

How To Choose An Online Academic Program

(NAPSA)—As online education continues to grow in popularity, more and more higher education institutions are developing and introducing online programs.

How can prospective students ensure that they choose a quality program that provides a solid educational background and helps them meet their goals?



Daniel
Hamburger

“All online programs are not created equal, and it’s important to gain a clear understanding of the overall reputation of the institution as well as the

practical elements of the program before signing on,” says Daniel Hamburger, head of DeVry University Online. Hamburger outlines several areas that prospective students should evaluate before enrolling in a program:

- **Institutional Accreditation**—“Accreditation means that the institution has met a rigorous set of educational standards,” says Hamburger. He says to check with the state board of higher education, which must approve the degree programs that institutions offer.

- **School History**—Ask questions such as: “How long has your institution offered online courses?” “How many students have you graduated?” “How are your degrees perceived in the marketplace?”

“Students should seek out programs that are well regarded and that have a solid track record of

producing graduates who have secured employment after graduation,” Hamburger adds.

- **Faculty and Staff**—“The best online programs have faculty who are exceptional written communicators and who can translate the dynamic atmosphere of a traditional classroom into the online environment, by spurring dialogue and encouraging class participation.” Hamburger adds that DeVry has an extensive training program for its instructors that includes a 12-week course requiring faculty to develop and teach a test course to “students.” The school’s faculty have teaching experience and terminal degrees in their fields—and all online faculty have the additional benefit of mentors throughout their teaching careers.

- **Flexibility**—An increasing number of students are preferring to mix and match their course loads, taking some classes online and others on campus. See if your online institution allows such action.

- **Useability**—Evaluate a program’s online platform to make sure that it is user friendly. Hamburger says his school lets students participate in class demos to get a feel for the functionality prior to enrolling in actual classes.

As one of the largest degree-granting higher education systems in North America, DeVry University provides associate, bachelor’s and master’s degree programs in technology, business and management. For more information, visit www.devry.edu.