

DATA POINT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NCES 2015-556 JUNE 2015

The Relationship Between Education and Work Credentials

This Data Point uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), a nationally representative sample survey of households. The SIPP provides information on many topics, including income, participation in government programs, family dynamics, and education. This report uses new SIPP data on professional licenses and certifications, collected September to December 2012.

Work credentials can serve as an alternative or supplement to education credentials. Work credentials include occupational licenses and certifications; education credentials include diplomas, degrees, and educational certificates. Both types of credentials attest that a person has the skills needed to perform a job. However, a license is issued by a government agency (often a state board), while a certification is typically issued by a professional or trade organization.

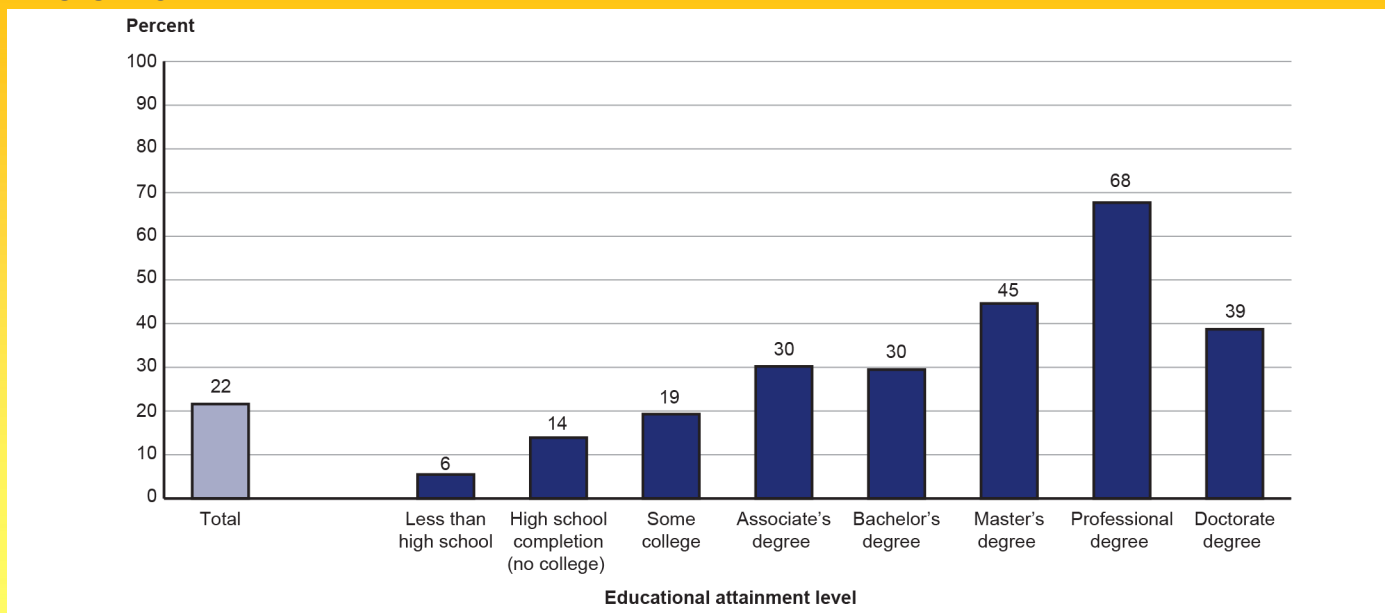
New national data show that over one in five adults (22 percent) report having a work credential (figure 1). Overall, 71 percent of these credentialed adults report that their most recent credential is a license and 29 percent

report that it is a certification (see <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ctes/tables/A33.asp>).

Work credential rates generally increase with education level.

Excluding adults with a doctorate degree, the proportion of adults with a work credential generally increases with educational attainment, ranging from 6 percent for adults with less than a high school diploma to 68 percent for adults with a professional degree.¹ Nonetheless, over half of those who hold a work credential (53 percent) have less than a bachelor's degree (see <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ctes/tables/A32.asp>).

FIGURE 1. Percentage of adults with a license or certification, by adults' educational attainment level: 2012

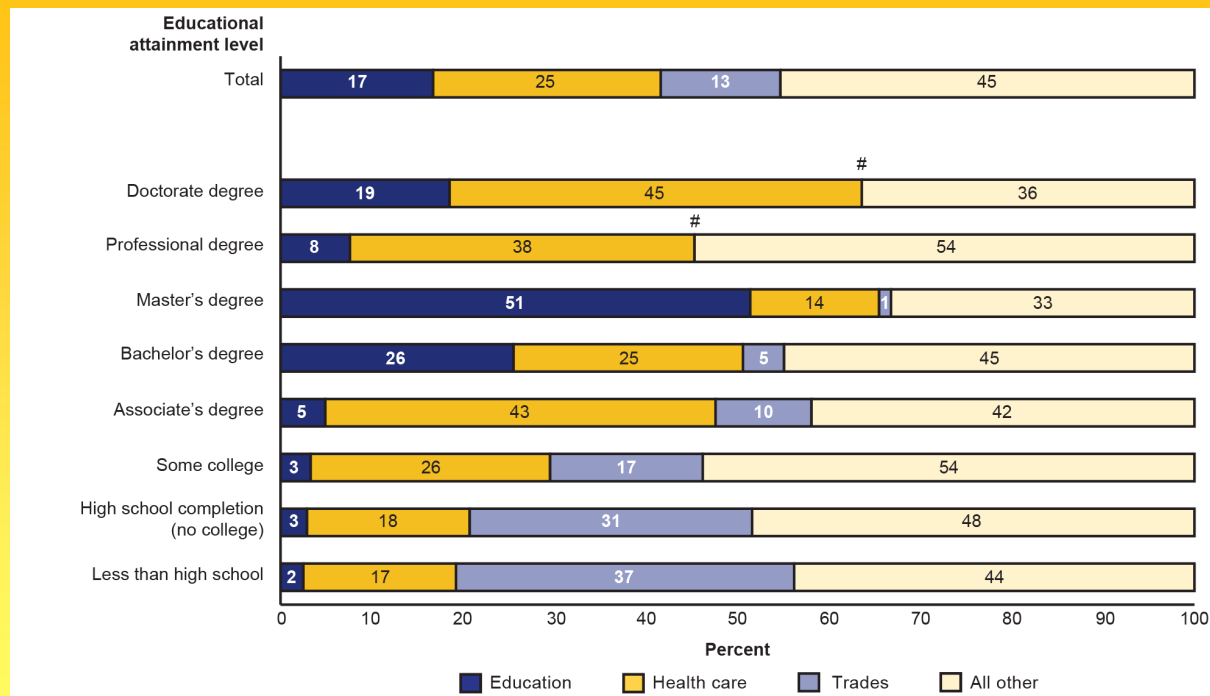


NOTE: Estimates are for the population aged 18 and older. Standard errors for estimates can be found at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ctes/tables/A31.asp>.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2008 Panel, Wave 13 (Sept.–Dec. 2012).

To learn more about the SIPP, visit <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sipp>.
For questions about content or to view this report online, go to <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2015556>.

FIGURE 2. Among credentialed adults, percentage with a credential in selected subject fields, by adults' educational attainment level: 2012



Rounds to zero.

NOTE: Estimates are for the population aged 18 and older. "Trades" includes transportation and material moving, construction, and manufacturing. "All other" includes all subject fields other than education, health care, and trades. A full list of subject fields included in the survey can be found at <http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2014/demo/p70-138.pdf>. Standard errors for all estimates in this figure can be found at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ctes/tables/A35.asp>.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2008 Panel, Wave 13 (Sept.–Dec. 2012).

Work credential fields vary by education level.

The most common fields in which work credentials are obtained (based on the most recent credential) are health care (25 percent of credentialed adults), education (17 percent), and the trades (13 percent) (figure 2). Together, these fields account for over half (55 percent) of all credentials.²

These credentialing fields are associated with different levels of education (figure 2). Compared to credentialed adults at other education levels, a higher percentage of adults with bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees have a credential in education. Similarly, a higher percentage of credentialed adults with subbaccalaureate and advanced degrees have a credential in health care; 45 percent of those with doctorate degrees, 38 percent of those with professional degrees, and 43 percent of those

with associate's degrees report having a health-care credential. The proportion of credentialed adults with credentials in the trades decreases as education attainment increases, ranging from 37 percent of those with less than a high school diploma, to 1 percent or less of those with degrees above the bachelor's level.

Endnotes

¹ The one exception was the statistical test between credentialing rates for adults with an associate's degree and a bachelor's degree, which was not significant.

² For more detailed information on credentialing fields, see Ewert, S., and Kominski, R. (2014). *Measuring Alternative Education Credentials: 2012*. Washington, DC: Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. Available at <http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2014/demo/p70-138.pdf>.

This National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Data Point presents information of education topics of current interest. It was authored by Lisa Hudson of NCES and Stephanie Ewert of the Census Bureau. Estimates based on samples are subject to sampling variability, and apparent differences may not be statistically significant. All stated differences are statisti-

cally significant at the .05 level. In the design, conduct, and data processing of NCES surveys, efforts are made to minimize effects of non-sampling errors, such as item response, measurement error, data processing error, or other systematic error.