



So, you want to be an actor?

Can you recommend an acting school?

This is a commonly asked question, yet MEAA does not recommend individual schools. However, we can advise you on the things you need to consider when choosing a school. There are a large number of acting schools throughout Australia. They vary dramatically in cost, standards, reputation etc. Broadly speaking, there are two types of schools: Accredited tertiary courses and Commercial schools.

Accredited Tertiary Courses

These are courses set up at tertiary institutions where you can earn a BA or Diploma in Performing Arts. You need to distinguish between courses that prepare you for a career as an actor and those that focus on the academic side of theatre studies.

The National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA), established in 1958, was one of the first such institutions offering courses for future theatre practitioners and actors. Entry is based on auditions and is very competitive. Students pay HECS.

For further information on other courses, call The Universities Admission Centre or the institution you are interested in directly.

Commercial Schools

There are a number of commercial schools that operate out of venues including community halls, office space and theatres etc. These vary greatly in standards. Some are very good and will prepare actors properly for entry into the acting profession. Unfortunately, there are also some schools that are more interested in taking your money than making you employable or developing your skills.

When searching for a school, it is wise to have a clear list of questions to ask about their services and to take a good look around before deciding.

The first question you need to ask yourself is whether you want to train for a career, or whether you simply want to have fun. If the latter is the case, join a local amateur dramatic group.

BEWARE OF:

Schools that ask for a large, upfront, and/or non-refundable payment

Entry to the course by interview only, i.e. no audition process & requirement by the school for you to sign a contract.

Never sign one without getting independent advice.

If you are serious about pursuing a career in acting, there are some questions you should consider:

Do you want a full-time or part-time course?

What is the aim of the course, e.g., Does the school teach a particular style of acting, and is that the kind of acting/training you would like to do?

Is the school associated with a theatre or agency?

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What facilities are offered?

How long is the course? Is it in terms? Is weekend work involved?

What are the costs? Are they upfront, per term, HECS's etc.

What happens if I wish to leave the course after paying my money? Do I get a refund? Is it transferable to another course at that institution?

What sort of work are graduates doing in the entertainment industry?

How many students in each class?

Who are the teachers? What experience and / or credentials do they have?

What is the range of classes available e.g., a good general course should contain a number of different classes such as voice, movement, mime, film and television. Other courses can be much more specific and focused.

What is entry to the course based on? Academic results? Interview? Auditions.

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