

BA vs BS

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There may be a lot of confusion out there to the ignorant student on the differences between a Bachelors of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Science degree.

Both degrees incorporate a general education requirement of students to take a certain number of elective courses. The BS degree typically requires more courses in the specified major than a BA degree. While the BA focuses on creating a well-rounded graduate through a wide selection of various courses in social sciences. The BS degree tends to be awarded more often in the natural sciences than in the humanities. The BS is often awarded in pre-professional academic majors more than purely academic ones.

Bachelors' degrees typically require four years of full-time study, although some programs (such as Engineering) can take longer. Some universities and colleges allow ambitious students to complete them in less time. It all really depends on the School and the type of program itself, as well as how hard and fast you are willing to work at obtaining your degree.

Let's take a look at the Difference between a BA and a BS:

Bachelor of Science

A B.S. is a more technical degree that, in theory, is a more specialized version of a B.A., with more focus on the subject. It may and usually requires more advanced analytical courses, which is why most Bachelor of Science degrees are given in the fields of math and science. It is used with the more specialized or focused careers in mind with the likes of engineering, journalism, and advertising.

Bachelor of Arts

A B.A. is clearly the more popular and traditional major. It is the award given after completion of a program in the liberal arts or social sciences. The primary goal of a BA is to provide a well-rounded education, not to prepare the student for a specific job. A typical B.A. will have less major hours and more elective hours. A Bachelor of Arts has additional college requirements such as a foreign language, and additional literature and social sciences.

There is not a set standard that College degree programs follow in the U.S. and you may often come across some of these differences. Sometimes you will see a degree program that would typically be a Bachelor of Science degree, yet the College claims it as a B.A. These Colleges only usually offer more of an academic course program, rather than the professional training type. Also, there are schools out there (Caltech, MIT) that award the Bachelor of Science degree for all subjects.

Bachelor of Fine Arts

Another popular degree is the Bachelor of Fine Arts. This is awarded for courses of study in the fine and/or performing arts, usually at an art school, but still available at most universities. It is usually referred to as a "professional" degree as students generally receive more study and training in their major field compared to other BA or BS programs.

Advice on Choosing between a B.A. and B.S.

Beyond the differences between the BA degree and the BS degree, it really just depends on the policies of the college or university. If you are interested in a more specialized career that involves technical and analytical skills, a Bachelor of Science may be for you. It comes highly recommended if you choose to major in such subjects as: Economics, Statistics, Engineering, Accounting, Computer Science and many other math and science themed majors. Some students have a more difficult time with highly technical and analytical work, and therefore may want to select a program that gives them a more well-rounded education of the subject. Few employers recognize any difference between a BA and BS when recruiting. Earning any type of a degree can really help you advance your career.