

**Office of the Chancellor
Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education
Procedures and Standards for University Operations**

**Procedure/Standard Number 2017-30
Terminal Degrees**

Approved by: 
Chancellor

Date: 6/29/17

History: Reviewed by Chief Academic Officers, Council of Presidents, and APSCUF State Meet & Discuss.

Revised :

Additional History:

Related Policies, Procedures or Standards:

[Board of Governors' Policy 1987-01: Degree Equivalencies in Faculty Appointment and Promotion Criteria](#)

Additional References: The APSCUF CBA and the University Statements on Promotion Policies and Procedures address promotions and, as such, are not within the purview of this document.

I. Introduction

The purpose of this procedure is to communicate the instructions, processes, and standards regarding terminal degrees within Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education. This procedure will ensure there is consistency across the State System in the definition of terminal degrees.

For institutional reporting, the number and percentage of full-time tenured and tenure-track instructional faculty with terminal degrees are calculated. Degrees approved for this measure include, but are not limited to: AuD; CScD/SLP.D; DA; DBA; DEd or EdD; DHSc; DM/ DMA/DMUS/DMUSIC; DN.Sc/DNP; DPA; DPE/PED; DPH; DPS; DPT; DSW; JD; MD; MFA; MLS/MLIS; MPAS/MMS/MS/MHS; OTD; PhD/DPhil; Psy D; and ScD/DSci. The MFA is considered a terminal degree for faculty teaching in the creative, visual, or performing arts (e.g. creative writing, dance, art, theater). The MLS/MLIS is considered a terminal degree for those in library science. Consistent with Act 182, terminal degrees shall be earned in the discipline areas aligned with faculty primary responsibilities. This policy applies to instructional faculty.

This procedure does not reflect on the processes that occur at each university, such as when a faculty member must have earned his/her terminal degree. It is understood that each university has local processes and procedures that are undertaken prior to the processes established in this procedure.

II. Definitions

- A. **Faculty:** All persons whose specific assignments customarily are made for the purpose of conducting instruction as a principal activity (or activities), and who hold

academic rank titles under the faculty collective bargaining agreement of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, and instructor. This includes department chairpersons. Student teachers, graduate assistants, or teaching associates should not be included.

- B. **Terminal Degrees:** Degrees earned that generally are recognized by the discipline as being the highest in a discipline.

III. Procedure/Standard

The determination of acceptable faculty terminal degrees against this standard will be made by a State System university through alignment of faculty primary responsibilities and the appropriate credential. For example, a JD might be appropriate as a terminal degree in business law and criminal justice, but might not be appropriate in music or early childhood education. Another example, a DPS in occupational therapy might be an appropriate terminal degree for occupational therapy, but not for nursing.

For the State System, terminal degrees are defined as, but not limited to, those listed in the chart below:

Terminal Degree Abbreviation	Full Name of Degree
AuD	Doctor of Audiology
CScD, SLP.D	Doctor of Clinical Science (Speech Language Pathology)/Doctor of Speech Language Pathology
DA	Doctor of Arts
DBA	Doctor of Business Administration
DEd, EdD	Doctor of Education
DHSc	Doctor of Health Science
DM, DMA, DMUS, DMUSIC	Doctor of Music
DN.Sc, DNP	Doctor of Nursing Science/Nursing Practice
DPA	Doctor of Public Administration
DPE, PED	Doctor of Physical Education
DPH	Doctor of Public Health
DPS	Doctor of Professional Studies
DPT	Doctor of Physical Therapy
DSW	Doctor of Social Work
JD	Doctor of Jurisprudence
MD	Doctor of Medicine
MFA	Master of Fine Arts
MLS/MLIS	Master of Library Science/Library Information Science *
MPAS, MMS, MS, MHS	Masters in Physician Assistant Studies/Master of Medical Science (Physician Assistant)/Master of Science in Health Science (Physician Assistant Studies)/Master of Health Science (Physician Assistant Studies)
OTD	Doctor of Occupational Therapy
PhD, DPhil	Doctor of Philosophy
Psy D.	Doctor of Psychology
ScD or DSci	Doctor of Science

Terminal degrees not on this list might be appropriate for inclusion following consultation with the Office of the Chancellor. The listing will be reviewed and updated periodically.

With Board of Governors' approval of new applied and professional degree programs, the corresponding terminal degree(s) will be added to this list (e.g. Pharmacy D or D. Engineering).

*Universities offering a Master in Library Science degree (currently Clarion and Kutztown) may require a higher degree level than noted in this chart. Some universities require a master's in library science and a master's degree in a cognate field. Finally, some universities might require a doctorate for certain library responsibilities (e.g. serving as reference librarian for students in master's/doctoral programs).

IV. Attachments

None

V. Implementation

Effective Immediately. If at the time of hiring or upon the achievement of tenure, a faculty member held a degree that was recognized at that time by the university as a terminal degree in his or her field, that degree will continue to be recognized as a terminal degree for that faculty member.