# How Do I Know I’m Getting a Good Computer Science Education?

A computer science degree program is one of the best majors for today’s job market, and it’s one of the most challenging degrees you can get. Computer scientists are experts in discrete mathematics, linear algebra, algorithm theory and formal language theory, and they spend most of their time thinking of ways to reduce a set of step-by-step instructions to the smallest possible number of steps. You need a PhD to get a job with the title computer scientist, and most computer science (CS) majors enter the field of software engineering after graduation. You can be a software developer with a bachelor’s or master’s degree, but the education you receive is essentially the same no matter which profession you enter after college.

# What a Computer Science Degree Program is Like

CS programs mostly focus on math and computation, leaving students to learn software development on their own time. Most programs offer three degree tracks you can choose from: business, software design and pure science. The program you choose should offer a strong course selection for the degree track you want to follow. Most CS majors choose the software design track, and any accredited school you attend will offer all the courses needed to become a developer. All accredited schools that offer CS degrees also offer all the business and science courses needed to become a corporate enterprise developer or [computer science researcher](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/computer-and-information-technology/computer-and-information-research-scientists.htm).

If your goal is to be an enterprise developer, network architect or some other corporate IT professional, any accredited school with computer science and business departments will give you an adequate education. Your job prospects improve with the prestige of the school you attend. If your goal is to develop end-user software such as desktop and Web applications, you will face fairly strong competition for jobs, and your chances of finding the ideal programming job depend on the reputation of your computer science program.

For example, top software makers receive thousands of applications every year, and they only have time to interview applicants with the [best credentials](https://www.google.com/about/careers/lifeatgoogle/hiringprocess/). People who get jobs at Google, Apple and Microsoft typically have degrees from top ranked schools. Similarly, if your goal is to become a PhD student, you should choose the school with the best professors, research programs and student engagement.