

Advice from IMIS: The International Moving Image Society

Obviously, if you are looking for an employment or industry focused course, with an ambition to forge a career in the moving image industries, – our advice is that you should be wary of the whole raft of courses that contain the word “studies” in their title. These courses are often far more concerned with critical, cultural and social studies than preparing you for professional production and post production work.

Whether the course has industry relevant equipment and facilities or not, as well the industry experience of its course teaching team, and visiting lecturers, are critical factors. Check also that the course spends sufficient time on practical production work. Consider the balance between practice and theory on the course.

Research the general reputation of a course - look at its results, its festival entries, competition wins, industry and employment links, and the employment destinations of its graduates – all of this is researchable.

There is absolutely no substitute for visiting a course on its open days and researching and looking into these issues, and chatting to the students on the course. It is important to get a feel if there is enough taught time, access to a sufficient amount of equipment for the number of students. Research exactly how much contact there is between the course and industry and that work placements occur. Remember a lot of the publicity material you will see is in fact just that - publicity material.

Some of the top reputation courses receive very many applicants and entry is competitive. Sometimes the atmosphere on open days isn't as attentive and “warm” as you may like. Re-assure yourself, before applying, by chatting to students on the course, and asking them about the quality of their “on course” experience. Many students have achieved successful careers after graduating from lower reputation courses, but generally that only happens where the course team interviewed every suitable applicant, the individual attention they received during application was matched by an excellent “on course” experience and smaller student numbers allowing them to flourish. So it is also important for you to take into account what kind of location, size and nature of course might best suit you as individual too.

Also consider that industry trends now mean that there is a greater need for entry level employees to have a good understanding of digital moving image systems, data and workflow issues and some basic digital engineering systems knowledge. Traditional film school content might sound ideal but the needs of industry are getting far more digitally focused alongside all the creativity.

Also important for you to consider is how early do you want to specialise in your area of work? Is graduating in a very specific specialism and degree title something that you really want and is it necessary for your intended chosen path? Or might you be better suited to a course that is concerned with a wider range of skills and potential employment outcomes? Some courses will attempt to be a balance between these two structures with broad diagnostic production experience in the early stages of the course with opportunities to specialise, say, in the third year or in a post graduate year.

Two professional bodies IMIS and Skillset receive applications from courses for professional accreditation. Accreditation involves a panel of industry experienced professionals undertaking a detailed examination and visit to a course, to consider the industry focus and relevance of that course. IMIS fully endorses it's own and Skillset accredited courses as having been confirmed to be industry relevant as opposed to courses that have not as yet undergone accreditation scrutiny. Students on BKSTS accredited courses are encouraged to become members of IMIS, a professional body with an international membership of professionals working within the moving image industries.



www.bkstsaccreditation.com - a service to Education provided by International Moving Image Society.

Assuring professionalism and industry relevance in moving image education and training.

The Higher Education Statistics Agency recognises & approves the Society as an accrediting body. BKSTS Accreditation is included in the Key Information Set (KIS) for UK Higher Education courses.

An affordable and user friendly complementary scheme that is available alongside any others on offer.