



## Introducing Career Education Paths

How to connect employee learning to meaningful career outcomes

# Career Education Paths: Tying employee learning to career outcomes

Investing in education has emerged as a key strategy for attracting, engaging and retaining employees in the current labor market. Employers seek workforce education solutions to cost-effectively reskill or upskill workers into high-need roles. At the same time, employees want opportunities to develop their skills and advance their careers. However, both employers and employees struggle to achieve these goals.

**The challenge is twofold:** on one hand, there's a dizzying array of courses and programs on the market which makes assessing quality difficult. On the other hand, employers don't always know which programs will adequately address their unique skills needs.

It's not enough to merely offer a suite of courses and programs; the offerings need to be tied to employee career goals and the talent goals of the business.

This complex challenge is what led us to develop Career Education Paths.

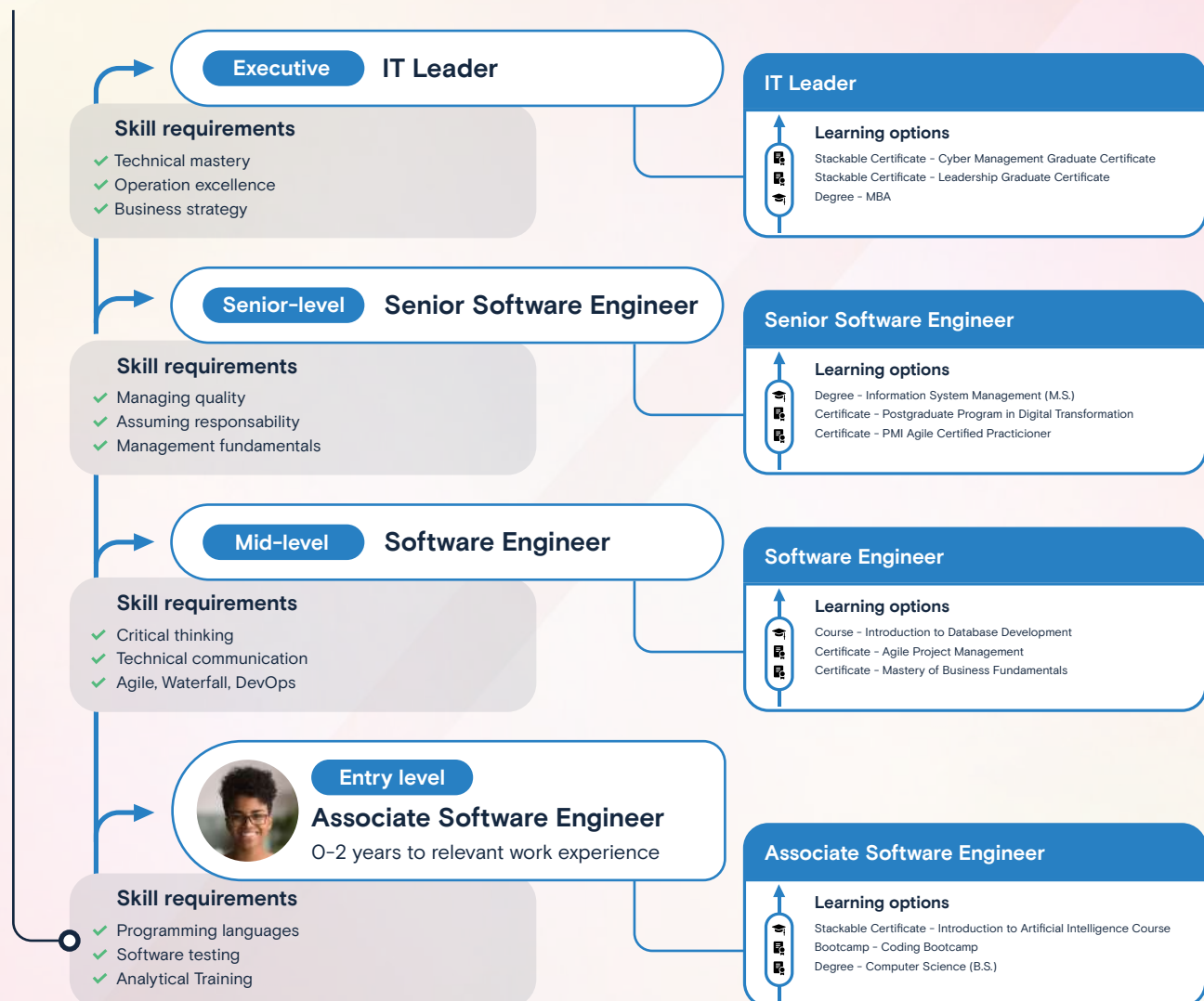
## What are Career Education Paths?

Career Education Paths harness InStride's industry, workforce and academic expertise to help businesses and employees link education solutions with career development needs.

Our team works hand-in-hand with you to identify your most pressing skills needs and determine the academic programs that are needed to address them.

The result? Employees get a curated set of quality academic offerings that will lead them to acquire the skills and experience needed for a specific career path.

## Example Career Education Path



# The benefits of Career Education Paths

## 1. Bridge the gap between corporate needs and academic offerings

Academic institutions offer a wealth of programs and courses but navigating this sea of options can be a challenge. Career Education Paths identify which education programs can build the skills required for critical roles within a business.

Ultimately, this solution helps employers with long-term talent goals such as increasing retention, decreasing time-to-fill openings and promoting from within.

## 2. Increase employee participation in workforce education

[Research](#) shows that employees are much more likely to take advantage of workforce education when:

- Finding relevant courses and programs is simple
- It's clear how education can lead to tangible career outcomes

Career Education Paths makes it easy for employees to find the courses and programs that build the skills required for a specific career path, providing visibility into the milestones along that journey.

Additionally, our client data shows that employees who visit a Career Education Path page on their employer's online education portal are **56% more likely to pursue an academic program** compared to ones who don't have that option as part of their employer's program.

## 3. Fuel career advancement for employees

Going back to school while working full-time can be a big commitment. Employees may feel stuck in their current role, but are unsure of what skills are needed to make a change. They also want to know that their time and effort will pay off before taking the leap.

Career Education Paths provide employees with a simple way to connect the dots between education and the skills needed for career growth. This helps build their confidence and paints a realistic picture of potential future opportunities for career advancement.

For employers, this is equally as beneficial as it helps to strategically build an internal talent pipeline for high-need roles and supports [succession planning](#).





## Career Education Paths in action: David's story

To illustrate the tremendous—and measurable—impact that Career Education Paths can have on employees and businesses, let's take a look at an example. We'll demonstrate how a Career Education Path can boost both earning potential and the value that an employee contributes back to their company.

Let's say that David is currently an IT technician at Main & Stern, a job that he's had for the past ten years. He has a high school diploma and earns around \$17/hour, or about \$35,000 a year. David has aspirations to get into cybersecurity and improve his earning potential, but he never had the opportunity to pursue higher education. Knowing that his company offers access to tuition-free courses and programs, David goes on his company's education portal to evaluate his options.

On the website, David sees there's a Career Education Path page that's dedicated to cybersecurity. This page provides details on the career outlook for this field, skills that hiring managers look for and a detailed list of the exact academic courses and degree programs that help to build these skills.

David knows that as an IT Technician, he has existing skills and experience that are transferable to entry-level cybersecurity roles, but he will need additional education to build upon these skills.

### Milestone 1: Cybersecurity Analyst

If David enrolls in a bachelor's degree program through his employer, he could transition into a Cybersecurity Analyst role and dramatically increase his earning potential—bumping his salary up to \$80,000 a year. That's a 130% increase.

At his current salary, the value that David contributes back to his company is \$70,000.\* But with the right education to help him become a Cybersecurity Analyst, this number would double to over \$160,000.

### Milestone 2: Cybersecurity Manager

From this first major milestone, David's earning potential and career progression can only go up. He has the option to take courses that align with professional certification examinations—such as the Certified Information Security Manager (CISM) certification—through his employer that would make him eligible for promotion to Cybersecurity Manager. This move would net him an annual salary of \$115,000 and boost the value he contributes to Main & Stern to \$230,000.

### Milestone 3: Cybersecurity leadership

But David might not want to stop his learning journey there; he could increase his earning potential even more if he decided to pursue a graduate degree. A Master of Arts in Global Security has the potential to make him eligible for promotion to leadership, pushing his annual salary to \$150,000 and catapulting his contribution back to the company to over \$300,000.

Each learning milestone along this path is carefully selected and curated to target the technical and soft skills that David needs to advance his career. This way, David doesn't have to navigate disparate academic programs on his own or risk choosing a program that doesn't align with his career goals. All of this information is made easily accessible to him through his employer's education portal and he can request enrollment information with just the click of a button.

**David's journey—his education, promotions and growth in earning potential—is made possible through his employer's investment in him.** This also yields a measurable return on investment for the company.



\*Revenue per employee varies widely by company and industry. For this fictional example, we used a 2x multiplier to indicate that an employee generates two times their annual salary in revenue for their employer.





## Methodology

So, how exactly does InStride develop Career Education Paths and make stories like David's possible?

First, our workforce education experts evaluate your organization's business goals and your immediate and long-term workforce needs. We look at industry-specific trends and global economic data to determine which skills are growing in demand alongside market changes.

Then, we use this data to curate a set of academic courses and programs and map them to the skills required for specific occupations. These programs can range from high school diplomas to professional certificates and graduate degree programs.

Once Career Education Paths are built, we make sure they're effectively promoted to your target employee populations. To start, they are prominently displayed on your education portal, making them easily accessible to all employees. Next, our team also helps you promote Career Education Paths through multi-channel marketing campaigns that can include channels such as email, SMS and physical mailers or flyers. This critical step ensures that employees are not only aware of this offering but also understand how easy it is to take the first step toward enrollment.

### About InStride

InStride enables employers to provide career-aligned, debt-free education through a personalized, digital platform and a consultative service model. As the global leader in these programs, InStride works with talent-focused partners like adidas, Labcorp, Intermountain Health, Medtronic and more to innovate their human capital management strategies.

### *A win-win for businesses and employees*

Career Education Paths offer a convenient way for employers to be more strategic with their workforce education investment. This tailored solution is designed to meet talent and corporate needs, boost workforce engagement and build talent pipelines from within.

At InStride, we're committed to evolving our solutions continually to meet the needs of our corporate partners and their employee learners. Today's workforce challenges are significant but not insurmountable, especially with a clear mission and strategy for addressing them.

**Curious to see what  
Career Education Paths could  
look like for your business?**

**Book a discovery call**