



## Employment outlook for bachelor's-level occupations

*Elka Torpey | April 2018*

What's the outlook in occupations that typically require a bachelor's degree to enter? Which of those occupations are projected to have many openings? How much do they pay? U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data can answer these questions.

This article examines selected occupations in which a bachelor's degree is typically required to enter them. It highlights wages and projected openings in these "bachelor's-level" occupations.

## Projections by entry-level education

BLS makes employment projections for more than 800 occupations. As part of this analysis, BLS also determines the education that is typically needed for people entering an occupation. In every occupation, however, the education typically required for people at the entry level may differ from that of people who are already working in it.

An example is [network and computer systems administrators](#). More than half of network and computer systems administrators ages 25 and older in 2015–16 had attained education other than a bachelor’s degree. Seeking candidates with competitive skills, most employers hiring network and computer systems administrators today require a bachelor’s degree in computer or information science. Therefore, BLS has determined that people entering this occupation typically need a bachelor’s degree.



In all, BLS designates 174 occupations as typically requiring a bachelor’s degree for entry. Employment in these bachelor’s-level occupations is projected to grow by 10 percent from 2016 to 2026, faster than the 7-percent average projected for all occupations.

## Openings by career field

This article features nine career fields in which BLS projects the most openings for bachelor's-level occupations:

- [Business](#)
- [Community and social service](#)
- [Engineering and architecture](#)
- [Financial](#)
- [Healthcare and science](#)
- [Information technology](#)
- [Management-related](#)

- [Sports, communication, and design](#)
- [Teaching](#)

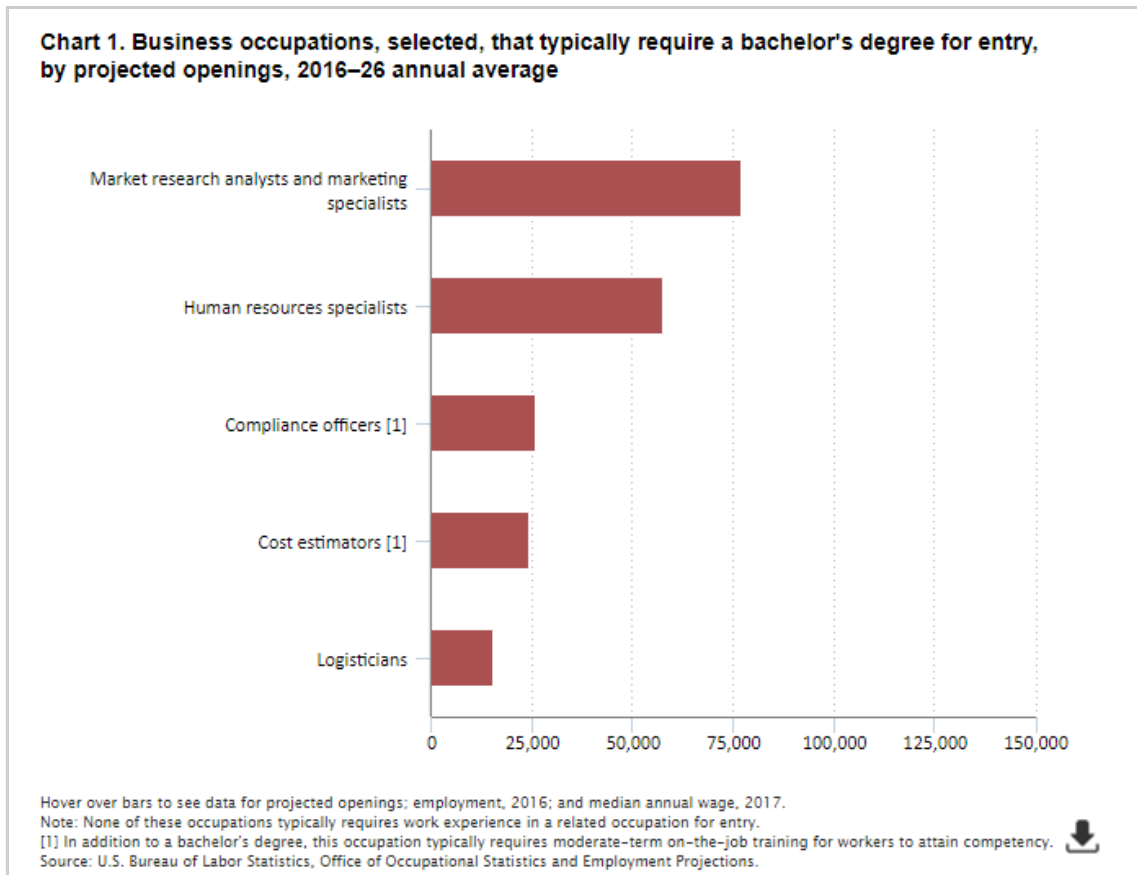
Nearly all of the occupations are assigned to career fields based on the type of bachelor's degree you might need to enter them. For example, [wholesale and manufacturing sales representatives](#) who sell technical and scientific products are included in the healthcare and science field, because employers may require that these sales representatives, like workers in all occupations in this field, have a degree in healthcare or science. Management-related occupations, however, are grouped together because you typically need work experience in a related occupation, in addition to a degree, to enter them.

For each career field, the charts that follow highlight the number of openings projected to arise each year, on average, from 2016 to 2026 in the selected occupations. Most of these openings will stem from the need to replace workers who leave an occupation. But some of them are expected to be newly created jobs.

The charts also include information about 2017 median annual wages. (A median wage means that half of workers in the occupation earned more than that amount, and half earned less. These wage data exclude self-employed workers.) In 2017, the median annual wage for bachelor's-level occupations was \$72,830, nearly double the \$37,690 median wage for all occupations.

## **Business**

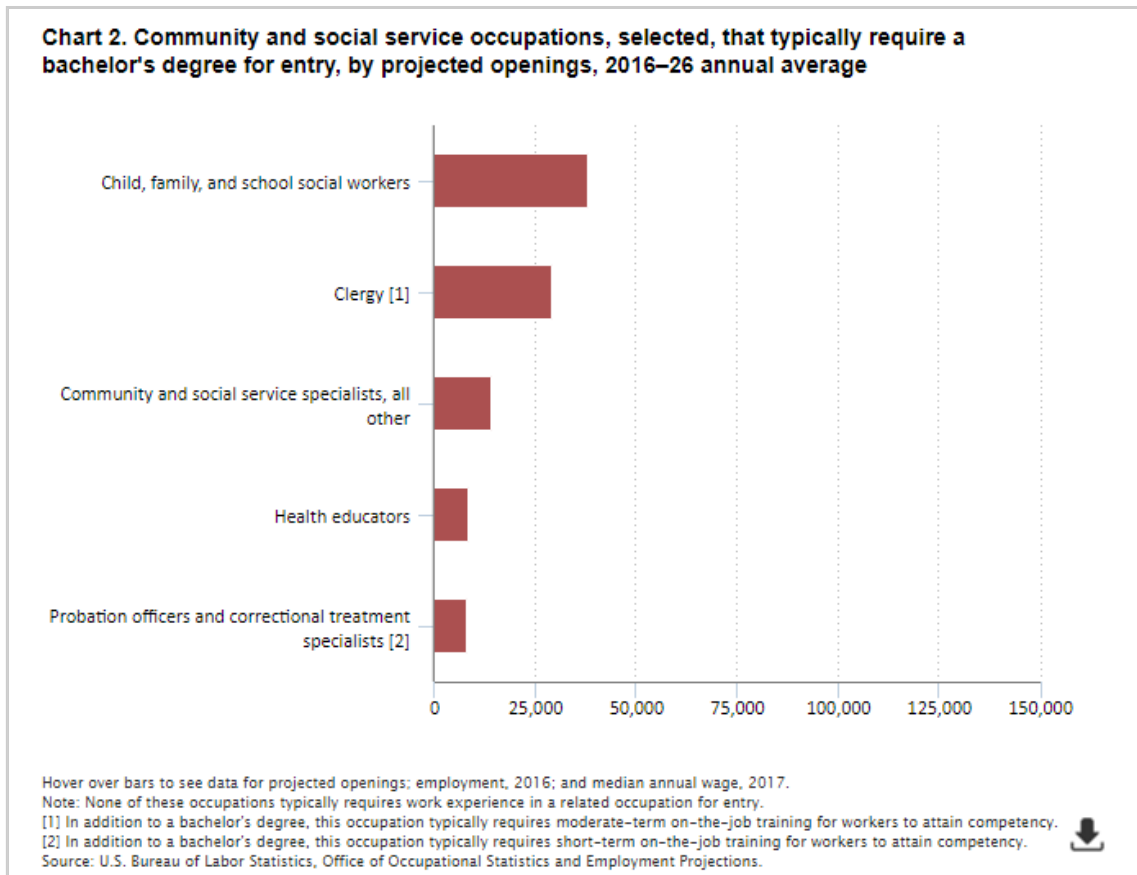
Workers in [business](#) occupations help organizations operate from day to day. Among the occupations in chart 1, [market research analysts and marketing specialists](#) is projected to have the most openings each year, on average, from 2016 to 2026.



In addition to typically requiring a bachelor’s degree for entry, two occupations in chart 1 require on-the-job training for workers to become competent. Wages for [logisticians](#) were highest of the occupations in the chart.

## Community and social service

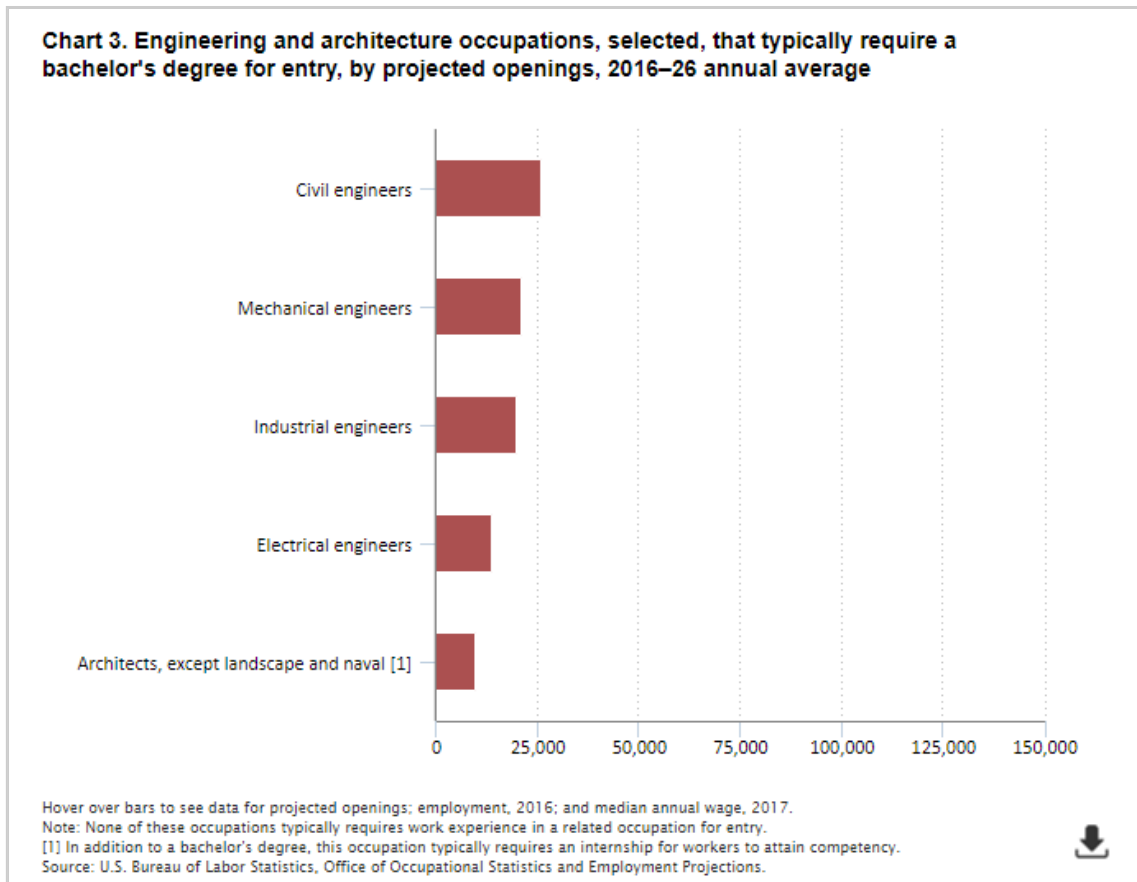
The work of occupations in [community and social service](#) involves helping people overcome problems or improve their lives. Fewer openings are projected to arise in these occupations than in some other fields. Of the occupations in chart 2, [child, family, and school social workers](#) is projected to have the most openings each year, on average, from 2016 to 2026.



Workers in some of these occupations may need additional credentials, such as a [license or certification](#). The occupations in chart 2 are among the lowest paid of the bachelor's-level occupations; however, each still had a wage above the median wage for all occupations.

## Engineering and architecture

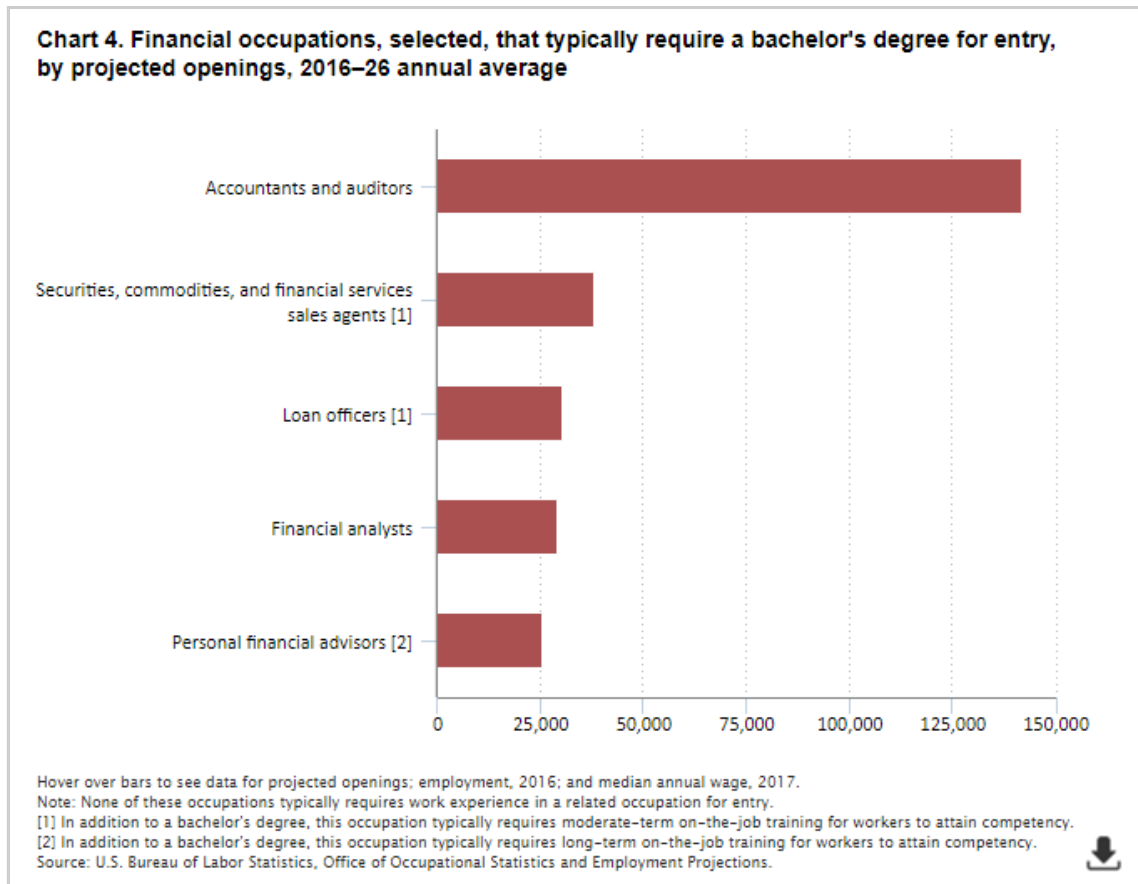
Workers in [engineering and architecture](#) occupations use math or science to design and develop structures, products, and systems. Of the occupations in chart 3, [civil engineers](#) is projected to have the most openings each year, on average, from 2016 to 2026.



Licensing may be required for some of these workers. Wages for the occupations shown in chart 3 were higher than the median wage for bachelor’s-level occupations—and more than twice the median wage for all occupations.

## Financial

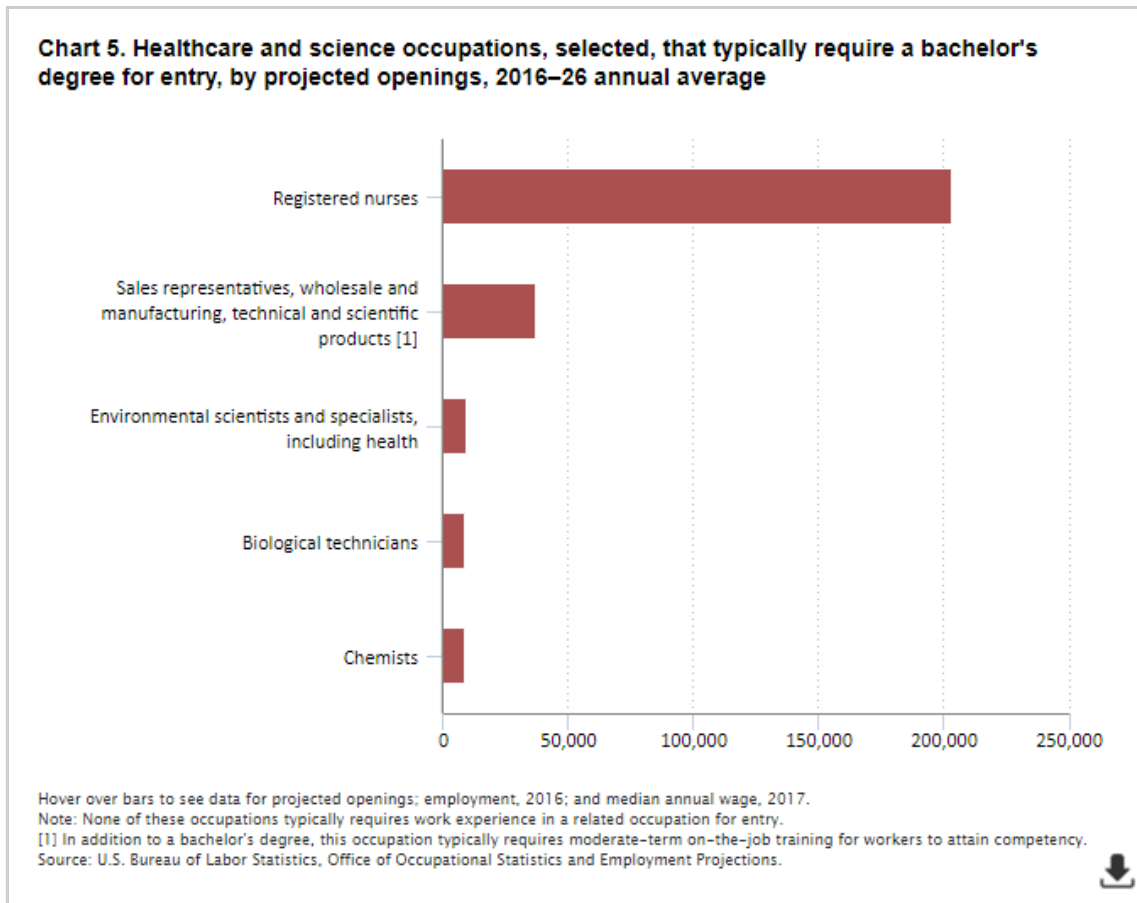
[Financial](#) occupations, including those in chart 4, involve offering analysis, advice, or other help in managing money. [Accountants and auditors](#) stand out among the other occupations in chart 4 for the most projected openings annually, on average, from 2016 to 2026.



Some financial occupations require licensing. On-the-job training, which workers receive after being hired, may be required in addition to a degree. [Personal financial advisors](#) had the highest median annual wage among occupations in chart 4.

## Healthcare and science

Workers in [healthcare](#) and [science](#) occupations use a variety of disciplines to conduct research, perform tests, or provide care. Projected openings for [registered nurses](#)—more than 200,000 each year, on average, from 2016 to 2026—dwarf those in the other occupations in chart 5.

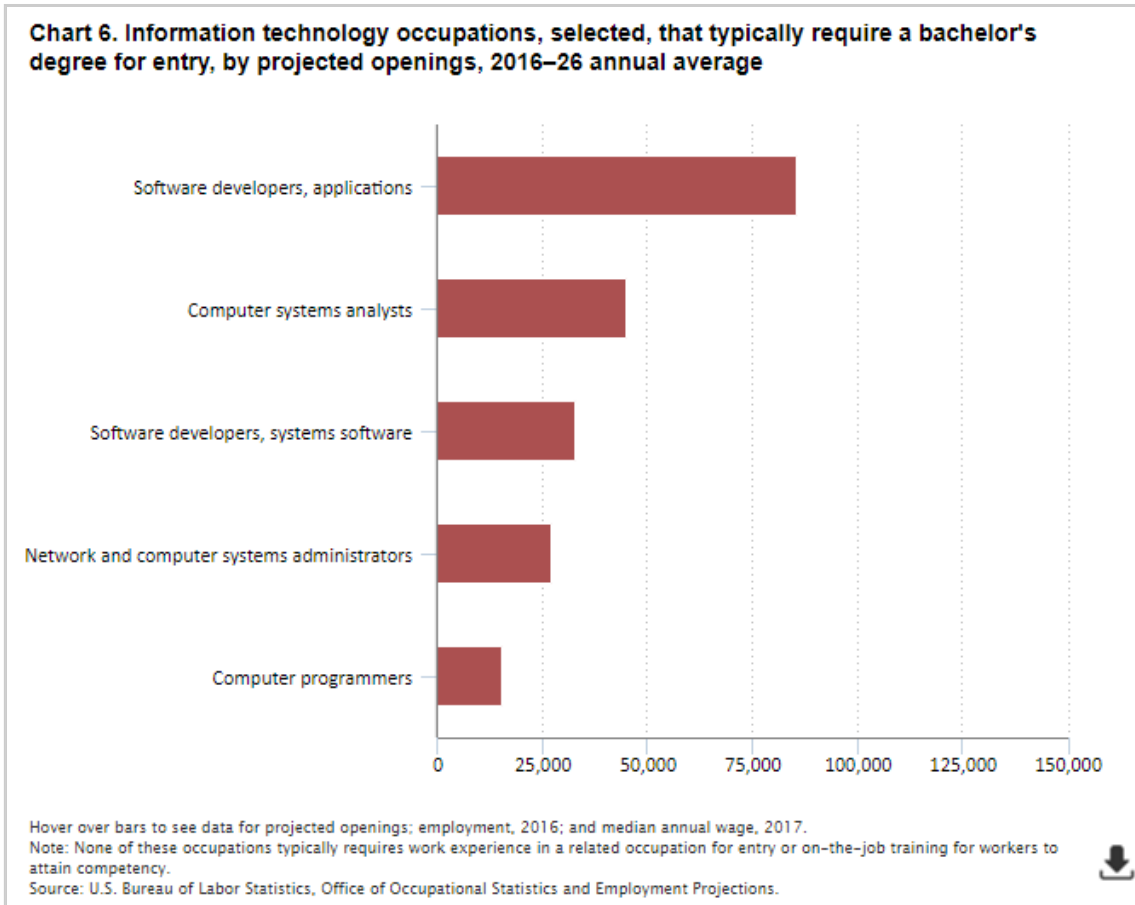


Some healthcare occupations require a license in addition to education. Two occupations in chart 5 had a wage that was above the median for bachelor’s-level occupations; the others had wages that were higher than the median wage for all occupations.

### Information technology

Workers who provide [information technology](#) (IT) services help organizations and individuals to develop and maintain computer systems, networks, or software. Of the occupations in chart 6, [applications software developers](#) is expected to have the most openings each year, on average, from 2016 to 2026.

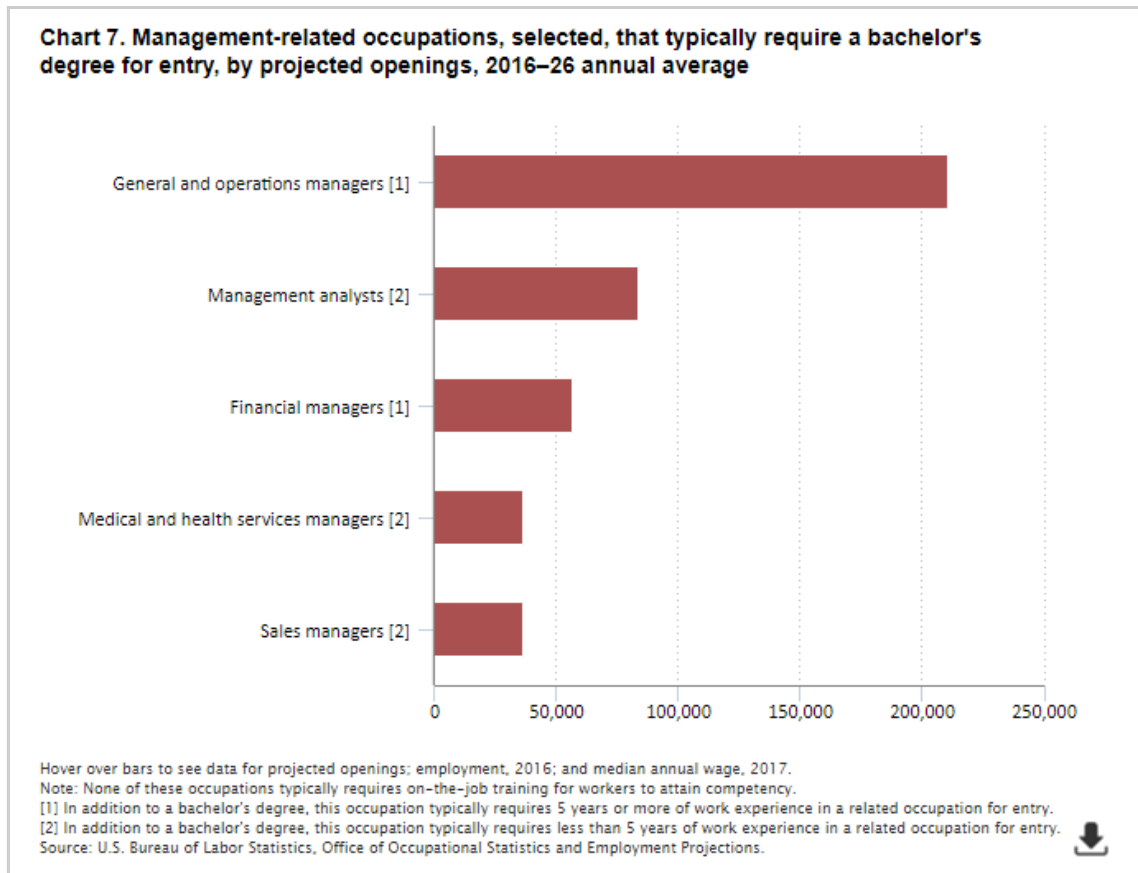




In addition to having a degree, some workers may benefit from getting IT certifications. Median wages for all of the occupations in chart 6 had wages that were above the median wage for bachelor-level occupations.

### Management-related

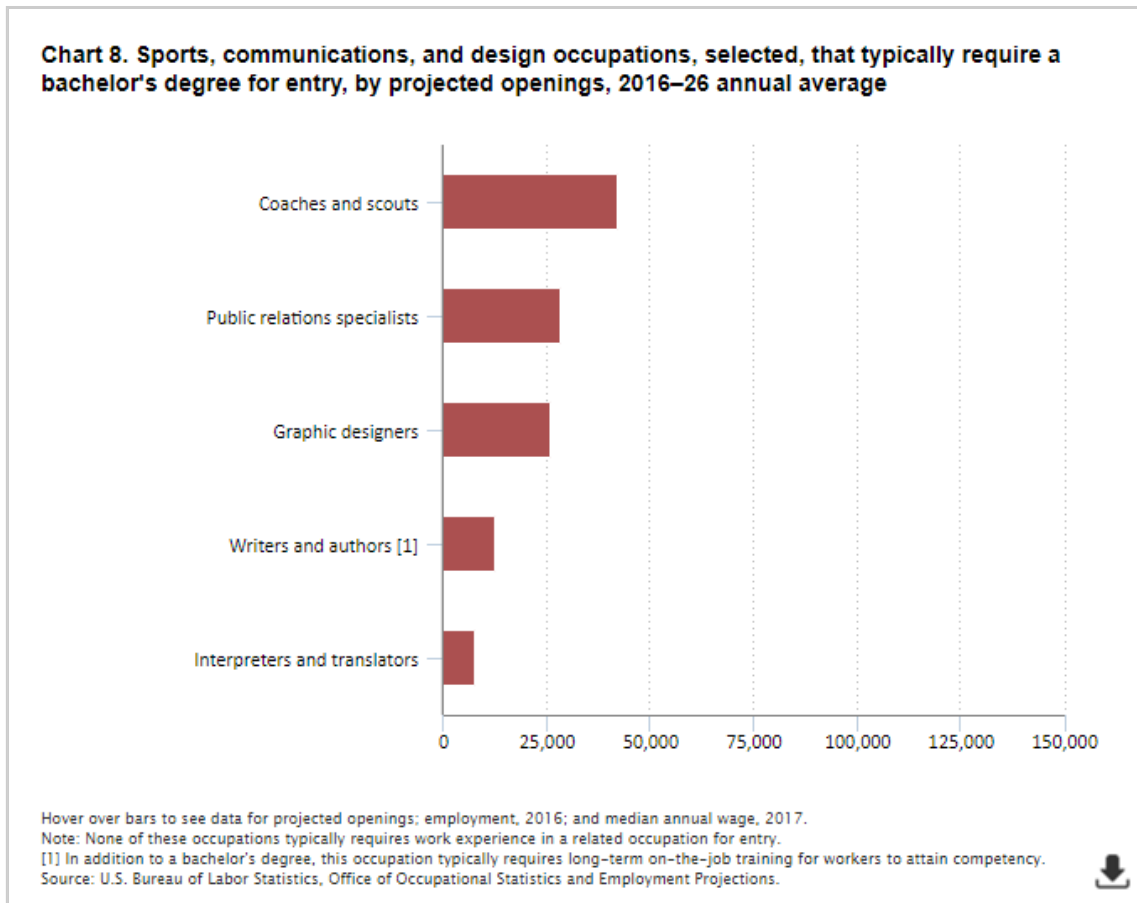
Most of the occupations in chart 7 are [managers](#) who oversee some type of work activity. From 2016 to 2026, the occupation of [general and operations managers](#) is projected to have more openings annually, on average, than any occupation in this article.



At the entry level, managers typically need work experience in a related occupation. The skill these workers have gained is reflected in their pay: Median wages in 2017 were among the highest of the occupations in this article.

### Sports, communication, and design

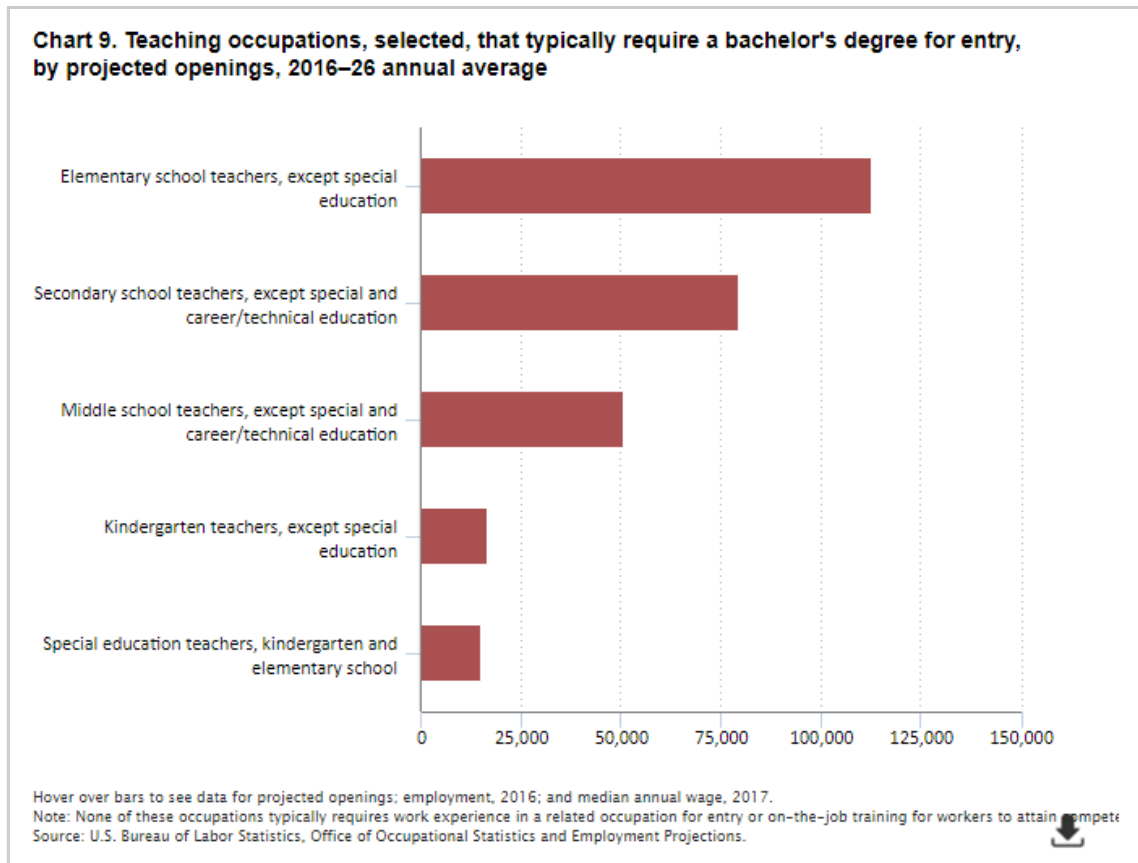
Workers in [sports](#), [communication](#), and [design](#) occupations entertain or inform others, often in creative ways. Of the occupations in chart 8, [coaches and scouts](#) is projected to have the most openings per year, on average, from 2016 to 2026.



As mentioned previously, wages in these charts exclude those for self-employed workers. And some of the occupations in chart 8 had a higher percentage of self-employed workers than other bachelor’s-level occupations.

## Teaching

[Teachers](#) use a variety of methods and tools for instructing students. Of the occupations in chart 9, [elementary school teachers](#) is projected to have the most openings annually, on average, from 2016 to 2026.



To work in public schools, teachers need a license in addition to a degree. All but one occupation in chart 9, [kindergarten teachers](#), had wages that were at least 50 percent more than the median wage for all occupations.

## For more information

Learn more about what’s required to enter the occupations highlighted in this article, as well as hundreds of others, in the [Occupational Outlook Handbook \(OOH\)](#). For example, the How to Become One section of the *OOH* often describes recommended coursework, alternative paths for entering the occupation, or other steps in preparing for a career, such as completing an internship or earning a license or certification.

If this article didn’t show the occupation you’re interested in, don’t worry. Maybe the occupation you’re looking for is designated as typically requiring a level of education other than a bachelor’s degree. Or perhaps it’s a bachelor’s-level occupations projected to have some, although not as many, openings compared with the occupations featured in this article. A full list of occupational projections that includes education typically required for entry is available from the [Employment Projections](#) program.

Elka Torpey is an economist in the Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections, BLS. She can be reached at [torpey.elka@bls.gov](mailto:torpey.elka@bls.gov).

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