

## Minimum formal education

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. For the purposes of the ORS, the formal minimum education necessary to perform a job is the requirement measured, not the educational attainment of individual workers. For example, a job may require a bachelor's degree, but workers performing the job may have higher degrees such as Ph.D. The estimates reflect the job requirement of a bachelor's degree.

Minimum formal education requirements are one of four components used to calculate an occupation's *specific vocational preparation*, or SVP. The SVP is determined by the amount of preparation time required by the job and includes credentials, prior work experience, minimum formal education requirements, and on-the-job training.

The minimum formal education requirements and the vocational time included in the SVP are shown below:<sup>1</sup>

**Table 1. Minimum formal education requirements**

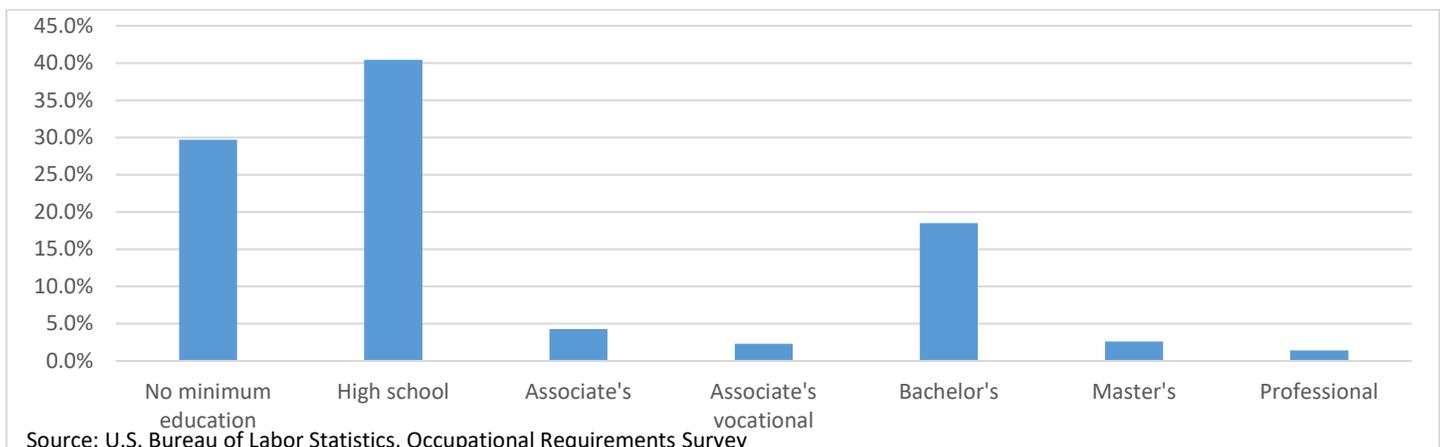
Minimum education requirement	Vocational time included in SVP <sup>1</sup>
No formal education required	None
High school	None
Vocational high school	2 years
Associate's	1 year
Vocational associate's	2 years
Bachelor's	2-3 years
Master's	All post graduate years (usually 1-2 years) plus 2 years of bachelor's
Professional	All post graduate years (usually 2-4 years) plus 2 years of bachelor's
Doctorate	6 years (4 years post-graduate plus 2 years of bachelor's)

Footnotes:  
<sup>1</sup> See the ORS Collection Manual for more detail regarding vocational time included in SVP for minimum education requirements  
 Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Requirements Survey

As shown in Table 1, the time required to complete incidental degrees is included in each education requirement. For example, if a job requires a master's degree, workers would have incidentally obtained a bachelor's degree. In this example, SVP would include both the time required to complete a master's degree as well as the time required to complete a bachelor's degree.

Minimum formal education estimates only include the degree requirement and not incidental degrees. So, when a job requires a master's degree, it is only reflected in the master's degree requirement and not in the lower degree requirements. In 2020, 29.7 percent of civilian workers had no minimum education requirement and 40.4 percent required a high school diploma. (See Chart A.)

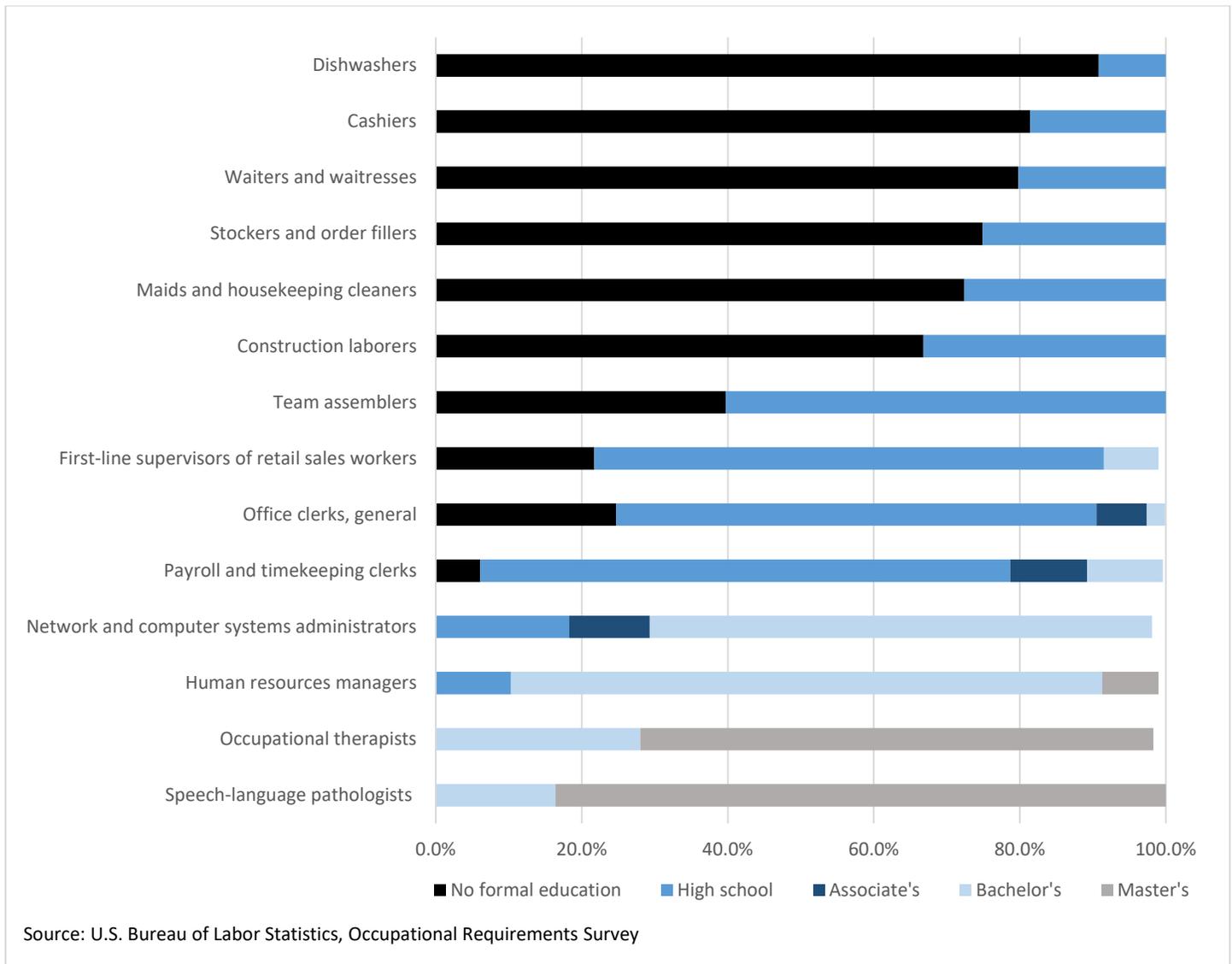
**Chart A. Percentage of civilian workers by minimum education requirement, 2020**



Not all minimum formal education requirements will be published for each occupation. While civilian workers and occupational groups may include workers in most education levels, at the detailed occupations fewer education levels may be published either because there are no workers with that job requirement or the estimate fails publication criteria.

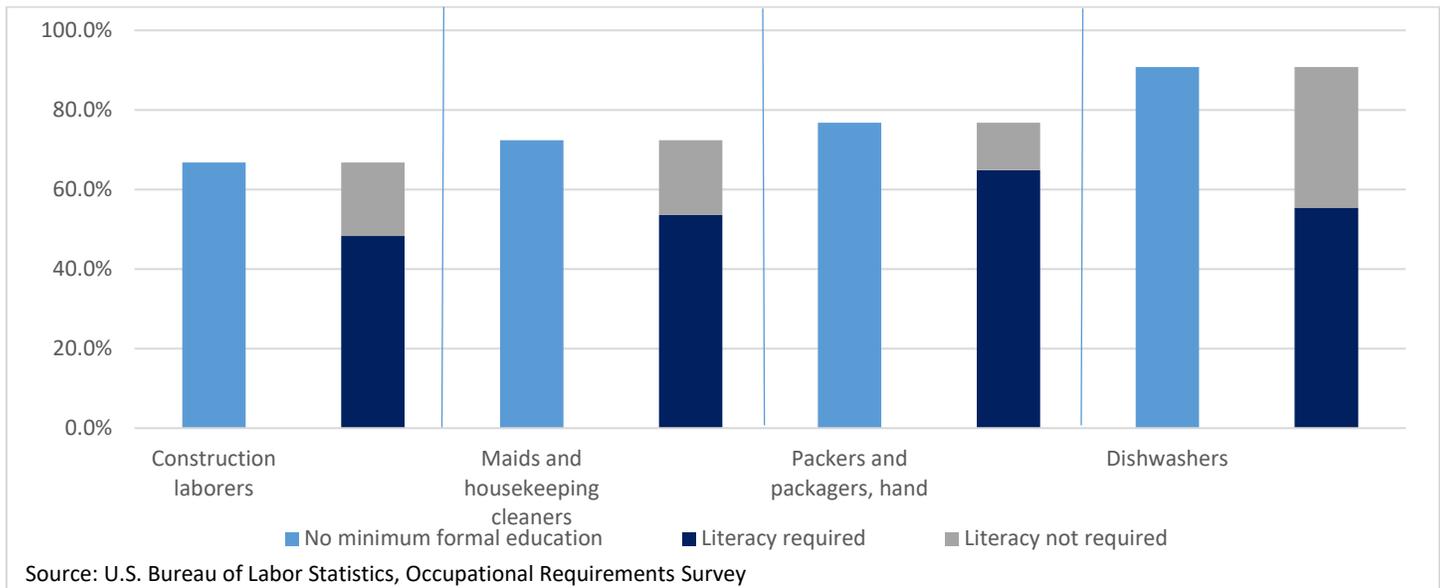
Sometimes, information about the distribution of minimum education requirements can be understood even when certain requirements are not published. For example, cashiers only had two publishable estimates: 81.4 percent of workers have no minimum education requirement and 18.6 percent require a high school diploma. They both summed to 100 percent, thus conveyed why there are no other estimates available for this occupation. (See Chart B.)

**Chart B. Percentage of workers by minimum education requirement, 2020**



When a job has no minimum education requirement, the ORS publishes whether that job requires literacy. The estimates for literacy required and not required sum to the percentage of the no minimum education requirement. For example, 90.8 percent of dishwashers had no minimum formal education requirement in 2020. Of these workers, literacy was required for 55.4 percent and not required for 35.4 percent. (See Chart C.)

Chart C. Percentage of workers by literacy requirement, 2020



### 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.

<sup>1</sup> For more information see the [ORS Collection Manual](#).