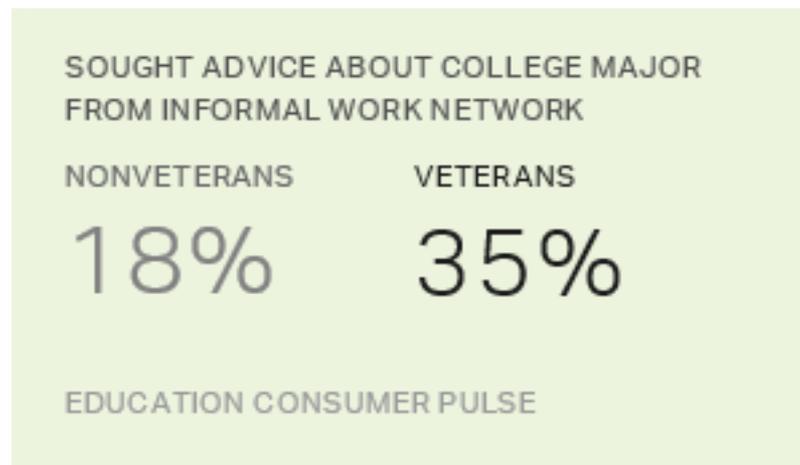


# One in Three Veterans Consult Coworkers About College Major

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<http://news.gallup.com/poll/222434/one-three-veterans-consult-coworkers-college-major.aspx>



by Vanessa Maturro

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Veterans with some postsecondary education are nearly twice as likely as nonveterans to have sought advice about their college major or field of study from people they've worked with -- 35% vs. 18%, respectively. In the case of veterans, people they worked with could include those they served with in the military.

Sources of Advice When Selecting a Major/Field of Study

For adults with some college, an associate degree or a bachelor's degree

	Veterans	Nonveterans	Overall U.S. adults
	%	%	%
<b>Informal social network</b>	44	56	55
<b>Formal resources</b>	39	45	44
<b>Informal school-based network</b>	20	34	32
<b>Informal work-based network</b>	35	18	20

Jan. 2-Aug. 13, 2017

Education Consumer Pulse

For veterans and nonveterans alike, the most common sources of advice for college major are informal social networks such as family and friends. But

veterans (44%) are less likely than nonveterans (56%) to report that they consulted their informal social networks. Veterans are also less likely to cite informal school-based sources, like school teachers, coaches and faculty than are nonveterans -- 20% vs. 34%, respectively.

One possible reason veterans are more likely than nonveterans to seek out work-based sources is because veterans tend to be older when they attend college or a postsecondary education program. The average age of attendance of veterans is 30 compared with 26 for nonveterans.

However, veterans' higher reliance on work-based sources of advice is not just due to them being older when enrolling in college or postsecondary education. Even when comparing veterans and nonveterans in the same age groups, veterans are more likely than nonveterans to rely on work-based sources. Thirty-two percent of veterans aged 18-35 sought advice from work-based sources, compared with 16% of nonveterans that same age. Similarly, 36% of veterans aged 35-65, compared with 20% of nonveterans in the same age category, relied on work-based sources for advice. This suggests that there is something about veterans' unique work relationships and experience that helps explain why they seek out work-based sources.

These findings come from a report by Gallup and Strada Education Network, [\*Major Influence: Where Students Get Valued Advice on What to Study in College\*](#). The data are from Gallup and Strada Education Network's [Education Consumer Pulse](#) -- a nationally representative, daily poll of 350 U.S. adults about their education experiences and perceptions. These findings are based on responses from more than 22,000 U.S. adults aged 18-65 who have some college education, an associate degree or a bachelor's degree.

Gallup asked U.S. adults with some postsecondary education or a degree to identify up to three sources they relied on for advice about their major or field of study. Gallup coded these open-ended responses into four major categories:

- **Formal sources:** Counselors (high school and college) and the media (internet and print). This group represents sources that are intentionally designed to provide guidance to students about their education choices.
- **Informal social network:** Family, friends and community leaders. These sources represent an informal network of advice and information for students but are not sources specifically designed to provide guidance to students about their education decisions.
- **Informal school-based:** High school teachers, high school coaches, college faculty or miscellaneous staff. The preponderance of responses classified in this category cited professors, faculty or other types of instructors not primarily in an advising role.
- **Informal work-based:** Employers, coworkers, people with experience in the field and military. The informal work-based category includes experiences gained while working and advice from people who work in particular fields.

While the sources of advice differ slightly among veterans and nonveterans, both groups rate the [helpfulness of the advice](#) they received similarly. And veterans (37%) are just as likely as nonveterans (36%) to say they [would change their major](#) if they could do it over again.

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## **Bottom Line**

Informal social networks and formal resources are the top sources for advice about selecting a college major among veterans and nonveterans alike. However, work-based sources feature more prominently in veterans' decisions about their major. Many veterans seek and receive helpful advice

from informal work-based sources, likely because most of them served before or during their postsecondary education and therefore were more likely to have interactions with work-based sources. Nonveterans who receive advice from work-based sources rate the quality of advice from these sources highly, but they are half as likely to seek advice from these sources.

These data show the importance of and need to encourage all students to pursue internships or jobs -- not only to gain practical experience, but also to develop important relationships with employers and coworkers who can provide valuable advice while making major education decisions. For members of the military, that may mean ensuring they have access to strong educational advising programs while they are serving.

*Learn more via the [Major Influence: Where Students Get Valued Advice on What to Study in College](#) report. Follow [@GallupHigherEd](#) and [@StradaEducation](#) on Twitter and use [#EduPulse](#) to join the conversation.*

## **Survey Methods**

Results are based on telephone interviews conducted Jan. 2-Aug. 13, 2017, with a random sample of 22,087 adults, aged 18 to 65, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia.

For results based on the total sample of 22,087 national adults with some college education or higher, the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 0.7$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

For results based on the sample of 2,157 veterans, the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 2.1$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

For results based on the sample of 18,815 nonveterans, the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 0.7$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

All reported margins of sampling error include computed design effects for weighting.

Each sample of national adults includes a minimum quota of 70% cellphone respondents and 30% landline respondents, with additional minimum quotas by time zone within region.

Learn more about how the [Education Consumer Pulse](#) is conducted.