# Is a Graphic Design Degree Worth It In 2021?

You know how the old saying goes: go to college, get a job, etc. etc. It used to be that getting a degree was the only way to get into a certain industry and graphic design was no different. But things have changed—and the traditional education route is definitely not the only way. You don’t necessarily need a degree to become a graphic designer. Though, all of this has got us asking, is a graphic design degree worth it in 2021?

We’re going to weigh both the advantages and disadvantages of

a degree in graphic design to help you answer the question “should I major in graphic design?

We’ll also introduce an excellent, and likely quicker and cheaper, alternative for those who feel like a graphic design degree is not for them: Shillington’s graphic design course.

# Advantages

## Tried and Tested

We would be lying if we said that doing a degree in graphic design is not a tried and tested way of starting a career in graphic design. For decades, the only way that creatives could turn their dreams into realities was the university route.

This meant that a huge amount of graphic designers got into the industry this way—they left school, enrolled at a college or university, studied and then spread their wings. So when we consider if a graphic design degree is worth it, we must take this into account. As we said, a lot of creatives have become graphic designers this way.

> *So, it’s undeniably an advantage of a graphic design degree and shows that it can be seen as a good major.*

## Prestige

A graphic design degree can be undertaken at some of the most influential and prestigious arts universities across the world—for example, Parsons School of Design and the Pratt Institute in New York, Central St Martins and other University of Arts London colleges in London and the Sydney College of Arts in Australia. These are just a few of the well known arts and design colleges that will prick up the ears of a potential employer.

If having the name of a well established institution on your degree certificate is something that you want to impress people, then it could certainly be argued that a graphic design degree is a good major to undertake.

## The Original Social Media

If you spend three years doing something, there's a high chance that you'll make some friends—and a graphic design degree is no different. During a graphic design major, you're guaranteed to make some like-minded friends for life—especially trudging blurry eyed to an early morning lecture or having some drinks at the bar after your exams. Though this is not exclusive to a graphic design degree! If the idea of working and learning alongside some like-minded creative people sounds like your kind of thing, then a graphic design degree is definitely worth it.

## A Creative Environment

> *Additionally, a graphic design degree is a great way to be immersed in a creative environment for three or more years—especially if you choose to study at a college that specialises in art, or even more specifically in design.*

You'll be surrounded by fellow creatives and have the opportunity to put your heads together and collaborate on projects. It really is a special thing to be surrounded by people who are all working towards the same creative goal—you'll find yourself being constantly inspired!

With this in mind, is a graphic design degree worth it? Absolutely. In fact, the opportunity to work with, be inspired by and just be around a whole bunch of fellow creatives for a considerable amount of time is one of the biggest benefits of a graphic design degree. You're guaranteed to make friends for life—especially when deadlines are looming.

# Disadvantages

## All You Need is a Portfolio

“What did you get in your degree?” is something that you are very unlikely to hear when you start working in the graphic design industry. In fact, it’s all about your portfolio—a showcase of your very best work, which also backs up all the incredible design skills and knowledge you have. Most of the time, potential employers will choose whether to interview and whether to hire you based solely on your portfolio and the work within it.

Well does this make a graphic design degree worth it? Well, yes, it is likely that you will graduate from university with a portfolio, but there are easier, cheaper and faster ways to go get yourself a portfolio. More on this later.

## Time is Money

A degree in graphic design isn’t exactly the speediest way to learn graphic design. In fact, let’s look at the average time it takes to complete an undergraduate degree in US, UK and Australia: three years, four years and three-four years respectively. That equates to roughly 36 to 48 months—and that’s not considering all the long holidays and breaks where you won’t even be studying!

So when you’re contemplating “is a graphic design degree worth it?” then it’s well worth considering whether you want to spend a good chunk of your life in graphic design education—rather than working in the industry—or whether it’s worth looking at the other options out there.

## Money is Money

Student debt has been a hot topic for many, many years—and it’s something that graphic design students are definitely not

free from.

> *If you take a look at the cost of a graphic design degree and, consequently, the debt that you will graduate with, you'll definitely be reconsidering whether a degree in graphic design is worth it.*

Let's break down how much a degree might cost you:

In the United States, the average domestic university student will pay, if they attend a college in their home state, $37,460 [1] for the privilege. If they chose to go to a college in a different state, this jumps significantly to $95,560! Meanwhile, international students who choose to attend a US college can face fees of $78,820* [2] on average for their degrees.

In the last decade, university fees in the UK have risen by 208%. Students now pay a maximum of £9,250 a year to study at a majority of universities. This means that students leave university with a debt of £27,750 [3] from course fees alone. This is regardless of the university you choose or where you study. International students in the UK pay on average anywhere between £30,000 to £114,000 [4] for a degree.

University in Australia costs an undergraduate anywhere between $45,000 and £99,000 [5]. Not only is the Shillington course a guaranteed, fixed price—it is between 79 and 86% cheaper than a traditional Australian university course. The average cost of an Australian degree for an international student is $87,705 [6] meaning that our Australian courses are between 84 and 89% cheaper if coming from overseas!

Those are some big numbers, right?

## Skills That Pay The Bills?

So you've spent four years getting your graphic design degree?

And acquired a load of debt in the process? You'll definitely have all the skills you need to get a job in the graphic design industry, right? Right…? Not necessarily. Some graphic design degree programmes or majors will spend three years teaching you how to design, but now how to design for a job and actually work in a studio. What do we mean? Well, in a traditional graphic design degree you'll have lectures that last an hour or two and some allotted time to work in a studio. Though, this really doesn't reflect the real life working environment of a graphic design studio—where you'll be thumbnailing, prototyping, designing and refining as a 9 to 5.

> *This is really something you have to think about when considering whether a degree in graphic design is worth it—do I want to do a major that might not necessarily help me nail the skills and knowledge I need to get a job?*

Or is there a better alternative?

## Degree Alternatives

What if we told you there was an alternative to a degree in graphic design that shares all the same advantages as a degree—it's tried and tested, has been an institution for over 20 years, is a great way to meet people and an even better way to be totally immersed in a creative atmosphere—but is also cheaper, faster and gets you all the skills and a portfolio you need to land a job? Well, Shillington ticks all those boxes.

Shillington's graphic design course is a truly innovative way of learning design. First of all, it's for everyone, regardless of experience, so you don't need a portfolio of design work to enrol as you do for certain university courses.

> *Instead, Shillington's course ensures that you leave with a stellar portfolio of your top graphic design work and all the*

*technical knowledge, skills and theory you need to go out and land yourself an amazing job in the design industry.*

On top of that, Shillington's graphic design course lasts just three months full-time or nine months part-time and has multiple campus options across the world in New York, London, Manchester, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane and a dedicated online course. Also, it wouldn't leave you saddled with the dreaded student debt. With different course fees for different cities (because, you know, things cost different prices in different places) and opportunities for studying abroad with no extra fees, Shillington really makes the design world your oyster.

# Conclusion

**As with anything, there are clear pros and cons to a graphic design degree. We aimed to outline these to help you decipher whether a degree in graphic design is worth it and, as you can see, there's a lot to consider. Whilst thinking about whether you want to major in graphic design, first think about things like how much money you want to spend, how much time you want to dedicate and why you want to enrol about on a specific course to begin with then you'll be well on your way to deciding whether that graphic design degree is worth it.**

**We've also outlined an amazing alternative to a graphic design degree—Shillington's graphic design course. This is well worth looking into if you are seriously considering becoming a graphic designer—as this is exactly what Shillington graduates do.**

*[1] https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/college-costs/college-costs-faqs*
*[2] https://www.studyinternational.com/news/charted-how-internatio*

*nal-student-fees-at-us-universities-are-going-up-up-up/*
*[3]*
*https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/advice/cost-studying-university-uk*
*[4]*
*https://www.topuniversities.com/student-info/student-finance/how-much-does-it-cost-study-uk*
*[5]*
*https://www.studiesinaustralia.com/studying-in-australia/how-to-study-in-australia/study-costs*
*[6]*
*https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/advice/cost-studying-university-australia*

https://www.shillingtoneducation.com/blog/graphic-design-degree-worth-it/