



# Governor's Commission on Digital Innovation and Lifelong Learning

edX

**Website:** <https://www.edx.org>

**Summary of Innovation:** EdX, founded in 2012 by Harvard University and MIT, is a non-profit online MOOC (Massive Online Open Course) provider. Learners have the option to either “audit” courses for free, or to pursue a verified certificate for a set fee. Auditors enjoy the full range of benefits open to verified learners, but do not earn a certificate for passing the course.

EdX has pioneered a MicroMasters program, “a series of graduate level courses from top universities designed to advance [one’s] career.”<sup>1</sup> Learners can enroll in these courses for fees far lower than the normal on-campus fee, and upon completion of the course, apply those credits towards a full master’s degree at the institution or use the MicroMasters to expedite their job search with edX’s sponsoring industry partners, which include Microsoft, IBM, and Boeing.<sup>2</sup> For example, Massachusetts residents who enroll in and complete certain MicroMasters programs in 2018 are guaranteed an interview in Boston for an internship or full-time role with GE.<sup>3</sup> EdX is also in the process of developing a MicroBachelors degree which would similarly unbundle an undergraduate credential into modular components and offer a “low-cost, low-risk way for students to start an undergraduate education even if they can’t get to a campus.”<sup>4</sup>

EdX CEO Anant Agarwal has embraced digital innovations and has expressed the goal of incorporating technologies like AI-powered adaptive learning, Augmented Reality, and Virtual Reality into the platform.<sup>5</sup>

**Learners:** EdX boasts a global learning community and has enrolled students from every country in the world.<sup>6</sup> EdX has launched curricula aimed at a broad continuum of learners, from high school to postsecondary. Many edX courses are self-paced and do not impose a set schedule on learners. For most courses, edX also offers financial assistance to learners who cannot afford to pay full price for verified certificates—in some cases, up to a 90 percent discount—and learners can be approved up to five times in a twelve-month period for financial assistance.<sup>7</sup>

**Partners:** EdX has partnered with over 130 global partners, including leading universities, corporations, nonprofits, and institutions.

**Bringing Innovation to Scale:** EdX hopes to attract 100 million learners to the platform by 2022; currently, the total number of edX learners is roughly 35 million.<sup>8</sup> Recently, edX has started to test the introduction of a “modest support fee” for some courses.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.edx.org/micromasters>

<sup>2</sup> <https://campustechnology.com/articles/2018/06/12/edx-begins-testing-a-paywall.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> <http://learn.edx.org/ge/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2018-01-25-edx-quietly-developing-microbachelors-program>

<sup>5</sup> <https://news.elearninginside.com/edx-ceo-anant-agarwal-announces-ambitious-goals-for-2022/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.edx.org/about-us>

<sup>7</sup> <https://support.edx.org/hc/en-us/articles/215167857-Does-edX-offer-financial-assistance-How-do-I-apply->

<sup>8</sup> <https://news.elearninginside.com/edx-ceo-anant-agarwal-announces-ambitious-goals-for-2022/>