

Hi, my name is Josiah Shaw. I served in the Air Force from 2002 until 2006 and again from 2012 until 2019. When I most recently returned to civilian life, I decided it was time to use my GI Bill benefits and get an education. I decided to pursue a career as a videographer. After googling programs, I found the Art Institute and thought it would help move me forward on my career path. I was wrong.

Enrolling was suspiciously easy. I spoke to someone for more information and within the same day, I was signed up for the school.

Immediately, I could tell there were problems, especially in my program. The gear they provided wasn't up to date, and I actually had to give the school lists of the kinds of equipment I needed. Only two other students were studying film with me, and I had just one class with them. Because of this, it was hard to collaborate with anyone on my projects. On top of this, in about half my classes, the teachers were doing very little teaching. The classes were just canned. They would just show us YouTube videos or reuse lesson plans. I couldn't believe the VA was paying for this. It felt like the school was happy to take our money but did not want to give us an education in return.

The kicker came at the very end. Three days before the end of the term, while I was working on my final assignment, I received an email from the school saying it would be permanently shutting down in just over a week. I couldn't believe it—I was completely blindsided. I was so frustrated that they had not told us earlier, as they must have known, or at least expected, that this was coming. Had I been aware of the closure earlier, I would have put together a portfolio or looked for another school.

It is wrong that an accreditor approved a program with such low quality that would eventually pull the rug out from underneath me. Had I not had my GI Bill benefits restored, this whole experience would have been a complete disaster. Even still, it was a huge waste of time. Please consider new rules that will force accreditors to look more closely at programming and prevent schools from surprising their students with abrupt closures.

Thank you for your time.