



Most significant source of postsecondary education or training. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) uses 11 categories to describe all types of postsecondary education or training. Occupational analysts assign a single category that best describes the education or training needed to become fully qualified in a given occupation. (For further information, see [Measures of Education and Training](#).)

Postsecondary awards

First professional degree. Completion of this degree usually requires at least 3 years of full-time academic study beyond a bachelor's degree. The first professional degree is the minimum preparation required for entry into several professions. Examples of occupations assigned to this category include lawyers, physicians, and dentists.

Doctoral degree. Completion of a Ph.D. or other doctoral degree usually requires at least 3 years of full-time academic work beyond the bachelor's degree. Examples include postsecondary teachers, medical scientists, and mathematicians.

Master's degree. Completion of this degree usually requires 1 or 2 years of full-time academic study beyond a bachelor's degree. Examples include clergy, physician assistants, and most counselors.

Bachelor's or higher degree, plus work experience. Most occupations in this category are management occupations. All require experience in a related non-management position for which a bachelor's or higher degree usually is required. Examples include engineering managers, education administrators, and financial managers.

Bachelor's degree. Completion of this degree generally requires at least 4 years, but not more than 5 years, of full-time academic study beyond high school. Examples include accountants, elementary school teachers, and engineers.

Associate's degree. Completion of this degree usually requires at least 2 years of full-time academic study beyond high school. Examples include paralegals, chemical technicians, and dental hygienists.

Postsecondary vocational awards. These programs lead to a certificate or other award, but not a degree. Some such programs last only a few weeks, while others may last more than a year. Occupations in this category include some that require only the completion of a training program and some that require individuals to pass a licensing exam after completion of the program before they can work. Examples include nursing aides, surgical technologists, and hairstylists and cosmetologists.

Work-related training

Work experience in a related occupation. Among the many occupations that require work experience is that of first-line supervisors or managers of service, sales, and production occupations.

Long-term on-the-job training. More than 12 months of on-the-job training or, alternatively, combined work experience and formal classroom instruction are needed for workers to develop the skills to become fully qualified. This category includes formal or informal apprenticeships that may last up to 5 years. Long-term on-the-job training also includes intensive occupation-specific, employer-sponsored programs that workers must complete. Such programs include those offered by fire and police academies and schools for air traffic controllers and flight attendants. In other occupations—nuclear power reactor operators, for example—trainees take formal courses, often provided at the jobsite, to prepare for the required licensing exams. Individuals undergoing training usually are considered to be employed in the occupation. Also included in this category is the development of some natural ability—such as that possessed by musicians, athletes, actors, and other entertainers—that must be cultivated over several years, frequently in a non-work setting.

Moderate-term on-the-job training. Skills needed for a worker to become fully qualified can be acquired during 1 to 12 months of combined on-the-job experience and informal

training. Examples include heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers and medical secretaries.

Short-term on-the-job training. Skills needed for a worker to become fully qualified can be acquired during a short demonstration of job duties or during 1 month or less of on-the-job experience or instruction. Examples include retail salespersons and waiters and waitresses.

BLS economists use the following principles to assign the education or training categories for each occupation:

- **An occupation is placed into the category that best describes the education or training that most workers need to become fully qualified in that occupation.**
- **Postsecondary awards or degrees, if generally needed for entry into the occupation, take precedence over work-related training, even though additional skills or experience may be needed for a worker to become fully qualified.**
- **The length of time that an average worker generally needs to become fully qualified through a combination of on-the-job training and experience is used to categorize occupations in which a postsecondary award or degree usually is not needed for entry.**

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