



Master's or Ph.D.?

What will an advanced degree in CS prepare you to do?

Master's degree

- Great (additional) preparation for a career as a computing professional.
- A great way to demonstrate academic potential, possibly to help with a later application for a Ph.D.

Ph.D. degree

- Great preparation for a career in CS research.
- Essential if you want to be a (tenured) professor.
- A useful/vital credential for leadership positions in academia, industry, or government.

How do the experiences compare?

Master's Degree	Ph.D. Degree
Coursework + Project or Thesis Program may consist entirely of coursework	Coursework + Research + Dissertation Emphasis on developing research skills
Many different types of programs Some emphasize breadth Some have special focus Some combine both	Develop general knowledge through coursework and/or exams Specialized knowledge through area exams or projects Majority of time spent becoming expert in a particular research area
1-3 years if full-time Can be done part-time	3-7 years (most often 4-6) Programs typically expect a full-time commitment

(OVER)



CRA-WP

Computing Research Association
Widening Participation

Is funding available?

Master's Degree	Ph.D. Degree
Limited funding available RA/TA support sometimes available Employers may provide partial or full support for continuing education	Easier to obtain RA/TA support RA or TA support provides stipend Tuition/Fees typically waived Opportunities to apply for competitive national and other fellowships

How to decide?

You might choose not to pursue an advanced degree. In many computing professions, experience is as valuable as a degree.

Remember that Master's and Ph.D. degrees are designed to prepare you for different career paths.

Decide based on your career goals.

Additional Resources



More on Master's vs Ph.D. programs on the CRA Conquer website:
<http://conquer.cra.org/students/where-can-research-take-me/what-are-the-paths-to-a-career-in-research>



Master's vs Ph.D. and how to apply:
<https://cs.stanford.edu/degrees/phd/PhD/GraduateSchoolAdvice.pdf>