

GET THE JOB

Diversify With Certification

Whether you possess only a high school diploma or professional degree, certifications can help you land the job that you want and set you apart from other job seekers.

Certifications demonstrate to employers that you have certain skills and knowledge. Often a certification requires a minimum amount of on-the-job experience in addition to passing an exam.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics defines a certification as something that is awarded by a professional organization or other nongovernmental body, is not legally required to work in an occupation (unlike a license) and demonstrates competency in how to do a job, often through an exam process.

They say the occupations that most often want a certification include architecture and engineering, health care, community and social services, maintenance and computer jobs. However, professional organizations from hospitality to food service to technical jobs to administrative and finance jobs offer certifications, sometimes in



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highly specialized areas.

Note that there is a difference between certificates and certifications. Certificates can help you gain the knowledge you need to achieve a certification.

FINDING CERTIFICATION PROVIDERS

While there are many places that will take your money in exchange for a certification, it will only do you good if you choose one that has credibility in the industry and gives

you practical and useful knowledge and skills.

The National Center for Educational Statistics says the most common source for certifications and certificates are private for-profit schools and community colleges. Make sure any college you apply to is accredited by the Department of Education or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

Other sources are the official professional associations that represent an industry. For

example, the National Restaurant Association offers certifications for food service workers in such areas as food safety, alcohol service, allergens and management.

Sometimes the best way to find a certification is to talk to your colleagues or your current employer.

CERTIFICATION OPENS DOORS

According to Gallup's "Great Jobs" report, people who have a high school diploma and a

professional certification — but no other college education — are the most likely group to have a "good" job, at 49%. Only those with post-graduate degrees come close with 47%.

People with certifications are also more likely to be employed. According to a study funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in 2020, 81% of people with certifications are employed compared to 68% of those without. They also found that people with certifications felt more confident they would be promoted in the future than those who did not have one.

COMMUNICATING YOUR CERTIFICATION

Once you've earned a certification, make sure potential employers know about it. You can include it under the education section of your resume or, if you have several certifications, you can create a separate section listing them.

Add them to your LinkedIn profile and your personal website if you have one. On LinkedIn, go to your profile, click on "Add profile section" and find the "Licenses & Certifications" option. Click on that and add your information.

You can also bring them up in interviews as proof that you are a committed and skilled professional.