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Doctor of Science

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D.Sc., **Sc.D.**, **S.D.**, or **Dr.Sc.** are common abbreviations for the [Latin](#) *Scientiae Doctor*, meaning **Doctor of Science**.

North America

In the [United States](#), the *Doctor of Science* is a research based [doctoral](#) degree. The Sc.D. is recognized by both the [United States Department of Education](#) and the [National Science Foundation](#) to be equivalent to the more commonly used [Ph.D.](#)^{[1][2]}

The first North American Sc.D. was inaugurated by [Harvard University](#) in 1872 - when graduate studies first began at Harvard and the Ph.D. and Sc.D. degrees first introduced there in the same year^[3]. The Doctor of Science degree is earned with the approval of a committee on the basis of original research and publications, and it is awarded predominantly in doctoral-level science programs, such as engineering, information systems, medical and health sciences, and neuro- and health economics^[1].

Although much rarer than the Doctor of Philosophy, the Doctor of Science degree has long been awarded by major institutions, such as [Harvard University](#)^[4], [Johns Hopkins University](#)^[5], [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#)^[6], [Tulane University](#)^[7], [Washington University in St. Louis](#)^[8]. In effort to standardize doctoral degree conferral at these large research institutions, the Ph.D. has often replaced the Sc.D.^[9]. For instance, the doctoral degree in [biostatistics](#) at Harvard recently changed from Sc.D. to Ph.D. - even though the doctoral-degree structure, requirements, and doctoral academic regalia have remained identical^[9]. As well, doctoral programs at [Johns Hopkins University](#) and [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#) that offer the Sc.D degree also offer the Ph.D. degree - and requirements for obtaining the two degrees are identical. Currently, doctoral-level research programs that offer the Sc.D. but not the Ph.D. degree include several doctoral programs at [Harvard University](#) and [Boston University](#), the [engineering](#) programs at the [Washington University in St. Louis](#) and [The George Washington University](#), and [Towson University](#).

In everyday lay usage, it is commonplace and acceptable to refer to an Sc.D. as a Ph.D.^{[10][11][12]} Distinction is usually made in formal academic settings.