

TYPES OF DEGREES

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There are numerous types of degrees and degree programs out there. Which one is right for you? It really depends on what you want to do with your education and what you're hoping to accomplish in your career. Certain jobs require certain degrees and/or professional training-doctor's for example are required to have a medical degree. A Master's Degree in Business (MBA) is a graduate degree that can help you prepare for a career in many fields. Each type of degree will open different doors.

CERTIFICATES AND LICENSES

Unlike degrees which typically include a general education component, certificates and licenses are designed to help students develop a specific skill set that will prepare them for a particular job or to perform a specific function. Certificates and licenses typically take one to two years to complete. They can be earned at community colleges and technical and vocational schools. Several four-year colleges also offer certificate programs.

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES

There are two general types of undergraduate degrees, Associate's Degrees and Bachelor's Degrees. Associate's Degrees earned at a community college with the intent of transferring to an accredited four-year institutions are sometimes referred to Transfer Degrees.

TRANSFER DEGREE

The associates degrees listed below, when earned from an accredited institution, generally will fulfill general education requirements as well as many of the introductory course requirements for the major a student intends to pursue at a four-year college. When considering attending a community college or any 2-year undergraduate program, discuss your choices with a college advisor at your current school or an enrollment office at the four-year college you plan on attending down the road.

A.A. – Associate of Arts

A.A.T. – Associate of Arts in Teaching

A.E.S. – Associate of Engineering Science

A.F.A. – Associate of Fine Arts

A.S. – Associate of Science

ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE

Associate's degrees are undergraduate degrees that typically take two years to complete. The most traditional associate's degrees are the Associate of Arts (A.A.) and Associate of Science (A.S.), but there are several types of associate's degrees including the Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.), which is designed to prepare students for a particular career path. Most traditional programs consist of three parts: general education requirements, major requirements, and electives.

BACHELOR'S DEGREE

A bachelor's degree is an undergraduate degree offered at four-year colleges and universities. They typically take four, sometimes five, years to complete. There are several different types of bachelor's degrees, the two primary

being the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Science (B.S.). B.A. degrees typically focus in the humanities and social science fields. B.S. degrees usually focus on scientific and technical fields. Other bachelor's degrees include the Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.) or the Bachelor of Business Administration (B.B.A.), to name just a couple.

Not only is the bachelor's degree the degree of choice among employers looking to fill entry-level positions but students who want to pursue a graduate or professional degree must first earn a bachelor's degree.

GRADUATE DEGREES

Graduate degrees are advanced programs of academic and professional study that focus on a particular discipline or profession (i.e. Law, Medicine, Psychology, Business, etc.) In the past, graduate programs were primarily "academic" (research and education oriented), but today many, if not most, are "professional" (skills development and knowledge oriented) in nature. Many are a combination of both. Graduate degrees can take anywhere from two to six years to complete.

How is a Graduate Degree Different from an Undergraduate Degree?

In relation to an undergraduate degree, graduate degrees are much more focused on a particular discipline and offer a much more in depth education. In addition, there is a much higher expectation regarding the quantity and quality of students' academic work. There are two general categories of graduate degrees; Master's and Doctoral. Each is addressed in detail below.

MASTER'S DEGREE

A master's degree is a post-secondary or graduate degree students often pursue following a bachelor's degree. Even though a master's degree is much more rigorous and demanding than a bachelor's degree, they can usually be completed in just two years of full-time study. The majority of master's degrees involve intricate analysis and/or extensive research. There are several types of masters degrees. The most common include the following: Master of Arts (MA), Master of Science (MS), Master of Fine Arts (MFA).

DOCTORATE DEGREE

A doctoral degree is an advanced graduate degree that typically follows a bachelor's or master's degree. In many fields, a doctoral degree is considered a "terminal degree", the highest academic degree in a given field of study. Unlike bachelor's and master's degrees that can be completed on a part-time basis, doctoral degrees are work-intensive and usually require a student's full-time attention (i.e. 40 to 60 hours a week of studying). Most doctoral degrees are research oriented and are earned under the supervision and tutelage of a professor.

Depending on the field of study, a doctoral degree can take anywhere from two to five years to complete, sometimes longer. There are four basic types of doctorate degrees:

Professional Doctorates – The professional doctorate, as the name suggests, is a professional oriented doctorate degree that focuses on a particular profession. These programs typically emphasize skill development and knowledge acquisition. An example of a professional doctorate is the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA).

Research Doctorates – These doctorate degrees are research oriented doctorates that focus almost exclusively on academic research. Common research doctorates include Ph.D. and Doctor of Philosophy.

Higher Doctorates – A higher doctorate is a tiered research degree. While not as common in the United States, these degrees are awarded in several countries including France, Great Britain, and Ireland.

Honorary Doctorates – An honorary doctorate is degree in which the usual requirements have been waived. This degree is typically awarded as a way of honoring or recognizing an individual's contributions in a specific field, or to society in general. Honorary doctorates are not awarded by all universities that award doctorate degrees.

PROFESSIONAL DEGREE

A professional degree professional degree is a doctorate level degree that is required as a prerequisite to working in a particular career field. Professional degree programs are typically offered via specialized schools of study that concentrate in a particular area of expertise (e.g. law, medicine, psychology, engineering, etc.) Most professional degree programs require a bachelor's degree as a condition of application. All study within these programs focuses on earning the specific professional degree for the field of study.

SPECIALIST DEGREE

A specialist degree is a type of professional degree that is typically earned in addition to a master's degree. It is designed to provide a professional with an additional certification to fulfill licensing requirements (e.g., Ed.S. for a school principal). The program requires additional coursework, training, and/or internship experience.