Survey: student co-op application effort

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In Spring 2018, I surveyed students in the classes of 2019 (4A) and 2021 (2B) about their efforts to secure co-op jobs. Anecdotally, we believe that the level of effort corresponds to about half a course; this survey attempts to corroborate or refute that belief.
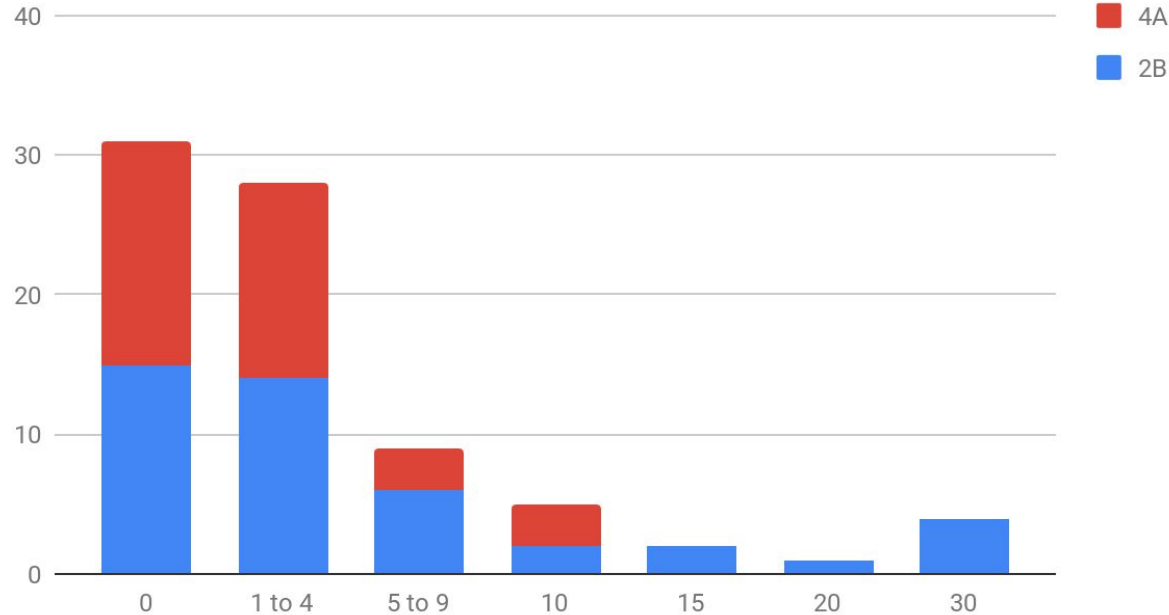
Response rate

We have 217 students on-stream at the moment, with 124 students in the class of 2021 and 93 students in the class of 2019. We received 82 responses (37%), with 47 responses from SE 2021 and 35 responses from SE 2019. The response rates were the same from the two classes.

Before main round

Students may apply to jobs before the main WaterlooWorks round opens. Students applied to a mean of 3.9 jobs (SE21 5.4, SE19 2.1) before main round.
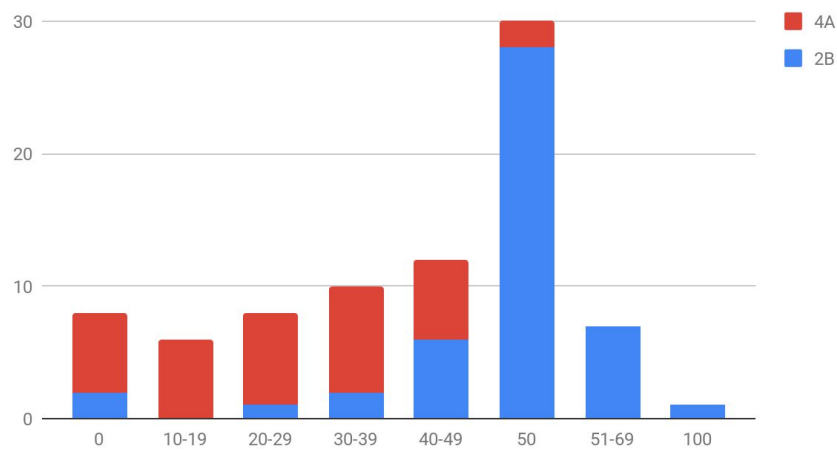
Jobs applied to before main round

Main round

Most of the action is in main round. Students applied to a mean of 37.5 jobs, with a noticeable difference in means between SE21 (48.4) and SE19 (24.7).

Many SE21 students applied to the maximum of 50 jobs. Two 2B students applied to 0 jobs. The rest of the respondents from the class applied to at least 28 jobs.
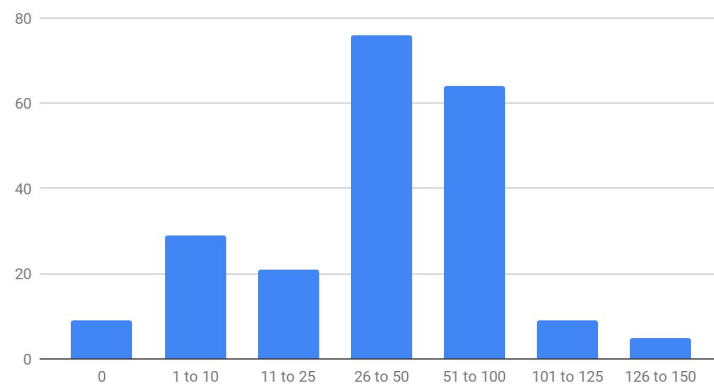
Trends in SE19 were less clear. A small plurality applied to 30-39 jobs, but each bucket [10n, 10n+9] accounted for about 25% of respondents.
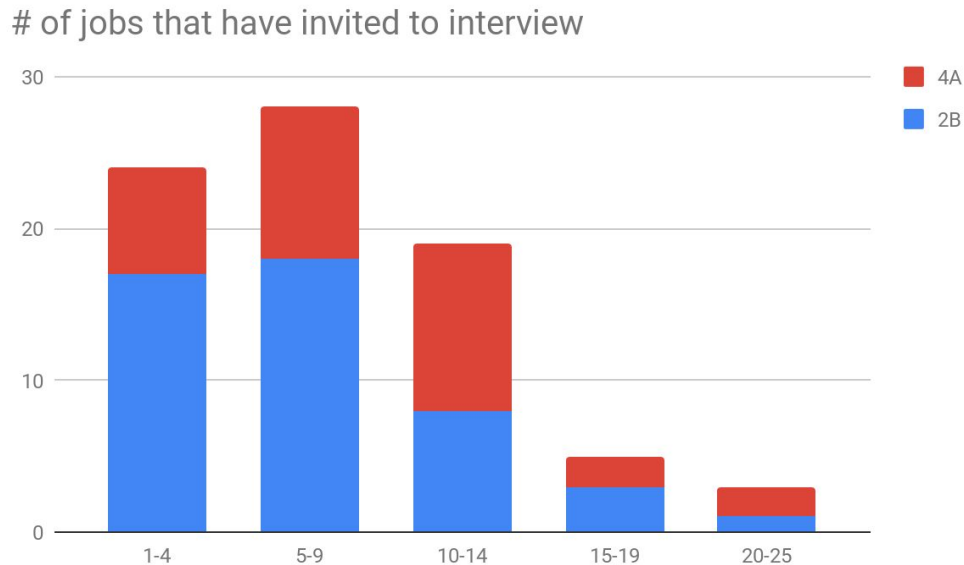

Jobs applied to in main round

We also received data from CECA about the number of jobs applied to in main round and the first week of continuous round; N=213, and 39 students were still unemployed after main round. That data shows that, including continuous, most students apply to between 26 to 50, with almost as many in the 51 to 100 range.

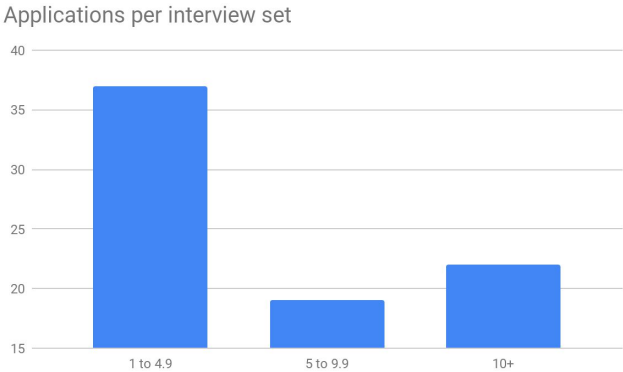[CECA] Jobs applied to (main round + 1st week of continuous)

Interviews

The next few questions investigate the number of interviews that students are invited to. Bilal Akhtar pointed out that some jobs invite candidates to multiple interview rounds, and our results show a couple of jobs that invite to 4 interviews.

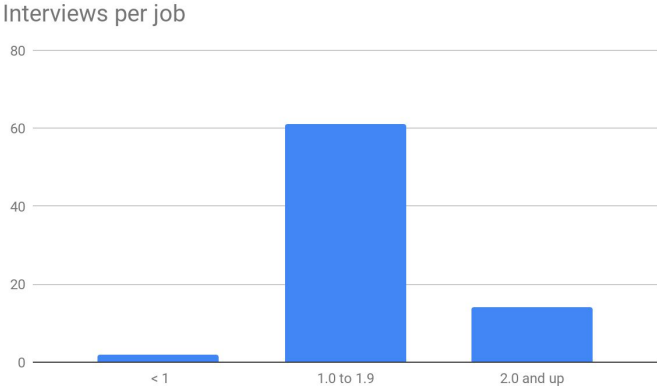# of jobs that have invited to interview

All respondents received at least one interview. Despite applying to fewer jobs, the SE19 students incite more interest from jobs. For SE21, about the same proportion of respondents receive interest from between 1-4 and 5-9 jobs, 75% of respondents in total. A plurality of SE19 students (31%) have received calls from 10-14 jobs. The overall mean is 7.6 (SE21 mean 7.2, SE19 8.2). The overall max number of interviews is 25 (from an SE21 student), and the max from SE19 is 22 (a student who used all 50 applications, so batting .440, or 2.27 interviews per application).

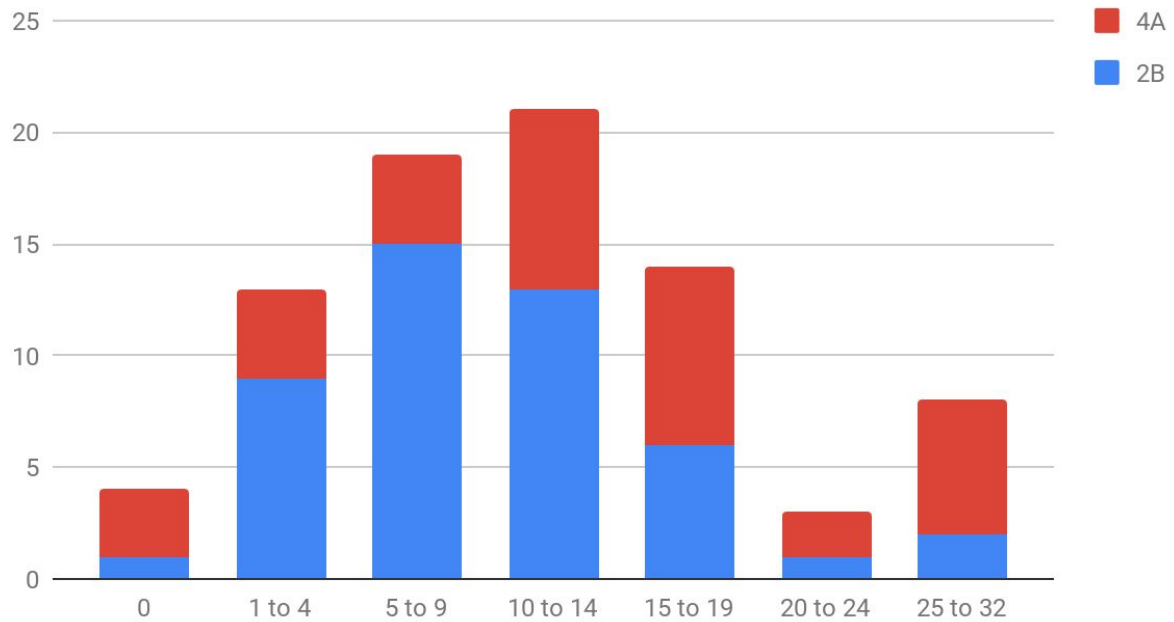I also computed applications per interview set (i.e. per prospective job), mean of 8.8 (SE21 12, SE19 4.1).

Applications per interview set

The mean number of interviews per job was 1.43 (SE21 1.3, SE19 1.67). Most jobs have between 1.0 and 1.9 interviews.

Interviews per job

I also asked about the total number of interviews, which looks normally distributed.
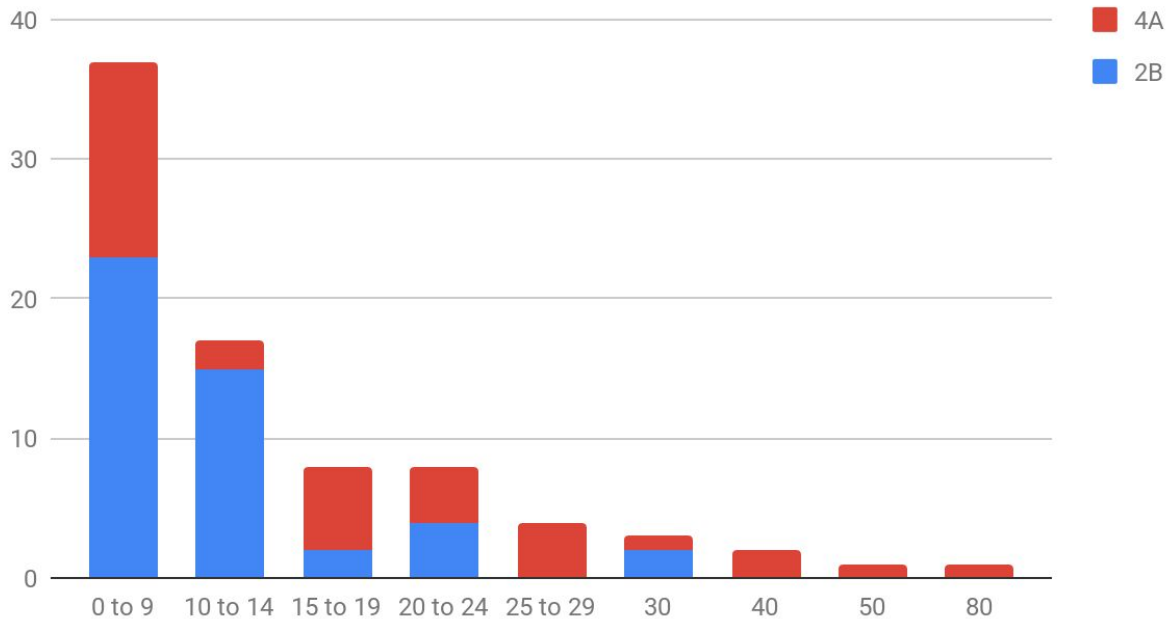
Total # of interviews

The mean number of interviews was 11 (SE21 9.6, SE19 16.6), with a plurality of SE21 students having 5-9 interviews and SE19 students having between 10-14 and 15-19 interviews (22% each). The max number of interviews was 30 for an SE21 student and 32 for an SE19 student.

Hours applying for jobs

The whole reason I did this survey was to understand how many hours students spent applying for jobs. It seems that most SE21 students spent between 10-14 hours at peak, while most SE19 students spent between 0-9 hours. (Overall mean 12.6, SE21 mean 9.6, SE19 mean 16.6 median 15; the mean is distorted by some outliers.)

Peak hours in a week preparing/applying/interviewing for jobs

This peak is not worrisome, although I still wonder about cumulative number of hours. The peak could potentially be poorly timed with respect to midterms or assignments.

Continuous?

Finally, I surveyed the students about whether they expected to be in continuous round, and I got some data from CECA's webpage. Slightly more students were not matched in main round than expected, especially for SE19, but the numbers are still quite low. As of time of writing (July 4, 2018), 18% of SE students don't have a job yet.

Do you expect to go to continuous round?