

It's All Academic

IN GENERAL, more academic preparation correlates with more job opportunities. In health care, there is a distinct correlation between academic preparedness and the position held. A job title can indicate the number of years in preparation for the specific career.



Objectives:



1. Present the levels of education, and explain the correlation of academic preparation to levels of training.
2. Define entrepreneurship, and identify opportunities in the health care field.

Key Terms:



aide	elementary education	secondary education
assistant	entrepreneur	technician
associate's degree	master's degree	technologist
baccalaureate degree	postsecondary	therapist
bachelor's degree	education	vocational training
doctorate	professional	

Education and Training

You have probably participated in some type of career planning and college preparation activities. Was the material new to you, or were you already somewhat familiar with the education and required training? Do you know the difference between various degrees that can be obtained from colleges and universities? Do you know how much time it takes to earn those degrees? Do you know which degrees lead to which positions? The answers to these questions will help you with important career-planning decisions.

LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND TYPICAL TIME REQUIREMENTS

Let's begin with a brief review of the basic education levels and their time requirements. This will show you a general pattern that will be helpful with future career-planning activities.

- ♦ **Elementary education** is grammar school or grade school (grade 1 through 8) education.
- ♦ **Secondary education** is education obtained in high school.
- ♦ **Postsecondary education** is education obtained after high school.
- ♦ **Vocational training** is job- or occupation-related training or education.

Associate's Degree

An **associate's degree** is a degree that can be earned at a vocational or technical school, at a community or junior college, and sometimes at a four-year college or university. An associate's degree typically requires a prescribed two-year course of study and can be awarded in a variety of disciplines or subject areas. A student who completes an associate's degree nursing program, for example, might be awarded an associate's degree in nursing. Other programs award an Associate in Science (AS) degree or an Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree.

Bachelor's Degree

A **baccalaureate degree**, or **bachelor's degree**, is a degree awarded by a college or university. It typically requires a minimum of four years of study, with a concentration in a particular subject area. Examples of baccalaureate degrees are Bachelor of Science (BS), Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), Bachelor of Social Work (BSW), and Bachelor of Arts (BA).



FURTHER EXPLORATION...

ONLINE CONNECTION: Creating an Occupational Profile

Go to the following website: http://www.careerinfonet.org/Occupations/select_occupation.aspx?next=occ_rep&level=&optstatus=&id=1&nodeid=2&soccode=&stfips=&jobfam= and select from the "Healthcare Practitioners and Technical" or "Healthcare Support" link. Then select your state on the next page. On the final page, you will see a full career-occupational profile. Within this profile, you will see information on wages, employment trends, knowledge, skills, abilities, typical tasks and activities, tools and technology, the education and training required, a list of related occupations, and an extensive list of web resources.

Once you have reviewed the information for one field, select two other career options, and complete the same review. Of the three careers reviewed, which appeals the most to you? Why? Share your answer with the class.

Master's Degree

A **master's degree** is a degree awarded at the college or university level. It typically requires two years of study beyond the bachelor's degree. Examples are Master of Science (MS), Master of Social Work (MSW), Master of Public Health (MPH), and Master of Science in Nursing (MSN).

Doctorate

A doctorate is the highest degree awarded by a college or university. It typically requires two or more years beyond a master's degree. In some cases, a doctorate may require as many as four to eight additional years of study, depending on the discipline or specialty area. Examples of doctorates are Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Doctor of Medicine (MD), Doctor of Osteopathy (DO), Doctor of Optometry (OD), Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM), Doctor of Nursing Science (DNSc), and Doctor of Education (EdD).



FIGURE 1. A doctorate may require as many as four to eight additional years of study (post-baccalaureate), depending on the discipline.

RELATIONSHIP OF TRAINING LEVELS AND ACADEMIC PREPARATION

Generally speaking, in the health care industry, you can associate a health care worker's job or position title with a certain level of education and on-the-job training, though requirements might vary slightly from state to state. For instance, an **aide** or **assistant** typically has one or more years of vocational training that combines classroom and on-the-job training. Occasionally aides or assistants have less than a year of specialized vocational training, such as dental assistants, medical assistants, and nursing assistants.

Technician

A **technician** is a person who typically has completed a two-year associate degree, a specialized vocational training program, or three to four years of on-the-job training. Examples of technicians are dental laboratory technicians, medical laboratory technicians, surgical technicians, and emergency medical technicians (EMTs).

Technologist or Therapist

A **technologist** or **therapist** has typically completed three to four years of college (usually a bachelor's degree) plus work experience or on-the-job training. Examples of careers at this level are medical laboratory technologist and physical therapist. In the health care field, a **professional** is a person who has completed four or more years of college and has earned a bachelor's degree, master's degree, or doctorate. Examples of health care professionals are registered nurses with bachelor's degrees or higher, nurse practitioners, doctors, and dentists.



FIGURE 2. A technologist or therapist has typically completed three to four years of college (usually a bachelor's degree), plus work experience or on-the-job training.

Owner-Operated Job Opportunities

Many health care professionals work in a typical hospital or health care setting with a manager or supervisor. Some professionals have the desire to be their own boss.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

An **entrepreneur** is an individual who organizes, manages, and assumes the risk of his or her own business. In the current health care industry, many health care occupations allow a trained individual to become independent. However, even a trained entrepreneur must work under the direction or guidance of a physician when managing a business that provides health care (e.g., a nurse with a legal degree who owns a business that provides expert witnesses in the area of health care and a massage therapist who owns his or her own business).

Summary:



Generally speaking, in the health care industry, you can associate a health care worker's job or position title with a certain level of education and on-the-job training, though requirements might vary slightly from state to state. There are many levels of education and training. The vast majority of health care occupations require an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, or a doctorate. In the current health care industry, many health care occupations allow a trained individual to become an entrepreneur.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. List the levels of education that exist (in order) to the level of baccalaureate degree.
2. List the degrees awarded by colleges and universities.
3. Define the term “entrepreneur.”
4. How many years of college must a physical therapist complete?
5. How many years of college must a technician complete?

Expanding Your Knowledge:



Visit your local career resource area, and ask about job shadowing opportunities in the area you identified previously as an area of interest. Job shadowing is a great way to get a firsthand experience in a new career area. Take notes while asking questions during your experience.

Web Links:



Identify Your Interests

<http://www.careeronestop.org/StudentsandCareerAdvisors/IdentifyYourInterests.aspx>

Education & Careers

<http://www.ada.org/education.aspx>

Occupational Outlook Handbook

<http://www.bls.gov/oco/>