

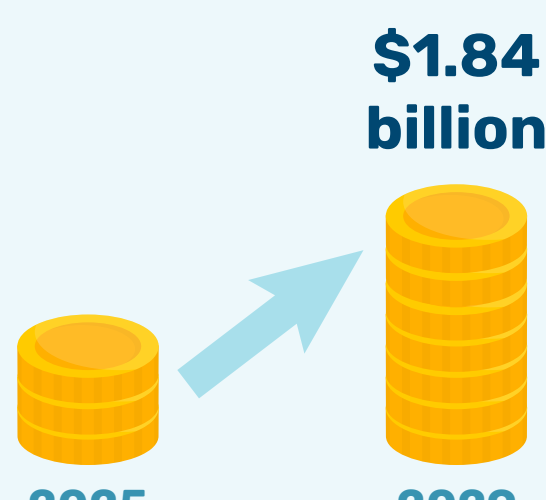
Skills-Based Credentials Are Reshaping Higher Education

Traditional degrees are no longer the only path to success. Today's modern school systems are moving to skills-based education to meet learner and employer demands for flexible, career-focused learning pathways. One key driver of this shift is alternative credentials—short, stackable, and career-aligned credentials that highlight skills often overlooked by traditional programs.

The market is booming, providing increased opportunities for students and employers alike. **Here's why institutions of higher learning should get on board:**

The Market Is Booming

The global alternative credentials market is projected to grow by \$1.84 billion from 2025 to 2029.¹



36.8 million

AMERICANS

are stuck without credentials. Alternative credentials can re-engage these learners.²

RE-ENROLLMENT JUMPED

9.1%

in 2022-2023, meaning students are coming back for credentials that matter.²

Certificates Are Growing Rapidly



Certificates aren't a trend—they're a movement. Undergrad enrollment went up **7.3%**, while graduate certificates rose **1.9%** in fall 2024.³



More learners are choosing **CAREER-FOCUSED EDUCATION**, with certificate completions up **3.9%** in 2022-2023.⁴

Why Students Want Skills-Based Credentials



83% OF STUDENTS

say skills-based learning should be a priority. Schools that ignore this could fall behind.⁵



90% OF STUDENTS

believe earning an industry microcredential will help them stand out to employers and secure jobs upon graduation.⁶



74% OF STUDENTS

say they're more likely to enroll in a degree program that includes industry microcredentials.⁶

Skills-Based Hiring Is on the Rise



Standing out is critical for learners. In fact, **72% OF EMPLOYERS** are more likely to hire someone with a microcredential.⁶

77%

OF EMPLOYERS

are already using or actively exploring skills-based hiring practices.⁸

80%

OF EMPLOYERS

find stackable credentials leading to a degree appealing, emphasizing a preference for credentials that can be accumulated over time.⁹

The Time for Skills-Based Credentials Is Now

Institutions have the unique opportunity to lead the future of education by embracing alternative credentials early. Not only are students looking to obtain these credentials but they also enhance retention and ensure that education aligns with evolving workforce needs.

Parchment Certificate Services empowers institutions to issue secure, skills-based credentials that showcase student achievements and meet modern employer demands.

Book a demo to see our solutions in action.

1. <https://www.technavio.com/report/alternative-credentials-market-for-higher-education-industry-analysis>

2. <https://nscresearchcenter.org/some-college-no-credential/>

3. https://nscresearchcenter.org/stay-informed/?mk_t_tok=NTc1LVRCVjYxOTkAAAGYCHZoa8WUyYjN5qNdaR0TgQUUWqT1oT6o1oTok4xDrusWQec6LPDM_heDMTgXnGik39b-DJ2bPbBJoPPc3x3afaTHmwsRn6ynGH8F3YMinIA

4. <https://www.highereddive.com/news/credential-completion-clearinghouse-charts-certificates/713266/>

5. <https://www.instructure.com/research/lifelong-learning>

6. https://blog.coursera.org/from-higher-education-to-employment/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

7. https://www.weforum.org/stories/2023/05/growth-summit-2023-4-ways-micro-credentials-skills-based-hiring-access-jobs/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

8. https://collegeseducation.com/about/news/employer-demand-for-microcredentials-on-the-rise-new-study-from-upcea-and-collegis-education-reveals/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

9. https://collegeseducation.com/about/news/employer-demand-for-microcredentials-on-the-rise-new-study-from-upcea-and-collegis-education-reveals/?utm_source=chatgpt.com