

Avoiding Trade School Fraud: Questions to ask before enrolling

How can you keep yourself from enrolling in the wrong trade school? The short answer is, you need to get some solid information from the trade school before you enroll. This is easier said than done. The admissions person you speak with is really a salesperson. A slick salesman or saleswoman can fool an eager student every time. He or she may try to avoid answering your questions directly. So, if you are suspicious about the information you are getting (and I'm sorry to say this, but some suspicion is probably good), find some someone else to ask:

1. What percentage of people who enroll end up completing the program?
2. Of those who don't complete the program, how many transfer to another school and how many simply withdraw?
3. Of the people that complete the program, what percentage get jobs in the field?
4. What kind of jobs are considered in the field, and counted toward this percentage? Are these the kind of jobs you would want?
5. What is the average wage graduates earn in their first job after graduating? What data is there to support this?
6. What are students saying about the school? Get on the internet and find out. Even better, try to ask them when you are looking at the school.
7. What will your student loan payments be? How will they increase if you can't make them?
8. What percentage of students who attended the school are in default on their student loans?
9. Is there a community college near you that offers a similar program? If so, check it out. Community colleges are usually a LOT cheaper than for-profit trade schools, and their graduates often do as well or better in terms of jobs than the name-brand trade school.

I hope this helps. BE CAREFUL OUT THERE!

Harry Shulman has 25 years of experience fighting for his clients. For the last seven years, he has limited his practice to representing consumers who did not get what they bargained for. His primary means of accomplishing this has been by filing and pursuing class action lawsuits. Harry's cases have benefited tens of millions of consumers, and provided them with tens of millions of dollars.

He began his law practice in Colorado 1985 at Holland & Hart, where he was made a partner in 1991. He moved to San Francisco in 2000, and practiced at Legal Strategies Group and The Mills Law Firm before starting his own firm in 2010.