



StraighterLine

Website: <https://www.straighterline.com/faq/>

Summary of Innovation: StraighterLine is a platform that operates as a 'virtual' online college – it delivers no classes of its own, and does not award any degrees, but instead connects students to online courses that are offered through its 130 college partners. Students pay Straighterline a subscription of \$99 per month plus about \$59 per online course. As students successfully complete courses, the Straighterline process (a) guarantees full course credit/credit transfer within its network of accredited colleges plus (b) recommended course credit acceptance to degree programs at more than 2,000 additional higher education institutions.

The organization was founded in 2009 with goal of entering market at lower price point for online courses. The website claims to save students up to 60% or the total cost of a degree.

Straighterline offers the following services for its students:

- immediate access to a wide range of online courses delivered by recognized higher education organizations – students start their coursework on-demand;
- free one-on-one online tutoring, includes: writing center, scheduled, or drop-in;
- live student support – technical support, membership, or course support from Student Advisors;
- full course credit for courses within their degree plan; and
- free transcript processing and easy credit transfer.

Students who enroll in courses through Straighterline are provided with all course-related eTextbooks for free. The organization recommends that a three-credit course will typically require about 75 hours of study time, and suggests students plan to spend about 17-20 hours each week so they can finish a single course within a month.

Students cannot access federal financial aid through this approach, in part because Straighterline is not a qualifying higher education institution. The website estimates that one year of tuition and fees will cost about \$1,299 – lower than the cost for earning a degree directly from any of the partner colleges, and at a cost that is more affordable for students to pay directly.

Partners: Straighterline has about 130 colleges in its approved college partner network. Within Massachusetts, these include Lesley College, Pine Manor College, Bay State College, Fisher College, Urban College of Boston, Benjamin Franklin Institute, and New England College of Business. Straighterline also markets the fact that any credited courses will also be considered by more than 2,000 other colleges and universities for transfer to their degree programs upon request because of the recommendation of the American Council on Education's College Credit Recommendation Service (ACE CREDIT).

A series of employer partners offer tuition assistance to any employee who accesses courses or degrees through Straighterline, including Aaron's, Frito Lay, Harden Healthcare, RadioShack, 7-Eleven, Waste Management, Inc., and Xerox.

Finally, Straighterline has established strategic partnerships with a variety of organizations, primarily to enhance student services and provide the highest quality learning experience. These partnerships include:

- Moodlerooms, which owns Moodle, the world's leading Learning Management System, to serve as an open source platform for course delivery in the cloud.
- C-eLT provides offline and online one-on-one e-Tutoring services for Mathematics, Statistics, Sciences, English, and Accounting/Finance to undergraduates.
- eScience Labs supports students through hands-on science kits available.
- NetTutor delivers institution-specific online tutoring staffed with expert, U.S.-based tutors who know how to help students succeed.
- SkyWay provides affordable online college courses to America's rural areas through satellite broadband internet connections.
- SmarThinking provides on-demand, live, online tutoring, essay review, and essay grading services.

Targeted Population of Learners: Straighterline is not necessarily targeting any identified population of learners, but seeks to reduce the cost for any student who participates in online learning. According to data on the website, the current student population is 60 percent female, 12 percent active-duty military or military veterans, 7 percent international, 73 percent working adults, and 52 percent have at least one child.

Bringing the Innovation to Scale: Straighterline has about 15,000 student memberships per year.