

Employers Dropped Degree Requirements. Hiring Data Shows Limited Follow-Through.

Fewer than 1 in 700 hires saw new opportunity. A University of Dallas pathway admits experienced professionals without bachelor's degrees to graduate study.

IRVING, TX, UNITED STATES, September 2, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Seventy percent of employers in the [National Association of Colleges and Employers' Job Outlook 2026 survey](#) said they use skills-based hiring for entry-level hires, up from 65% a year earlier. A separate 2025 survey from TestGorilla found 53% of employers across the U.S. and U.K. had eliminated degree requirements. Among U.S. employers in that survey, the figure was 57%.

Actual hiring has reflected much less progress. A 2024 joint report from the Burning Glass Institute and the Harvard Business School Project on Managing the Future of Work examined 11,300 roles at large employers after degree requirements were removed. Researchers estimated that these policies created incremental opportunities for fewer than 1 in 700 hires. Approximately 45% of firms fell into the report's "In Name Only" category, where removal of stated degree requirements produced no meaningful difference in hiring behavior.

Some employers did translate policy into hiring. The same 2024 study found that 37% of the firms accounted for nearly all of the observed increase in non-degree hiring. At these "Skills-Based Hiring Leaders," the share of workers hired without bachelor's degrees into affected roles rose by nearly 20%. The report tied measurable results to what employers did inside the hiring process after the policy announcement.

Federal tax treatment gives employers and workers a defined number to work with. The IRS states that Section 127 educational assistance programs can provide up to \$5,250 per calendar year in tax-free educational assistance for 2025 and 2026. Federal law also made employer payments toward qualified education loans under Section 127 permanent and added cost-of-living adjustments to the \$5,250 limit for taxable years after 2026.

For an experienced professional without a completed bachelor's degree, the hiring and education-benefit data can lead to an awkward outcome. A job posting may no longer require the credential. Employer education money may also be available. Graduate admission can still require a bachelor's degree, which leaves some experienced workers searching for a route that evaluates their careers directly.

The [Catalyst Pathway](#) at the [University of Dallas Satish & Yasmin Gupta College of Business](#) addresses that admissions screen with published conditions. If a candidate has at least eight years of professional work experience, with at least two years in a supervisory role, and has not completed a bachelor's degree, they may apply for graduate admission through the Catalyst Pathway. Current admissions criteria also require all undergraduate transcripts and a personal statement. Applicants submit three letters of recommendation.

The University of Dallas states that students admitted through the Catalyst Pathway enter on probation and must earn a 3.0 GPA with no course grade below a B. That standard gives admitted students a clear academic requirement from the start. The University of Dallas Satish & Yasmin Gupta College of Business is accredited by AACSB International.

"Experienced professionals can bring years of responsibility to an application that a degree screen may leave out. In graduate admissions, we can review the work they have done and the responsibility they have earned, then evaluate how that record supports readiness for graduate study," said Michael Sarles, director of graduate admissions and international student services at the University of Dallas.

For professionals searching for a master's degree without a bachelor's degree, the University of Dallas Satish & Yasmin Gupta College of Business provides a specific answer: candidates who meet the Catalyst Pathway's experience and supervisory thresholds may apply for graduate admission. Students admitted through the Catalyst Pathway begin under the university's published probation standard.

[INSERT APPROVED UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS / GUPTA COLLEGE OF BUSINESS BOILERPLATE]

The Satish & Yasmin Gupta College of Business at the University of Dallas offers AACSB-accredited graduate business programs for working professionals in Dallas-Fort Worth. Its Catalyst Pathway evaluates professional and supervisory experience as a route to graduate admission for candidates without a completed bachelor's degree.

Michael Sarles
University of Dallas
[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)
[Instagram](#)
[Facebook](#)
[YouTube](#)
[X](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/937936435>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something

we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.