



## Learn an Expert's Opinion on Online Real Estate Degrees

### Description

There are numerous ways to study real estate online, whether your objective is to become a certified realtor or pursue a hobby.

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Kent Ducote, a broker associate in Key West, Florida, who sells residential and commercial real estate, completed most of his real estate schooling remotely. He earned his Certified Commercial Investment Member, or CCIM designation through online classes, and he holds an online master's degree in international real estate from Florida International University.

"You may be quite successful if you have the discipline to be fully on your own and self-study," the 57-year-old explains.

While online degrees in the profession are available, that is not the credential that many students obtain to begin a real estate career, according to David Overbye, dean of academic affairs at the online REALTOR University, which provides a master's degree in the subject.

"It's quite easy to enter the field; it's much, much more difficult to be successful in the field," Overbye explains. "You must consider how you will arrange your career path as a real estate broker."

Here are seven different ways to learn about real estate and possibly obtain qualifications in the profession online.

## **Fundamental free and low-cost online courses:**

There are numerous opportunities for learning about real estate for free or at a minimal cost. Experts can provide a general overview of the field or go into a more specific topic within the discipline.

For example, the website edX provides a free online course with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology called Socially-Responsible Real Estate Development. Udemy.com also has a lot of possibilities, many of which are less than \$20, such as classes in analyzing real estate and multifamily investment opportunities.

Other free possibilities can be found on websites like BiggerPockets.com and REALTOR.com. In some situations, students may be required to pay to obtain completion certificates. These often cost \$30 to \$150 on the websites of edX and the online education provider Coursera, for example.

## **Online prelicensure education:**

Aspiring real estate agents should examine their state's licensing requirements; the type and amount of study vary. Aspiring real estate agents must typically take a prelicensing course, after which they will receive an official transcript or certificate to present with their application. In most states, students can complete that requirement online.

The website Real Estate Express is one option for prelicensure prep in many states. The cost of each course varies, but they are all fully self-paced. The CE Shop, 360training.com, and OnCourse Learning Real Estate are some other alternatives.

Many online learners "are working actively; they're migrating either part-time or full-time into real estate," says Tom Davidson, general manager of Real Estate Express. "Leaving that job to attend an eight-hour class session doesn't work. So the online student will work in the evenings, during lunch, and whenever they can fit it in."

## **State licensing test preparation:**

Those who have finished their prelicensure courses can also study for their state's licensing exam online. But, according to experts, additional exam preparation beyond a prelicensure course can be advantageous.

License Exam Instructor, for example, is a \$49 30-day plan for prospective real estate agents in California that includes access to a personal online tutor, practice exams, e-books, and other state-specific test material.

## **Continuing education requirements:**

Continuing education requirements for real estate agents and brokers vary by state. On its website, the National Association of Realtors lists many continuing education online courses and whether they fit the standards of different states.

Real Estate Express provides online continuing education courses for most states, both individually and in bigger packages, with 24/7 access to material for increased flexibility. For example, standalone classes in New York start at \$15, but multi-course packages can cost \$130.

Courses for becoming a broker and learning certifications include: Students may also attend online courses to advance in the field after obtaining a real estate license, possibly to become a broker. Websites such as Moseley Real Estate Schools and Allied Business Schools Inc. provide online classes for students from all around the country to get their broker licenses.

An online course to become a registered broker in Virginia costs \$229 on Moseley and includes unlimited access to course materials and the opportunity to engage with other students and teachers.

Depending on their exact professional ambitions, students like Ducote may benefit from a second designation in the field. Ducote obtained his CCIM mostly online, eventually completing his final exam in Texas and submitting a portfolio of past transactions. Certified Property Manager, Accredited Land Consultant, and Certified International Property Specialist are other designations.

## **University online certificate programs:**

Online university certificates – whether for credit or not – are shorter in length and less expensive than online degrees. In addition, they delve further into specific topics within the field or provide a more general overview of real estate to experts from other industries.

The for-profit, online American Public University System provides an undergraduate online certificate in real estate management for 18 credit hours, much less than the 60 hours required for the school's associate degree in the discipline. The certificate program is also limited to real estate, whereas degree students must complete additional general prerequisites.

"Sometimes, students want to start with the certificate and then go to the associate degree," says Kevin Forehand, the school's program director for real estate studies programs.

Meanwhile, Cornell, Cornell University's online degree-granting arm, offers a certificate in commercial

real estate and another in hotel real estate investments and asset management for \$3,600 each.

## Real estate online degrees:

While a full real estate degree is not required to enter the sector, students may choose to pursue one. For example, associate degree students at APUS may choose to pursue their education to pursue a long-held passion, to educate themselves. At the same time, they purchase their first house or eventually become a licensed realtor.

“We get a lot of international buyers and sellers in Key West,” Ducote adds, “and I just wanted to understand a little bit more how to deal with them.” And basically, I only wanted the accreditation to attract investors since people look up realtors’ qualifications and so on online.”

“Typically, they’ve been in the sector for quite a while, and they’re earning a master’s degree basically to strengthen their business,” Overbye says of master’s students at REALTOR University.

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