

Degree Award Level Definitions

01 Award of Less than One Academic Year:

Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma (less than 1 academic year): An award that requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level (below the baccalaureate degree) in less than 1 academic year (2 semesters or 3 quarters), or designed for completion in less than 30 semester or trimester credit hours, or in less than 45 quarter credit hours, or in less than 900 contact or clock hours.

02 Award of at Least One but Less than Two Academic Years:

Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma of (at least 1 but less than 2 academic years): An award that requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level (below the baccalaureate degree) in at least 1 but less than 2 full-time equivalent academic years, or designed for completion in at least 30 but less than 60 semester or trimester credit hours, or in at least 45 but less than 90 quarter credit hours, or in at least 900 but less than 1,800 contact or clock hours.

03 Associate's Degree:

Associate's degree: An award that normally requires at least 2 but less than 4 years of full-time equivalent college work.

04 Postsecondary Award, Certificate, or Diploma of at Least Two but Less than Four Academic Years:

Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma (at least 2 but less than 4 academic years): An award that requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level (below the baccalaureate degree) in at least 2 but less than 4 full-time equivalent academic years, or designed for completion in at least 60 but less than 120 semester or trimester credit hours, or in at least 90 but less than 180 quarter credit hours, or in at least 1,800 but less than 3,600 contact or clock hours.

05 Bachelor's Degree:

Bachelor's degree: An award (baccalaureate or equivalent degree, as determined by the Secretary, U.S. Department of Education) that normally requires at least 4 but not more than 5 years of full-time equivalent college-level work. This includes all bachelor's degrees conferred in a 5-year cooperative (work-study) program. A cooperative plan provides for alternate class attendance and employment in business, industry, or government; thus, it allows students to combine actual work experience with their college studies. Also includes bachelor's degrees in which the normal 4 years of work are completed in 3 years.

06 Post - Baccalaureate Certificate:

Post-baccalaureate certificate: An award that requires completion of an organized program of study beyond the bachelor's degree but less than a master's degree. It is designed for persons who have completed a baccalaureate degree. The program of study does not meet the requirements of a master's degree.

07 Master's Degree:

Master's degree: An award that requires the successful completion of a program of study of at least the full-time equivalent of 1 but not more than 2 academic years of work beyond the bachelor's degree.

Some of these degrees, such as those in Theology (M.Div., M.H.L./Ray) that were formerly classified as "first-professional", may require more than two full-time equivalent academic years of work.

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08 Post - Master's Certificate:

Post - Master's certificate: An award that requires completion of an organized program of study beyond the master's degree, but less than a doctor's degree. The program of study does not meet the requirements of a doctor's degree. An example of this type of degree is the Ed.S.

17 Doctor's Degree - Research/Scholarship:

Doctor's degree-research/scholarship: A Ph.D. or other doctor's degree that requires advanced work beyond the master's level, including the preparation and defense of a dissertation based on original research, or the planning and execution of an original project demonstrating substantial artistic or scholarly achievement. Some examples of this type of degree may include Ed.D., D.M.A., D.B.A., D.Sc., D.A., or D.M., and others, as designated by the awarding institution.

18 Doctor's Degree - Professional Practice:

Doctor's degree-professional practice: A doctor's degree that is conferred upon completion of a program providing the knowledge and skills for the recognition, credential, or license required for professional practice. The degree is awarded after a period of study such that the total time to the degree, including both pre-professional and professional preparation, equals at least six full-time equivalent academic years. Some of these degrees were formerly classified as first-professional and may include: Chiropractic (D.C. or D.C.M.); Dentistry (D.D.S. or D.M.D.); Law (J.D.); Medicine (M.D.); Optometry (O.D.); Osteopathic Medicine (D.O); Pharmacy (Pharm.D.); Podiatry (D.P.M., Pod.D., D.P.); or, Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.), and others, as designated by the awarding institution.

19 Doctor's Degree - Other:

Doctor's degree-other: A doctor's degree that does not meet the definition of a doctor's degree - research/scholarship or a doctor's degree - professional practice.