

Credentials

The Occupational Requirements Survey (ORS) publishes job-related information on physical demands; environmental conditions; education, training, and experience; as well as cognitive and mental requirements. The job requirements reflect those necessary for workers to perform critical tasks in support of the critical job functions, and not the capabilities of individual workers.

Credentials include training time required as a condition of hiring, which often result in certifications, licenses, or educational certificates and are part of the education, training, and experience requirements.

The published estimates reflect the percentage of workers with credential requirements and the time necessary to obtain them.

Credential requirements include:

- Certifications which are issued by a certification body, industry association, or professional association and acknowledge that occupation specific skills and abilities exist. Certifications expire if not renewed.
- Educational certificates which are issued by an educational institution (or a training provider) and certify that an occupation specific program of study was completed. Educational certificates typically do not expire.
- Licenses which are issued by a government agency and constitute a legal authority to perform a specific occupation. Similar to a certification, a license expires if not renewed.

Apprenticeships, vocational training, non-credit courses, and credit courses that do not result in a degree are included in credential requirements. When workers are expected to obtain credentials to perform critical job tasks, these requirements are included in estimates.

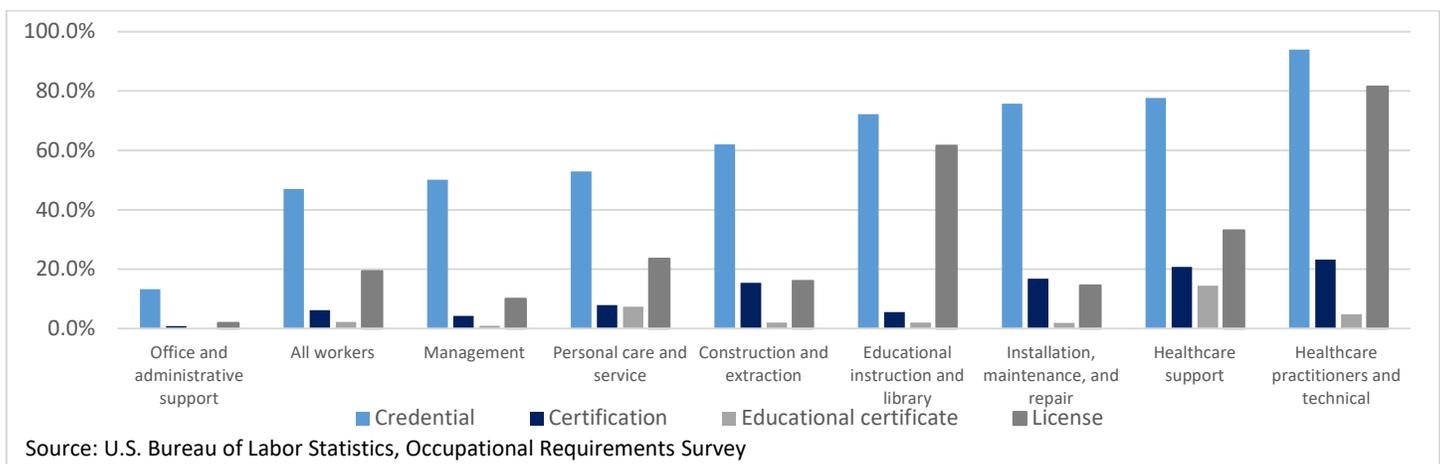
Not all credentials are included in the ORS estimates. Instances where:

- credentials are desirable but are not required,
- credentials are part of the hiring criteria but are not associated with any critical job tasks, and
- certificates of attendance or participation for training that is not vocationally relevant are not included in credential requirement estimates.

In 2020, 47.0 percent of civilian workers were required to have a credential where 6.2 percent had a certification requirement and 19.4 percent had a license requirement.

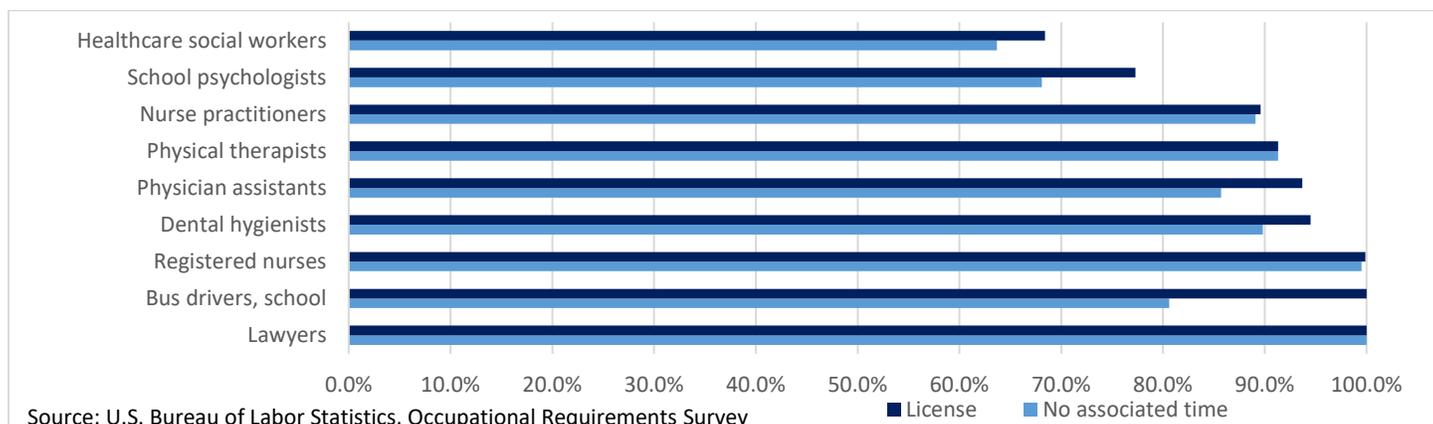
Among published occupational groups, credential requirements ranged from 13.3 percent for workers in office and administrative support occupations to 94.0 percent for workers in healthcare practitioners and technical occupation. (See Chart A.)

Chart A. Percentage of civilian workers with credential requirements by occupational group, 2020



Estimates reflect the length of time necessary to obtain the required credentials. In some instances the duration of individual credentials cannot be separated from other education, training, and experience requirements. For example, lawyers have degrees included as part of the criteria for obtaining licenses so there is no separate time from the degree requirement. When this occurs, it is included as concurrent time with the other education, training, or experience requirements as appropriate. (See Chart B.)

Chart B. Percentage of workers with license and associated time requirements, 2020



When there is time required separate from other education, training, and experience requirements, the percentage of workers that require a credential is published along with the length of time associated with that credential requirement. For example, 68.8 percent of nursing assistants have a license requirement and 22.1 percent have separate time associated with the credential, whereas 46.7 percent do not have separate time associated with the license.

Percentile estimates for associated time provide a range of time required to obtain the credential. For example, at the 10th percentile, electricians had 1,440 days (almost four years) associated to license requirements. While at the 90th percentile, the license requirement had 1,825 days (five years) associated with it.

Additional resources:

- [Latest news release](#)
- [Archived ORS news releases](#)
- [Handbook of Methods](#)
- [Collection manuals](#)
- [Factsheets](#)

Articles:

- [Sitting and standing requirements in 2020](#)
- [Job requirements for animal caretakers on National Mutt Day](#)
- [Three-fourths of workers had to interact with the public in 2019; 4.3 percent worked around crowds](#)
- [Physical requirements in food preparation and serving jobs](#)
- [Job requirements and wages for auto mechanics in 2018](#)
- [Occupational requirements and benefits for nurses in the United States in 2018](#)
- All [The Economics Daily](#) (TED) articles on ORS
- [A look at teachers' job requirements, employer costs, and benefits \(PDF\)](#)
- [The Occupational Requirements Survey: estimates from preproduction testing](#)

For additional information on occupational requirements see the [ORS homepage](#) or download the [ORS complete dataset](#) to explore the latest estimates.