



Edalex

Whitepaper

2021 Employability Outcomes Survey

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Lens on Learners

Stakeholders in the Modern
Credential Marketplace



Forward

At Edalex, our passion is to surface learning outcomes, digital assets, and the power of individual achievement. We commissioned this market research in July 2021 to explore a range of critical topics on education, employment, skills and, most critically, the learner's voice. A key focus of ours is to help give learners a voice for their unique skills and competencies through evidence. Our findings reveal progress in key areas but also the imperative for redoubled efforts in others. We hope this market research contributes to the growing body of evidence in the area of skills-based learning and employability, and we look forward to continuing the discussion and debate within the community on solutions to identified challenges.



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Margo's in-depth knowledge and experience of micro-credentialing is the result of working in and with higher education providers and edtech leaders, nationally and internationally. She is passionate about the positive impact of technology within education and the enablement of lifelong learning and agility. Margo is a connector at heart and is a strong advocate for diversity and inclusion in all areas of life.



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Executive Summary

Over the first half of 2021, Edalex released a **Lens on Learners** article series, which explored the modern learner in-depth and covered the following:

- the various types of learners - both current and anticipated and the opportunities and challenges they face
- the unemployed and underemployed - who seek new or expanded employment opportunities
- lifelong learners - who engage in additional education to progress their careers
- recent college graduates - who are presented with an increasing array of work and study options

Of relevance to each of these cohorts, the series also examined non-formal learning, which often occurs outside of the classroom, and highlighted a number of initiatives currently underway that seek to assess and give meaning to the skills learnt through those experiences.

To round out the above, in July 2021, Edalex commissioned a market research survey of over 1,000 college graduates based in the United States regarding their employability outcomes, their future plans for education and their knowledge and understanding of the modern credential marketplace - the inaugural **Lens on Learners: 2021 Employability Outcomes Survey**.

Employability is the New Education Imperative

There is a new educational marker that has emerged in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic, something that has altered education and employment on a worldwide scale. Worker priorities have changed, and so have the things they look for in a prospective employer. This single event has accelerated some changes that were already happening, and made the world of learning and employability a more fluid landscape.

Learners are actively looking for better education, alternatives to the time and expense of traditional education, and many look to continue their education now or understand it will be a lifelong process that won't ever really end. However, most are also vested in doing whatever it takes to "land the job" they want, or at least land "a job" in their chosen field, and are often frustrated when that doesn't happen. College graduates are open to alternative forms of education, provided it was accepted by potential employers and recruiters. "I'm frustrated that I need a degree to 'prove' the skills I already have," one web developer told us. "But it is challenging to get a job without that piece of paper." Seeking to address rising market demand, governments around the world are starting to align new credentials - such as micro-credentials, certificates and vocational training - with existing national qualification frameworks. Large companies (often in the tech sector) are creating their own standards based on the job-specific skills they require, with many announcing full degrees are no longer a requirement candidates need to meet in order to find work.

There is growing acceptance of digital badges and credentials among candidates and employers, although more work is needed to build labour market knowledge and skills literacy in student cohorts, and understanding of the meaning and use of digital evidence records by learners and hiring managers. Deeper levels of evidence (such as personalised evidence) is seen as advantageous by learners in boosting their employability, especially by those already familiar with digital credentials and how to use them to their advantage, typically younger graduates.

2020 will be seen as an economic and educational marker, drawn along the lines of a pre- and post-COVID world. External pressures will continue to impact the education industry, creating an increasingly complex landscape. There has been a global shift towards short-form learning options that are more flexible to changing workplace needs.

Key Findings

1

Lifelong learning is on the rise with a variety of external factors overcoming some of the pre-existing obstacles to further education. The **majority of respondents across all age groups represented in the survey plan to engage in some form of further education**, with 60% of respondents under 30, and 53.5% of 30- to 60-year-olds citing career progression as a key driver.

2

The alignment between field of study and work remains strong, with **79% of college graduates working in their preferred field at some point in their career** (of which 74% report full employment), although 32% say that their job is not at the level they expected.

3

Learners are questioning the time and financial return on investment of four-year degrees with 52% of respondents citing lack of relevance and cost as the top barriers to entry. In addition, 59% of respondents couldn't find full employment or took whatever work they could find after graduation, often causing them to seek out further education.

4

If engaging in further study, the **majority (57%) would choose skills or alternative credentials** - such as industry certifications, micro-credentials, or vocational studies - over the next level of formal education, as (43%) report that traditional degrees are not providing the skills needed for their desired work.

5

Employability is a high priority with **almost 68% of learners choosing their next level of education based on what is accepted or required by employers**. However, understanding how to find employment remains low with only 33% feeling well prepared, 45% feeling somewhat prepared and 22% not feeling prepared at all.

6

33% of graduates reported having either received a digital badge or knew what they were and how to use them. We found that younger graduates were more informed about digital credentials, who said they would share them via social media (primarily LinkedIn), in their resume and with their peers.

7

Learners are looking for better ways to understand and communicate their achievements, with **41% of respondents overall saying they would find personalised evidence of value when looking for work**.

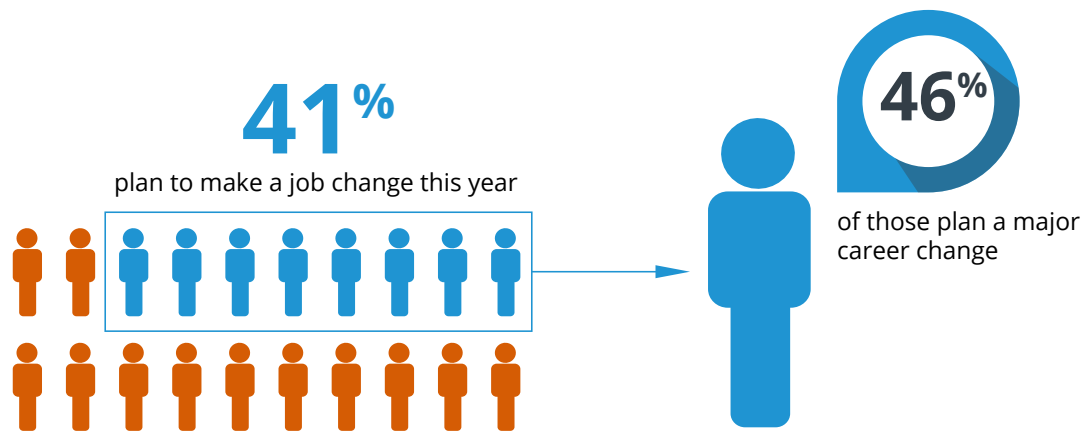
An Economic and Educational Marker

If you live in the US (particularly the Pacific Northwest region and are of a certain age) you can't possibly forget the eruption of Mount St. Helens in 1980. Even if you live in another part of the world, you've likely heard about it. But if you are in one profession (geology) - you can never forget it. The volcanic eruption of Mount St. Helens deposited ash over a large area of the United States and neighbouring countries. When you take a core sample of a river bed in any of those regions, you have a clear geologic marker: a layer of ash that indicates the year 1980. Any layers above that came after 1980. Forty years later, in 2020 we have a similar marker, albeit, not confined to a single region. Instead, on a global scale, COVID-19, has become the great divider. There is data pre-COVID and data post-COVID, and a limited data set during the COVID era, along with the various lockdowns and restrictions that accompanied it (and which sadly, for many around the world, is still ongoing).

COVID-19 has become a catalyst for transformational change in the world of work - remote work has suddenly

become an attractive and viable option and many industries are experiencing high levels of job mobility. Staff used the break that COVID provided as an opportunity to take a step-back and reexamine their life and work, with many recognising the need to future-proof their career by upskilling or reskilling. A Microsoft global survey shows that "41% of workers plan to make a job change this year, and 46% of those plan a major career change" (Microsoft, 2021), as shown in Figure 1. Other research has looked at the kind of jobs that will be lost, as well as those that will be created, as automation, AI, and robotics take hold. And it has inferred the type of high-level skills that will become increasingly important as a result. "The need for manual and physical skills, as well as basic cognitive ones, will decline, but demand for technological, social and emotional, and higher cognitive skills will grow" (Dondi, M., Klier, J., Panier, F. and Schubert, J., 2021).

Figure 1. Workers planning to make a job change this year



Source: 2021 Work Trend Index, Microsoft, 2021

“Over the past year, no area has undergone more rapid transformation than the way we work. Employee expectations are changing, and we will need to define productivity much more broadly - inclusive of collaboration, learning, and wellbeing to drive career advancement for every worker, including frontline and knowledge workers, as well as for new graduates and those who are in the workforce today.”

Satya Nadella, CEO at Microsoft

Education providers across the spectrum - traditional to online - scrambled to respond to the sudden demand for new, job-specific and transferable workplace skills, in quicker, more flexible and cheaper forms. Skills that are not only needed now, but also for the future. According to Microsoft's research, much of the learning that will accompany the previously mentioned career shifts, will take place through micro courses or employee and industry certifications. For these new credentials to serve the needs of both candidates and employers, mutual trust is required - learners need to trust that engaging in alternative forms of education will be recognised by hiring managers and employers need to trust that educational rigor has been maintained and candidates actually do possess the skills they claim to. Stakeholders in this exchange benefit most when there is verifiable proof of skills attainment, such as through a digital badge or certificate - and when alternative learning is aligned to established standards that can be easily understood by the market.

Drawing on a European-wide perspective and recent developments in The Republic of Ireland, authors of a recent article in the Journal of Learning for Development concluded micro-credentials are likely to become a more established and mature feature of the 21st-century credential ecology over the next five years. While the global micro-credential landscape is currently disconnected across national boundaries, they surmise that "more clarity and coherence will emerge as governments around the world increasingly align new credentialing developments with existing national qualification frameworks" (Brown, M., Nic Giolla Mhichil, M., Beirne, E., & Mac Lochlainn, C., 2021).

One example of this can be found here in Australia. In late 2019, the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) established the Digital Transformation Expert Panel to '... provide advice on how Australia's VET system can most effectively respond to digital change underway across industry and its impact on the nation's workforce', which they did in 2020 (Figure 2.). The first recommendation of the panel, advises the establishment of a "comprehensive national lifelong learning policy with a strong focus on the existing workforce, which drives coordination and collaboration across key stakeholders" (The Digital Transformation Expert Panel, 2020).

They recommend the policy features, among others:

- Strong tripartite collaboration between governments, industry and unions
- Strong leadership at both the industry level and within the workplace
- Performance monitoring and reporting framework with world-class targets for digital literacy and general capabilities

It's clear from the above, that post-COVID, the world of education and work has changed forever and high-level systems and frameworks will need to align accordingly.

Figure 2. Key recommendations from the Australian Government's 'Digital Transformation Skills Strategy'

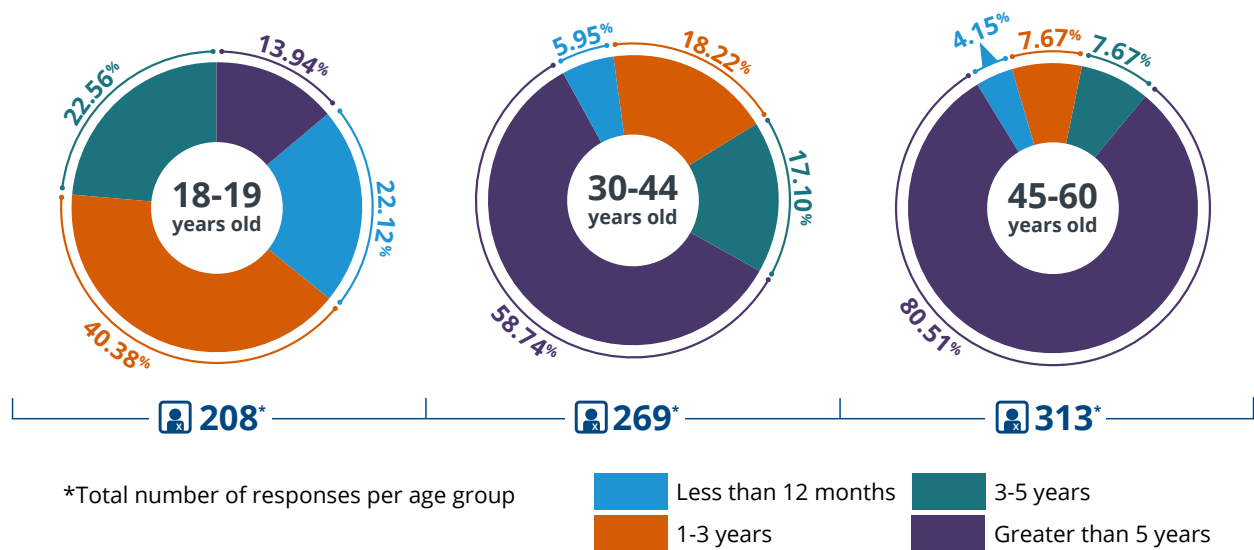


Source: The Expert Panel, The Learning Country: Digital Transformation Skills Strategy, 2020

Lifelong Learning is Vital and Growing

This transformation of the way we view work, life and education gives rise to some questions: what are the barriers and drivers of further education? When are learners engaging in education? Has it changed from the pre-COVID world? At what stage in their career do they decide to return to study - and why? In our research we asked where the learner was in their career: how long has it been since you graduated from your most recent study. The results are shown in Figure 3, broken down by age group¹. Education statistics show that “around 16% of students in the United States are over the age of 35, but more of those attend college part-time rather than full-time. By 2025, it is estimated that 42% of students will be over the age of 30” (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014).

Figure 3. How long ago did you graduate from your most recent study?



As you can see from the results, the longer from their last period of study, the older the learner is likely to be (80% of college graduates over 45 years of age having completed their most recent study over 5 years ago). When asked if they felt they needed additional education to advance their career, of graduates under 45, nearly 59% said yes. Other studies show that “60% of American adults have considered going back to school” (Champlain College Online, 2018), but face a variety of obstacles, including:

- Lack of finances
- Lack of time
- Lack of confidence
- Social anxiety
- Access to classes
- Perceived lack of support

But that isn't the entire picture. A multitude of simultaneous events are driving people back into education. “It's essential that lifelong learning becomes a reality for everyone since the crisis has further accelerated the transformation in our economy and skills needs. Today, too many adults do not participate in workplace learning and the pandemic has further reduced their opportunities to do so,” said OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann. “In the recovery efforts, skills will make the difference between staying ahead of the curve or falling behind in a world in constant flux. Countries need to invest part of the resources devoted to the recovery to lifelong learning programmes, involving all key stakeholders and with a specific focus on vulnerable groups - including young people, women and workers whose jobs are most at risk of transformation” (OECD, 2021). Even before the pandemic, only two out of ten low-educated adults took part in formal or on-the-job training, compared to six out of ten high-educated adults.

¹ Data excludes 60+ learners, who almost exclusively (97.85%) completed their study over 5 years' ago

“Lifelong learning is key if individuals are to succeed in labour markets and societies shaped by megatrends such as increases in life expectancy, rapid technological changes, globalisation, migration, environmental changes and digitalisation, as well as sudden shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic. In a fast-changing and uncertain world, lifelong learning can help individuals adapt and become resilient to external shocks.”

OECD Skills Outlook 2021 - *Learning for Life*

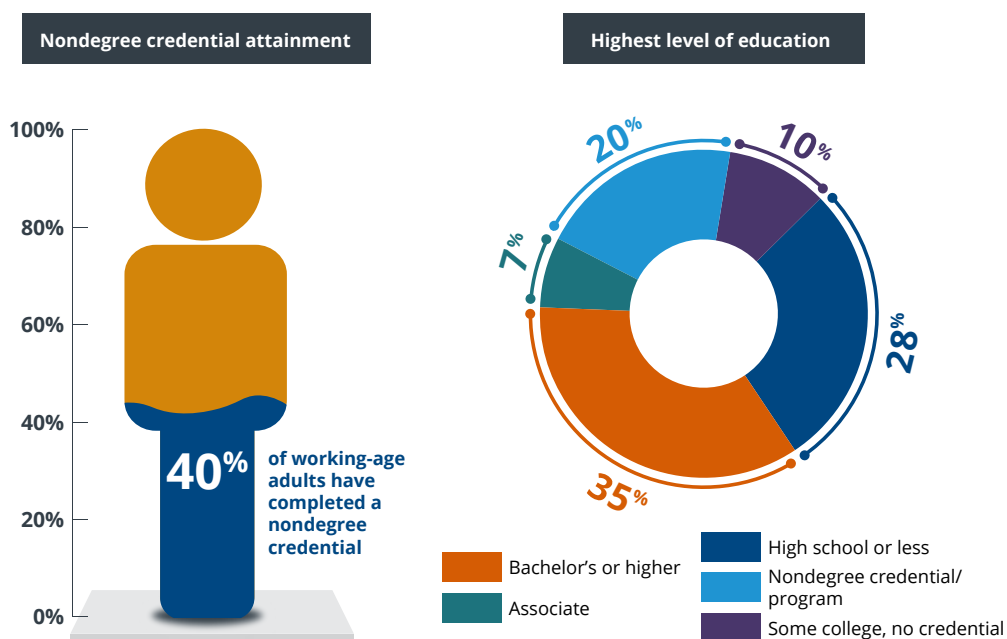
As the drivers of lifelong learning continue to impact globally, we need to shift our mindset to see learners at every stage of their learning journey. This is one of the reasons behind the current transformation of the education sector, and why the exploration of future learner cohorts in studies such as this are useful in tracking shifts over time.

Along with changes in the age that learners are returning to study, the type of education engaged with is also changing. Nearly as many Americans (40%) have completed a non-degree education or training program,

as those who’ve completed a degree program (46%) (Figure 4). Additionally, twenty percent of adults report a non-degree credential or program as their highest level of education, compared to 10 percent who report an associate degree as their highest level (Hanson, A., 2021).

From the above, we can see that attitudes towards training, including when learners undertake further education, the willingness to learn despite barriers to entry and the type of education they choose are all moving towards lifelong learning becoming a significant part of the new normal.

Figure 4. Working-age adults who have completed a non-degree credential



Source: Examining the Value of Nondegree Credentials, Strada Center for Education Consumer Insights, 2021

Education Leads to Preferred Employment

With the importance of lifelong learning being widely recognised then, it's worthwhile examining the strength of the link between study and work: does education in a particular field of study still result in work in that field? If not, why not? Regardless of the age of the respondent, in our research, we found that 75 to 80% have worked or were currently working in their field of study. That number was higher in those aged 60 and older - staying in one field for your entire career used to be much more common. A shifting job market and more flexible ideas of work mean changes are more likely to happen in today's job market.

According to the latest Graduate Outcomes Survey (Australia) (QILT, 2021), 73.4% of graduates are employed in their chosen field of study in their first three years after graduation. That number rises to 80% when it has been more than three years since they graduated. Things are different in the UK, with 66% going into full time employment right away, and that number only rising by around 5% by the three year mark. The data provided in the US varies greatly by region and graduate outcome. Overall employment is about the same for those who graduate with bachelor's degrees, averaging about 65 to 73% overall. However, only about 58 to 60% are employed full time in their chosen field, at least in

bachelor's recipients. Those with a masters degree fare slightly better, "averaging 77 to 82% employment overall, with similar numbers engaged in full-time employment" (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2019).

What about that other 20 to 25% who are not working in their chosen field? This is where an interesting divide occurs. The QILT data comes pre-COVID, and finds that around 40% of respondents who are not working in their chosen field, are not doing so primarily for personal reasons - from travel to caring for a loved one to deciding they are passionate about another line of work and pursuing that instead. The others find themselves struggling in the current labor market: either they cannot find employment in their chosen field or could only find part-time or entry level work not commensurate with their level of education.

In our research, we find similar results (Figure 5.). Just under 16% are underemployed for personal reasons like caring for a loved one, travel, or starting a family. Another 25% discovered they were passionate about another career field or industry which they then pursued. That puts us in the same 40% neighborhood, with the exception that the 25% changing careers was slightly higher than the QILT data.

Figure 5. Why graduates are not working in the field they studied in



In theory, our data should closely mirror the US data from NACE, but that data is not broken down in the same way, which is one of the many challenges in the currently available employability data. However, we can extrapolate some things from their report:

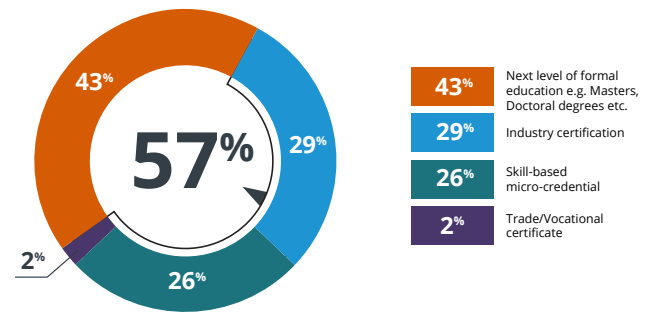
- 10 to 15% of those not yet employed said they were seeking employment (depending on the region they are from)
- 15 to 20% are pursuing further education

The rest are temporarily employed, traveling, not working for personal reasons, pursuing freelance or alternative career options, and other miscellaneous options. These results are likely the result of a wider variety of responses and fields of study.

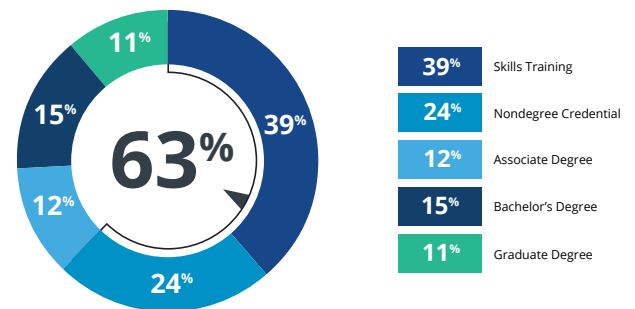
A common outcome of recent study, for a large number of students, is to go on to further education: a bachelor's degree is simply not enough. Not without experience or more specialised learning. In other words, the very scenario that makes it difficult for employers to find qualified candidates also makes it difficult for learners to meet those qualifications. For those looking to continue their education, what are the options? And of those options, what would they choose? "It's clear that digital credentialing presents a crucial avenue for workers to upskill and that the vast landscape of digital credentials offers individuals more choice and much greater affordability" (Gallagher, S. July, 2021). Ours and other research by the *Strada Center for Education Consumer Insights* supports this rise in skills-based non-traditional learning, as shown in Figure 6.

Looking at the results of our survey, and the data from others gives us some insight on why this might be. Those who are pursuing industry certifications are often enrolled in the tech sector. Tesla, Google, Facebook, and even IBM and Amazon have all stated that a college degree is no longer a requirement for employment, along with countless startups. This is one of the reasons that skills-based micro-credentials continue to gain in popularity, and are increasingly widely available - from Udemy and Coursera to certifications offered by MasterClass and countless other providers.

Figure 6. Preference for skills-based learning over formal education



Source: Lens on Learners: 2021 Employability Outcomes Survey, 2021



Source: Public Viewpoint: Insights from 2020, Implications for 2021, Strada Center for Education Consumer Insights, 2020

Regardless of the type of education that learners engage with, they can be assured that in the vast majority of cases, doing so will lead to employment in their preferred line of work. The proliferation of alternative options for learning add to the value that learners receive from further education, in terms of shorter timeframes, lower costs and more workplace relevant skills.

“As the working world changes, mature learners wishing to upskill, retrain, advance or become more secure in their professional lives are likely to engage in a range of learning experiences, including more short form micro-credentials”

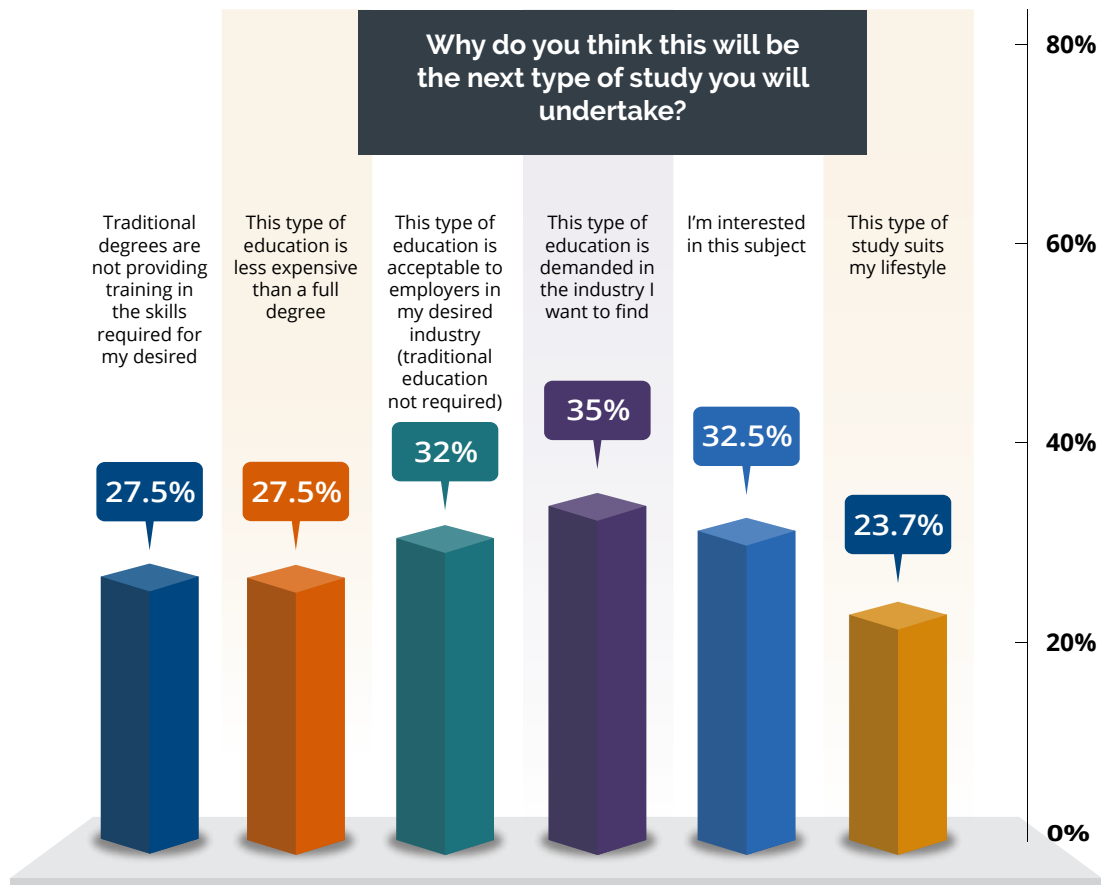
On-Ramps and Off-Ramps: Alternative Credentials and Emerging Pathways Between Education and Work

Micro-Credentials, Digital Badges and Evidence of Skill

Emeritus Professor Beverley Oliver posited recently that most adult learners are “primarily motivated to acquire a credential, micro or macro, in order to secure meaningful paid employment, or more broadly, career advantage” (Beverley, O., 2020). The *Strada-Gallup* survey included reports that individuals with non-degree credentials were more likely than those without to report their degrees were worth the cost, make them attractive job candidates, and helped them achieve their goals. This non-degree credential lift is particularly pronounced with associate degrees... Adults with associate degrees and non-degree credentials reported earnings of \$50,000 annually, a substantial premium over the median earnings of high school graduates (\$32,000) (Hanson, A., 2021).

From the employer side, LinkedIn reports that in 2021, learning and development professionals globally considered the most important areas of focus to be upskilling and reskilling (Van Nuys, A. et al., 2021) - a focus that’s driving the market towards micro-credentials and just-in-time training faster. There are a few factors to consider when examining this rise in micro-credentials, the first being: if skills-based education is the answer to many of the employability woes for learners, why skills-based micro-credentials? Additionally: if learners are questioning the value and return on investment from a two- or four-year degree, why do learners continue to choose them? When we asked our respondents the answers were, perhaps, not surprising (Figure 7):

Figure 7. Reasons for choosing what form their next education would take



Note: Total percentages add up to greater than 100% as users were able to select more than one response

While 35% said that the education they seek is demanded by the industry they work in, 27% said that four-year degrees are not providing the right skills for the field they work in. 31% said the type of education was accepted by their industry, and 32% at least enjoyed the area of study. When asked where they would look for non-formal education in the future, 57% would choose skills or alternative credentials, such as industry certifications, micro-credentials, or vocational studies over the next level of formal education (41%).

It's worth recognising at this stage, one of the current pitfalls of the micro-credential marketplace: employer verification. Here is a quick summary of the key issues²:

Legacy frameworks, like colleges and universities, offer a degree that has a certain meaning attached to it. A Master of Fine Arts in Film from Columbia University, for example, carries more weight than the same degree from a "lesser" college, even if both include the same key elements that make up that degree. The same can be said for MBAs and other degrees. However, when it comes to skills-based microcredentials, there is not an established, universal and decentralised framework, similar to an accreditation body. Instead, there are various industry endorsements that may or may not be meaningful to an employer.

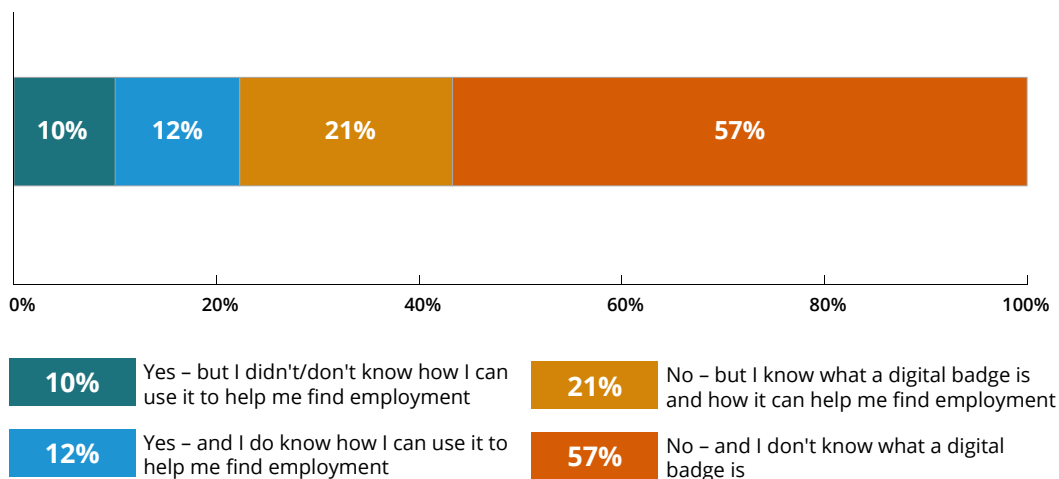
It comes down to the old adage "trust, but verify": and quite simply, a degree is easier to verify than most micro-credentials or digital badges offered through more modern course forms. Then there is the issue of portability: will a credential earned at Google, for instance, in their own instruction program, translate to Apple

should the employee switch jobs? The answer is a solid "maybe." In fact, even between departments in large companies, credentials don't always transfer well. "After the pandemic, I decided to change my job with Apple," one employee who wished to remain anonymous, but who had been with the company for ten years told us. "I went to work on day one, and was put in reception, not even doing my job, just answering phones. It turned out the certifications I had spent a decade earning had not followed me, and until the new department got proof of them, I wasn't allowed to do the job I was hired for."

Meaningful digital badges and credentials are imperative if they are to properly service the employment needs of learners and businesses. We asked our respondents if they had received a digital badge after completing their most recent study, and if they knew how it might help them find employment (Figure 8.). Their responses demonstrate a clear need for increased awareness of alternative credentials and what one can do with them:

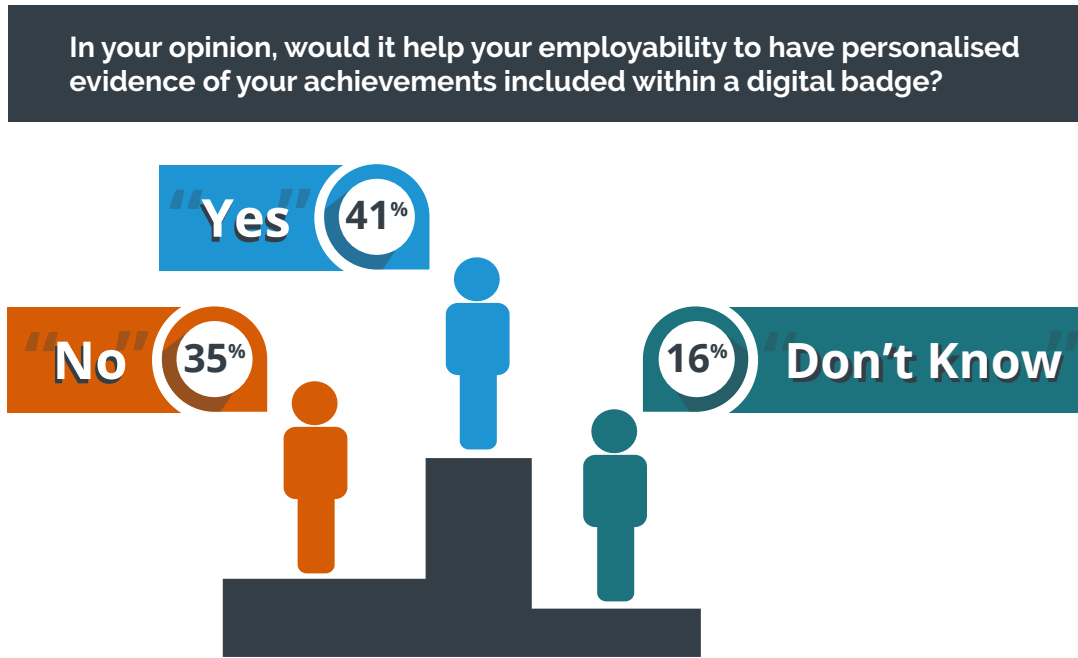
- 67% did not know how they could use digital badges (57% did not know what a digital badge was and had not received one; 10% had received one, but weren't clear on their value or use in finding employment)
- 33% knew what digital badges were and how they could be used to aid in their job search (21% did not receive a digital badge, but knew what digital badges were and how one might help them find employment; 12% did receive a digital badge, and knew what it was and how it could help them)

Figure 8. Did you receive a digital badge after your most recent study?



²We discuss this issue in greater depth in our [article on frameworks](#)

Figure 9. Learners' perceived value of personalised evidence of achievements



We went a step further, asking respondents if they felt personalised evidence of a learner's achievements would add value in their recruitment interactions with employers. 41% said yes; 35% said no; and 16% said they didn't know (Figure 9).

There were included a variety of comments - some that illustrate the need for a decentralised framework that is also trustworthy and can be verified. "I don't think so," one respondent said. "Because I don't think my employer knows about it." Another answered, "People don't value the badge. They are interested in [certifications from an] official institution." Others were optimistic: "If this became commonplace or was something familiar to a company, yes," one respondent told us. Another said, "Possibly but

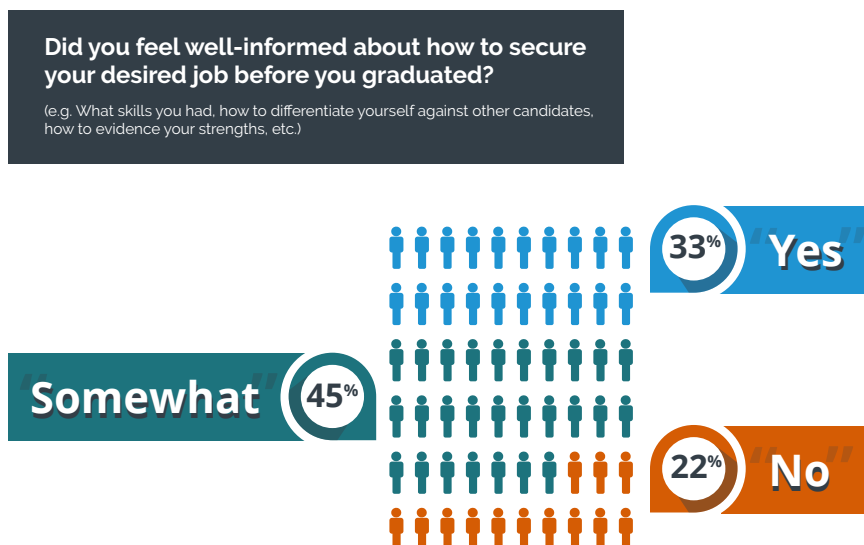
it will be hard to transition from a resume based system. It depends on how these could be influenced." From the answers to these questions, discoverability and awareness are perhaps the greatest current obstacles for learners and employers, leaving things even more complex for educators. When asked who they would share a digital badge with, 35.44% said they would share with employers and recruiters; 19% would post on social media, primarily LinkedIn; 15% said peers and family; 8% didn't know; and 17% would not share it with anyone (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Who graduates would share their digital badge with



Given the importance of finding employment upon completion of study, we asked respondents: did you feel well-informed about how to secure your desired job before you graduated (e.g. What skills you had, how to differentiate yourself against other candidates, how to evidence your strengths, etc.), only 33% of learners said they did (Figure 11.). Another 22% said no, and the rest said, "Somewhat." If a learner was asked, "How did your class on statistics go?" Most often the answer will involve a letter grade: "I got an A, so I guess pretty well." Does this letter grade help them articulate what skills they possess and what they can do with them?

Figure 11. Learners confidence in speaking about their differentiated skills



One Definition of Skills Literacy:

“An individual’s understanding of what skills have been developed through formal and non-formal education and how to speak about them in a way that will be understood by, and have meaning to employers and others.”

What if the question was reframed: what skills did you take away from that class? Often, it takes some time for the student to answer, if they can answer at all. However, this is totally different when one looks at industry specific transcripts. For example, the Joint Services Transcript that US Military Veteran’s receive when they leave the service doesn’t have letter grades at all. One column does show an overall percentage, but the other shows “skills mastered” and often has a level assigned to those skills. In the military context, these are “mission critical” skills, and without them, the servicemember is often unable to perform the tasks they are assigned. Mastery is key to success. But is it really different when it comes to employability? Employers have “mission-critical” skills job candidates must have to ensure success, and it is often the lack of applicants with these skills that causes them to bemoan the “skills gap.” But what if the skills gap is not the entire issue? What if illustrating those skills was simpler for learners to do?



Emeritus Professor Beverley Oliver discusses the need to increase labour market awareness among students in [this video interview](#).



In [this video interview](#) with Dr Doris Zahner from the Council for Aid to Education (CAE) discusses the important role skills awareness and literacy play.

Conclusion: Where to From Here

There are a number of insights from this market research and our [Lens on Learners](#) series:

- **Learners need a better way to illustrate the skills they have learned**, whether it is informal, non-formal, formal, or industry-specific, with only 33% feeling confident in expressing their skills. Transcripts as they exist today lack these skill rankings, and learners often have to prove mastery through experience or may even be passed up for opportunities because they lack that proof.
- **That proof needs to be personalised, portable and easily verifiable.** 41% of survey respondents believe they would benefit from personalised evidence embedded within the digital credential.
- **Ongoing education for learners as well as employers on the potential and power of digital credentials is essential.** While there is growing awareness, 67% of respondents were still not aware of how to use digital credentials, despite individuals with non-degree credentials being more likely than those without to report their degrees were worth the cost, make them attractive job candidates, and helped them achieve their goals.
- **The development of a universal, decentralised but verifiable educational framework would add value** to any skills-based micro-credentials and digital badges.
- To help develop an increased focus on employability, **grading as we know it should include results-based answers to skills-based assessments.**

There are other takeaways and things we can conclude, but perhaps the one that looms largest is “How?” How do we get from where we are now to where we need to be? There is already great work being done in these areas, and we must partner with those already involved and on the cutting edge to align our efforts toward meaningful change. We know there are learners out there, some eager to fill open positions in their field of study, but to date, their skills remain hidden or unacknowledged. To make a long-term difference in employability, all stakeholders must embrace new forms of education and skills certification to meet the needs of the global economy, now and into the future.

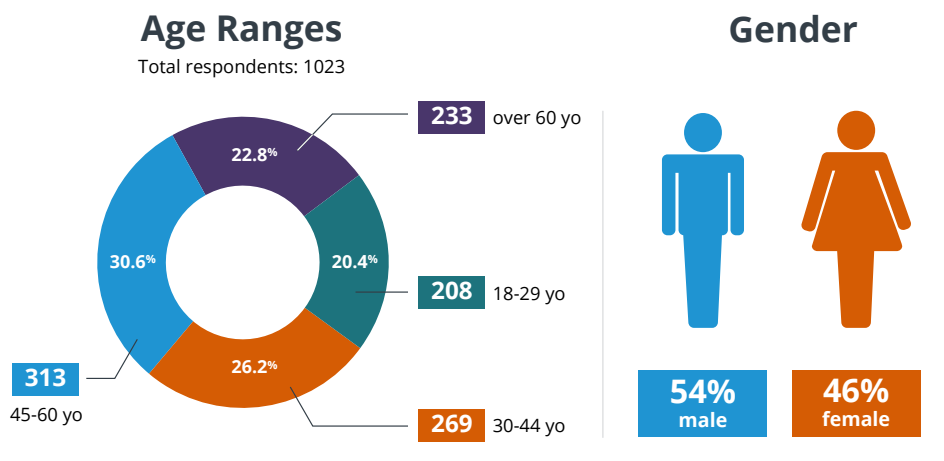
Methodology

The survey was conducted during July 2021 using Survey Monkey, with the only pre-qualification being that the survey respondent had to be a college graduate. This was to ensure we captured a broad snapshot of learners of all ages and in all stages of their career. We felt that if we limited our demographics to recent college graduates, we would have missed some key (and interesting) statistics and misrepresented the current and anticipated spectrum of lifelong learners. All respondents were based in the United States.

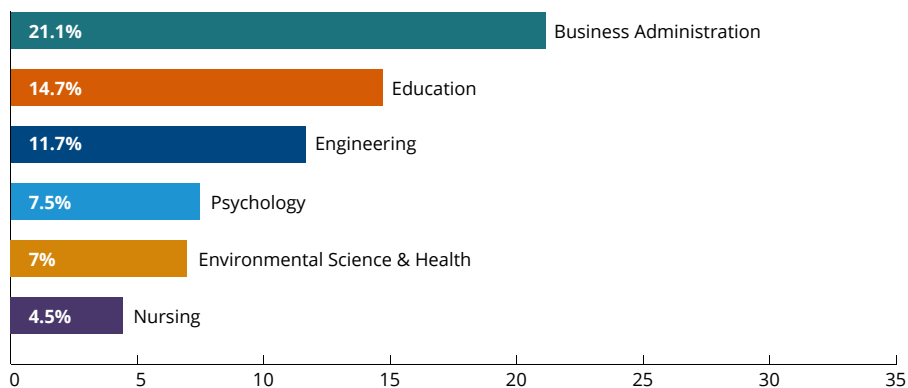
An anomaly in the type of responders should be noted. 233 of our 1023 respondents were 60+ years old. As a result, the majority of that group was retired, not looking for employment, additional education, or even to switch jobs. This also means when we asked if they were working in their field of study, they answered “no.” As a result, we have filtered the responses from this group out of the responses to the majority of our questions, as noted in those instances.

Respondents were segmented by age into ranges 46% of respondents were female and 54% were male. Top fields of study identified included business administration, education, engineering, and psychology with a wide variety of other fields also represented.

While the focus of this research survey was on learners, Edalex are planning further studies in other areas, including educators and employers, and we will be embarking on additional research studies and article series.



Top Fields of Study



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