

Definitions for the Education and Training Classification System

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) education and training classification system consists of three categories of information that BLS analysts have assigned to each detailed occupation in the 2010–2020 National Employment Matrix. The categories are 1) typical education needed for entry, 2) commonly required work experience in a related occupation, and 3) typical on-the-job training needed to obtain competency in the occupation. Each category and its related choice selections are defined below. This education and training system replaces the one used for the 2008–2018 projections cycle.

Typical education needed for entry. This category best describes the typical level of education that most workers need to enter the occupation. Occupations are assigned one of the following eight education levels:

Doctoral or professional degree. Completion of a doctoral degree (Ph.D.) usually requires at least 3 years of full-time academic work beyond a bachelor's degree. Completion of a professional degree usually requires at least 3 years of full-time academic study beyond a bachelor's degree. Examples of occupations for which a professional degree is the typical form of entry-level education include lawyers, physicians and surgeons, and dentists.

Master's degree. Completion of this degree usually requires 1 or 2 years of full-time academic study beyond a bachelor's degree. Examples of occupations in this category include statisticians, physician assistants, and educational, vocational, and school counselors.

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 of occupations in this category include budget analysts, dietitians, and civil engineers.

Associate's degree. Completion of this degree usually requires at least 2 years but not more than 4 years of full-time academic study beyond high school. Examples of occupations in this category include mechanical drafters, respiratory therapists, and dental hygienists.

Postsecondary non-degree award. These programs lead to a certificate or other award, but not a degree. The certificate is awarded by the educational institution and is the result of completing formal postsecondary schooling. Certification, which is issued by a professional organization or certifying body, is not included here. Some postsecondary nondegree award programs last only a few weeks, while others may last 1 to 2 years. Examples of occupations in this category include nursing aides, emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and paramedics, and hairstylists.

Some college, no degree. This category signifies the achievement of a high school diploma or equivalent plus the completion of one or more postsecondary courses that did not result in a degree or award. Examples of occupations in this category are actors and computer support specialists.

High school diploma or equivalent. This category signifies the completion of high school or an equivalent program resulting in the award of a high school diploma or an equivalent, such as the General Educational Development (GED) credential. Examples of occupations in this category include social and human service assistants and pharmacy technicians.

Less than high school. This category signifies the completion of any level of primary or secondary education that did not result in the award of a high school diploma or equivalent. Examples of occupations in this category include janitors and cleaners, cashiers, and carpet installers.

Work experience in a related occupation. For some occupations, work experience in a related occupation may be a typical method of entry. The majority of occupations in this category are first-line supervisors or managers of service, sales, and production occupations. Although work experience in a related occupation is beneficial for all occupations, this metric is meant to capture work experience that is commonly considered necessary by employers, or is a commonly accepted substitute for other, more formal types of training or education. Occupations are assigned one of the following four categories that deal with length of time spent gaining related work experience:

More than 5 years. This is assigned to occupations if more than 5 years of work experience in a related occupation is typically needed for entry. Examples include construction managers and computer and information systems managers.

1 to 5 years. To enter occupations in this category, workers typically need 1-5 years of work experience in a related occupation. Examples include marketing managers and database administrators.

Less than 1 year. Examples of occupations that typically need less than 1 year of work experience in a related occupation include restaurant cooks and industrial truck and tractor operators.

None. No work experience in a related occupation is typically needed. Examples are audiologists and actuaries.

Typical on-the-job training needed to attain competency in the occupation. This category encompasses any additional training or preparation that is typically needed, once employed in an occupation, to attain competency in the skills needed in that occupation. Training is occupation-specific rather than job-specific; skills learned can be transferred to another job in the same occupation. Occupations are assigned one of the following six training categories:

Internship/residency. An internship or residency is training that involves preparation in a field such as medicine or teaching, generally under supervision in a professional setting, such as a hospital or classroom. This type of training may occur before one is employed. Completion of an internship or residency program is commonly required for state licensure or certification in fields including medicine, counseling, architecture, and teaching. This category does not include internships that are suggested for advancement. Examples of occupations in the internship/residency category include physicians and surgeons and marriage and family therapists.

Apprenticeship. An apprenticeship is a formal relationship between a worker and sponsor that consists of a combination of on-the-job training and related occupation-specific technical instruction in which the worker learns the practical and theoretical aspects of an occupation. Apprenticeship programs are sponsored by individual employers, joint employer-and-labor groups, and employer associations. The typical apprenticeship program provides at least 144 hours of occupation-specific technical instruction and 2,000 hours of on-the-job training per year over a 3-to-5 year period. Examples of occupations in the apprenticeship category include electricians and structural iron and steel workers.

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 attain competency. Training is occupation specific rather than job specific; therefore, skills learned can be transferred to another job in the same occupation. This on-the-job training category also includes employer-sponsored training programs. 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. This category excludes apprenticeships. Examples of occupations in the long-term on-the-job training category include opticians and automotive service technicians and mechanics.

Moderate-term on-the-job training. Skills needed for a worker to attain competency in an occupation that can be acquired during 1 to 12 months of combined on-the-job experience and informal training. Training is occupation-specific rather than job-specific; therefore, skills learned can be transferred to another job in the same occupation. This on-the-job training category also includes employer-sponsored training programs. Examples of occupations in the moderate-term category include school bus drivers and advertising sales agents.

Short-term on-the-job training. Skills needed for a worker to attain competency in an occupation that can be acquired during 1 month or less of on-the-job experience and informal training. Training is occupation-specific rather than job specific; therefore, skills learned can be transferred to another job in the same occupation. This on-the-job training category also includes employer sponsored training programs. Examples of occupations in the short-term category include retail salespersons and maids and housekeeping cleaners.

None. There is no additional occupation-specific training or preparation typically required to attain competency in the occupation. Examples of occupations that do not require occupation-specific on-the-job training include geographers and pharmacists.