

# Graduate Degree Options for Psychology Majors

The graduate pathway for Psychology majors is either a professional pathway (Psychology in practice/Applied Psychology, law or medicine) or a research pathway (academic/research in Psychology). A master's degree usually requires 2 to 3 years of work after the bachelor's degree, and a PhD will take 5 to 7 years beyond the bachelor's. The selection of a master's or doctorate degree should be based on interest in either practice or research and on commitment level.

## Master's Degree Level Pathway:

### *Practitioner Option:*

- ◆ A **law degree** leads to careers for the practice of law in a legal setting (e.g. civil, criminal, or business).
- ◆ A **medical degree** leads to careers for the practice of medicine working directly with patients (e.g. general physician, psychiatrist, and surgeon). You may also decide on a degree in an allied health field (e.g. occupational therapy, physician assistant, or physical therapy).
- ◆ A **master's degree in counseling psychology** leads to careers in counseling in a variety of situations with a focus on assisting patients in addressing and managing mental, behavioral, and emotional concerns. You will become a licensed professional counselor (mental health, substance abuse, etc.).
- ◆ A **master's degree in school psychology, social work (clinical), marriage and family therapy, and applied behavior analysis** are other counseling related areas that focus on a specific population.
- ◆ A **master's degree in applied psychology or business** leads to careers in psychology and business such as management/organizations, human resources, marketing/advertising, and public relations.

### *Research Option:*

- ◆ A **master's degree** with a focus on applied/research Psychology that provides more research education and experience for the preparation of an applied/research-focused career or doctoral program.

## Doctoral Degree Level Pathway:

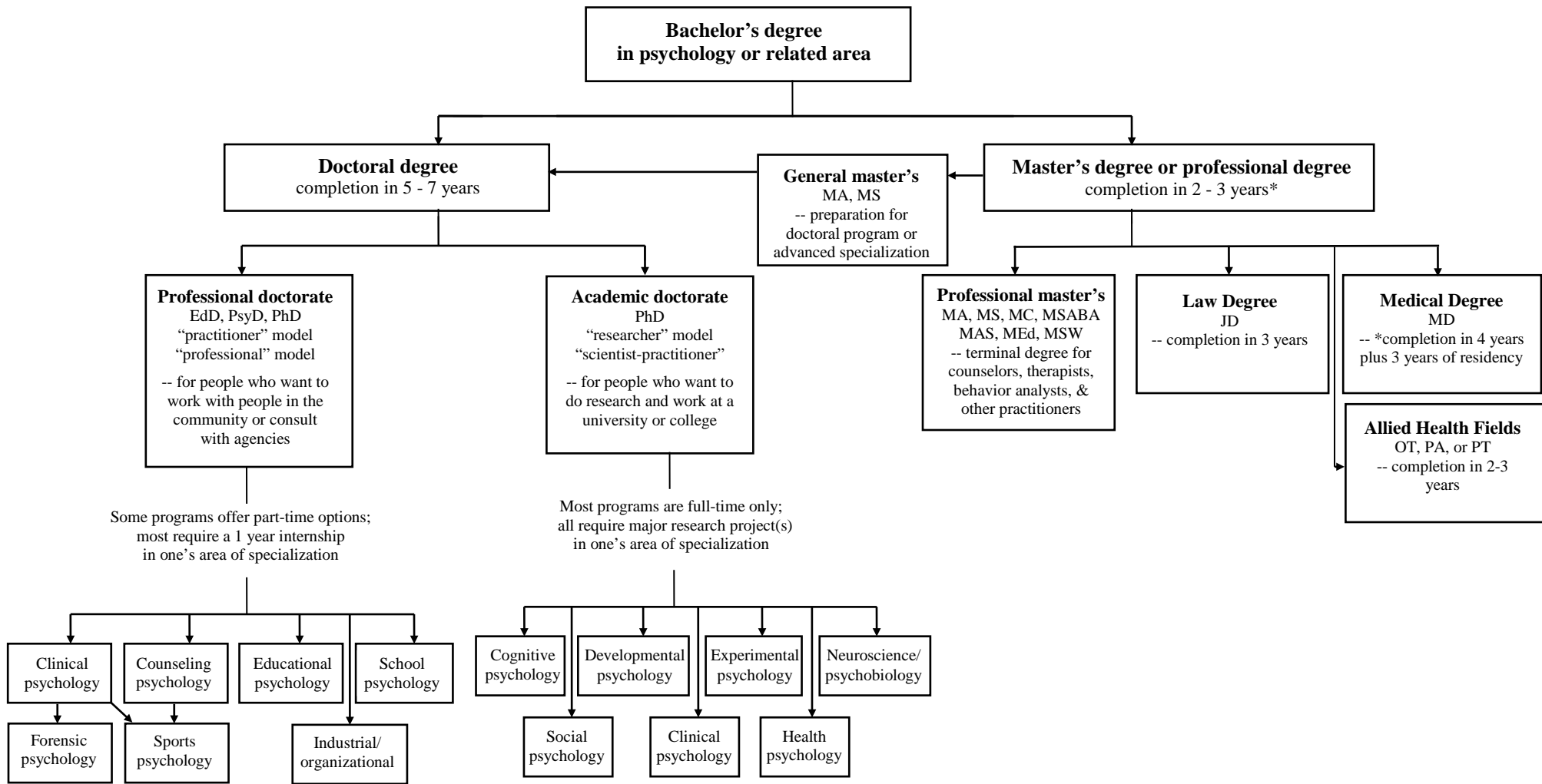
### *Practitioner Option:*

- ◆ A **PhD in counseling psychology** provides training in research and practice with a focus on working with patients with major life adjustment issues (emotional, social, health, etc.) and using psychotherapy and assessment to manage adjustment issues.
- ◆ A **PhD or PsyD in clinical psychology** provides training in applied research and practice with a focus on working with patients with mild to severe mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders and using psychotherapy, assessment, and diagnostic techniques. There are clinical psychology PhD programs that prepare you for group or private practice and follow a "scientist-practitioner" model as well as PsyD in clinical psychology programs that are solely designed for group or private practice.
- ◆ A **PhD in school psychology** provides training in applied research with a focus on working in a school setting to address behavioral and social issues related to student learning and educational models using assessments and evaluations.

### *Research Option:*

- ◆ A **PhD in a research area of Psychology** such as behavioral neuroscience, clinical, cognitive, developmental, or social generally follows a "research or scientist" model and is strictly designed for research in Psychology. This option is best suited for an academic/research position or consulting position with an educational institution, business or governmental organization.

For information on job outlook and availability and medium salary, use the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* available on the Bureau of Labor Statistics website: <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>



The following books provide information, such as admissions requirements and program descriptions, for specific graduate schools. All three can be found in the advising suite of the Psychology Department.

*Graduate Study in Psychology*  
*Peterson's Graduate Programs in the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences*  
*Peterson's Graduate Programs in the Biological/Biomedical Sciences & Health Related Medical Professions*

Key to abbreviations:

EdD = doctor of education  
 PhD = doctor of philosophy  
 PsyD = doctor of psychology  
 MA = master of arts  
 MS = master of science  
 MC = master of counseling  
 MSABA = applied behavior analysis  
 MAS = master of advanced study  
 MEd = master of education  
 MSW = master of social work  
 JD = juris doctor  
 MD = doctor of medicine  
 OT = occupational therapy  
 PA = physician assistant  
 PT = physical therapy