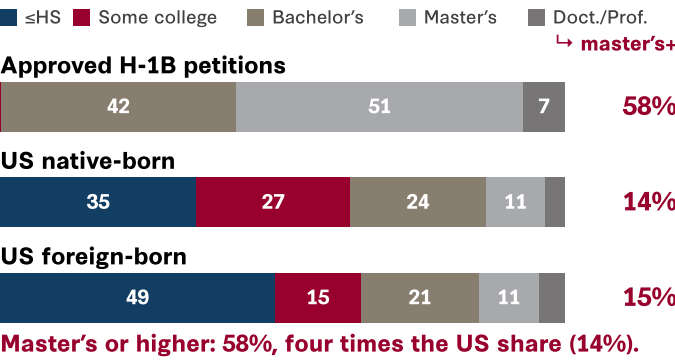


# The H-1B workforce in charts

The H-1B visa lets US employers hire foreign professionals for jobs that require at least a bachelor’s degree, from software engineers to accountants to doctors. Demand far exceeds the 85,000 annual cap, so the visas are allocated by lottery. Federal records obtained by [Bloomberg](#) under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) cover petitions from the four FY2021–24 lotteries, and they reveal a group that differs from the **US working-age population** in many respects.

## 1 Top of the class

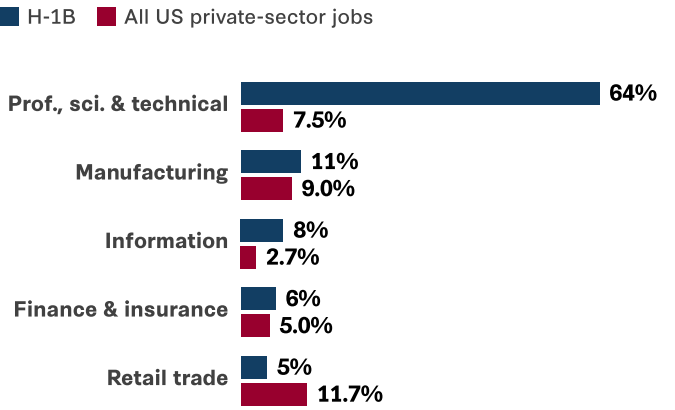
Highest degree completed, % of each group, ages 25 and over



Source: H-1B: USCIS petition records obtained by Bloomberg under the Freedom of Information Act, FY2021–24. US groups: Census CPS 2022 ASEC, Table 1.5, ages 25 and over. H-1B shares are of petitions aged 25 and over that report a degree.

## 5 One sector hires

Employer sector, H-1B vs all US private-sector jobs

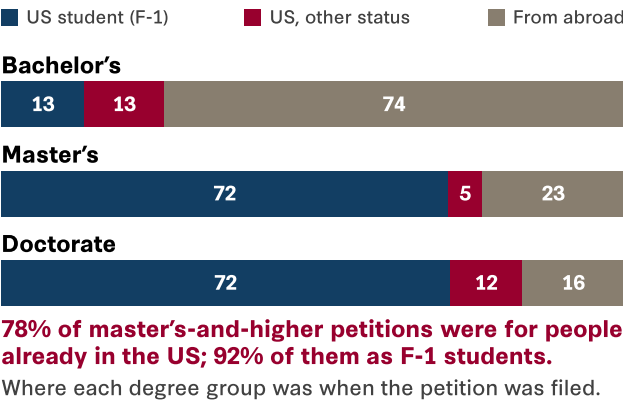


**64% of H-1B jobs sit in one sector,** more than eight times (8.5x) its share of US private employment.

Source: H-1B: USCIS petition records obtained by Bloomberg under the Freedom of Information Act, FY2021–24. US benchmark: private-sector employment, Census County Business Patterns 2022.

## 2 The university pipeline

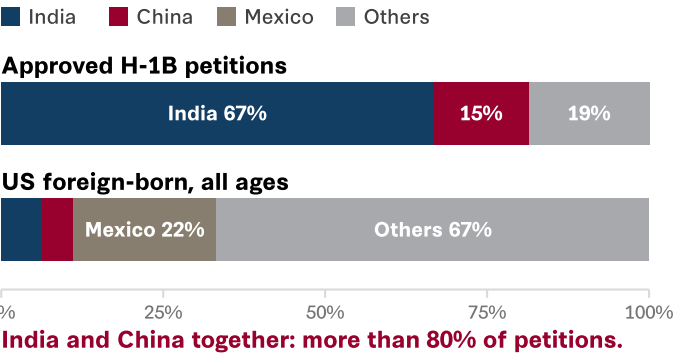
Where the worker was when the petition was filed, by degree



Source: H-1B: USCIS petition records obtained by Bloomberg under the Freedom of Information Act, FY2021–24.

## 6 Two-thirds born in India

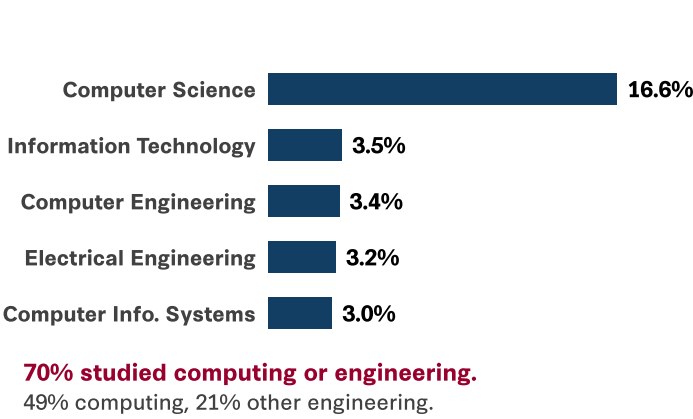
Country of birth, % of each group



Source: H-1B: USCIS petition records obtained by Bloomberg under the Freedom of Information Act, FY2021–24. US foreign-born: Census ACS 2024 1-year (all ages).

## 3 What they studied

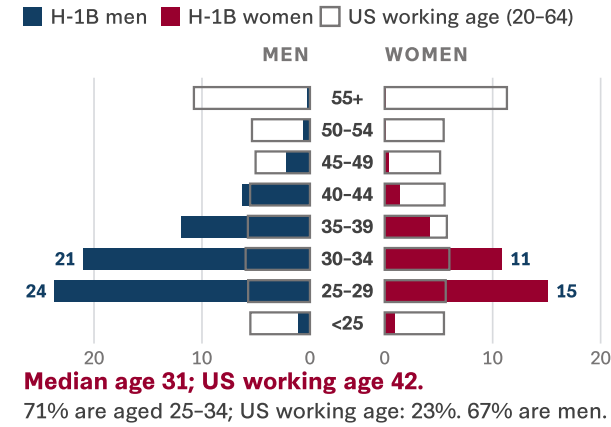
Most common fields of study, % of petitions naming one



Source: H-1B: USCIS petition records obtained by Bloomberg under the Freedom of Information Act, FY2021–24.

## 7 Young, and mostly men

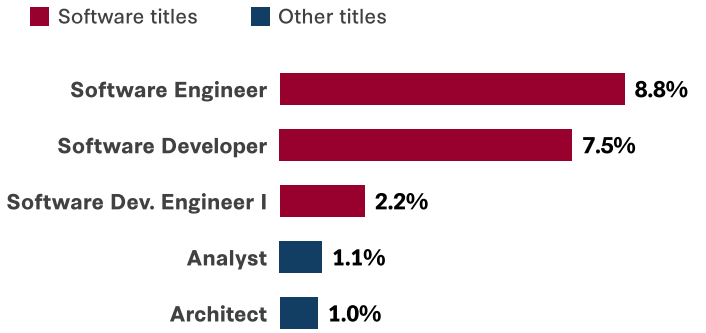
Age × sex, % of each group in each band



Source: H-1B: USCIS petition records obtained by Bloomberg under the Freedom of Information Act, FY2021–24. US benchmark: working-age (20–64) population, Census CPS 2022 ASEC.

## 4 Software, over and over

Most common job titles, % of petitions listing one



**The top 3 titles, all software, are ~18%** of the 66% of petitions reporting a title; 28% of those say “software.”

Source: H-1B: USCIS petition records obtained by Bloomberg under the Freedom of Information Act, FY2021–24.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- **58% hold a graduate degree**, compared to 14% of the US native-born and 15% of the foreign-born; virtually all hold at least a bachelor’s.
- **US graduate school is the pipeline:** 71% of master’s-and-higher petitions went to people already here on a student visa, while 74% of bachelor’s-only petitions went to people hired from abroad.
- **70% studied computing or engineering** — computer science alone accounted for 16.6% of the group.
- **The work mirrors the training:** 64% of petitions come from employers in a single sector of the economy: professional, scientific and technical services.
- **Two-thirds were born in India** (67%).
- **71% are aged 25–34** — three times the share of the US working-age population in that age bracket (23%).

**Notes.** Figures describe the 363,024 approved H-1B cap petitions of FY2021–24. A petition is the application an employer files, for new cap-subject employment, for a worker whose registration was drawn in the lottery; a visa can be issued only after USCIS approves it. Coverage among approved petitions: highest degree 82.4% of petitions aged 25 and over (education shares are computed on those reporting one); field of study 99.9%; job title 65.8%; a usable employer sector 95.6% (sector shares are of those); country of birth, age and sex 100%. US education benchmarks are the population aged 25 and over (Table 1.5), and age and sex benchmarks the working-age (20–64) population, Census CPS 2022 ASEC; sector shares compare with US private-sector employment, County Business Patterns 2022; origins compare with all foreign-born US residents (50,234,840, ACS 2024 1-year).

Sources: USCIS H-1B I-129 petition records obtained by [Bloomberg](#) under FOIA, FY2021–24; US Census Bureau CPS 2022 ASEC, ACS 2024 1-year, County Business Patterns 2022. Full analysis: [H-1B Worker Education, Sectors, Employment](#) and [H-1B Worker Demographics](#) (hoover.org).