

Choosing the Right School

Choosing a school is a very important decision that should be made with care. Beware of misleading advertising about an educational opportunity that sounds too good to be true. It most likely is not a legitimate degree.

Consider the following:

Accreditation

Many online sites claim to be accredited institutions and even list the name of an accreditation agency. No Kansas institution may call itself accredited unless the accreditation agency is recognized by the United States Department of Education. Those accreditation agencies that are recognized by the United States Department of Education are listed on the United States Department of Education website www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/index.html.

State Approval

Each state has a law governing educational institutions. Most states license an online school that is physically located within their borders. Licensed schools are required to meet a set of standards and to provide accurate consumer information to prospective students. In Kansas all private and out-of-state postsecondary educational institutions are approved by the Kansas Board of Regents with the exception of cosmetology (Kansas Board of Cosmetology) and barbering (Kansas Board of Barbering).

Transfer of credit to another institution

The transfer of credits is a decision made by the receiving school. No institution should tell an individual that their courses will transfer unless they can show a written agreement listing specific transfer courses. If an individual knows that he/she wants to attend another school, it is always wise to call the second school to ask if they take credits from the first.

Employment

If the ultimate goal is employment, a call to the prospective employer or an employer in your area of interest is important. It is also good to check with any agency in the state of Kansas where a license is required to verify that the education you are considering will meet their license requirements. If you want to be a certified teacher, call the Kansas Department of Education 785-296-8012; for nursing call the Kansas Board of Nursing 785-296-4929, etc

Be sure to ask any prospective employer what level of education is required for the occupation.

Complaints about the school

The Kansas Board of Regents, county attorney offices and the Kansas Attorney General's office all accept complaints about institutions in Kansas. Check with these agencies to see if the institution you are considering has formal complaints in progress. It is also a good idea to check with the Better Business Bureau.

Visit the Prospective School

It is always a good idea to actually visit the school you are considering. There should not be any rush for you to sign an enrollment agreement on the spot. What you should get, however, is a catalog of courses, and a tour of the building where you will see equipment and facilities including library access at times you would need to be there. As you tour the classes, look for interaction between the instructor and the students, and the attitude of the students toward the activity they are doing. Look at the requirements of the program you are considering to see just how long it might take you to complete this program. Compare these to other institutions you visit in order to choose a school where you will feel comfortable and learn as much as possible. Remember, you are investing in your future.