The Best Universities to Study Blockchain Technology

One of the fastest rising industries is blockchain technology as it promises to reduce costs and increase efficiency, while potentially disrupting an ever growing number of industries, from music, to energy, to finance.

Demand for blockchain skills has increased considerably and will probably continue to do so as prototypes, tests, pilots, move on to production, but skills are in very short supply.

Companies are competing for blockchain talent not just with each other and start-ups, but with new business models, such as token sales and ICOs, that have allowed some blockchain coders to raise millions for new innovative
projects.

Blockchain team sizes at financial institutions according to a report by Cognizant.

me with the early days of the internet, the early 90s, when there was much talk about the web, but few understood it or saw its full potential.

Like back then, blockchain technology is a flat world right now. There are no, or very few, barriers with rich and poor, artists and coders, thinkers and idiots, all intermingling.

That means the opportunities are vast and only require ability, making this space one of the most meritocratic around, where you require no permission by anyone.

So interest in studying blockchain technology has increased considerably with university students ditching investment banking (http://www.trustnodes.com/2017/06/09/university-students-ditching-investment-banking-innovation-demand-fintech-blockchain-courses-mbas) in favor of Fintech more generally and blockchain tech more specifically.

However, as the field is very new, formal courses are in short supply, but we present below what we think are probably the best universities to study blockchain technology right now, based on their involvement in this space as far as we, as news reporters, have noticed.

**Cornell University**
If you’re into computer science with an interest in blockchain technology, the best place to go is Cornell if you can study under Emin Gün Sirer.

The professor has a deeper understanding of blockchain technology than probably anyone else, including some core protocol developers who spend their time developing public blockchains.

He is one of the very few in this space who can see what others can’t and some even call him a genius.

He revealed the Slockit DAO vulnerabilities, authored the selfish mining paper, studied the bitcoin network to suggest a 4MB blocksize is safe at the height of the scalability debate, suggested a new method of scaling called Bitcoin NG, suggested a new methods of storing your coins called Bitcoin Vault (http://www.trustnodes.com/2016/02/27/no-bitcoin-theft-new-invention-says-professor), and co-directs (http://www.initc3.org/) the Initiative for Cryptocurrencies and Smart Contracts.

If you’re really good, it’s where you want to go. It’s our first choice and probably miles ahead of any other because they’ve had considerable impact in this space and you might even get to meet Ethereum’s inventor, Vitalik Buterin.
other choices are a bit less clear cut and somewhat more subjective, taking into account other considerations, as there is no obvious university for the second place.

We therefore won’t be ranking them, but simply list them – in no particular order – and let you judge for yourself.

That said, Cambridge University is a good place to go. It’s one of the best in the world, and your ability to gain access communicates plenty to a future potential employee.

As far as the blockchain aspect is concerned, Cambridge might be a choice if you are more interested in the economical aspects of blockchain technology, rather than the coding aspects.

They have a Centre for Alternative Finance which they describe (https://www.jbs.cam.ac.uk/faculty-research/centres/alternative-finance/) as an “international interdisciplinary academic research institute dedicated to the study of alternative finance, which includes financial channels and instruments that emerge outside of the traditional financial system.”

They recently released a benchmarking study which analyzes the digital currencies space. It made some headlines, bringing them to our attention and to this list.

**University College London (UCL)**

The last time we visited UCL’s Centre for Blockchain Technologies website, it felt like we were at some forgotten corner of the internet where the 90s still live, but now that page (http://blockchain.cs.ucl.ac.uk/) looks flashy and impressive.

They claim the centre has 75 researchers and 570 students making it “the largest Blockchain Student Society in the world.”
and has attracted its own articles, so the university is probably a good place to go if you like cosmopolitan London, where most of the blockchain related events happen in Europe.

**The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)**

MIT was one of the first universities to enter the blockchain space, going so far as to even pay some bitcoin developers, including the current maintainer of the bitcoin protocol.

However, we haven’t really heard much from them, but you can’t really go wrong with MIT, which has a blockchain centre (http://blockchain.mit.edu/), a long history of backing technology and has powered much of the Silicon Valley with new graduates.

**Johns Hopkins University**
If your interest is in cryptography, you’ll probably want to go to John Hopkins. Many of its research
ers contributed to Zcash, a new public blockchain based digital currency that increases privacy.

![Johns Hopkins University](image)

**St. Mary’s University School of Law**

If your interest in blockchain technology has less to do with code, or even business, and more to do with law, then you’ll probably want to study under Angela Walch, Associate Professor at St. Mary’s University School of Law.
She gained relevance by suggesting coders might have a duty of care. It’s an intriguing idea with which you can’t quite agree or disagree. Raising relevant points that are likely to become more and more important as the field grows.

There are many, very difficult, legal questions that face this space. Less to do with actual law and more to do with what the law should be.

Professor Walch is one of the few in the legal profession that has taken the initiative to contribute towards that debate, suggesting she is somewhat ahead of anyone else and therefore probably the best place to go if your interest is both law and blockchain technology.

And The Rest

The above universities are listed based on their impact in this space, our awareness of them, and our awareness of their work. We may be missing some, or perhaps quite a few.

We intend to keep this page up to date, so we’ll gladly add additional universities as we become aware of them. As such, feel free to email us with a paragraph or two about your university as far as it pertains to blockchain
technology.

The universities listed below are from respondents to our above request. We will list them with no commentary, in the order received and with an image included if one has been sent.

Those who have reached out will be quoted below in full, so our readers must be aware what follows has not been verified and is not our words, thus should be accordingly weighed.

That said, as you read on you will find there are different approaches to requests for listing. That, by itself, should tell you plenty.

What follows below should absolutely not be judged by the order of appearance, and just because a university appears below does not necessarily mean they may not be better than some of the universities listed above.

**The University of Northampton**

Olinga Ta’eed, Professor in Social Enterprise from the University of Northampton, was the first to reach out and state:

“The Centre for Citizenship, Enterprise and Governance (http://www.cceg.org.uk/) (CCEG) is an independent not-for-profit university spin-out Think-Tank on the Movement of Value with the largest team of blockchain academic researchers and developers in the world.”

The Northampton University Blockchain Lab

The professor further states “CCEG houses the CCEG Blockchain UN Lab with the support of the University of Northampton, that currently houses 9 multi-million pound commissions, 35 research projects, 5 whitepapers, and 23 in the development
team.

CCEG also founded the IoV Blockchain Alliance for Good as part of its 60,000 members worldwide under which it runs thought leadership roundtables at Fordham University in New York, Cambridge University, etc.

CCEG communicates its blockchain research through the journal Social Values & Intangibles Reviews (http://ow.ly/mHTx3o9odXr) and regular newsletters.”

The University of Nicosia

George Papageorgiou, a lecturer at the University of Nicosia (UNIC), contacted us to state:

“UNIC has had the earliest and most extensive academic initiative in cryptocurrency and Blockchain, in the world.

UNIC was the first university in the world to:

– Teach a university-level course (https://digitalcurrency.unic.ac.cy/) on cryptocurrency (January 2014)

– Offer an accredited academic degree program – a Master of Science in Digital Currency – taught online in English (March 2014)

– Have graduated students from an accredited academic degree program (June 2016)

– Accept Bitcoin for tuition for any degree program at the university (October 2013)

– Issue academic certificates onto the Bitcoin blockchain, using its own in-house software platform (September 2014)

Over 8,000 students have taken and are taking our free MOOC (taught by Andreas Antonopoulos and Antonis Polemitis)

Over 100 active students in our MSc, taught by a globally renowned faculty.
23 alums from the degree program, most of them deeply involved in prominent businesses and research in the space

This leading role in academia has been recognized by blockchain industry publications in their evaluation of UNIC’s position among universities involved in the field – CoinDesk (#1, 2015), the Merkle (#1, 2017).

In May 2017, joining over 2500 participants and 100+ key industry speakers, Antonis Polemitis, CEO of UNIC and Prof George Giaglis chaired and moderated the Academic Workshop panels alongside other global leading universities including Cornell, Duke, MIT, George Mason, UCL, University of Illinois and Ledger Journal. Topics of discussion included research, education and partnerships with the blockchain industry.”

**Duke University**

Brent Xu, who currently works at ConsenSys, an incubator and overall ethereum powerhouse, has reached out to state:

“I studied at Duke University for my undergraduate and master’s degree in business. Subsequent to my studies, I joined the world of finance in fixed income trading. It was only later that I discovered blockchain technology through a class taught at the Duke Fuqua School of Business on innovations and cryptoventures taught by professor Campbell Harvey. This class was one of the first if not the very first class taught on blockchain technology (I believe the class started around 2013).

Throughout the class, we explored all the various technologies built on blockchain technology, ranging from an introduction to bitcoin and cryptography to various new technologies (at that time) including Ethereum, Ripple, and private blockchains. We also had several speakers join including my current employer, Joe Lubin at ConsenSys.

After attending the class, I decided to pursue this technology full time. Joe Lubin’s talk during the class was both inspirational and revolutionary, I knew that Ethereum was indeed the space that I wanted to focus on.
I have been working at ConsenSys for over a year now and am pursuing expertise as a solutions architect in blockchain technology. I am also building
new projects pertaining to smart cities, smart real estate finance, energy, and supply chain management, all built on Ethereum.”
(https://www.trustnodes.com?bsa_pro_id=25&bsa_pro_url=1)
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March 9, 2018 1:51 pm
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March 8, 2018 7:35 pm

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Truth
No Berkeley? Are you kidding me? Blockchain at Berkeley is by far the most organized blockchain initiative at any major university. UC Berkeley CS is renowned for distributed systems and they have some core devs contributing too.

Bryan Ford (https://dedis.epfl.ch/)

You’re missing EPFL in Lausanne, Switzerland. EPFL is one of the top technical institutions in Europe, and its DEDIS (Decentralized/Distributed Systems) lab is the only research group in the world in which PhD students have the opportunity to work in a team of academics and software engineers to design and build a next-generation open-source decentralized systems and blockchain platform from the ground up. While other universities certainly have more faculty doing blockchain work and more public visibility, no other institution matches EPFL’s recent track record of publishing student-led, system-building blockchain papers in the top-tier academic security/privacy conferences. In particular, EPFL/DEDIS... Read more »

Nick

You didn’t mention the best course available – the MSc in Digital Currency from The University of Nicosia: https://digitalcurrency.unic.ac.cy (https://digitalcurrency.unic.ac.cy)

Ken

For blockchain programming Keep an outside eye on the students who are attending 42 in Fremont, ca. A down and dirty coders paradise that pushes the limits of its students through projects and collaboration. I’ve been there and seen it in action. Not talked about in the academic world because you can’t buy your way in. No degree is provided, just hard core skills and the knowledge and connections required to build your own enterprise. The talent that will come out of that school in the coming years will dwarf the majority of universities that try to get in on... Read more »

OCP
Can you share more information with me about the school?
sirchibuihe@gmail.com (mailto:sirchibuihe@gmail.com)

Andrew Miller (http://decentralize.ece.illinois.edu/)

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign should show up in here for sure

marie

TBH I met professor Olinga many times, he doesn’t know much about blockchain, so please do some background check before listing his lab. I let you have a look at his github...

TBH I met professor Olinga many times, he doesn’t know much about blockchain, so please do some background check before listing his lab. I let you have a look at his github...
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