

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 results 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. These credentials are included in overall credential requirements but are not separately published. When workers are expected to obtain credentials to perform critical job tasks, these requirements are included in estimates.

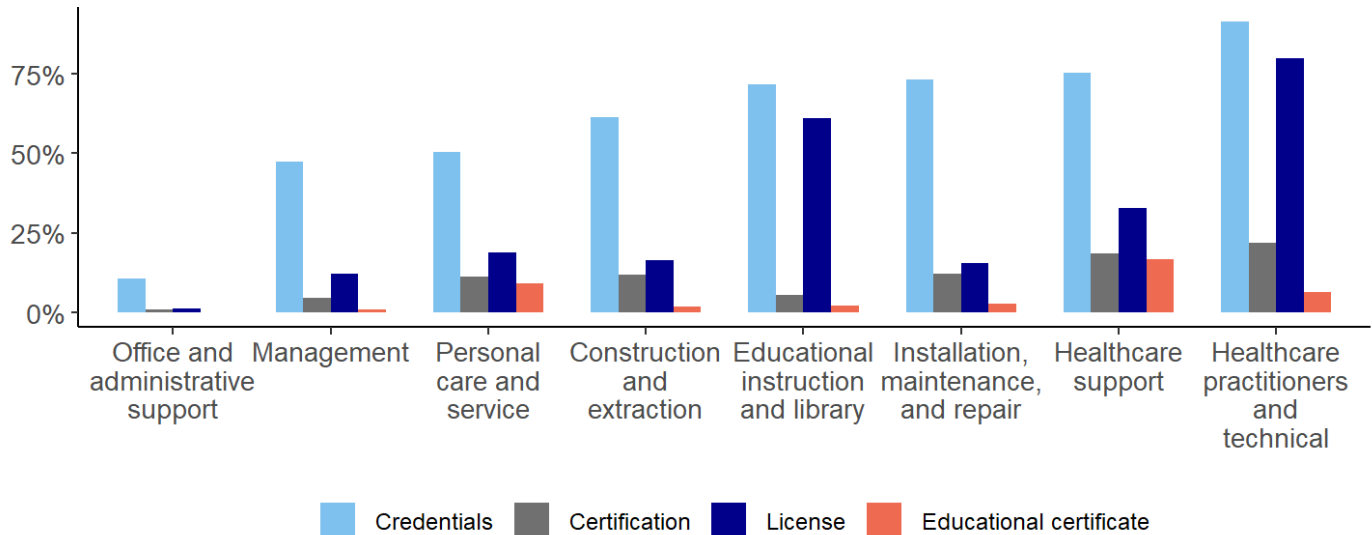
Not all credentials are included in the ORS estimates. Instances where:

- 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 2021, 45.3 percent of civilian workers were required to have a credential where 5.8 percent had a certification requirement and 19.1 percent had a license requirement.

Among published occupational groups, credential requirements ranged from 10.8 percent of office and administrative support workers to 91.4 percent of healthcare practitioners and technical workers. (See Chart A.)

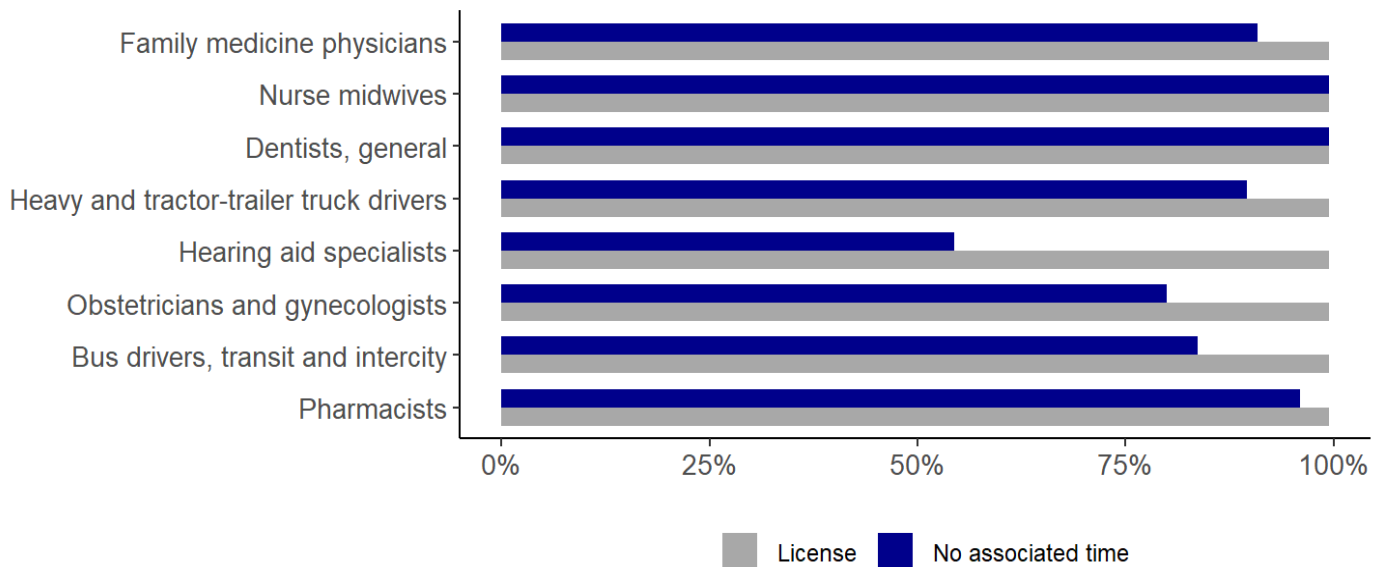
Chart A. Percentage of civilian workers with credential requirements by occupational group, 2023



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Requirements Survey

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 (published as no associated time) with the other education, training, or experience requirements as appropriate. (See Chart B.)

Chart B. Percentage of workers with license and no associated time requirements, 2023



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Requirements Survey

The percentage of workers with credential requirements are published along with the associated length of time necessary to obtain the credential when the time is separate from other education, training, and experience requirements. For example, a license was required for greater than 99.5 percent of bus drivers, transit and intercity. For 16.3 percent of these workers, obtaining a license required time in addition to other education, training, and experience. No associated time was required for 83.7 percent of bus drivers, transit and intercity required to obtain a license.

Percentile estimates for associated time provide a range of time required to obtain the credential. For example, at the 25th percentile, electricians had 1000 days (about 3 years) associated with license requirements. While at the 90th percentile, the associated time for the license requirement was 1825 days (5 years). (See Table 1.)

Table 1. Percentage of workers with license requirements and associated number of days, 2023

Occupation	Required	Associated time	Number of days				
			10th percentile	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile	90th percentile
Insurance sales agents	81.0	48.0	3.00	5.0	6.5	10.00	14
Personal care aides	17.9	11.8	4.38	5.0	7.0	12.63	-
Nursing assistants	67.3	26.0	9.38	10.0	15.0	22.50	-
General and operations managers	6.1	2.5	-	-	50.0	-	-
Pharmacy technicians	71.0	11.6	-	-	62.5	120.00	125
Hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists	99.5	-	150.00	156.2	187.5	200.00	-
Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	99.0	11.6	191.20	360.0	365.0	365.00	365
Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	38.3	20.8	365.00	500.0	1095.0	1460.00	1825
Electricians	35.8	24.7	-	1000.0	1460.0	1825.00	1825

Note: Dash indicates estimate did not meet publication criteria.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Requirements Survey

Additional resources:

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- [Archived ORS news releases](#)
- [Handbook of Methods](#)
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- [Factsheets](#)

Articles:

- [All The Economics Daily \(TED\) articles on ORS](#)
- [Minds at work: what’s required according to the Occupational Requirements Survey \(PDF\)](#)
- [A look at teachers’ job requirements, employer costs, and benefits \(PDF\)](#)
- [Occupational Requirements Survey: Third wave testing report \(PDF\)](#)
- [Occupational Requirements Survey: results from a job observation pilot test](#)
- [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.