

10 things to check before joining a course

Regardless if you are going to a reputed large college or a small franchised coaching class, there are some common aspects you need to check before joining a course.

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There has been an explosion in the number of higher education programs offered in India. You can choose certificates, diplomas, Bachelor's and Master's degrees in a huge range of disciplines from business, media, medicine, psychology, technology to many others.(Shutterstock)

There has been an explosion in the number of higher education programs offered in India. You can choose certificates, diplomas, Bachelor's and Master's degrees in a huge range of disciplines from business, media, medicine, psychology, technology to many others. However, many of these courses are expensive and you need to ensure that whatever institution you choose to join is able to provide you with a high-quality educational experience that leads to great outcomes for your career. Regardless if you are going to a reputed large college or a small franchised coaching class, there are some common aspects you need to check before joining a course.

1. Institution's reputation

Have your friends and family heard about this institute? What is the general impression they have about it? It is also good to check with any family friends who work in the corporate world if their company hires graduates from this institution and what the general quality of those hires are.

2. Faculty profile



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Have a look at the work experience of the people teaching the course you've selected. Ideally, they should have had industry work experience that is relevant to the course being taught. Purely academic faculty who know subject theory but without hands on experience will be limited to teaching from the textbook which will not give you a proper understanding of the course material.

3. Infrastructure

Does the institute provide you with good quality air-conditioned classrooms? Is there access to computers and the internet? Are there student canteen or recreation facilities? Ideally, the higher priced the course, the better the infrastructure should be.

4. Practical learning

Does the teaching primarily consist of lectures assessed with exams or is there a lot of practical hands-on learning assessed with project assignments? Nowadays, employers look for graduates who have a practical grasp of the subject with strong fundas, which can only be developed with a hands-on learning approach.

5. Industry integration

Do they have any companies which have endorsed their courses or helped with creating their curricula? Do senior industry managers come to give guest lectures? Do they offer industry visits for students?

6. Live projects

Many quality institutions work with companies to offer live projects, where students work with a company mentor to solve a real-life issue the company wants to solve. This gives students immense exposure to real world conditions. Check if your planned course offers this option.

7. Use of technology in classroom

Technology has pervaded all aspects of the workplace and it is important that your planned institution gives you a grounding in the software used in companies. Check if you get to work with MS Office, Adobe, CAD-CAM, CRM and any other relevant software used for your planned career after graduation. Also, check if the institution uses e-learning facilities, where you are able to view course materials and video lectures from home. Do they use any online business simulations or other interactive software for teaching?

8. Job placements

Most students join courses to get a boost in their career prospects. Check if the institution offers job placements. If they do find out where their students have been placed and at what salaries. Make sure you speak to past students to get their feedback on how they have progressed after taking this course

9. Alumni network

Many good institutions have a strong alumni network where past students who are well placed in their careers can be of help to fresh graduates. Check if your planned institution has a good alumni network and if it facilitates connections with them

10. Demo Lectures

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Regardless of what the institutions admissions counselors tell you, nothing beats first-hand experience of what studying in their institution is like. Check if they are willing to allow you to sit in one of their current classes just to observe how the teaching quality is. It also allows you to speak to current students in this demo class as to how their experience has been.

Asking a lot of questions of the admissions counselors, checking online reviews and connecting to past students via social media should give you most of the information you need on the above 10 points. Always make sure you are educated about an institution before you get educated inside the institution!

(Akhil Shahani is the Managing Director of The Shahani Group. Views expressed here are personal)

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