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Add IT to your portfolio

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The Aptech Certified Computer Professional (ACCP) programme is the most sought-after course, for it prepares students for IT careers. Typically, undergraduate students from any discipline can benefit from ACCP if they pursue it along with college education. "The ACCP is a modular programme with multiple exit points, so it gives students the option of either taking up the entire three years or taking it in a modular format," Kacker adds.

Beef up your CV

This is one area students pursuing degree courses can consider so that by the time they graduate they can add value to their CVs. "Two kinds of students come to us. There are some who want to do a short-term course; there are others who pursue a longer course that's parallel to their regular B.Sc. or B.Com. programme. The second option can be a powerful proposition for students," Raghav says.

At NIIT, such students can go for its three-year GNITT programme that lets students to specialise in a particular sector like software or networking. While two years of this course are devoted to classroom training, the final year is kept for 'professional practice' wherein students get to intern in a firm, besides earning a stipend.

Aptech's ACCP programme too is enriched with a one-year internship apart from programmes in English language enhancement, workplace skills and management information systems, thereby increasing the employability of the student.

It's not just regular college students who go for courses at computer institutes. Engineering students also have shown keen interest in enhancing their skills. Aptech for Engineers, for instance, is a series of specialised IT courses for engineering, B.Sc. (IT), BCA/MCA and other IT students.

"It is an extension of Aptech's portfolio and one of the most exclusive offerings to enhance the skill sets of engineering students," says Kacker. "Aptech for Engineers offers specialisation options in popular application development frameworks such as Sun Java & .NET."

Students may have a degree in engineering but they may not be exposed to technology. Raghav points out. "For such students, when the world is going through a difficult phase, the only way to increase their employability is to go for additional skills."

Degree or diploma?

You can also go for an IT degree and the options range from the IITs to the regional engineering colleges and private institutions. The Amity Institute of Information Technology in Noida, for



Group Capt. O.P. Sharma (retd), director, Amity Institute of IT (third from left), says the demand for specialised IT courses will remain

FUTURE COURSE OF ACTION

After completing an IT course, you'll find many job avenues opening up. Some of these are:

- Programmers
- Web developers
- System analysts
- Software testing and quality assurance
- Database analysts, architects and administrators
- Software architects, solution

builders and consultants

- Project managers
- Technical writers and documentation specialists
- Helpdesk and technical support
- Management Information Systems (MIS)

Students can get employed not only in the IT industry, but also in related sectors such as telecom, banking and insurance, and BPO companies.

instance, offers a B.Sc. and a BCA in IT for undergraduate students and an M.Sc. and MCA in Networking and Management for Master's students.

"New technologies are emerging fast, so companies will have to take more young people with an IT background to keep pace with the changing world. Hence the demand for specialised IT courses will remain," says Group Capt. O.P. Sharma (Retd), director, Amity Institute of Information Technology.

Which option works better – a degree or diploma? Sharma pitches for degree courses. "When you learn about a new technology, a lot of applications are involved," he says. "With a B.Sc. (IT), you can go anywhere. Also, as a graduate

in this sector, you not only learn about the applications, but also brush up on science, mathematics, operations research and human resource management. Your knowledge becomes wider here and your employability increases."

Countering slowdown

Sharma says 50 per cent of the Amity students in this year's graduating batch have already been recruited. "The salary packages may not have been as great as it was before the meltdown, but so far we have had a great placement record at Amity," he adds.

Has the global slowdown really affected the sector? "The IT industry is definitely experiencing a slowdown, but recruitment hasn't stopped

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completely," says Raghav. "A number of IT firms are still recruiting in large numbers. The recruitment numbers have certainly fallen, but as soon as this phase ends the demand for IT professionals will rise again. Continuing education programmes that increase career skills are the route to job security, whether during a recession or a non-slowdown phase," says Kacker.

"It's an investment that's worth making at such times," adds Raghav. No investment in IT can be a wrong move, for IT is an essential part of our business environment. As Sharma puts it, "No business can take place without IT, so there can never be a serious downturn in this sector."

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