



CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Need a bachelor's degree in information technology? Now, there's an app for that.

CONTACT: JOE COCKRELL NEWS@BRANDMAN.EDU 949-793-3057

ONLINE NEWSROOM FOR MYPATH: www.brandmannews.org/CBE-info

April 1, 2016 - A nonprofit university's innovative solution to one of the biggest challenges in the American workforce is MyPath. The unparalleled online program now offers a Bachelor of Science in information technology (B.S.IT), Brandman University announced today.

MyPath offers accredited bachelor's degrees through new technology, allowing students to move at their own pace in less time than the normal four years while working completely online via a tablet or laptop device. There are no textbooks to buy because all course materials are embedded into the platform. Students can earn a degree at a fraction of the cost, and [MyPath](#) is approved by the U.S. Department of Education for federal financial aid.

Launched in 2015, the first degree offered through MyPath was a bachelor's in business administration (B.B.A.) and more than 100 new students from across the U.S. are thriving in the program.

The new MyPath B.S.IT program is primarily designed for students who are new to the IT field, as well as those who have knowledge of information technology and are ready to move on to increased levels of expertise and responsibility. The program uses industry-endorsed certifications from CompTIA and Microsoft to validate a student's knowledge, skills and abilities (competencies in IT). Graduates from this program will earn a bachelor's degree, as well as multiple CompTIA and Microsoft certifications. There are a total of 39 competencies in the program which students must master in order to graduate.

“There are many IT professionals who have earned Microsoft or CompTIA certificates through the course of their careers but never completed a bachelor’s degree,” said Brandman University Chancellor Gary Brahm. “MyPath allows them to earn a bachelor’s degree by leveraging those credentials they’ve already earned. MyPath is also an ideal program for people who have completed non-accredited programs at popular coding academies.”

According to [Burning Glass Technologies](#), a labor-market data firm that analyzed 1.6 million ads for software-developer jobs nationwide, in ninety-five percent of the tech-sector job ads that list a minimum credential, the employer calls for a bachelor’s degree or higher.

About Competency-Based Education

The competency-based education (CBE) platform is part of a growing trend in higher education where innovative universities are re-thinking the traditional constraints on time, such as the credit hour, and other big obstacles for adult students who must earn a degree while working full time and balancing family responsibilities.

“Forward-thinking universities are developing programs that are more tightly coupled with the real-world demands in today’s modern workforce and the demands on adult students who work and have family obligations,” said Brahm.

As employers demand better-educated staff, the job world is changing for both traditional and nontraditional students while barriers grow larger for those not pursuing a degree. [In a recent survey](#) conducted online by Harris Poll on behalf of Brandman University among U.S. adults, 63 percent of employed adults who don’t have a bachelor’s degree and are not pursuing one cite tuition and textbook costs as the biggest barriers, followed by 37 percent who say they don’t have time to pursue a degree, while 27 percent believe they are “too old” to work towards a bachelor’s degree.

Nearly a quarter of American adults start college but don’t finish – about 37 million people, according to research commissioned by the Gates Foundation in 2013. Now, they’re being left behind in an economy increasingly focused on bachelor’s-prepared workers. In that [Harris Poll](#), nearly four-in-five adults (78 percent) say there are significant benefits in earning a degree from an accredited university, and a clear majority (90 percent) says consideration of pursuing one would need to be on ‘their terms’. For example, they would choose when, where and how they take classes.

About MyPath

More than two years in the making, the first-of-its-kind online program represents a new path to a bachelor's degree. Key features of MyPath include:

- **Unprecedented technology:** Brandman partnered with Flat World Knowledge to create MyPath, which incorporates the latest learning technology (adaptive learning, game-based learning, data analytics and social learning).
- **Self-paced learning:** Students move entirely at their own pace in a competency-based environment rather than attending classes.
- **Accessibility:** Content is available anytime and anywhere using an iPad or laptop computer; there are no textbooks to purchase. All materials are embedded into the program, which saves students thousands of dollars.
- **Inclusive cost:** Tuition is \$2,700 every six months (\$5,400 per academic year). Students set their own pace, so the faster they move through the program the lower overall cost. Federal and state financial aid is available; residents of California are eligible to apply for Cal Grants.
- **Ongoing assessment:** With digital badges validating skills along the way, students will be able to put evidence of their abilities to work in real-time, immediately elevating their profile with employers and prospective employers.
- **Comprehensive academic and student support.** Students are fully supported by academic coaches who counsel on program progress and full-time faculty tutor students on the topic of the competencies and assist them with questions along the way.

The faculty and administration at Brandman University worked closely with employers to develop MyPath and incorporated academic frameworks from the Lumina Foundation's Degree Qualifications Profile and the Liberal Education and America's Promise from the Association of American Colleges & Universities into the platform.

Closing the skills gap

"As a nonprofit leader in adult education, Brandman's mission is to provide value for our graduates through relevant degree programs," Brahm said. "There is a growing gap in the American workforce between the skills needed by businesses and the capabilities of college graduates in this country. This is what makes the MyPath program a truly disruptive innovation in higher education."

A recent research study by Gallup outlines the skills gap for American college graduates. In the study, only 11 percent of business leaders “strongly agree” that college graduates have the requisite skills for the workforce whereas 96 percent of chief academic officers believe that their institutions are “very effective” (56 percent) or “somewhat effective” (40 percent) at preparing students for the work world.

“Competency-based education has been shown to be an increasingly effective tool to get qualified, experienced graduates to the marketplace quickly, and for them, cost-effectively,” Brahm added. “Moreover, it allows students to be tested on areas where their experience may well qualify them as knowledgeable. This allows them to focus on what they need to learn not what they already know. We built this program with a lot of input from business leaders with a focus on making the degree relevant to the needs in the modern workforce.

MyPath is available for free download on iPads through the App Store or an online HTML version is accessible through the Brandman website. Prospective students interested in trying the program can complete the Competency Intro Module (CIM), which is a no obligation, no cost and immersive experience that introduces this new approach to attending college and serves as an admissions requirement to the program. To learn more visit www.brandman.edu/mypath.

About Brandman University

Brandman University is a private, nonprofit institution accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission. As part of the Chapman University System, Brandman blends a legacy of academic excellence with innovative curriculum and strong support services designed for students with busy schedules. The university offers 50+ undergraduate, graduate, credential and certificate programs across its schools of arts and sciences, business, education, nursing and health. Brandman serves 12,000 students annually with programs available online and at 26 campuses throughout California and Washington. The university’s online programs consistently rank among the top in the nation by U.S. News & World Report. www.Brandman.edu