

# OPEN DOORS WITH A DOCTORATE

*Doctorate recipients become the world's leading researchers, experts, and innovators.*

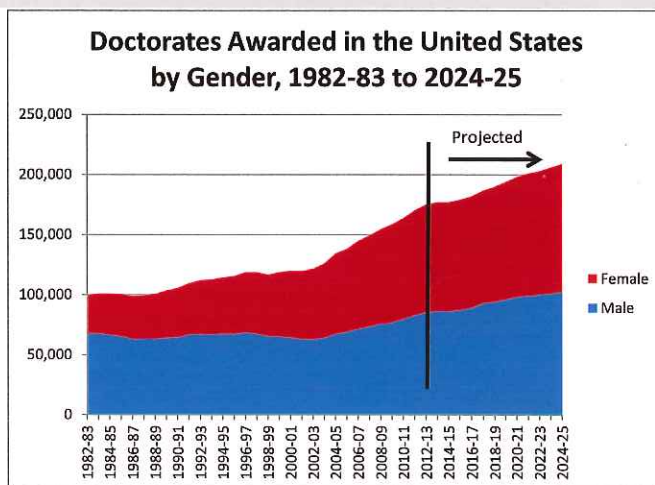
Higher education in the United States is arguably the best in the world, with doctoral education the “jewel in the crown,” attracting the best and the brightest domestic and international students. The doctorate recipients emerging from our graduate schools become the world’s leading researchers, experts, 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.

## With a Doctorate you can:

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

The number of doctorates (including professional practice doctorates) awarded in the United States increased by about three-fourths from 1982-83 to 2012-13, growing from 99,335 to 175,038 (see chart), primarily because of growth in the number of women earning doctorates. By 2024-25, a projected 209,000 doctorates (including professional practice degrees) will be awarded annually.<sup>1</sup>

Doctoral students are typically funded through a combination of fellowships, tuition waivers, teaching assistantships, research assistantships, loans, and other sources of financial support. Among research doctorate recipients in 2014, 32% reported that their primary source of funding was a research assistantship or traineeship, 27% said it was a fellowship or grant, and 21% said it was a teaching assistantship. The remaining 20% of doctorate recipients were primarily funded



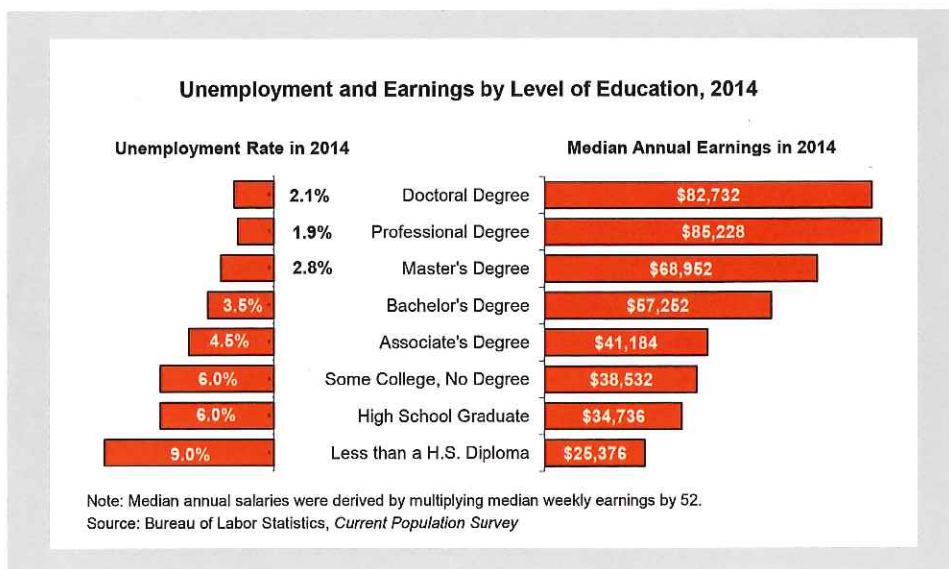
Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.  
NOTE: Includes doctoral degrees in professional practice, such as MD, DDS, and law degrees.

by their own resources, loans, their employer, or other sources.<sup>2</sup>

Doctorates are key for future employment and career advancement. The number of jobs that typically require a doctorate or a professional degree for entry will increase by 12% between 2014 and 2024, much greater than the 6.5% rate of growth expected for all occupations.<sup>3</sup> Although occupations requiring doctorates are projected to increase rapidly, only 1.8% of the population 25 years of age and older in the United States held a doctorate in 2014, and 1.5% held a degree in professional practice.<sup>4</sup>

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 2014 for those with a doctorate was \$82,732, compared with \$57,252 for those with only a bachelor's degree, and \$34,736 for those with only a high school diploma (see chart). In 2014, among individuals 25 years of age and older, the unemployment rate for those with a doctorate was 2.1%, compared with 3.5% for those with only a bachelor's degree, and 6.0% for high school graduates (see chart).<sup>5</sup>

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 in civic activities, such as voting, than those with lower levels of educational attainment. They are also more likely to say 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. Parents with postsecondary degrees are more likely to educate their children about community, national, and world events, and to involve them in community activities.<sup>6</sup>

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 education 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, and be a contributing member in a global society, and you will 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

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2. National Science Foundation, Survey of Earned Doctorates, 2014, Table 35. Doctorate Recipients' Primary Source of Financial Support, by Broad Field of Study, Sex, Citizenship Status, Ethnicity, and Race: 2014. <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/2016/nsf16300/data-tables.cfm>
3. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment by summary education and training assignment, 2012 and projected 2022.
4. U.S. Census Bureau, Educational Attainment in the United States: 2013. [http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep\\_table\\_education\\_summary.htm](http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_table_education_summary.htm)
5. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Earnings and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment (Last Modified on December 8, 2015). [http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep\\_table\\_001.htm](http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_table_001.htm)
6. Council of Graduate Schools, Graduate Education and the Public Good, 2008. <http://www.cgsnet.org/graduate-education-and-public-good>

### Additional Sources of Information

- Council of Graduate Schools, Graduate School and You, [www.cgsnet.org](http://www.cgsnet.org) (click on "Publications").
- National Science Foundation, Doctorate Recipients from U.S. Universities: 2012, <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/sed/2012/>
- National Science Board, Science and Engineering Indicators: 2014, <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/seind14/>
- 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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