# How Do I Find a Good Master’s in Computer Design Program?

A Master’s in Computer Design or Graphic Design will help you gain traction in a very competitive line of work. Once you have studied for your graduate degree in computer design, you will be qualified to work as an experienced software engineer, an animation programmer, or a researcher through a government agency like the National Security Agency. This will increase your likelihood of advancing your career while you increase your lifetime earning potential. A master’s degree will qualify you for master’s level work, but not all graduate programs are created equal. If you want to find the best terminal program, here are some tips.

# Find Programs That Are Accredited

The single-most important factor when you are comparing any type of post-secondary degree program is accreditation. Accreditation is more than just a designation, it is a stamp of approval from a standard-setting agency. There are regional, national and programmatic accreditation awards. Regional accreditation shows that the school as a whole meets the standards set by agencies that are controlled by the[US Department of Education](http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/). A national accreditation is controlled by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and is awarded to programs that have more relaxed admissions standards and programs for practical or liberal arts majors.

The most important accreditation when you are specifically looking for a computer design graduate program is the programmatic accreditation. This is a specialized award that is granted by professional organizations in the field and that focuses on the standards of a specific major. Many different accrediting organizations exist, but one to look to when you want to major in computer design is ABET. [ABET sets the standard](http://www.abet.org/accreditation/new-to-accreditation/what-programs-does-abet-accredit/#cac) and offers accreditation to computer programs all throughout the nation that educate students on designing programs, implementing, engineering and evaluation.

# Review the Retention Rates of Each Grad Program

Meeting the standard in curriculum and content should not be your only focus. You also need to consider other metrics and data that might signify that a program might not be as great as it claims to be. One way to compare a computer design program from the next is to compare retention rates. A [retention rate](http://oedb.org/rankings/retention-rate/) at a grad school is the percentage of first-year grad students who return for their second year. This rate is often higher at graduate schools because these students are familiar with degree programs and have shown that they are willing to do what it takes to graduate. If there is a low retention rate, it could signify that faculty or student culture may not appeal to grad students.

# How is the Degree Perceived by Employers?

If you want to work for a software firm or for a large [Fortune 500 employer](http://www.computersciencedegreehub.com/internships-fortune-500-companies/), you should find out which programs are highly perceived. Most of the best programs have an ABET accreditation along with a regional one, but that does not mean that is all that employers are looking for. Success rates, the method of content delivery and job placement rates might be different factors that a recruiter might look for.

The demand for computer engineers or graphic designers is continually growing. If you want to compete in a very competitive field where education is paramount, it is time to consider earning your master’s. Look for the right master’s in computer design, and only then should you consider returning to school.