

CHICAGO PORTFOLIO SCHOOL

Why is the Chicago Portfolio School program one year when other portfolio schools make you sign up for two?

Our goal is simple: to help you get a job. To get a job, you need a portfolio of 18-25 superior samples. Nothing less will do. (But nothing more is required.) Therefore, we believe a program with the right intensity, the right assignments, and the right instructors, can accomplish our goal in 12 months without cutting corners or sacrificing quality. For instance, we only give the kind of assignments that will lead to good portfolio samples. We don't play pretend. We make sure concepts and executions are truly worthwhile before students comp them into final form. And we don't believe in spending time on assignments that aren't directly related to improving your book. In other words, we simply don't waste time; yours or ours.

When are the classes held?

Our instructors are working professionals; Copywriters, Art Directors, Designers who work during the day so most portfolio classes meet in the evening. Some computer classes and design seminars meet during the day.

How well do I need to know the computer in order to be accepted in the Program?

It's okay if you don't know much now but you'll need to get up to speed on Adobe Creative Suite programs fairly quickly. All our students take computer classes at our sister school, Digital Bootcamp. Classes are geared for whatever level of instruction you need.

If you're an Art Director or Designer you'll need to be proficient in Illustrator, InDesign, Photoshop and Flash by the time you're done with the program. Copywriters need to be proficient in InDesign and Photoshop.

Will I have enough time for a full time job while I'm going to portfolio school?

Going to portfolio school is a full time job. In our experience, students who attempt to work full time while going to school struggle to find time to adequately prepare for classes. Let's just say, while it's not impossible, as the year progresses, it becomes very, very difficult to do both. We strongly discourage working full time while in school because in order to create a good enough book you'll need to spend a minimum of 30 hours each week outside of class.

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Do you help us get a job once we finish the Program?

Yes, of course. The point of our school is to get you a job and we do as much as we possibly can to help. After all, it's in our best interest for our students to finish with amazing samples and to land their dream job. You'll take "Marketing your Book" class during the 4th quarter which covers everything you need to know about the process of looking for a job. Plus, twice a year we invite creative recruiters from across the country to come look at our recent graduates' portfolios. Finally, all graduates of our program receive regular emails alerting them to job postings, as we get them.

Do you have an internship program?

Yes, but again we try to be practical and cost-efficient. So, our internships are only for students who have completed the program. That way it doesn't interrupt the year. And you do not pay tuition while you're interning full time; that would be silly.

Do most students stay in Chicago once they're done with the program?

No. In fact, even though we love our students, we encourage them to look all over the country because the more open you are to moving, the more options you have for finding a job. Our students get hired all over the country.

What are you doing to address the digital revolution?

We stress the need for digital portfolio samples every, single day. At the same time we require students to use new and different digital media, we also require their ideas to be smart, conceptual and great.

What is your acceptance rate?

We only have space for eight students in each program per quarter. So, we are only able to accept 60-70% of applicants each quarter. Because you'll be working in art director/copywriter teams for most of the year, we seek to accept an equal number of writers, art directors and designers. However, if we are not able to accept you during the quarter you applied for, we will try and accommodate you for a later start date.

What is your job placement like?

There is no guarantee of a job just because you went to a portfolio school. Any portfolio school. But we can make this promise: if you work really hard during your year here; listen to instructor feedback, spend lots of time making lots of samples, take advantage of all opportunities offered by our program, and take the job of finding a job seriously, you will get a job. People that work hard and really want it, get it.

Please don't hesitate to call or email (maria@chicagoportfolio.com) with any other questions.

We look forward to getting your application.