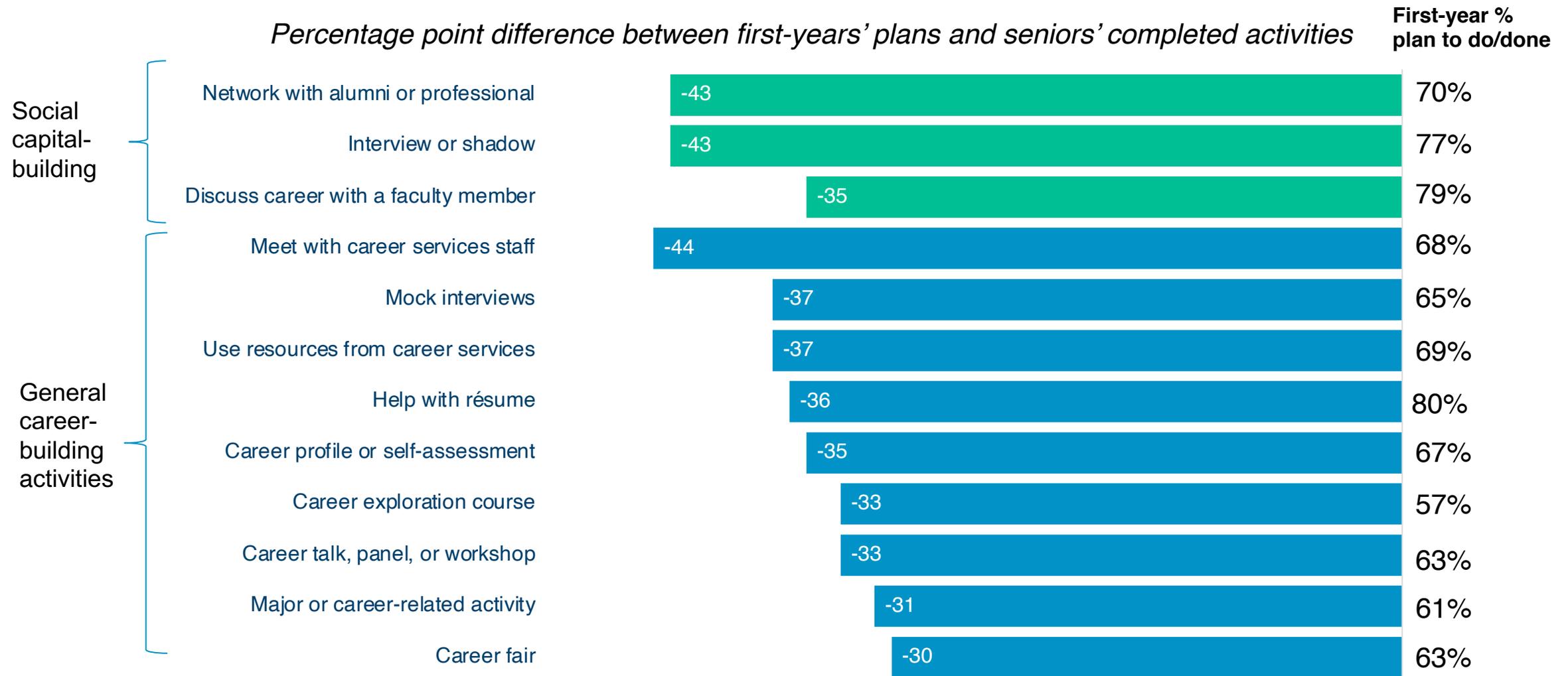


National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Overview

- Colleges and universities partner with NSSE to survey their first-year and senior students each spring about their undergraduate student experience.
- NSSE 2021 was administered between February and May 2021 to 203,284 U.S. students in 337 U.S. institutions.
 - The **Career and Workforce Preparation Module** was available for the first time and chosen by **91 U.S. institutions with 55,277 students responding.**
 - The module explores students' career plans, influences on their goals, confidence in work-related skills, career exploration in curriculum, and use of career resources and services.

Career-Building Activities

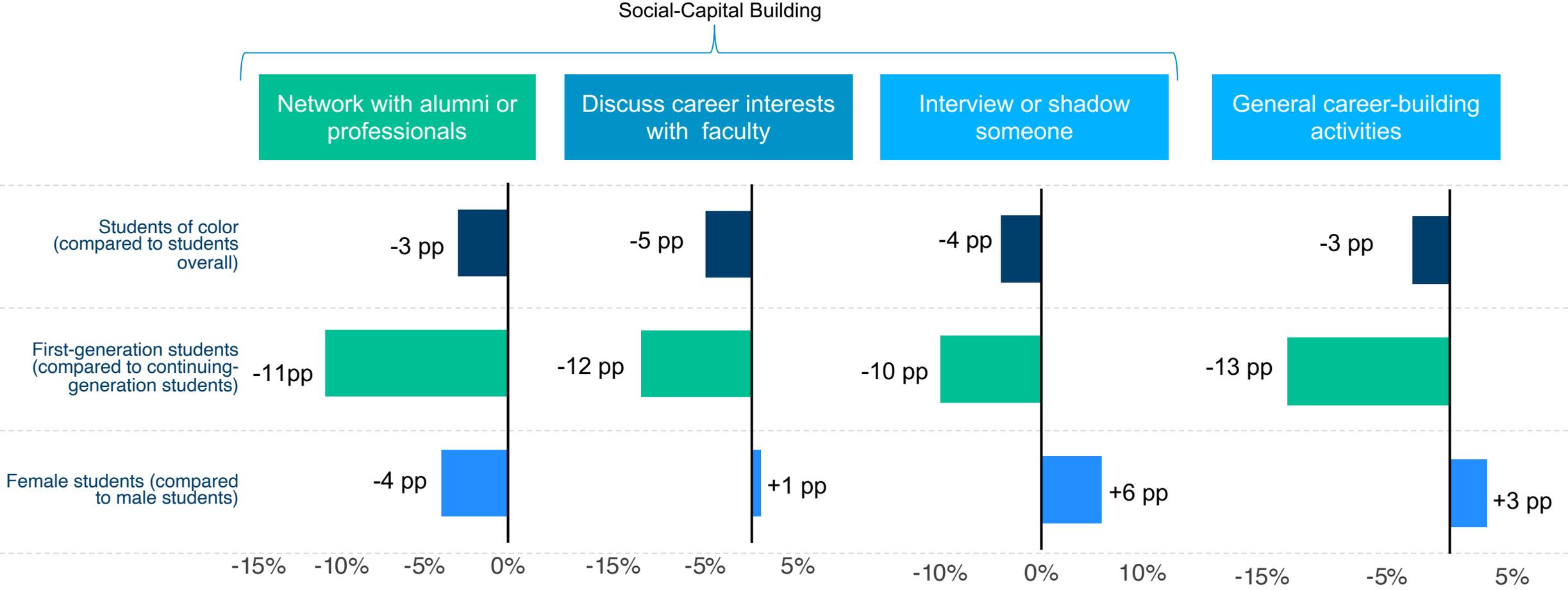
Compared to first-year students' expectations, seniors are typically half as likely to complete career preparation experiences



SOURCE: 2021 NSSE Career & Workforce Preparation Module

NOTES: Base = 55,277 participants at U.S. institutions, n = 24,921 first-year students and 29,893 seniors. Survey question: Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do at this institution before you graduate (whether in person or online)?

Equity gaps persist, especially in first-generation seniors' participation in career-building activities



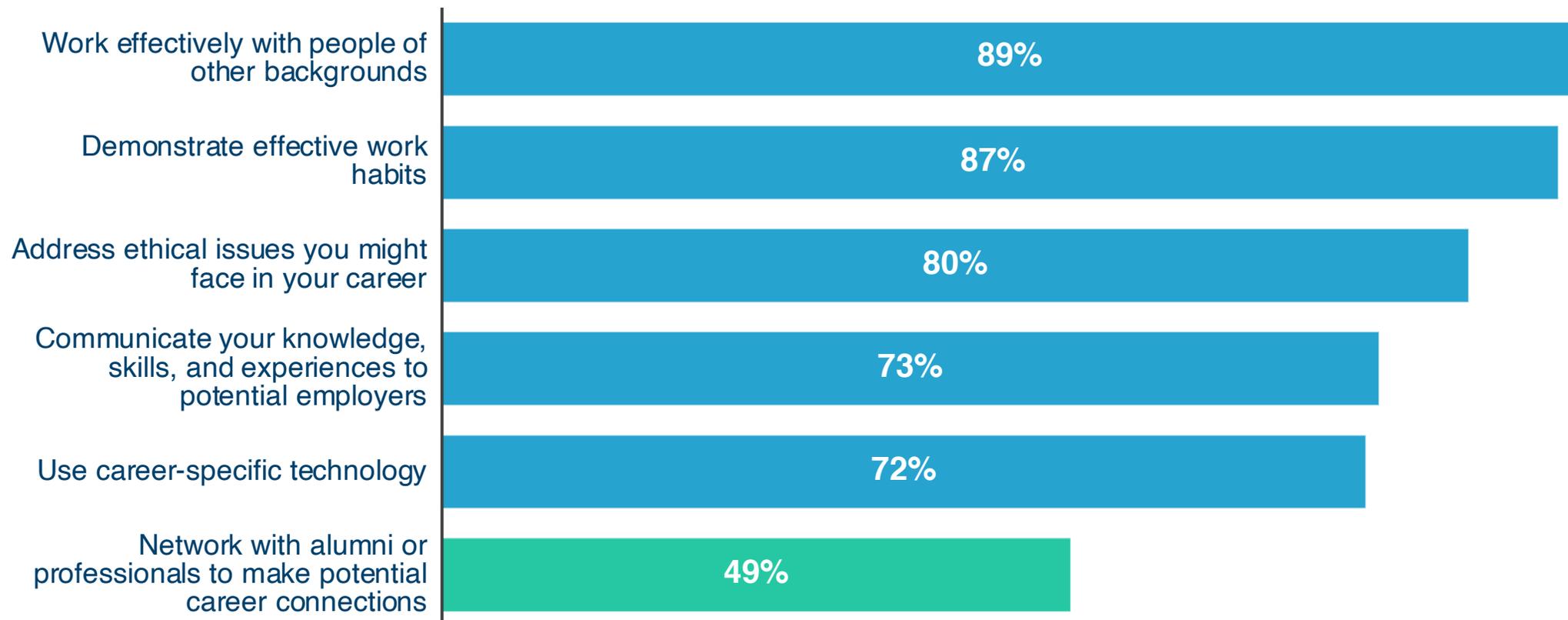
SOURCE: 2021 NSSE Career & Workforce Preparation Module

NOTES: Base = 55,277 participants at U.S. institutions, n=29,893 seniors. Responses represent seniors who reported "Done or in progress" to certain activities; first-generation defined as neither parent having a bachelor's degree; students of color includes student-reported racial/ethnic categories: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latina/o, Middle Eastern or North African, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Another race or ethnicity, Multiracial. Those who preferred not to respond were not included.

Social Capital Connections

Seniors have less confidence in their networking abilities

How much confidence do you have in your ability to do the following?

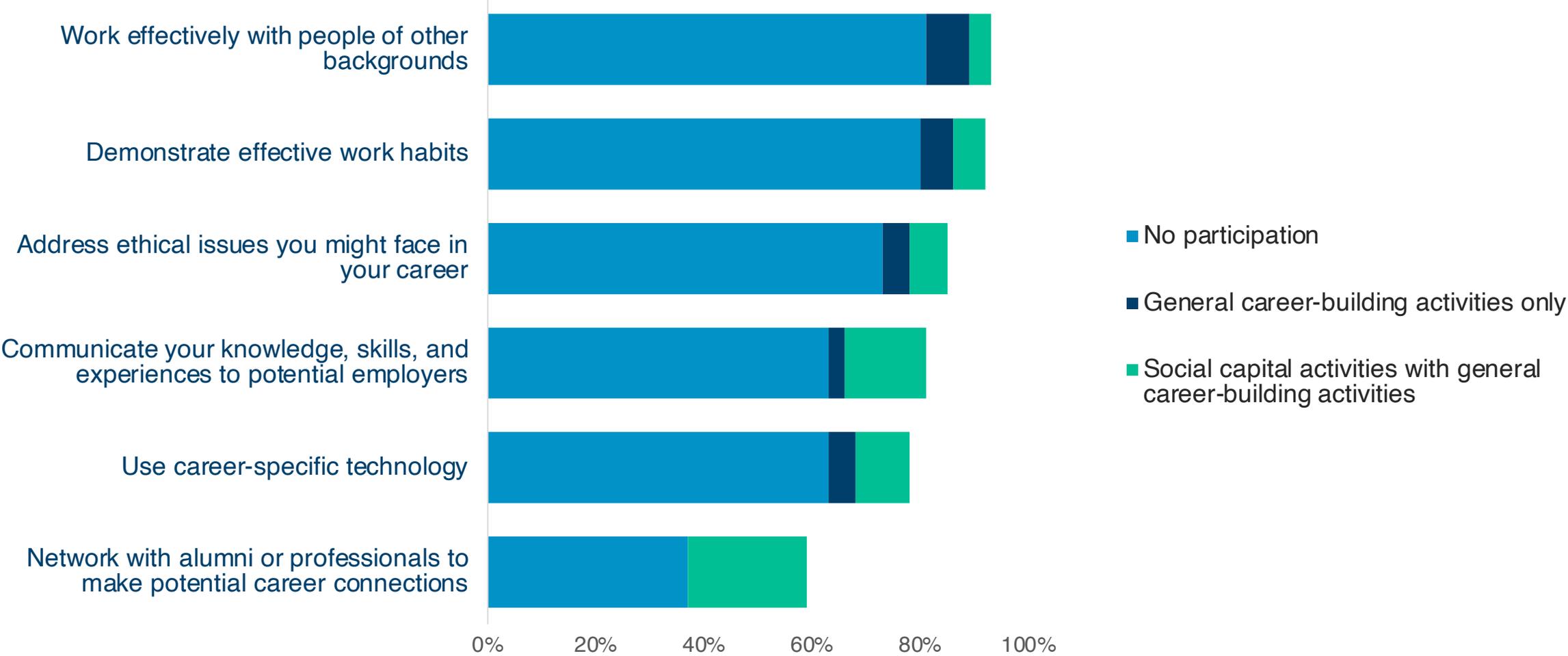


SOURCE: 2021 NSSE Career & Workforce Preparation Module

NOTES: Base = 55,277 participants at U.S. institutions, n=29,893 seniors. Responses represent seniors who answered "Very much" or "Quite a bit" to each statement.

Career preparation experiences are linked with increased confidence

How much confidence do you have in your ability to do the following?

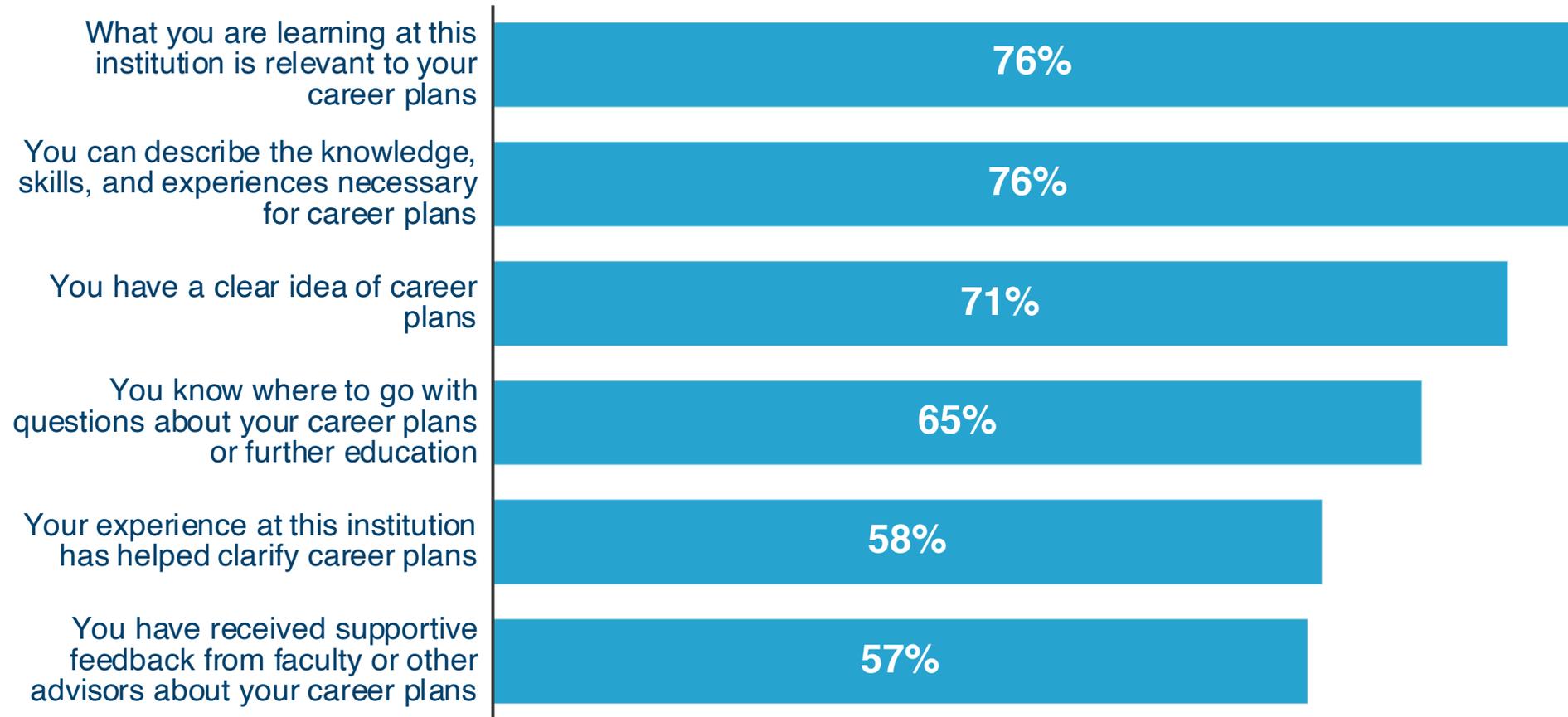


SOURCE: 2021 NSSE Career & Workforce Preparation Module

NOTES: Base = 55,277 participants at U.S. institutions, n=29,893 seniors. Responses represent seniors who responded "Quite a bit" or "Very much" to each statement.

7 out of 10 seniors feel they have clear career plans

To what extent do the following apply to you?

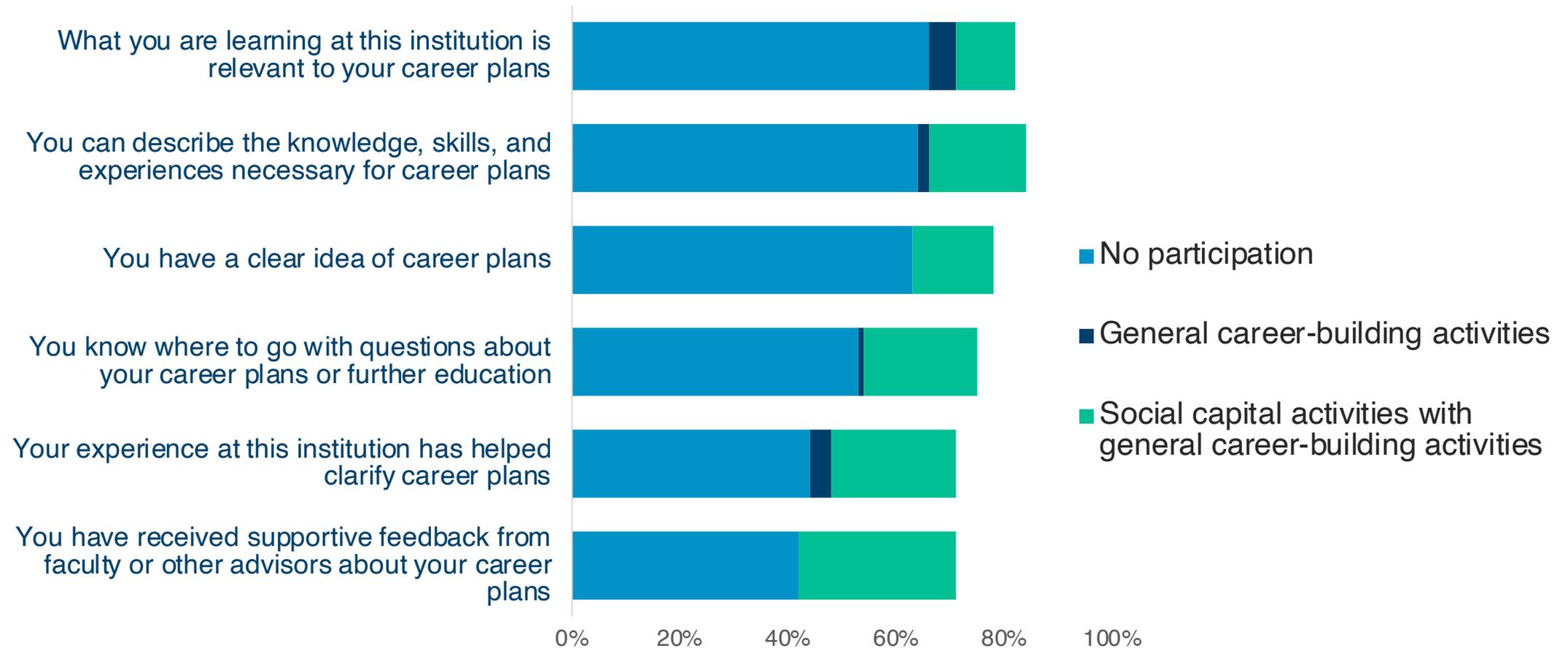


SOURCE: 2021 NSSE Career & Workforce Preparation Module

NOTES: Base = 55,277 participants at U.S. institutions, n=29,893 seniors. Responses represent seniors who responded "Very much" or "Quite a bit" to each statement.

Social capital-building is associated with stronger career planning outcomes

To what extent do the following apply to you?

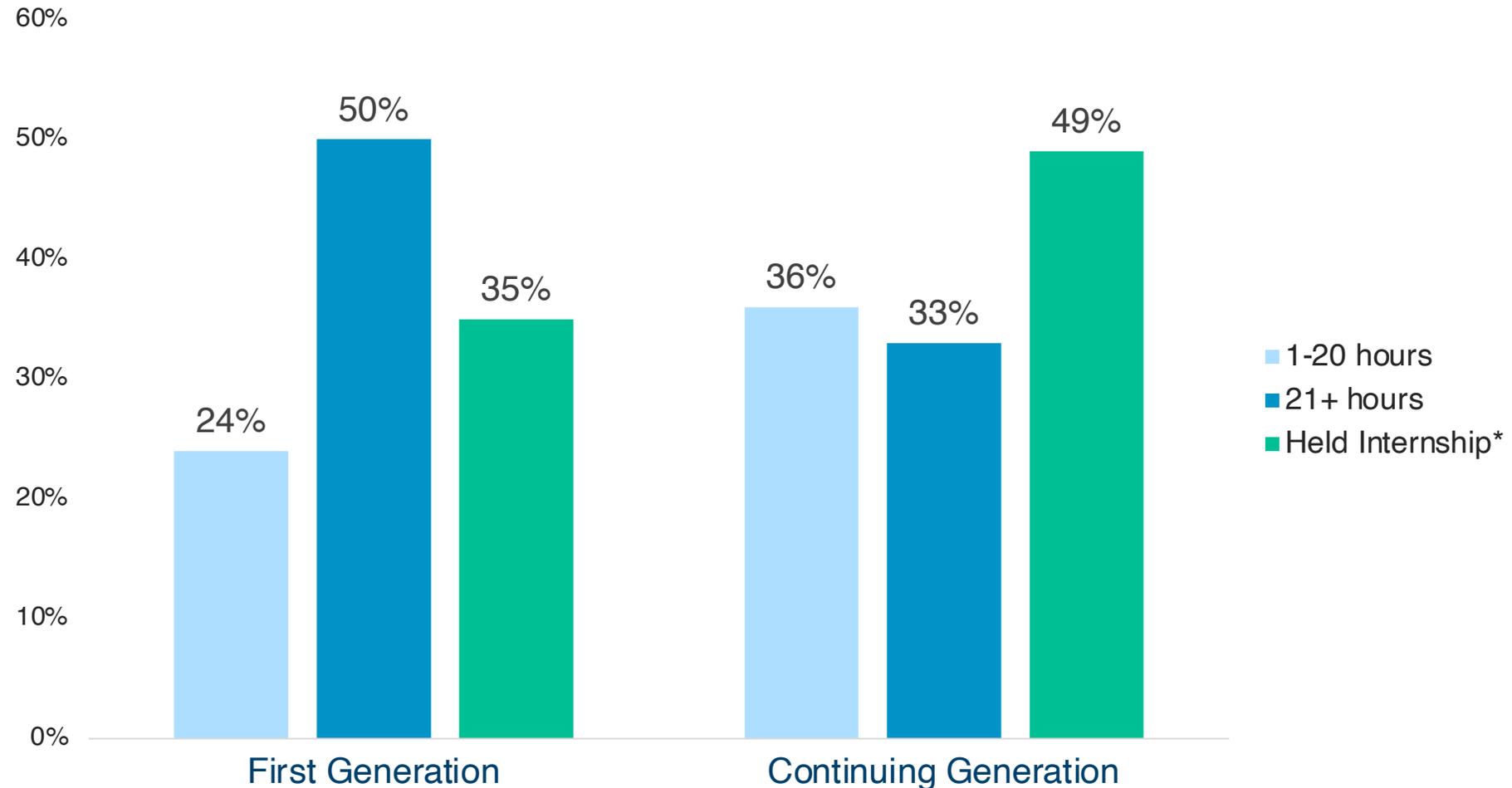


SOURCE: 2021 NSSE Career & Workforce Preparation Module

NOTES: Base = 55,277 participants at U.S. institutions, n=29,893 seniors. Responses represent seniors who responded "Quite a bit" or "Very much" to each statement.

The Importance of Work and Internships

First-generation seniors are more likely to work over 20 hours a week and less likely to complete an internship

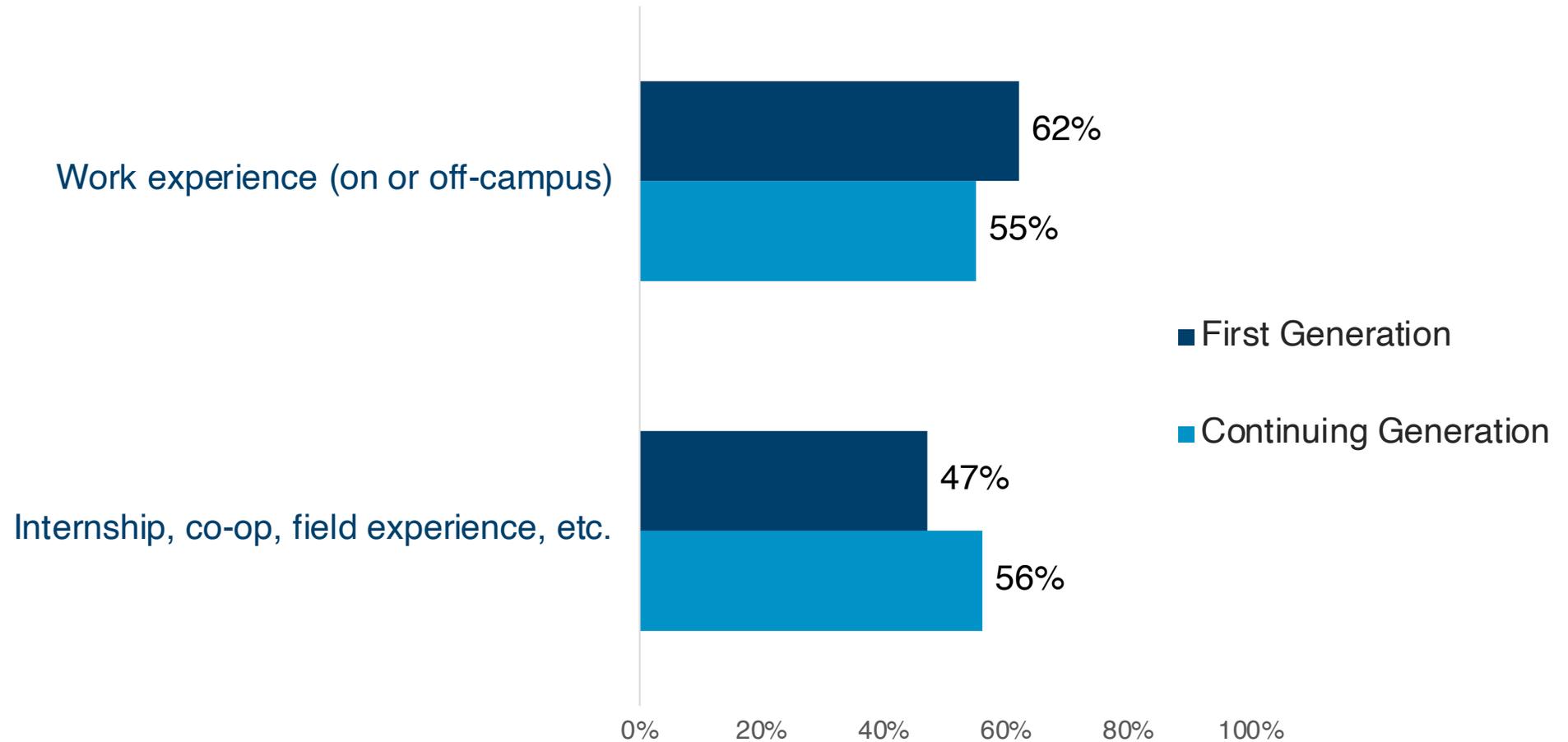


SOURCE: 2021 NSSE Career & Workforce Preparation Module

NOTES: Base = 55,277 participants at U.S. institutions, n=29,893 seniors. Responses represent seniors only. First-generation defined as neither parent having a bachelor's degree.
* Regardless of work status.

Work and internship experience is correlated with relative influence on career plans

To what extent have the following influenced your career plans?

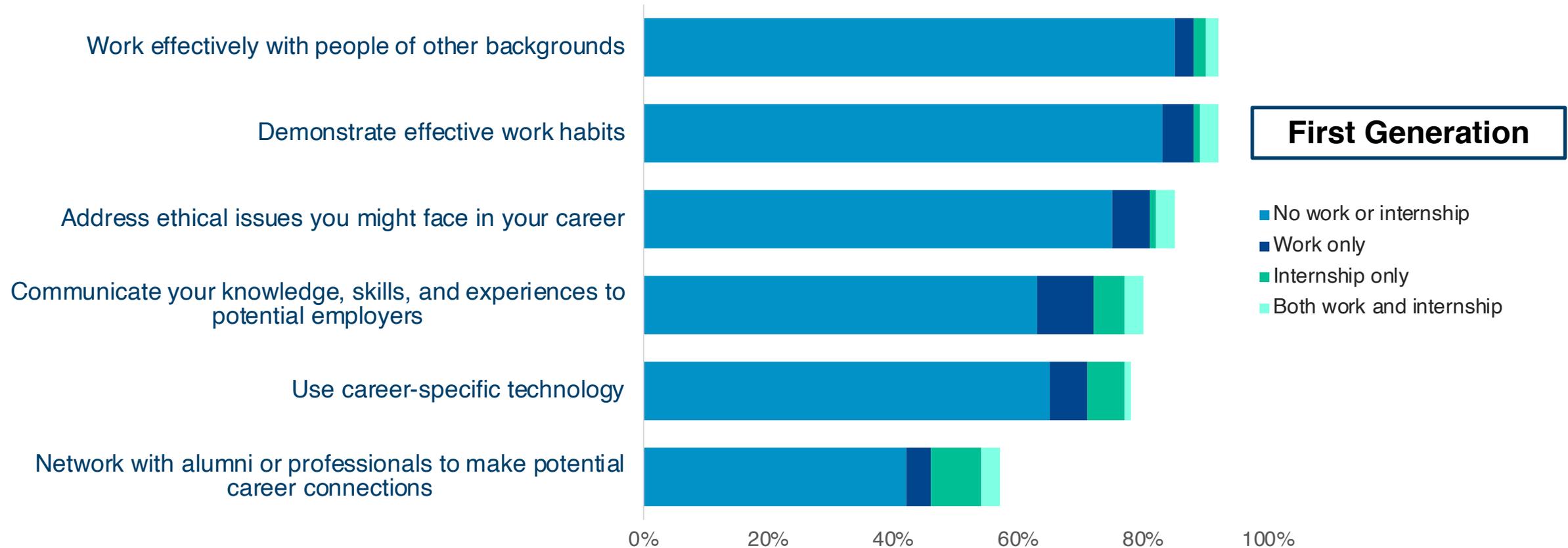


SOURCE: 2021 NSSE Career & Workforce Preparation Module

NOTES: Base = 55,277 participants at U.S. institutions, n=29,893 seniors. Responses represent seniors who responded "Quite a bit" or "Very much" to each statement. First-generation defined as neither parent having a bachelor's degree.

Work and internship experiences are linked to greater confidence in workplace skills among first-generation seniors

How much confidence do you have in your ability to do the following?



SOURCE: 2021 NSSE Career & Workforce Preparation Module

NOTES: Base = 55,277 participants at U.S. institutions, n=29,893 seniors. Responses represent seniors who responded "Quite a bit" or "Very much" to each statement; first-generation defined as neither parent having a bachelor's degree.

Key Findings

1. Although most first-year students intend to participate in a range of career-building activities, fewer seniors reported having these experiences. Networking, informational interviewing, and visiting with career services staff have the largest gaps.
2. Although seniors are generally clear on their future career plans and confident in their career-relevant skills, they feel least confident in their ability to network with alumni or professionals to make career connections.
3. Seniors who participated in career-preparation activities — particularly networking and social-capital building — reported greater confidence in their workplace skills and clarity in their career plans.
4. Students who held internships or had a combination of work and internship experiences were more likely to report confidence in their workplace skills than those who did not.
5. First-generation students are less likely to participate in social-capital building activities and less likely to hold internships, both of which are linked to higher confidence in workplace skills. Ensuring that all students have these experiences is key to equitable outcomes beyond completion.

Learn more at
StradaInsights.org

Methodology: NSSE 2021 Career and Workforce Preparation Module

In a collaboration between NSSE and Strada Education Network, the Career and Workforce Preparation Module assesses how the college experience prepares students for their future.

	AUDIENCE	Total CWP Sample (n=55,277 at U.S. Institutions) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 24,921 first-year students• 29,893 seniors
	MODE	Online survey, median time: 5.6 minutes
	DATES	February – May 2021
	GEOGRAPHY	NSSE's overall sampling methodology calls for either a census of all first-year and senior students or a random selection of an equal number of students from each group, with sample size based on total undergraduate enrollment.