



Council of Graduate Schools

Open Doors with a Doctorate

Higher education in the United States is arguably the best in the world, with doctoral education the “jewel in the crown,” attracting the best and the brightest domestic and international students. The doctorate recipients emerging from our graduate schools become the world’s leading researchers, experts, and innovators in the 21st century, working in universities, industrial enterprises, national governments, and many other areas around the world. If you want to lead efforts to conduct cutting edge research, educate the next generation of students, explore new frontiers, discover new vaccines and cures, explore alternative energy sources, promote global civil and cultural interchange, or improve your community, then consider a doctoral degree. You will be at the forefront as we enrich the arts and literature, develop climate solutions, improve global communications and health care, document history, strengthen the global economy, and develop new technologies. It will be you – our doctorate recipients – who will lead us out of the “now” into a better future.

The number of doctorates awarded in the United States more than doubled between 1980-81 and 2008-09, increasing 105% from 32,958 to 67,716 (see chart), primarily because of growth in the number of women earning doctorates. By 2018-19, a projected 95,000 doctorates will be awarded annually.¹

WITH A DOCTORATE YOU CAN:

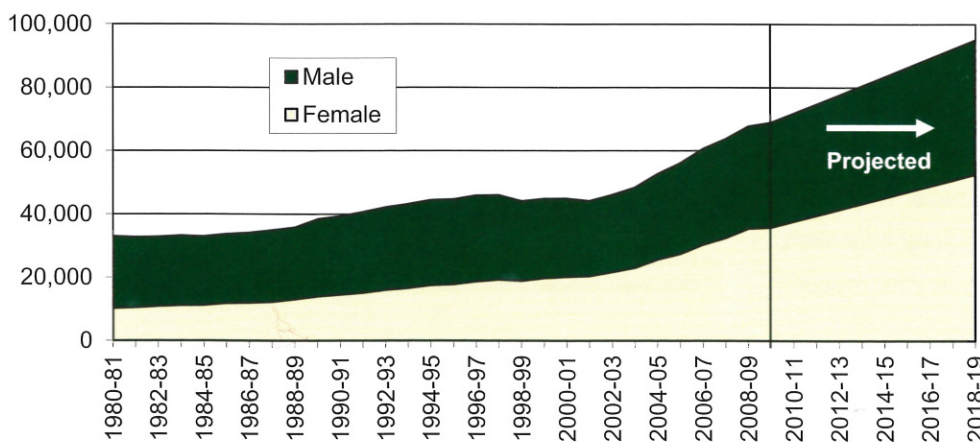
- Conduct cutting edge research
- Become a professor
- Explore new frontiers – discover/invent/improve the “now”
- Advance the knowledge of your discipline
- Hone independent thinking
- Be intellectually stimulated and challenged
- Become a leader in your field
- Advance your career
- Enhance your problem-solving talents
- Maximize your earning power
- Grow professionally

Doctoral students are typically funded through a combination of fellowships, tuition waivers, teaching assistantships, research assistantships, loans, and other sources of financial support. Among doctorate recipients in 2009, 30% reported that their primary source of funding was a research assistantship or traineeship, 28% said it was a fellowship or grant, and 18% said it was a teaching assistantship. The remaining 24% of

doctorate recipients were primarily funded by their own resources, loans, their employer, or other sources.²

Doctorates are key for future employment and career advancement. The number of occupations that typically require a doctorate will increase by nearly 17% between 2008 and 2018, much greater than the 10% rate of growth expected for all occupations.³ Although occupations requiring doctorates are projected to increase rapidly, only 1.4% of the population 25 years of age and older in the United States held a doctorate in 2010.⁴

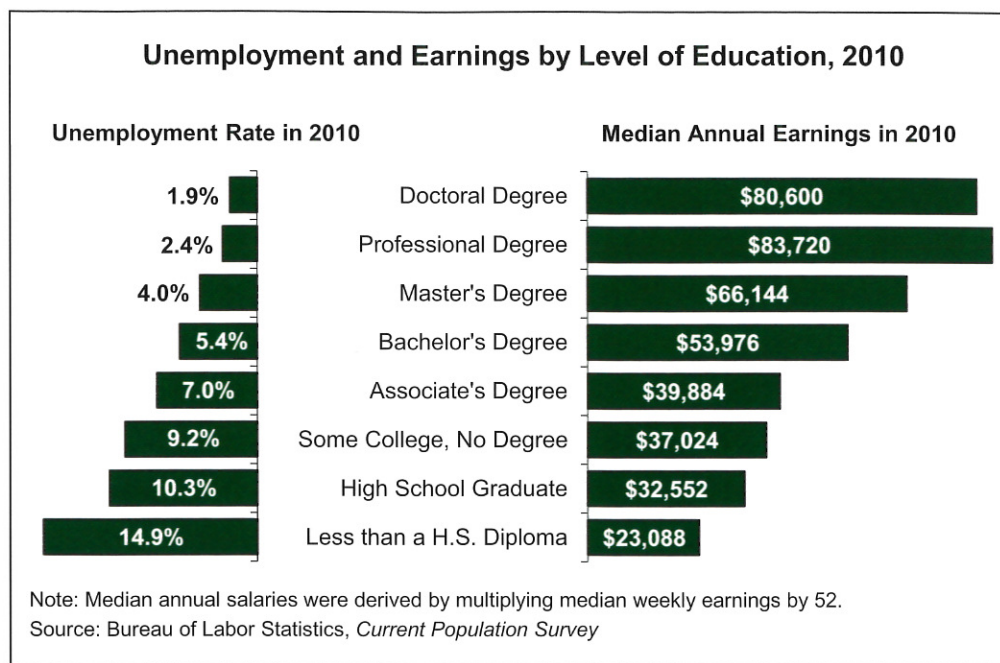
Doctorates Awarded in the United States by Gender, 1980-81 to 2018-19



Note: Excludes professional doctorates in fields such as medicine and law.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics*, 2010

A doctorate increases potential earnings and the likelihood of employment. Individuals with a doctorate typically earn more than those with lower levels of education. The median annual salary in 2010 for those with a doctorate was \$80,600, compared with \$53,976 for those with only a bachelor's degree, and \$32,552 for those with only a high school diploma (see chart).⁵ In 2010, among individuals 25 years of age and older, the unemployment rate for those with a doctorate was 1.9%, compared with 5.4% for those with only a bachelor's degree, and 10.3% for high school graduates (see chart).⁵



Doctoral education plays a key role in producing an educated citizenry that contributes to the public good of the United States at the national, state, and local levels. Individuals with a graduate degree have higher participation than those with lower levels of educational attainment in civic activities such as voting and are more likely to involve their children in community activities; to say that their health is good, very good, or excellent; to be leaders in business, government, and non-profit sectors; and to drive the innovation that will lead to sustained economic growth for the United States.⁶

A highly trained workforce led by doctorate recipients is essential to America's prosperity. To continue our leadership in cutting-edge research; explore new frontiers in scientific, civic, and cultural areas; and expand the knowledge in all disciplines requires the leadership of a doctoral workforce. Doctoral is not for everyone, but if you have a thirst for knowledge, are willing to devote significant time and effort, relish intellectual challenges, and want to search for new and better ways to advance the knowledge in your field, then doctoral education might be for you. You will grow professionally in your research

area, advance up the career ladder, enhance your leadership ability, be a contributing member in a global society, and earn more money in the process. You will be a leader in your field. So, if you enjoy these challenges and rewards, "Open Doors with a Doctorate." We all will benefit!

References

1. National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics 2010*, <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d10>.
2. National Science Foundation, *Doctorate Recipients from U.S. Universities: 2009*, www.nsf.gov/statistics/insf11306.
3. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economic News Release, "Table 9: Employment and total job openings by postsecondary education and training category," <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.t09.htm>.
4. National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics 2010*, <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d10>.
5. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Education Pays," http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm.
6. Council of Graduate Schools, *Graduate Education and the Public Good*.

Additional Sources of Information

- Council of Graduate Schools, Fellowships and Financial Aid, www.cgsnet.org (click on "Resources for Students").
- National Science Foundation, *Doctorate Recipients from U.S. Universities: 2009*, www.nsf.gov/statistics/insf11306.
- National Science Board, *Science and Engineering Indicators: 2010*, www.nsf.gov/statistics/seind10/c2/c2h.htm.
- Payscale.com, Salary Survey Report for Degree: Doctorate (PhD), [http://www.payscale.com/research/US/Degree=Doctorate_\(PhD\)/Salary](http://www.payscale.com/research/US/Degree=Doctorate_(PhD)/Salary).



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