

Overview of Graduate Degrees

- Graduate programs typically are studies beyond the bachelor's degree that are at the masters or higher level.
- Professional degrees are those that prepare students for specific careers in specific fields such as business (MBA), education (MEd, EdD), law (JD), medicine (MD), and pharmacy (PharmD). Professional programs focus on real-world application, and often also require students to complete internships in their field of study before graduation.
- Research or academic degrees are typically more research-oriented than professional programs. These programs require students to conduct research and usually require a thesis (dissertation) or capstone project in order to graduate.
- It's important to know that at places like Penn, students are not typically charged tuition for PhD programs. Most doctoral students have their tuition paid by their program, and are provided with health insurance and a small living stipend in exchange for teaching and research duties.
- Most professional degrees DO charge tuition although there may be ways to obtain loan forgiveness for public service, particularly for teachers, lawyers, and doctors working in underserved areas.
- A postdoc is a temporary position that allows a PhD to continue their training as a researcher and gain skills and experience that will prepare them for their academic career. Most postdoc positions are at a university or in industry, but there are some postdoc positions at nonprofits and in government.

| Degree | Avg Years | Avg tuition cost per year | Tuition help | Typical careers | Avg starting salary |
|--|-----------|--|---|--|-----------------------|
| DDM/DDS Doctor of Dental Medicine/ Surgery | 4 | \$36,000 (public); \$67,000 (private) | Scholarships, government/military service programs, loan forgiveness | Dentist Periodontists, Orthodontists require 2-3 additional years of postdoctoral training | \$119,000 |
| DVM Doctor of Veterinary Medicine | 4 | \$28,000-54,000 (in-state); \$41,000-66,000 (out-of-state) | Scholarships, loan forgiveness & repayment opportunities | Veterinary surgeon or nurse, Federal Government Inspector, Zookeeper, Researcher, Professor | \$60,000 |
| EdD Doctorate of Education | 3-5 | \$49,000 | Student loans, employer tuition reimbursement or sponsorship | School principal, superintendent, higher education administration, chief learning officer | \$90,000 |
| JD Juris Doctor (law) | 3 | \$21,000 (public, in-state); \$49,000 (private) | Scholarships, grants & assistantship positions, federal student aid, student loans, loan forgiveness programs | Lawyer, Law Librarian, Professor, Consultant, Judge/Hearing Officer, Mediator, Writer/Journalist | \$68,5000 -130,000 |
| MA/MS Master Arts/Science | 1.5-2 | \$20,000-30,000 | Employer tuition reimbursement, federal financial aid, loans, grants, federal work-study, institutional aid, scholarships & fellowships | Highly dependent on specialization | \$78,000 |

| Degree | Avg Years | Avg tuition cost per year | Tuition help | Typical careers | Avg starting salary |
|--|-----------|--|---|--|---------------------|
| MBA Master of Business Administration | 2 | \$30,000-80,000 | Scholarships, loans, employer sponsorship | Director, Entrepreneur, Manager, Analyst, or Consultant in: business development, finance, marketing, projects, programs, products, operations | \$105,000 + |
| MD/DO Medicinae Doctor (Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine) | 7-12 | \$36,000 (in-state); \$60,000 (out-of-state & private) | Scholarships & grants, federal financial aid, private student loans, TA/RA, government or military service program | Specialized Doctor, Surgeon, Researcher, Paramedic, Medical Examiner, Public Health Worker | \$89,000 |
| MPH Master of Public Health | 2-3 | \$16,000-33,000 (public); \$25,000-60,000 (private) | Scholarships, stipends, federal financial aid | Epidemiologist, Biostatistician, Researcher, Educator, Health Care Administrator, Policy Advisor | \$63,000 |
| MSW Master of Social Work | 1-2 | \$13,000 (public); \$36,000 (private) | Scholarships, stipends, federal financial aid | Social Worker or Counselor in mental health, substance use, school, family, Case Manager, Human Services Administrator | \$60,000 |
| PhD (Humanities) Doctor of Philosophy | 7-10 | \$36,000 (research-based); \$48,000 (professional) | Many universities fund tuition and stipend for living expenses, TA/RA, fellowships/scholarships, loans | Higher education Faculty or Administrator, Financial Analyst, Policy Advisor, Industry Researcher, Teacher, Consultant | \$75,000 |
| PhD (STEM) | 4-6 | \$36,000 (research-based); \$48,000 (professional) | Many universities fully fund tuition and stipend for living expenses, working as TA/RA, fellowships/scholarships, loans | Professor/Teacher, Policy Advisor, Industry/Government Researcher, Consultant | \$75,000-150,000 |
| PharmD Doctor of Pharmacy | 4* | \$25,000 | Financial aid, scholarships | Pharmacist, Drug Development, Medical Writer *Note that some students enroll in PharmD programs as undergrads, shortening the total higher ed time to PharmD from 8 to 6. | \$90,000-140,000 |
| PsyD Doctor of Psychology | 4-6 | \$30,000 | Financial aid, scholarships | Clinical psychologist, Forensic Psychologist, School Psychologist, Counselor. *Note PhDs are generally trained following the scientist-practitioner model that puts greater emphasis on research, while PsyDs are generally trained with greater emphasis on clinical work. | \$79,000 |