

Emerging careers

Wine & beer

The wine and beer industries are not new. People have been studying the production and use of fermented beverages for thousands of years. Throughout much of that time, education came through apprenticeship and then certification. Now universities are starting to offer degrees, expanding the possibilities for job candidates in these industries.

Most who seek careers in beer and wine are driven by passion. While some start young — either in the labor-intensive lower tiers of the industry or by seeking formal training right away — others are career-changers looking to turn their hobby into a profession. Earnings that follow can vary greatly. Working for a small winery or craft brewery is not going to net as much as working for a major brand, but as health and sustainability trends move consumers toward quality over quantity, the number

of boutique producers entering the market is increasing.⁽¹⁾ More new producers means more opportunities for those open to both the uncertainty and potential of a start-up.

Specialties^(2, 3, 4)

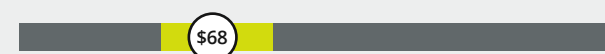
Winemaker (\$85–\$150K)



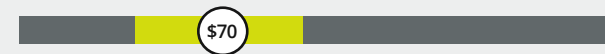
Sommelier (\$55K–\$155K)



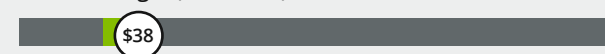
Vineyard manager (\$50K–\$85K)



Brewmaster (\$40K–\$100K)



Cellar manager (\$35–\$40K)



\$0 \$25K \$50K \$75K \$100K \$125K \$150K \$175K \$200K

Skills of the field

Technical skills⁽⁵⁾

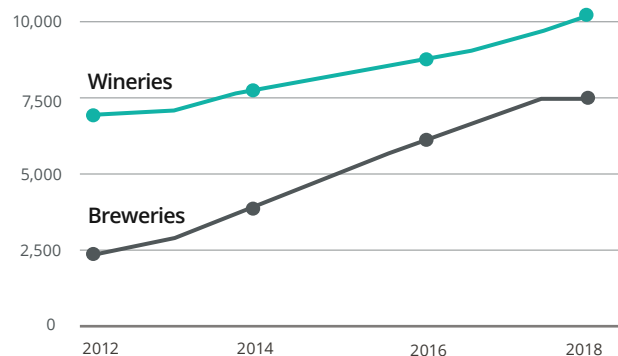
- Viticulture/enology/fermentation
- Business/sales/marketing
- Laboratory skills
- Engineering
- Chemistry

Soft skills⁽⁵⁾

- Research
- Work ethic and attitude
- Social perceptiveness
- Sociology and anthropology
- Stamina

Job growth

Total number of wine & beer producers in the United States.^(6, 7, 8)



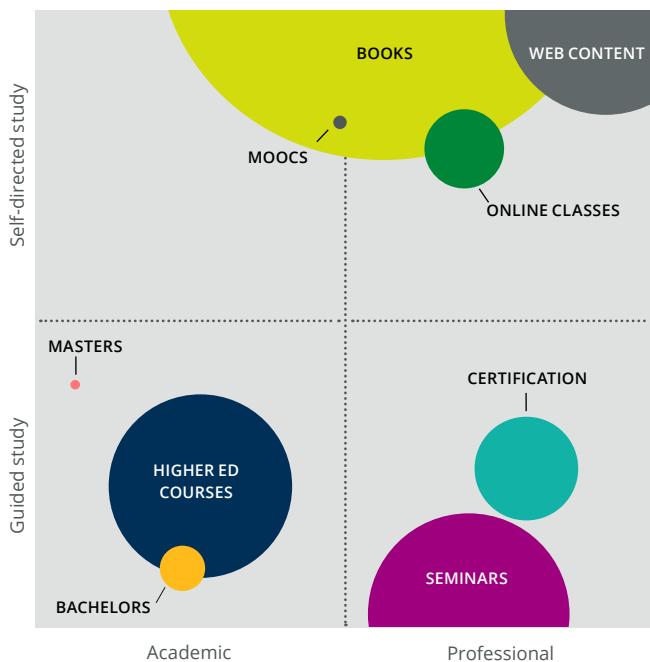
Study options available

Between the field and the pour, there are many ways to specialize in the wine and beer industries, and expectations for applicants' experience and background will vary. Those willing to start at the lowest tier of wine and beer work — in the field or in the cellar — will learn a lot on the job.

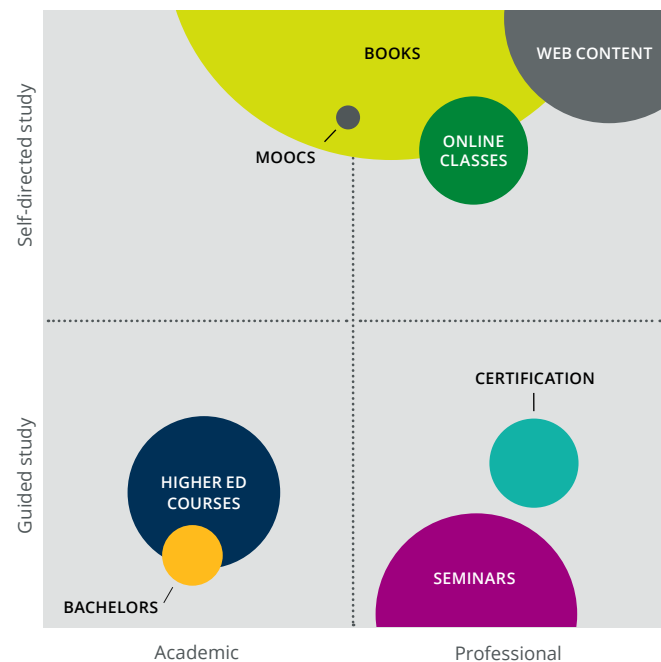
At the business and sales end, industry knowledge is crucial, but traditional degrees often suffice.

Those looking to specialize as brewmasters, enologists, or sommeliers, however, are going to need certifications and proven dedication to understanding the science, taste, and history of their product. University degrees are increasingly a way to gain the necessary academic foundation. There are numerous bachelors and a few masters options in the US, and even some PhDs for those willing to go international.

Wine education options



Beer education options



Explore additional fast-growing professions that offer new opportunities for rewarding careers—with the right education and skills.

[See the careers >](#)

Insider advice

“My hunch is that as time goes on, the educational requirements of microbrewers in the US will increase, if for no other reason than that the demand will increase. One microbrewery owner I spoke with recently declared he will never again hire another brewer without formal training...or a lot of experience.”

— “How to go pro in the beer biz”, [Teri Fahrendorf](#)⁽⁹⁾

Sources

- ¹ “State of the industry: What’s to come for alcohol in 2019”, Beth Newhart
- ² “2019 Salary Survey Report”, Kerana Todorov
- ³ “Wine Jobs: An Overview of Careers in Wine”, winefolly.com
- ⁴ “How Much Money Can You Make Working in a Brewery?”, justbeerapp.com
- ⁵ “Culinary Wine Schools and Programs”, Rebecca DeVaney
- ⁶ “National Beer Sales & Production Data”, Brewer’s Association
- ⁷ “Wines Vines Analytics”, Wine Communications Group, Inc.
- ⁸ “Over 1,000 New Craft Breweries Have Opened In the Past Year”, Chris Morris
- ⁹ “How to go pro in the beer biz”, Teri Fahrendorf

