



## Career Pathways

# Understanding Regulated and Non-regulated Professions in the United States

As you navigate your career pathway, it can be helpful to understand the difference between regulated and non-regulated careers in the United States.

### What Are Regulated Professions?

Regulated professions are jobs that require a license or certification, usually because the work is related to public health or safety. Regulation ensures that anyone working in that profession has the knowledge and experience required to do their job safely and effectively. Examples of regulated professions include:

- Medical Doctor
- Lawyer
- Professional Engineer
- Certified Professional Accountant

In the U.S., professions are regulated at the state level. Each state determines which professions are regulated and what level of education or training is required to begin working in a field.

### What is a State Licensing Board?

A state's licensing and certification agency is commonly referred to as a "state licensing board." This board is a government-regulated agency that sets the standard of minimum qualifications needed to work in a specific profession. Because the cost and time it takes to become licensed varies by state, contact the state licensing board of your field before you begin the licensing process.

**If the licensing process in your state is a greater investment of time and money than you can make, you may consider pursuing alternative careers that do not require licensing.**



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The first step in applying for licensure in a regulated field is obtaining a credential evaluation, which compares the education you received in your country to a similar degree or diploma in the U.S. Regulated professions often require that your credential evaluation be performed by a specific agency. Professions with this requirement include accounting, architecture, dentistry, law, medicine, nursing, and pharmacy.



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## What is a Non-regulated Profession?

Some professions in the U.S. are non-regulated. A non-regulated profession means that the profession does not have a legal requirement or restriction on its practice such as a license or certificate. It is important to note that a profession which is non-regulated at the state level may still be internally regulated by professional associations.

Examples of non-regulated professions include:

- Hospital administration executive
- Management consultant
- Construction project manager
- Financial analyst

Even in non-regulated professions, employers may prefer to hire employees who have completed voluntary certifications that demonstrate meeting certain professional standards, as determined by a professional association in your field. Because qualifying exams for certifications often require a certain amount of work experience, research whether a certification would be advantageous in your situation.