



Duet (formerly Match Beyond)

Website: <https://duet.org/>

Summary of Innovation: Duet, affiliated with the Match Charter School Network (and about to spin off into its own entity), offers accelerated associate's and bachelor's degree programs through a hybrid approach in partnership with Southern New Hampshire University's College for America platform. The organization provides personal coaching, study support, and job placement services to high school graduates and GED-recipients in Boston. Students complete a series of project-based modules to earn competency-based credits for completion.

"[Duet] is designed to address a growing problem in Boston and across the nation. Among Americans over the age of 24 who attempted college, one in three left without attaining any degree and only half received a bachelor's degree. Eight in ten low-income college matriculants do not earn a bachelor's degree by age 24. This has negative consequences for the many who fail to complete – and for the local and national economies, which increasingly demand a more and better-educated workforce. Some estimates suggest that 14 million jobs will go unfilled in the next decade due to skills gaps."

Duet provides a personal coach for academic support and motivation, study space at a physical campus in downtown Boston, computer and internet access, lunch and dinner, transportation costs, personalized career coaching.¹

SNHU provides accredited Associates and Bachelor's degrees via an online and project-based program. low-cost and high flexibility, and timely reviews of student work and feedback.

The program currently focuses on six degrees – an associate's degree in healthcare management, an associate's degree in general studies with specializations in either business or customer experience, a bachelor's degree in communications with concentrations in business and healthcare, a bachelor's degree in healthcare management with concentrations in business and global perspectives, and a bachelor's degree in management with concentrations in insurance services, logistics and operations, and public administration.

The tuition cost for each program amounts to \$6,500, (as of 7/1/18), which is divided between SNHU – College for America and Duet (billed through SNHU). Students can access federal financial aid via Pell Grants.

Targeted Population of Learners: Seeks students who live in Boston, have a high school degree or GED, want to earn a postsecondary degree, and seek a path to advance career. For reference, over 90 percent of students at Match Public Charter School identify as people of color.²

Partners: The program has developed partnerships with several key Boston-based employers, including:

- Boston Children's Hospital

¹ <https://www.matchbeyond.org/get-a-degree/>

² <https://www.matchbeyond.org/student-profiles/tena/>

- Boys and Girls Club
- Brigham and Women’s Hospital
- Bright Horizons
- Comcast
- Eastern Bank
- Plymouth Rock
- Wellington Management

There are also more than twenty referral partners, including:

- Bottom Line
- Brooke Charter Schools
- College Bound Dorchester
- Match Charter Public School
- More Than Words
- Phoenix Charter School
- YearUP
- Youth Villages

Bringing Innovation to Scale: Duet began in 2013 with nine students. As of 2018, it had grown to 250 students, and there are plans to grow beyond 500 within five years.³ In a recent announcement, Duet will receive funding from The Shapiro Foundation over a five year period to provide scholarships to serve 100 DACA students in Greater Boston, so they can enroll in SNHU—College for America.⁴

Duet has identified the following issues for future focus as it scales its offering:

- balancing academic support and services with the College for America program;
- evaluating what’s “lost” in the shift from a traditional college experience to the online approach;
- quality of projects offered (higher order thinking skills);⁵
- scaling costs; and
- struggles with public perception that they only serve Match students.

³ Email from Duet leadership and <https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelhorn/2015/04/30/match-beyond-no-excuses-meets-disruption-in-higher-education/#25912fee516b>

⁴ Email from Duet Leadership and <http://educationnext.org/new-path-to-a-college-degree-match-beyond-low-income-students/>