## How Do Credentials Differ?



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|                               | CERTIFICATE*  | CERTIFICATION  | DEGREE   | LICENSE   |
|-------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Awarded by                    | Education and training providers, employers, labor unions, and industry associations      | Industry<br>certification bodies   | Education institutions   | Government agencies   |
| Awarded for                   | An exam at the end<br>of a training or<br>education course or<br>a one-time<br>assessment | Third-party,<br>independent<br>competency<br>assessment  | Course of study  | Meeting requirements of an occupation                         |
| Indicates                     | Education/<br>knowledge/skills  | Skill mastery/<br>competencies   | Education,<br>successfully passed<br>courses   | Legal permission  |
| Time to complete              | Variable, generally less than 2 years   | Variable   | Variable, generally 2 years or more  | Variable  |
| Time and renewal requirements | Often no time limit,<br>no renewal<br>requirement   | Time-limited, includes recertification   | No time limit, no renewal requirement  | Time-limited,<br>renewal generally<br>required                |
| Revocation process            | Cannot be revoked   | Can be revoked for incompetence or unethical behavior  | Cannot be revoked  | Can be revoked for incompetence or unethical behavior         |
| Examples                      | CNC Machinist,<br>Zurich Insurance<br>Apprenticeship                                      | CompTIA Cybersecurity Analyst, Certified Energy Auditor, Medical Laboratory Scientist, MLS(ASCP) <sup>CM</sup> | Bachelor of Science<br>in Engineering,<br>Associate of Arts in<br>Business<br>Administration | Electrician,<br>Professional<br>Engineer, Registered<br>Nurse |
| Standard for accreditation    | ANSI/ASTM<br>E2659-18, a globally<br>recognized<br>American National<br>Standard          | ANSI/ISO/IEC<br>17024:2012, an<br>international and<br>national standard                                       | National, regional, or programmatic  | State law defines scope of practice                           |

<sup>\*</sup> There are many types of certificates. Some examples include: certificates of participation, certificates of achievement, certificates of completion for apprenticeship, and assessment-based certificates.