TOP FILM SCHOOLS

Academy of Art University School of Motion Pictures (San Francisco, CA):

Founded in 1929, this prestigious school offers instruction in cinematography, directing, acting, and production. It’s also a screenwriting school, making it about as well-rounded as they come.

American Film Institute (AFI) (Los Angeles, CA):

In addition to being the nation’s largest non-profit exhibitor of motion pictures, the AFI also offers filmmaking classes at their famed Conservatory. Classes break into small groups reminiscent of production teams, and their graduate-level students produce more finished works that any other film school.

Art Center College of Design (Pasadena, CA):

Offering a Bachelor of Fine Arts, this top film school is located minutes from Universal Studios, Paramount, Disney, and Warner Bros. Classes are small, and each student has access to the latest post-production tools, HD, 16mm, and 35mm. Studio heads and noted filmmakers often present lectures. Three tracks are available for study: directing, editing, or cinematography. Also includes surround sound mixing studios, computer labs, editing suites, green-screen equipment, and a 5,000 square foot stage (with cyclorama).

Brooks Institute (Santa Barbara, CA):

In addition to offering a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Film (which can be completed in three years), this educational institution also serves as a screenwriting school, offering a Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting. The film program started in the 1950s, and the modern-day program emphasizes everything from proposals to editing. Programs are broken into six eight-week terms.

CalArts School of Film and Video (Valencia, CA):

All major types of filmmaking are emphasized, including experimental live-action, documentary, and dramatic narrative. Four different programs of study are offered, and students will have access to the latest equipment and extensive facilities. 3D animations systems are available, and students will learn to shoot on everything from 16mm to HD video. Student films are showcased through a series of special screenings on-campus and at local theaters, and industry professionals are often in attendance.

California State, Long Beach (Long Beach, CA):

Their program, known as Film and Electronic Arts, can prepare students for careers in sales, studio operations, production, directing, producing, script reading, teaching, photography, costume design, and many more. In addition to production and post-production skills, students are also taught about aesthetics and film theory.

California State, Northridge (Northridge, CA):

Their department of Cinema and Television Arts provides students with the professional training that will allow them to have a career in the film or television industry. Their faculty combines theory with practical application, and they’ve directed or produced over 5,000 films, TV shows, industry films, and stage plays combined. Over 100 internships are offered each semester. Students can pursue a BA in Cinema and Television Arts or an MA in Screenwriting.
Chapman University – Dodge College of Film and Media Arts (Orange County, CA):

While you learn how the film industry works, you’ll also have the opportunity to take advantage of internships and part-time jobs in the beautiful surroundings of Orange County.

Undergraduate degree programs include: B.F.A. Creative Producing, B.F.A. Digital Arts, B.F.A. Film Production, B.A. Film Studies, B.F.A. Screen Acting, B.A. Screenwriting. They have state-of-the-art equipment and facilities, including fully equipped soundstages.

Columbia College Hollywood (Tarzana, CA):

With an emphasis on screenwriting, editing, cinematography, directing, and producing, this top film school gives you the opportunity to learn from Oscar and Emmy winners and nominees. While pursuing your Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, you can intern for companies such as MTV, ABC, Village Roadshow, and New Line. It’s also a perfect place for those with jobs, as their academic calendar is broken into four terms per year, with only three class periods per day. Following graduation, at least 90 percent of students find a job in the film or television industry.

Los Angeles Film School (Hollywood, CA):

The Hollywood Reporter has called it “One of the best-equipped private learning centers in the country.” Keeping up with the ever-changing entertainment industry is a constant mission, and that’s why The Los Angeles Film School has expanded both its campus and curriculum. Today the school offers four Associate of Science Degree Programs in Film, Game Production, Computer Animation, and Recording Arts, and has added more than a dozen new classrooms, four new soundstages, thousands of feet of production area, and lots of new computers and gear, in a commitment to providing the best possible environment for learning. Emphasis is placed on directing, cinematography, and production design, and less on screenwriting and editing.

N.B. SMC’s full-time film professor, Salvador Carrasco, used to be the Head of the Advanced Directing Program at LAFS until recently.

Loyola Marymount University School of Film and Television (Los Angeles, CA):

Their school of Film and Television is broken into four separate degree programs: Film & Television Production, Animation, Screenwriting, Recording Arts. In addition to an undergraduate degree, this top film school also offers a Master of Fine Arts at LMU’s School of Film and Television.

New York Film Academy, Universal Studios (Hollywood, CA):

While their original campus is located in New York City, this school also has a branch in Hollywood. Accelerated degree programs are offered, concluding in one to two years. Students will begin making films from the first day in class. Since their creation in 1999, they have more than 30,000 graduates, and their additional locations and camps at Harvard University, Paris, London, and Disney Studios makes them the largest film school in the world.

San Francisco School of Digital Filmmaking (San Francisco, CA):

For those obsessed with digital filmmaking, be sure to check out this intensive one-year program. When completed, graduated will have the skills it takes to find work as cinematographers, writers, directors, producers, editors, and even independent filmmakers. The institution serves an additional function as an acting film school, thanks to their 8-week acting classes. There’s also a 5-week digital filmmaking workshop, and a screenwriting workshop.
San Francisco State Cinema (San Francisco, CA):

The school’s Cinema Department was founded in the 1960s, but a new facility was constructed in the ‘90s (including a 2500-square-foot shooting stage). Sound and editing labs are digital, and the school’s screening room is equipped to show both 16mm and 35mm films. As an undergraduate, you can pursue a BA in Cinema, while graduate students can seek an MA in Cinema Studies or an MFA in Cinema.

University of California (UCLA) Theater, Film, and TV (Los Angeles, CA):

Undergraduates can receive a BA in Film, Television and Digital Media. Facilities available to students include a color correction suite, costume shop, digital media lab, DVD duplicator, documentary lab, flatbed suites, FX room, Final Cut Pro suites, film to video transfer, prop shop, sound mixing labs, scoring stage, and a TV studio.

University of Southern California (USC) School of Cinematic Arts (Los Angeles, CA):

With a staff filled with working professionals, this facility is one of the top filmmaking schools in the nation. Facilities include screening rooms, mixing theaters, animation facilities, soundstage, and post-production suites. N.B. SMC’s full-time Film Studies professor, Josh Kanin, earned both B.A. and M.A. degrees at USC.

Florida State University Film School (Tallahassee, FL):

The only film school in the U.S. where students don’t have to pay for their own films, FSU’s program has been recognized by the Directors Guild of America for its quality. Faculty members have worked on the following films: The Godfather, Ulee’s Gold, Malcolm X, and Mephisto. Following graduation, students are paired with mentors in the industry, resulting in nearly a 100 percent rate of employment within 12 months.

Columbia College (Chicago, IL):

Offering nearly 120 academic programs, Columbia College is one of the most diverse private colleges in the nation. Spread out over 22 building in the heart of Chicago, the school offers a degree in Film & Video, with concentrations in directing, audio, cinematography, editing, documentary, critical studies, animation, producing, and screenwriting. Graduate students may also enroll for an MFA in Creative Producing.

University of Iowa Cinema and Comparative Literature (Iowa City, IA):

Offering an undergraduate degree in Cinema, the school also provides an MA and PhD in Film Studies, and an MFA in Film and Video Production. Common courses include Issues in Film Theory, Modes of Filmmaking, and Introduction to Film Analysis.

Columbia University (New York, NY):

With a focus on writing and learning about film as an art form, the school offers an undergraduate degree in Film Studies. Internships are available, and the organization known as Columbia Undergraduate Film Productions enables students to take part in the producing and directing process. An MA in Film Studies is also available. One of the school’s more successful graduates in Kathryn Bigelow (The Hurt Locker), the first woman to win an Oscar for Best Director. Columbia is also known as a quality screenwriting school, with numerous courses available on the subject.
New York University (NYU) Tisch School of the Arts Institute of Film and Television (New York, NY):

Also known simply as NYU, this is one of the leading film schools in the nation. Undergraduate classes are available, and graduate degrees are also offered. The university has an Asian campus in Singapore, and it features the same quality instruction available on the American campus. N.B. SMC’s full-time film professor, Salvador Carrasco, graduated from NYU and has a close professional relationship with many of its faculty members.

College of Santa Fe Moving Image Arts (Santa Fe, NM):

The college itself is over 150 years old, and students will have the opportunity to work on state-of-the-art sound stages, production offices, and backlot. Internships have previously been available on such motion pictures as North Country, Brothers, and No Country for Old Men.

University of Texas Radio, Television, and Film (Austin, TX):

Students can choose to obtain a Bachelor of Science, Master of Fine Arts, MA, and PhD. Considered one of the 10 best film departments in the United States, the UT film program is located in the heart of the Texas film industry (which is populated by everyone from Robert Rodriguez to Richard Linklater). The school’s first degree in broadcasting was offered in 1939, and the department of Radio - Television - Film came about in 1965. Both scholarships and internships are available. In recent years the Austin film community has become incredibly vibrant and influential as a hub of independent filmmaking, second only to New York and Los Angeles.

Not regionally accredited