

CPARIS Web Site

Tertiary study for a professional career in audio

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1 The right course

To find the course that is right for you, first ensure that the main focus of the institution you intend to join is on digital electronics and computer technology and that they provide intensive hands-on experience in an organisation that offers audio training.

2 Checklist

- First check the Audio Engineering Society education programmes.
- Visit the institution(s) you have selected.
- Speak to their current students.
- Speak to their past graduates currently employed in the industry.
- Speak to their faculty members and evaluate what they can teach you.
- Examine the institution facilities and evaluate them only in terms of what you can learn.
- Ask about their internship opportunities.
- Ask about the number of students they have placed (their job placement record).
- Ask about the number of options offered during the course.

3 In a nutshell

If I was to do this all over again, I would still select the Tonmeister concept: a four-year degree featuring acoustics, electrical engineering, music, psychology and technology.

The best ones are located in Germany, so consider learning German while you are still in high school.

Apart from Germany, I would recommend the University of Surrey in the United Kingdom which has a dedicated Tonmeister course in Guildford (the one from which I graduated).

4 The high life

Anyone wanting to jump into a professional audio career must bear in mind that the glamorous recording side is only a small portion of the total number of jobs available in audio.

Besides the possibility of working with top artists, the audio business covers many other areas such as audiovisual services, audio retailing, media services, medical research, military applications, radio and television broadcasting and sound reinforcement.

5 The bright lights

Audio is a people industry. You need to have sympathy for the aim of your client. This cannot be taught.

If you want to work with top artists such as Eminem or Sting on their next album, your ability to deal with values and manners that may be unfamiliar to you is what really matters to them.

You will still need to acquire the knowledge in the first place and having a four-year degree in your curriculum vitae will improve your chances of finding a job and increase the range of opportunities available to you when you face the work place.

6 Action

The way you spend your spare time will also affect your future.

I would suggest to:

- Become involved with the student radio stations or educational television stations.
- Seek work in audiovisual or instructional media units or volunteer for sound work in drama or theatrical arts.
- Read magazines such as the journal of the Audio Engineering Society (JAES) or the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE). These publications will tell you where the technology is moving.