coursera

2020 Impact Report

Serving the world through learning

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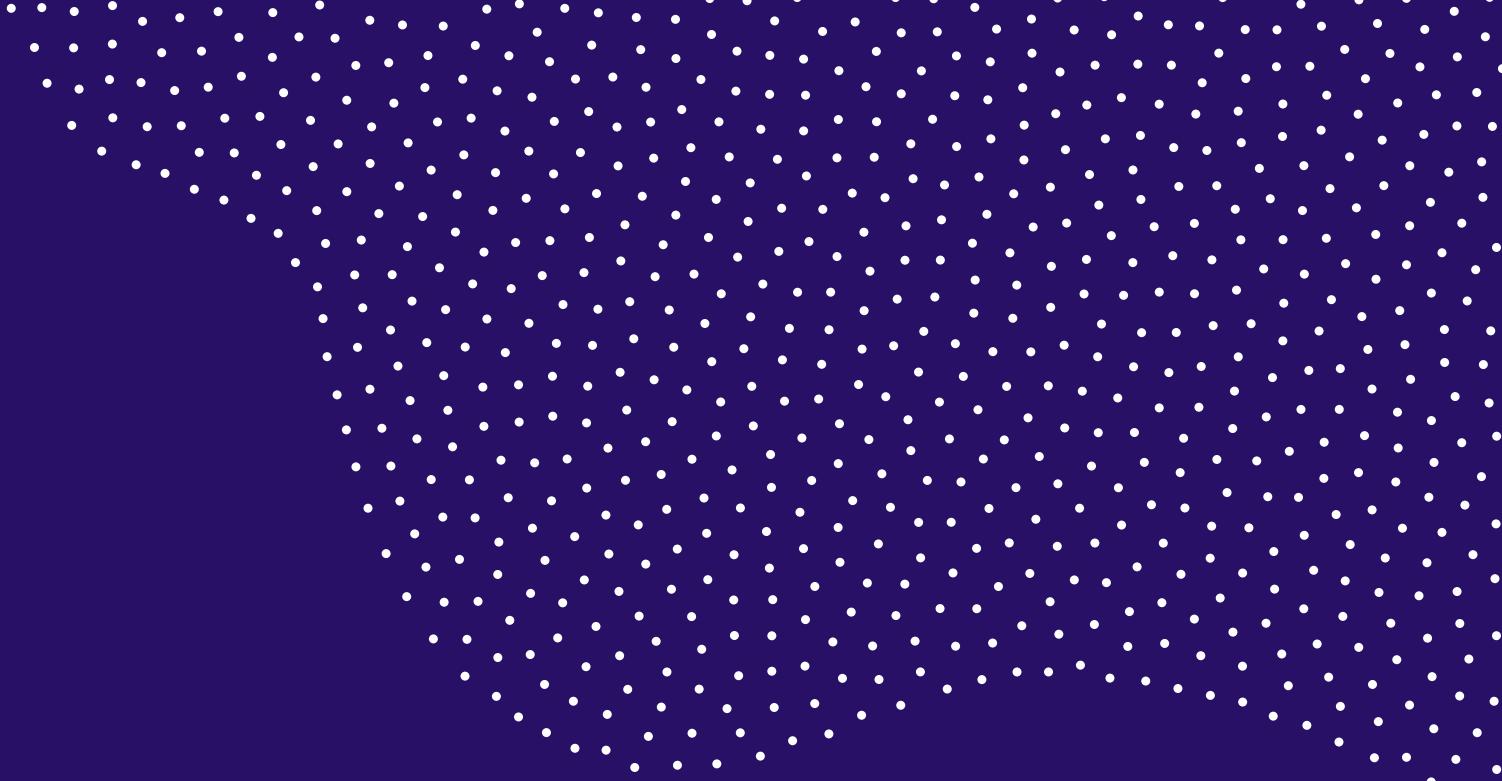
We envision a world where **anyone, anywhere** has the power to **transform their life through learning.**

Letter from the CEO

Welcome to Coursera's first-ever impact report.

Coursera was founded in 2012 with a mission of providing universal access to world-class learning. At no time in Coursera's history has this mission been more relevant or urgent. The world is facing unprecedented economic disruption, and the need to develop skills for a digital future is even more apparent now. The pandemic has created irreversible changes to the ways universities, enterprises, and governments operate — and online learning will be at the heart of how the world responds.

As we adapt to a "new normal," Coursera is seeing unprecedented demand. Since mid-March, over 21 million learners have joined Coursera, a 353% increase from the same period last year. Similarly, during that time, we've seen more than 50 million course enrollments on Coursera, a 444% increase. Thousands of colleges and universities now offer Coursera to enrich their students' learning experience.

In Coursera's inaugural impact report, you'll find that how the world learns is dramatically changing. Students globally are demanding high-quality online learning options. Universities are ushering in a new era of digital transformation. Workers are learning job-relevant skills to stay competitive. Public health officials are training thousands of contact tracers at scale. Together with our partners, we launched a number of initiatives to help learners and institutions every step of the way, providing them with access to free content, job-relevant skills, and many resources on Coursera.

What started as a short-term response to a crisis will result in a long-term digital transformation of higher education. Much still needs to be done, but together we have made a difference that we all can be proud of.

Onward and upward.

Jeff Maggioncalda
CEO, Coursera

Achieving human progress through learning

70M
Learners

200
Partners

2,300
Companies

325
Government agencies

**3,700**
Campuses

$300M
In scholarships*

*Scholarships are equivalent to costs saved through free access to content on Coursera.
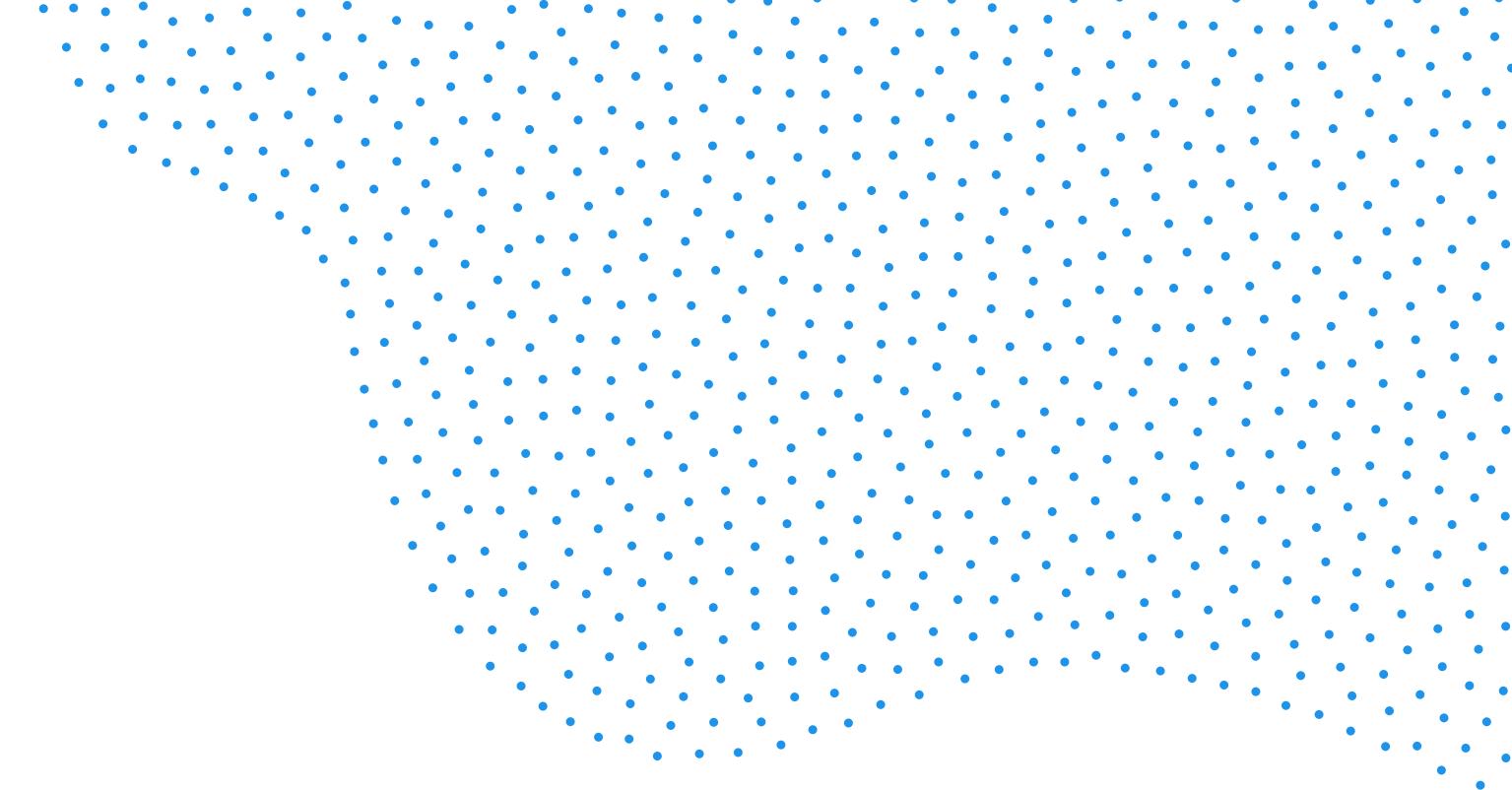
Serving Learners
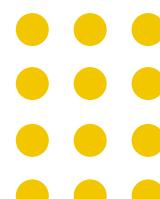
70M
Learners served

+60%
YoY Growth

59M
Enrollments

+248%
YoY Growth

178M
Learning hours

+164%
YoY Growth

NORTH AMERICA

16M
Learners

10M
Enrollments

+54%
YoY Growth

+144%
YoY Growth

EUROPE

13M
Learners

9M
Enrollments

+48%
YoY Growth

+137%
YoY Growth

ASIA PACIFIC

21M
Learners

27M
Enrollments

+70%
YoY Growth

+416%
YoY Growth

LATIN AMERICA

13M
Learners

9M
Enrollments

+69%
YoY Growth

+234%
YoY Growth

MIDDLE EAST, AFRICA

6M
Learners

5M
Enrollments

+64%
YoY Growth

+283%
YoY Growth

*Covers the period of September 15, 2019 — September 15, 2020

"

In a rapidly changing economic landscape, learners need new and accessible ways to develop future-ready skills. While COVID-19 disrupted education systems and jobs worldwide, the transition to online learning ensured people could learn skills to adapt and rebuild their careers.

Access to Coursera has provided hope and opportunity to millions in ways unforeseen before the pandemic. Looking ahead, we are excited to play an even bigger role in connecting people with job-ready content, teaching in-demand skills, and helping build meaningful careers.

Shravan Goli
*Chief Product Officer and Head of Consumer Revenue*

Global Learner Trends

Top 5 countries with the most learners

United States
14 million

India
9.8 million

Mexico
3.8 million

China
3.5 million

Brazil
3 million

Learners (Millions)

2   4   6   8   10   12   14
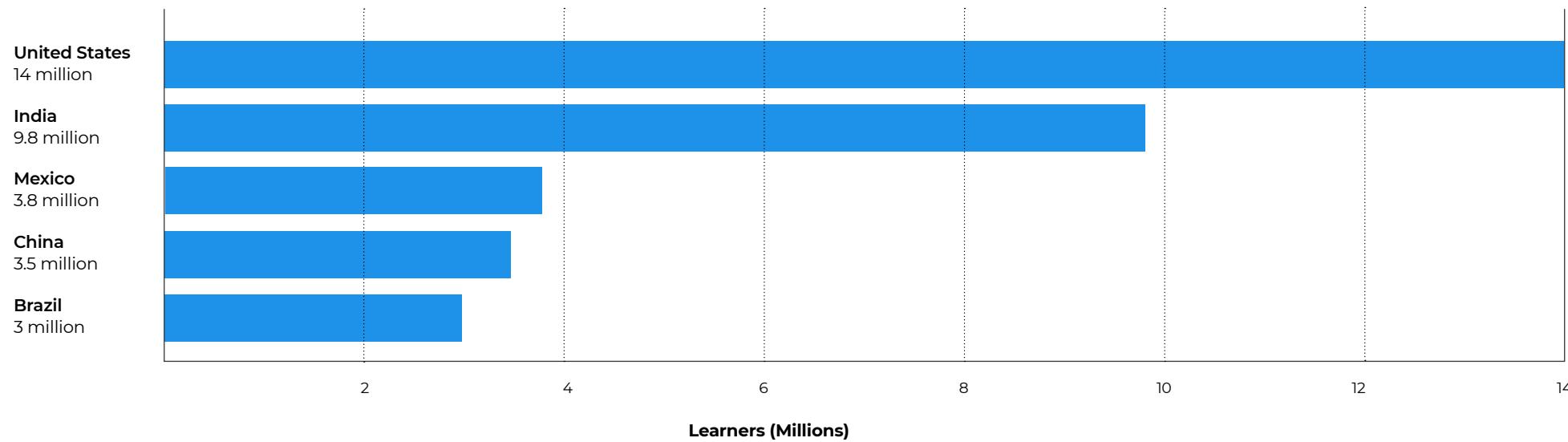
Top 5 countries by learner growth

Bangladesh
192%

Thailand
128%

Kazakhstan
114%

Argentina
113%

Philippines
107%

Growth (%)

25   50   75   100   125   150   175   200
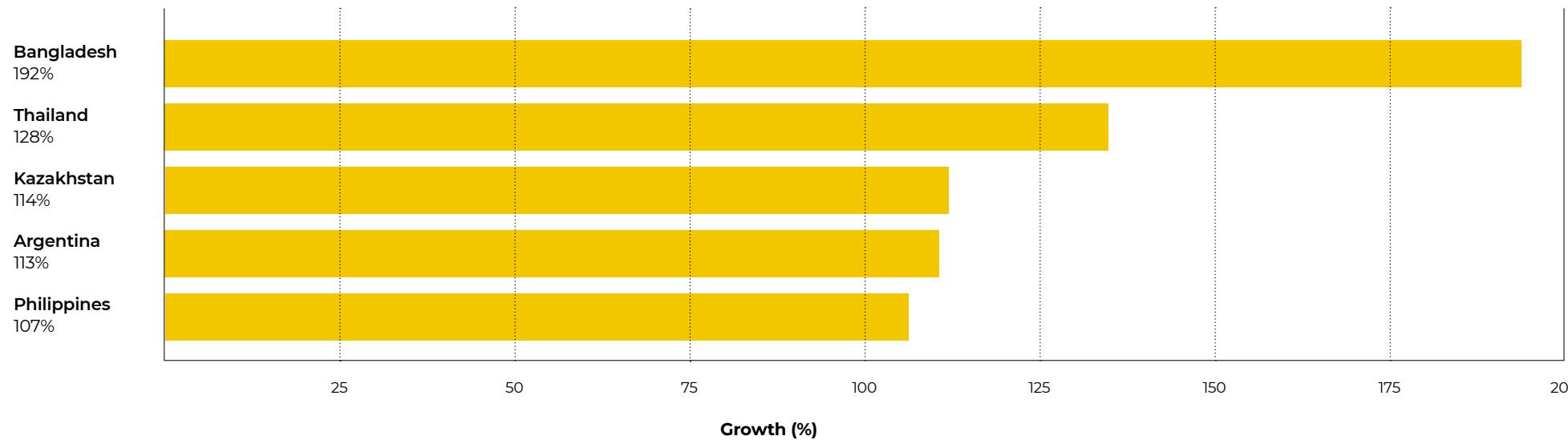
*Covers the period of September 15, 2019 — September 15, 2020   **See appendix for further skills methodology

Top career skills among learners

1 Contact Tracing
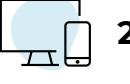
2 Digital Marketing

3 Project Management
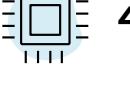
4 Python Programming

5 Social Psychology

6 JavaScript
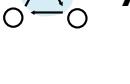
7 Algorithms

8 Graphic Design

9 Regression Analysis

10 Data Structures

Helping Learners Achieve Their Goals

Six months after completing a course on Coursera, all learners receive a Learner Outcomes Survey asking about the impact of their learning. Below are the results from those who learned to improve their career, and as a result, achieved positive career outcomes like a promotion, pay increase, or new job.
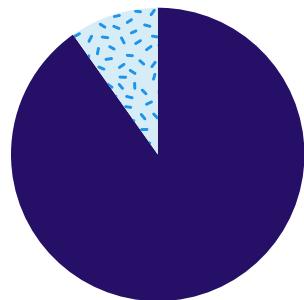
87%
Learners report career benefits
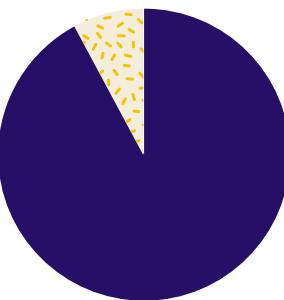
88%
Learners without a bachelor's degree report career benefits
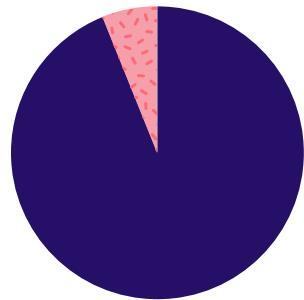
91%
Learners in emerging markets report career benefits
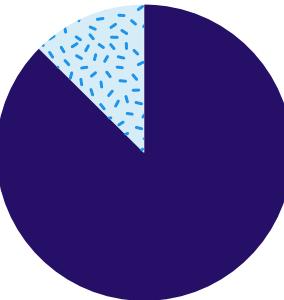
84%
Unemployed learners report career benefits

Outcomes conditional on learners having a stated career goal for taking content on Coursera. See appendix for further details on the Learner Outcomes Survey.

"

I come from an area with minimal opportunities for the poor and disadvantaged, especially in a field like IT. **My progress in the IT field shows that anyone can accomplish whatever they set their mind to if they get the right opportunities.**

Tristen A.
Learner from Georgia, USA
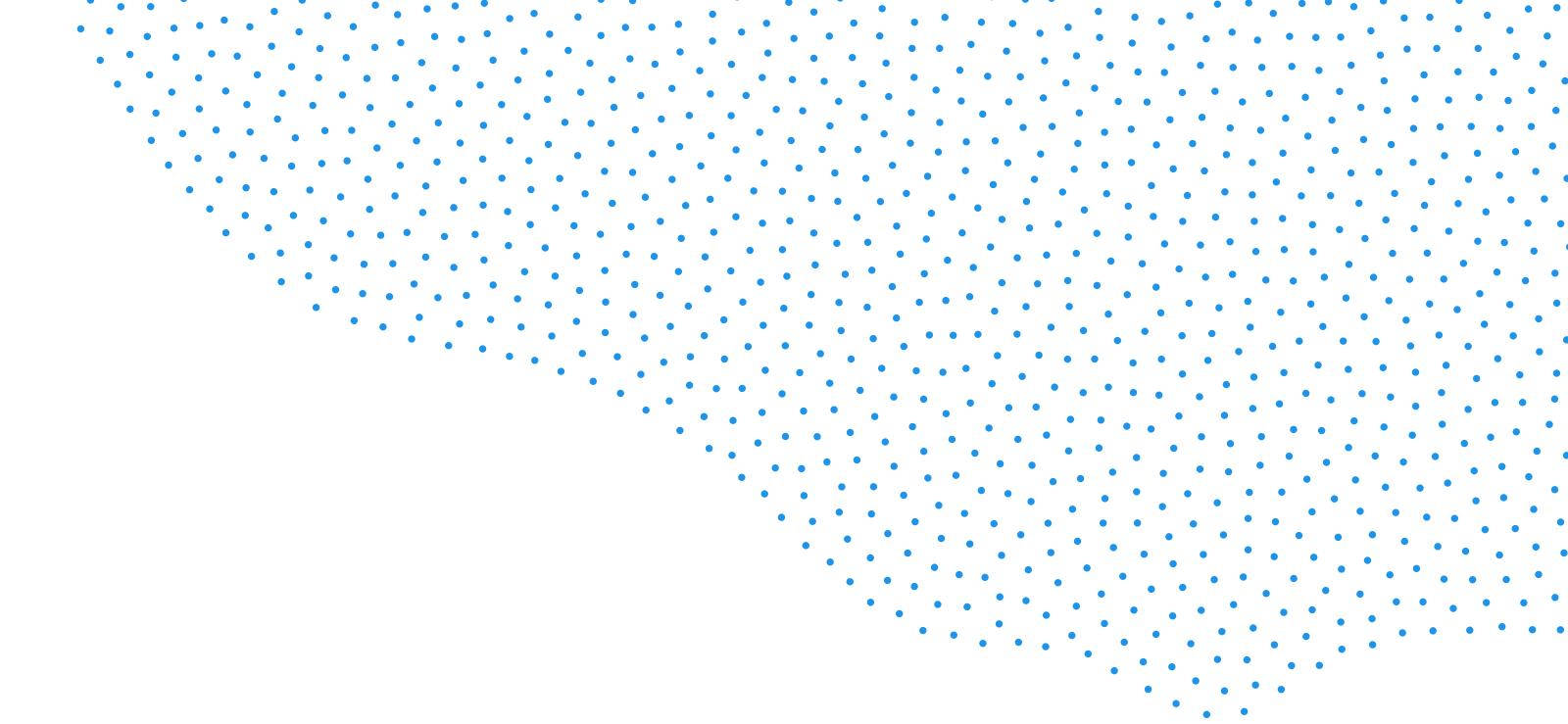
Connecting Partners

Expanding Access to World-Class Learning

150
University partners

3,800
Courses

385
Specializations

17
MasterTrack™ Certificates

20
Degrees

> Beyond the disruption on campuses worldwide, the pandemic will reshape how education is delivered from here on. Our partners have responded to the crisis with bold actions and rapid innovation. They provided free learning to millions of students, created content that led to a greater understanding of COVID-19, launched contact tracing courses to fight the spread, and helped affected workers regain employment.

At Coursera, we are proud to support a generous and resilient community of educators, building a more inclusive and accessible model of higher education.

Betty Vandenbosch
Chief Content Officer

Empowering Partners at Scale

Top innovations rated by partners

1   **Coursera Lab Assignments**

Provides access to real-world computer lab environments and auto-graded feedback directly in courses without any downloaded software — increasing equity for learners and expediting project authoring for instructors

2   **Guided Projects**

Teaches job-relevant skills through an in-browser interactive experience with step-by-step guidance from subject matter experts — enabling hands-on learning at scale

3   **Quiz imports**

Allows instructors and course staff to easily import quizzes and assessments directly from Microsoft and Google documents using Coursera templates, streamlining the course creation process

Top reasons why partners chose Coursera

1   **Broad reach of platform**

"I was really excited to share my happiness course with Coursera learners, but I had no idea it would be so popular. I've been thrilled and honestly humbled by the 2.9 million people who have taken the class. It just shows the kind of impact an organization like Coursera can have by giving content to so many curious folks who want to learn."

Laurie Santos
Professor of Psychology, Yale University

2   **Reputation as a leader in online learning**

"I had no prior experience teaching online classes. With the courses being offered on Coursera, I saw teaching on Coursera, one of the leading online learning platforms, as an opportunity to learn how to set up online classes and how to make them the most effective — lessons that became relevant more quickly than I thought at that time."

Svenja Sommer
Associate Professor, Information Systems and Operations Management, HEC Paris

3   **Ability to affect positive change**

"Coursera has truly helped to democratize education. I was born in Trinidad & Tobago, and I have lived in Jamaica and the USA. I have received emails from students in all three locations who have taken my course on the Coursera platform. I don't believe Coursera is focused on education alone. Coursera is in the business of reaching learners and changing lives."

Hayden Noel
Clinical Associate Professor of Business Administration, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

What lies ahead is an opportunity to end educational privilege. We shouldn't be satisfied with democratizing access to content. **We need to democratize access to choice, to pathways, and to networks, that provide a lifetime of support and inspiration.**

James DeVaney
Associate Vice Provost for Academic Innovation and Founding Executive Director for the Center for Academic Innovation, University of Michigan

Job-Relevant Industry Credentials

As unemployment soars during COVID-19, accessible training that prepares learners for post-pandemic jobs is critical. Industry leaders have the deep expertise to prepare the talent of tomorrow, from rapid training for those without a college degree to advanced programs for leveling up in an existing career. Learners can develop job-relevant skills through stackable Specializations and certificates, opening new pathways to high-quality employment and higher education.

50
Industry partners

580
Courses

83
Specializations

18
Professional
Certificates

*Learner enrollments (global, excluding free trials) and learner outcomes (US-only) are based on data gathered by Google, sourced on September 9, 2020.

The Google IT Support Professional Certificate

"

IT support skills are highly teachable, and a four-year degree isn't typically required to build a successful career in this field. **So we created a program that beginners could use to learn the foundations of IT support in three-to-six months.**

Natalie Van Kleef Conley
Product Lead, Google IT Support Professional Certificate

300,000 Learners enrolled

80% report a career impact.*

61% do not have a four-year degree.

45% are in the bottom third of income in the U.S.
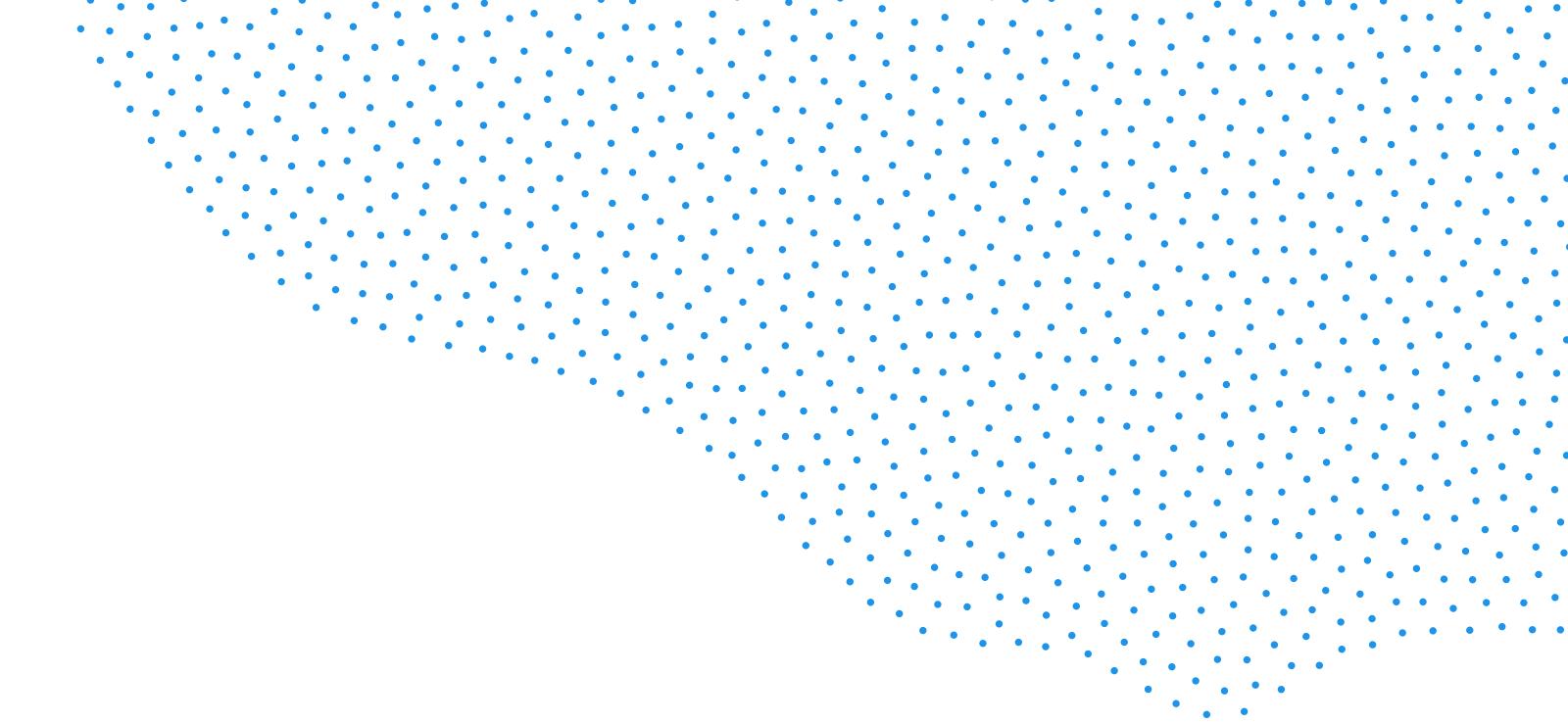
Supporting Institutions
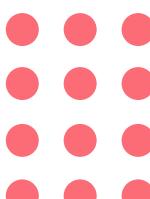
Coursera for Business

2,300
Enterprise organizations

550ĸ
Enterprise learners served

110ĸ
Enterprise learners grew to an intermediate or advanced skill level*

91%
Enterprise learners reported positive career outcomes**

> Institutions are acting boldly to support their learners and workers through an unprecedented unemployment crisis. Students need job-ready learning, employees need effective skills for remote working, and displaced workers need to regain employment.
>
> **This crisis has made clear that we need institutions to enable access to education at every stage of civic life.**

Leah Belsky
Chief Enterprise Officer

*Intermediate level indicates that the learner demonstrates the ability to apply basic concepts on the job independently. Gaining a skill at an advanced level indicates mastery of the material and ability to both teach and identify novel skill applications.

**See appendix for further details on the Learner Outcomes Survey.

***Covers the period of September 15, 2019 — September 15, 2020

Companies using Coursera for Business train **94% more employees** using **40% fewer training resources** in **46% less time**.*

748%

ROI over three years*

38%

Reduction in employee attrition

$1.12M

Recruitment cost savings each year

Jeffrey S.
Learner from Pennsylvania, USA

Jeffrey S. worked for years as a maintenance engineer when he decided to learn new skills through Exelon's Analytics Academy. The academy, which is part of the company's strategic analytics and digital transformation plan, helps employees learn new data skills through Coursera for Business. Jeffrey took seven courses, ranging from Python and machine learning to data visualization. His new skills led to a promotion with a raise, a larger scope of work, and more career opportunities. An analytics tool he created is projected to save the company $1 million over eight years.

Simon Brown
Chief Learning Officer, Novartis

As a company dedicated to "reimagining medicine," Novartis decided to "go big on learning" by offering its 108,000 employees across 140 countries continued learning opportunities, from data science degrees to courses focused on personal well-being. "This year, in response to the tapered situation, we've been working to curate learning content to make sure we're supporting our associates at this difficult time. We've seen an enormous uptick in the use of Coursera, and we hope that will be really valuable, not just for our associates, but also for their loved ones at this important time."

*According to findings by the International Data Corporation

**See appendix for further skills methodology

Top trending skills for enterprise learners

1 Agile Software Development

2 Project Management

3 Artificial Neural Networks
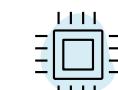
4 Python Programming

5 Contact Tracing

6 Negotiation

7 Google Cloud Platform
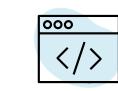
8 JavaScript

9 SQL

10 Apache

Coursera for Campus

As technology drives digital transformation for most institutions, universities are in need of tools that can deliver new pathways to learning. Coursera for Campus, launched in the fall of 2019, offers more than 4,000 courses from renowned universities to foster skill building curriculums and blended learning experiences. Through Coursera for Campus, universities are forging a new way to learn — one that is resilient through the pandemic and will lead to lasting change in education.

3,700
Campuses

2.4M
Campus learners served

530K
Campus learners grew to an intermediate or advanced skill level*

Hagigat H.
Learner from Tartu, Estonia

Matthew Rascoff
Associate Vice Provost for Digital Education and Innovation, Duke University

Hagigat H. is studying at the University of Tartu. When COVID-19 forced her campus and community to lock down, she continued learning independently with Coursera for Campus. Thanks to a course on recruiting, hiring, and onboarding employees from the University of Minnesota, Hagigat quickly found a new role in the HR department of an education company. In addition to courses, Hagigat was drawn to the interactive, hands-on Guided Projects on Coursera. "I am interested in designing my own product, so being able to learn skills like product management, Python, and HTML virtually with side-by-side instruction has been very helpful."

At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Duke University closed its Kunshan campus in China. In just three weeks, they moved in-person instruction online and offered their 600 students free access to online learning through Coursera, which later became the inspiration for Coursera's Campus Response Initiative. "We should be grateful that we have access to platforms like Coursera, and we should capitalize on this moment to enhance learning, to find opportunities for new ways to support learners in their need. When humanity is under threat, humans crave opportunities to learn. And I think this growth in learning is a sign of what's to come, and it's something we should support and strengthen."

*Intermediate level indicates that the learner demonstrates the ability to apply basic concepts on the job independently. Gaining a skill at an advanced level indicates mastery of the material and ability to both teach and identify novel skill applications.

**See appendix for further skills methodology   ***Covers the period of September 15, 2019 — September 15, 2020

Top trending skills for campus learners

1 Artificial Neural Networks

2 Digital Marketing
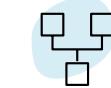
3 Blockchain
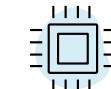
4 Python Programming
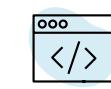
5 JavaScript

6 Bioinformatics

7 Algorithms
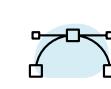
8 Graphic Design
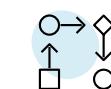
9 Data Structures

10 SQL

Coursera for Government

Partners with governments and nonprofit organizations around the world to equip government officials and citizens with in-demand skills

325
Government agencies

725K
Government learners served

78K
Government learners grew to an intermediate or advanced skill level*

91%
Government learners reported positive career outcomes***

Jawad Khan
CEO, Punjab Skills Development Fund (PSDF)

Jorge Sequeira
Managing Director, Costa Rican Investment Promotion Agency (CINDE)

Through Coursera, the PSDF — the largest kids' development fund in Pakistan — is equipping young Pakistani learners with the skills necessary to be competitive in the digitizing global workforce. "Pakistan is a country with 210 million people and enormous potential. 60% of our population is below the age of 30, but only 12% transition from secondary to tertiary education. We've tapped into this digital opportunity by partnering with Coursera to deliver world-class courses from leading universities and companies to our students and workforce."

In June 2020, Costa Rica launched a program with Coursera to train 50,000 people with the skills needed to succeed amid the Fourth Industrial Revolution. "This project is the first of many we expect to carry out, in collaboration with Coursera over the coming years. Its implementation reinforces the country's commitment to innovate and provide a favorable climate for local and foreign investment, with a human talent trained both in digital areas and in strategic skills for employability."

Collaborating with leading global institutions

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM   UNESCO   WORLD BANK

*Intermediate level indicates that the learner demonstrates the ability to apply basic concepts on the job independently. Gaining a skill at an advanced level indicates mastery of the material and ability to both teach and identify novel skill applications.

**See appendix for further skills methodology

***See appendix for further details on the Learner Outcomes Survey   ****Covers the period of September 15, 2019 — September 15, 2020

Top trending skills for government learners

1 Project Management

2 Digital Marketing
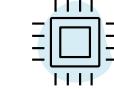
3 Python Programming
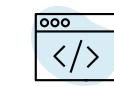
4 JavaScript

5 Agriculture

6 Contact Tracing

7 Google Cloud Platform
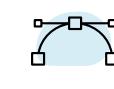
8 Graphic Design

9 Big Data

10 SQL
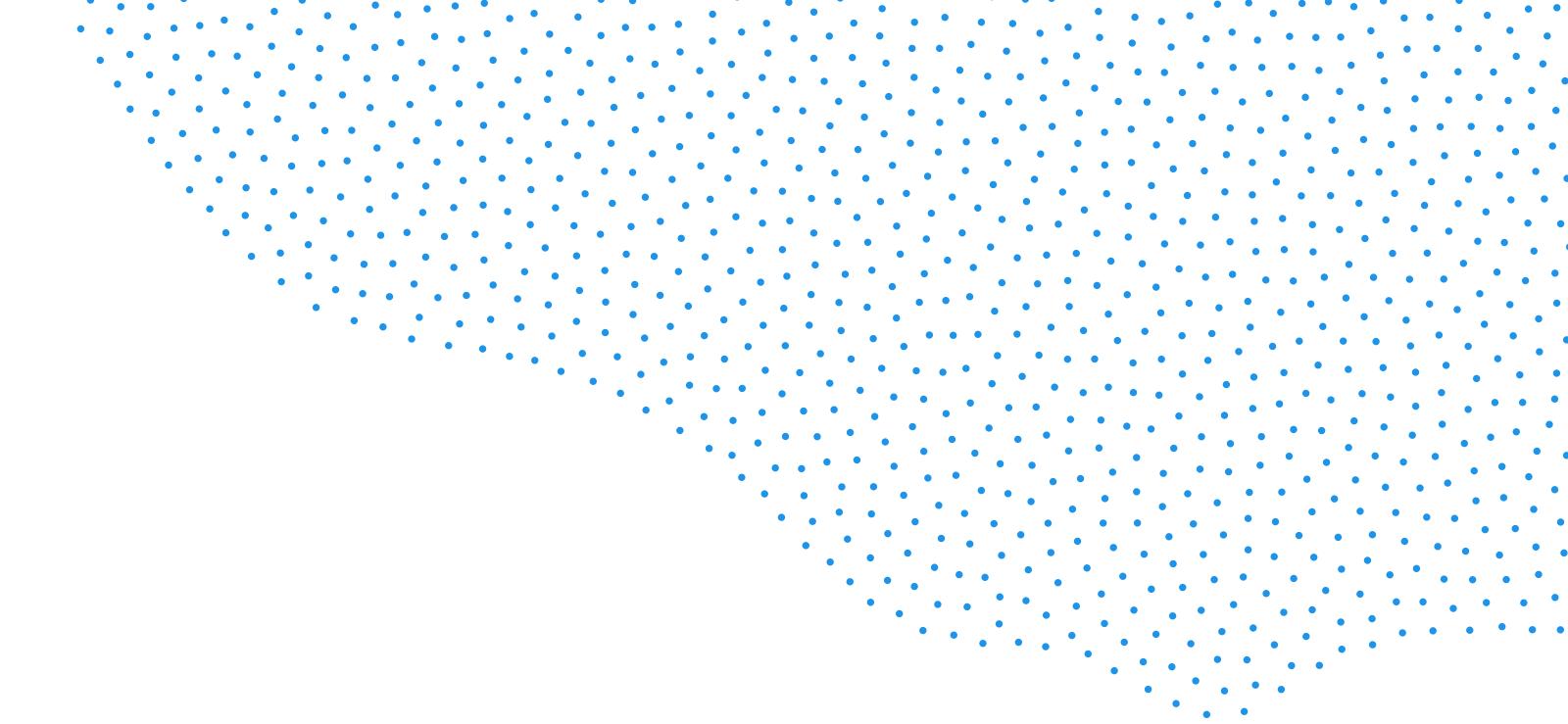
Creating Social Change

Coursera Coronavirus Response Initiatives

Campus Response Initiative
LAUNCHED: MARCH 12, 2020

As campuses closed around the world, Coursera began offering any college or university impacted by COVID-19 free access to its course catalog through Coursera for Campus to help them quickly transition to online learning.

COVID-19 Contact Tracing
LAUNCHED: MAY 11, 2020

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health with Bloomberg Philanthropies launched a contact tracing course on Coursera in three languages to quickly train needed global professionals in the fight against COVID-19.

10K
Departments, schools, and universities served

1.7M
Learners benefited

32M
Learning hours

750K
Learners reached

340K
Course completions

3M
Learning hours

Other top COVID-related course launches

Imperial College London	University of Toronto	Johns Hopkins University
Science Matters: Let's Talk About COVID-19	**Mind Control: Managing Your Mental Health During COVID-19**	**Fighting COVID-19 with Epidemiology Teach-Out**
260K Learners reached	**109K** Learners reached	**107K** Learners reached

*Covers the period from program launch to September 15, 2020

> **We launched 'Science Matters: Let's Talk About COVID-19' as a new kind of course, which would be updated in real-time with our regular situation reports and video updates.** Learners are introduced to the methods underpinning research reports and can access interviews and discussions with world leaders in the field to discuss key themes and reflect on the contribution of science to the global response.

Dr. Helen Ward
Professor of Public Health, Imperial College London

Workforce Recovery Initiative
LAUNCHED: APRIL 24, 2020

To help governments around the world upskill newly-unemployed workers, Coursera provided free access to thousands of job-relevant courses in domains like business, technology, and data science, an effort reaching **70 countries** and **25 US states** and local governments.

290
National, state, and local governments served

480K
Displaced workers reached

4M
Learning hours

Coursera for Students
LAUNCHED: JUNE 1, 2020

To help students regain control of their learning, Coursera provided free access to content on Coursera for college and university students around the world.

1.2M
Course enrollments

2M
Learning hours

JB Pritzker
Governor of Illinois

In an important step towards public and private sector partnerships, various state government leaders have made Coursera for Workforce Recovery available to newly-unemployed citizens. "The State of Illinois is dedicated to supporting the thousands of Illinois workers who have lost their jobs and livelihoods due to the pandemic. I am proud to see Illinois join this initiative with Coursera, a company with strong ties to the University of Illinois, to make job-relevant online learning available to help impacted workers re-enter the workforce."

Sydney M.
*Learner from
North Carolina, USA*

After getting laid off due to COVID-19, Sydney M. decided to take career-relevant courses on Coursera that she discovered through a friend's Facebook post. While unemployed, she put her new skills into practice during a volunteer marketing role at a local nonprofit. Thanks in large part to her new, proven skill set, she landed her dream job as a marketing lead at a company focused on inclusive tech education — an opportunity that has led to stability in her life during the pandemic's continued disruption.

*Covers the period from program launch to September 15, 2020

coursera ⬤ 2020 Impact Report

We are excited to join this initiative to make online learning widely available to Colombians who have lost their jobs due to the pandemic. **With access to courses teaching high demand digital skills, our citizens will be better prepared to return into new jobs and careers.**

Iván Duque
President of Colombia

Social Impact Programs

Education is a critical tool for social change. Over the last four years, Coursera has fostered an initiative across 140 countries to provide learning for tens of thousands of refugees. Because of the transformational impact of this program, we've launched a series of new programs that continue to benefit the lives of communities in need by partnering with nonprofits.

60
Nonprofit and community partners

70k
Underserved learners benefited

355k
Enrollments

1.7m
Learning hours

Refugee partners

Works with refugees to build career skills and find workforce opportunities in new communities during their challenging and disruptive transition

Veteran partners

Helps transitioning service members and military spouses, looking to develop career skills through free access to job-relevant content on Coursera

Justice Impacted partners

Supports formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals by delivering free skills training needed to prepare for employment opportunities and re-entry into the community

Underserved High School partners

Provides free access to content on Coursera for low-income students, teachers, and staff in need of affordable and quality learning materials

*Covers period from program launch to September 15, 2020

> As refugees, we are not allowed to work or study in Indonesia, and I could not finish high school back in Iran, which is why I am always looking for different ways to utilize my free time in the best way possible. **Last year, we heard about Coursera through UNHCR Indonesia, and I personally thought it was an amazing way to keep myself busy and increase my knowledge and skills.**

Abdullah S.
Learner from West Java, Indonesia

Driving the Quality of
Online Learning
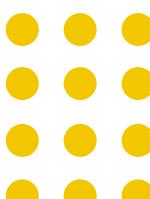
Learner Ratings on Coursera

4.7/5
Average course rating

79%
Learners gave their course a 5-star rating

75%
First-time learners go on to enroll in another course*

93%
Learners would recommend Coursera to a friend

99%
Enrollments are in courses with greater than a 4-star rating

Insights from Drivers of Quality in Online Learning

Top Recommendations for Instructors**

Help learners apply new skills
Hands-on projects, especially programming assignments and peer review assignments, can drive 30% higher skill development.

Leverage in-browser experiences
Course completion rates in programming courses using in-browser experiences are 20% higher than those with offline programming.

Ensure manageable course length
Courses that are roughly one month long have the highest completion rates.

Chunk video content
Shorter videos help learners benefit from the increased flexibility of online learning. Keep lectures under 10 minutes long to increase lecture completion rates by 16% and increase learner satisfaction.

Provide opportunities for practice
Practice quizzes and in-video questions increase career outcomes, skill development, and learner satisfaction.

Top Recommendations for Learners**

Find the right fit
Learners who enroll in courses that match their interests and experience level show the most skill growth.

Make learning a habit
Short and spread out learning sessions lead to better learning outcomes than bingeing content.

Be slow and steady
Learners who spend more time watching and reviewing videos complete courses at higher rates than learners who skim and are more likely to have beneficial career outcomes.

Get a fast start
Learners who stay up to date with their deadlines for the first two weeks are almost 2x more likely to remain engaged until course completion.

Incorporate social learning
Learners who participate in discussion forums early on are 25% more likely to complete the course.

*Only counting learners who completed 1 year ago or more in order to give sufficient window to re-enroll   **Coursera Drivers of Quality in Online Learning Report

> "
There's no one metric that defines the "quality" of an education. However, as a global leader in online learning, we at Coursera are uniquely positioned to lend a hand in understanding how online learning can and is transforming lives.

Our new Drivers of Quality in Online Learning Report looks across eight years of learner data and nearly 200 million course enrollments to provide actionable, data-driven insights into how instructors and learners can optimize their digital learning experience and continue to drive the quality of learning forward.

Emily Glassberg Sands
Vice President of Data Science

Data Methodology Appendix
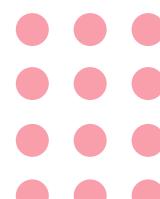
Data Overview

The data used in this report is primarily drawn from Coursera enrollment data. Some statistics are reported cumulatively since the founding of Coursera in 2012, while other statistics are reported for the one year period prior to the publication of this report: September 15, 2019 through September 15, 2020. When statistics reference "the past year," this is the period to which they are referring.

At several points in the report, we mention growth. This is computed as year-over-year growth for the above-defined one year period unless otherwise noted. Year-over-year growth is computed in the standard way (change divided by prior year total).

Learner Outcomes Survey Methodology

We send surveys to learners six months after completing a course asking respondents to report any outcomes they have received due to taking Coursera content. We track career outcomes using a question that asks whether the respondent had any of the following outcomes:

1 Got a promotion

2 Got a pay increase

3 Found a new job

4 Started a business

5 Improved their candidacy for new jobs

6 Became better at their current job

7 Picked a career path

We consider promotion, pay increase, and finding a new job to be tangible outcomes. In the surveys, learners can state whether their goal for using Coursera is career, education, or personal related (learners can have multiple goals). We report career outcomes conditional on the learner saying their goal for using Coursera was to achieve career outcomes. For the Enterprise user surveys (Business and Government), we assume all learners are intending to use the platform for career outcomes, and we do not condition the outcome statistics on the learners' stated goals.

Skills Methodology

The Coursera Skills Graph maps the connections among skills, content, careers, and learners on the Coursera platform. As learners complete items in courses, Coursera uses a patent-pending methodology to determine learner skill growth and to compare learners' skills to one another even when they have not taken the same courses. The full details of this methodology can be found in the whitepaper titled "Using a Glicko-based Algorithm to Measure In-Course Learning." An extensive appendix of skills methodology is included in the annual Global Skills Index report.

Top Trending Skills

In this report, we describe the trending skills of the last year among Consumer, Enterprise, Government, and Campus learners. We determine these trending skills by using learner enrollment data and the Coursera Skills Graph to know how many learners are interested in learning each skill.
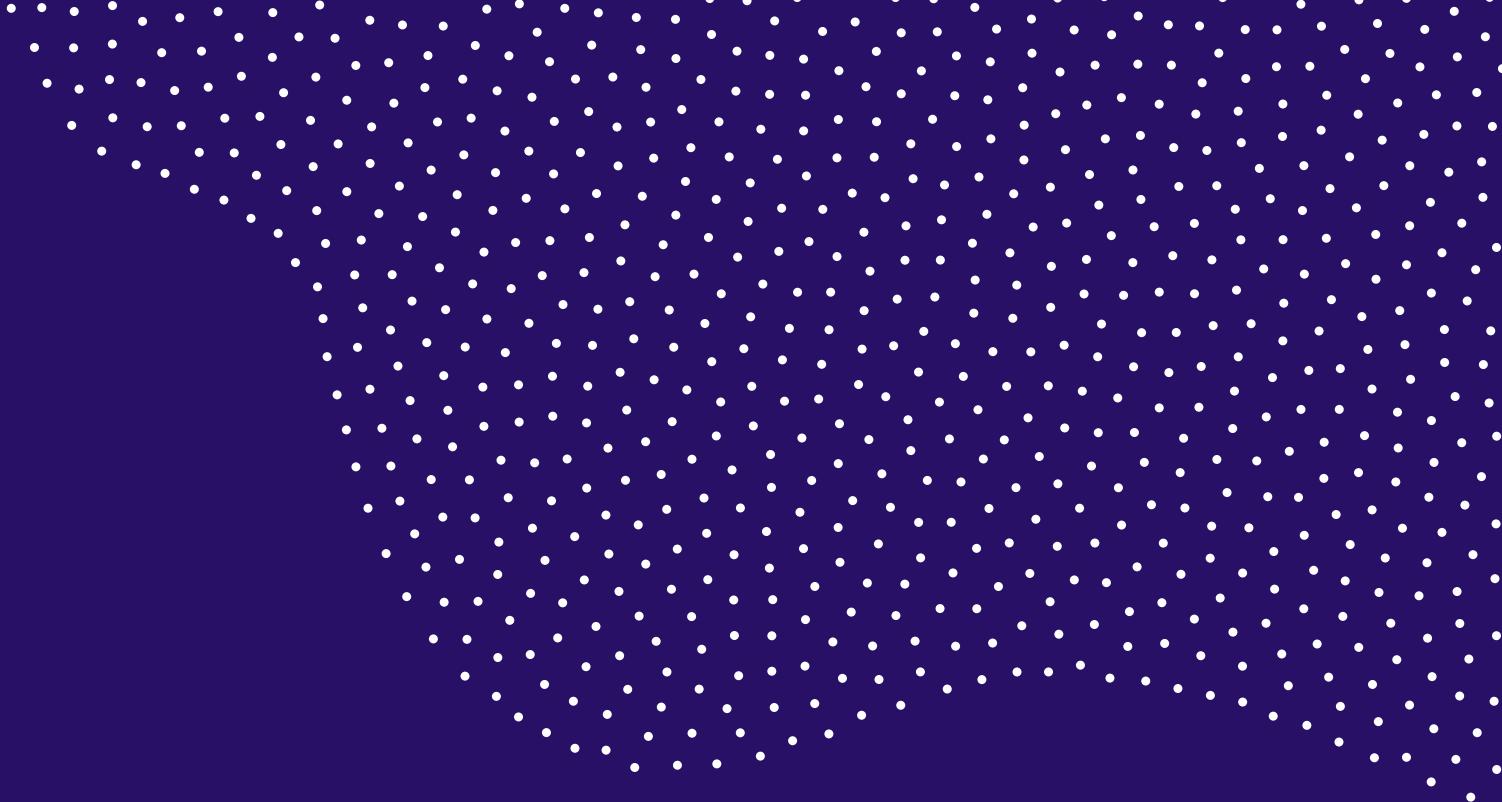
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