

The term “doctorate” comes from the Latin docere which means “to teach,” and is the highest level of formal study.

The typical educational timeframe to earn this level of degree can stretch up to 8-12 years, and requires at least 2 years of study beyond a masters degree.

The doctorate is divided into two different classifications: research and professional. As implied, the research doctorate incorporates published original academic research performed by the student. The most commonly earned research doctorate in the United States is the Doctorate of Philosophy, better known as the PhD. The requirements to earn the research doctorate vary based on the area of study; however this degree is typically earned by completing pertinent classes, passing a comprehensive exam, and finishing a dissertation.

The professional doctorate focuses more on advanced occupational preparation in such professions as law and medicine. The requirements to complete the professional doctorate are similar to those of the research doctorate, however the areas of study pertain more specifically to the student’s chosen profession rather than scholarly research.

There is a third and far less common type of doctorate: the Honorary Doctorate. This degree is awarded when a school wishes to formally recognize the contributions of an individual to a particular field. The requirements of a research or professional doctorate are typically waved, however some institutions do not award this degree type.

As with all lower degree types, students can choose to earn their doctorate online or at brick and mortar institutions. Take a look at the choices below to see what options are available to you from our fully accredited schools.