

College and Degrees

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There are different degrees, serving different purposes, which you may be pursuing as a WVU student. One of the best ways to gain a competitive edge in the world of work is by having a college degree. There are also long-term payoffs to having a degree: nonetheless, pursuing a college degree is both expensive and time consuming. There are a number of jobs that only college graduates can hold, and there are a number of jobs that require advanced degrees.

A university is not technical school training, nor is it vocational training. Receiving a college degree in any field does not automatically guarantee you a job after graduation. The college degree helps one prepare for career pursuits. There are many factors that go into getting a job. Attending West Virginia University is an education. If you are interested in becoming an automobile mechanic, cabinetmaker, welder, construction worker, etc., you should attend a trade school and/or get practical training through apprenticeships. In contemporary world of work reality, the best assurance of success in the workforce, or of obtaining your dream job is a dedication to excellence, the motivation to succeed, and the perseverance to endure. Internships, high grade point averages, leadership skills, and other skills enhance your opportunities for jobs after graduation.

The structure of college degrees is discussed below. All degrees discussed assume successful completion of the requirements. Requirements for your degree are in the "WVU Undergraduate Catalog(s)" and are online. It is advisable that you make a copy of the requirements for your degree and that you then design a check off list or database where you plan your semester course load. An assignment is included at the end of this discussion that will enable you to better understand that process.

In order to enroll in college one must have earned a high school diploma or a G.E.D.

The first college degree one might obtain after high school is an Associate of Arts, or Associate of Science degree, or a similar Associates degree. This is a two year degree and is frequently offered at community colleges, though four year colleges may also offer associates degrees. An associate's degree is not necessary in order to enroll for a bachelor's degree program.

The four year college degree is a Bachelor degree: it may be a Bachelor of Arts Degree, a Bachelor of Science Degree, a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree, a Bachelor of Music degree, or other Bachelor of Degrees. The degrees require different coursework. For instance, a Bachelor of Arts degree in Chemistry is different, in terms of the coursework, than a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry. A Bachelor of Arts degree is a "liberal arts" degree. That means that your coursework has been more general, that you have a broader background with more "arts" courses out of your major than if you are seeking a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry (which will have more "science" or "technical courses.") The same will hold true of all BA/BS degrees. Bachelor of Arts (in any offered field) is a broader, more liberal education. Each of the degrees has merit.

The degree one typically receives after the Bachelors degree is a Masters degree. Note: the actual degree title is Master of Science or Master of Arts, etc.; however one speaks of having a Master's degree in..... The Masters degree programs are typically two years of study post baccalaureate (after Bachelor) degree. There are, however, some unique programs that allow

you to complete a master's degree in less than two years (i.e., the MBA from the WVU Business School.)

The degree which typically follows the Master's degree is a doctorate. There are different doctorate/doctoral degree designations. There are the "professional" degrees such as the MD (Medical Doctor), JD (Law degree), DDS (Dentist) PharmD (Doctor of Pharmacy), and PhD (Doctor of Philosophy), EDD (Doctorate of Education) DS (Doctor of Science), DMA (Doctorate of Musical Arts), and perhaps other designations.

The MD requires four years of medical school after a Bachelor's degree. That will be followed by a residency of three to five or more years to focus on a specialization. There may also be additional training required for certain specializations.

The JD (Law degree) is typically three years of full time study after a Bachelor's degree.

The DDS (Dentist) degree is generally four years after the Bachelor degree, though certain subspecializations may take longer.

The Pharm D, pharmacy doctorate is typically a four or five year program.

The Ph.D. is a degree whereby the recipient is trained to do research and to teach. The Ph.D. is required for certain governmental positions and is an educational requirement at most institutions of higher learning (i.e., colleges and universities) for their faculty. The Ph.D. typically requires three to five or more year's of full time work after the Master's degree. The Ph.D. typically requires writing a dissertation, which has traditionally been original research in the field of study. Doctoral study is planned to combine regular courses, special seminars, independent study and supervised research and supervised training to promote knowledge in the major field.

The Ed.D. is a frequently pursued degree for individuals wishing to have the credentials for administrative public school jobs, certain college teaching or administrative positions. The degree requirements are typically less research oriented than the Ph.D.

Often continuing education is required for licensure in some of the above programs.

Opportunities for various career paths are vast and varied. The economy often dictates opportunities that are available in most fields. Certain fields have a glut of qualified applications, whereas in other fields, positions go unfilled.

The WVU Career Services Center has information in handouts and magazines that address current market demands.

The US Government website from the [Bureau of Labor Standards](#) also tracks job openings, new job titles, and the like.

Many jobs require that workers adjust to market concerns: you may be required to re-train, to learn new computer programs, to learn new information or to even obtain additional coursework to remain marketable and current in your chosen field.

Good luck to you as you pursue your dreams.