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EdX and World's Top Universities Launch MicroMasters Programs: New Master's-Level Credentials to Advance Careers in the Most In-Demand Fields

Flexible, affordable, digital credential for career advancement or graduate study in fields from artificial intelligence to supply chain management

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EdX → (<http://www.prnewswire.com/news/edx>)
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CAMBRIDGE, Mass., Sept. 20, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- EdX (<http://www.edx.org/>), the leading nonprofit online learning destination founded by Harvard and MIT, today launched 19 MicroMasters (<http://www.edx.org/micromasters>) programs, a new category of Master's-level online education, originally pioneered by MIT, to bridge the knowledge gap between higher education and the workplace. The modular programs, which offer a credential with a pathway to credit, provide high-quality education from top universities to help learners launch or advance their

career, or follow a path to an accelerated Master's degree. The MicroMasters initiative marks the next evolution in edX's mission to expand access to high-quality, career-relevant education at a fraction of the price.

MicroMasters programs from 14 universities including MIT and now Columbia University, University of Michigan, Thunderbird School of Global Management, a unit of the Arizona State University Knowledge Enterprise, Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) and more, enable learners to begin advanced education in an affordable and flexible manner. Offered in subjects ranging from artificial intelligence to project management and supply chain management, MicroMasters courses are created by esteemed edX university partners, valued by top companies and linked to specific career outcomes.

Industry and learner demand drove the development of MicroMasters, a program which was originally conceived by MIT and offered on edX as a pilot MicroMasters in Supply Chain Management (<https://www.edx.org/micromasters/mitx-supply-chain-management>) – a field experiencing a worldwide talent shortage. While developing the new MicroMasters programs, edX consulted with industry leadership to understand their challenges, both in hiring and developing a smarter, more capable workforce.

"The workplace is changing more rapidly today than ever before and employers are in need of highly-developed talent. Meanwhile, college graduates want to advance professionally, but are realizing they do not have the career-relevant skills that the modern workplace demands. EdX recognizes this mismatch between business and education for learners, employees and employers," said Anant Agarwal, CEO of edX and MIT professor. "The MicroMasters initiative provides the next level of innovation in learning to address this skills gap by creating a bridge between higher education and industry to create a skillful, successful 21st-century workforce."

Companies are looking for ways to provide their employees with deep, in-demand learning that will help them advance in rapidly growing fields, such as User Experience (UX) design, sustainable energy technology and operations. EdX discovered individuals have the same needs; an edX survey of online learners revealed a demand for a series of rich and rigorous courses informed by today's job market. Learners want flexible, affordable, real-time knowledge and skills that fit their lifestyles and prepare them for a specific in-demand job or career.

"WalMart is always looking to hire the most talented associates in the world, and completing online courses like the MITx MicroMasters credential in Supply Chain Management is a powerful way for people to learn the important skills required to be successful," Chris Sultemeier, EVP of Logistics, Walmart U.S.

"Everything I'm learning I can apply to a future job," said María Barba, an edX learner currently enrolled in the MITx Supply Chain Management MicroMasters.

A MicroMasters certificate is comparable to a significant portion, in most cases a quarter or a half, of a traditional Master's degree, and is a valuable standalone credential that will help learners advance their careers. In addition, it offers a new path to an accelerated graduate degree. Learners who excel in the MicroMasters courses, successfully earning the credential, may then apply to a full Master's program; for those who are accepted – either at the university offering the MicroMasters program or another university that acknowledges the MicroMasters certificate – the digital credential will count as credit toward a portion of the degree, resulting in an accelerated program. Moreover, MicroMasters offers "inverted admissions," where learners can prove their abilities via online courses and universities have more data to inform admissions decisions.

"We are proud to have been a pioneer for higher education's next step in engaging learners worldwide. MIT recognizes that not all high-potential Master's candidates can afford to spend a year or more on campus. As part of our mission to attract the best talent, we understand the importance of providing multiple pathways to degree programs," said Sanjay Sarma, Vice

President for Open Learning, MIT. "MicroMasters broadens our admissions pool, and also allows learners to demonstrate their abilities through a series of online courses. All who pass earn a credential valued by the marketplace; those who excel may apply and complete their Master's with an additional semester's residence."

"As Michigan continues to innovate and expand the conceptions of the public research university we're extremely enthusiastic about the three MicroMasters we are launching and the pathways we'll create for global lifelong learners," said Martha Pollack, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Michigan.

Pearson, the world's education company, with over 35,000 employees in more than 70 countries, will also collaborate with edX to support the newly launched MicroMasters programs. Learners around the world will have the opportunity to take MicroMasters courses at local Pearson learning centers, which offer regional, in-person support, access to dedicated cohorts and additional learning resources. This blended learning experience has the potential to help students complete and thrive in online programs in places where online education is less established.

EdX co-founding partner Harvard looks forward to offering a MicroMasters program in the future. And, other partner universities are considering launching additional MicroMasters programs over the coming year.

For more information and a complete list of MicroMasters course offerings, visit www.edx.org/micromasters (<http://www.edx.org/micromasters>).

Full List of Institutions and MicroMasters Programs:

United States

Columbia University (ColumbiaX)

Artificial Intelligence

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MITx)

Supply Chain Management

Rochester Institute of Technology (RITx)

Project Management

Thunderbird School of Global Management, a unit of the Arizona State University Knowledge Enterprise (ThunderbirdX)

International Business Management

University of Michigan (MichiganX)

User Experience (UX) Research and Design

Leading Educational Innovation and Improvement

Social Work: Practice, Policy and Research

International

Australian National University (ANUx)

Evidence-Based Management

Curtin University (CurtinX)

Human Rights

Galileo University (GalileoX)

e-Learning: crea actividades y contenidos para la enseñanza virtual (offered in Spanish)

Professional Android Developer

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HKPolyUx)

International Hospitality Management

Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMBx)

Business Management

Entrepreneurship

Polytechnic University of Valencia (UPValenciaX)

Liderazgo y trabajo en equipo en grupos de mejora continua (offered in Spanish)

Université catholique de Louvain (LouvainX)

Management (offered in French)

International Law

The University of Queensland, Australia (UQx)

Leadership in Global Development

Wageningen University (WageningenX)

Biobased Sciences for Sustainability

About edX

EdX is a nonprofit, open-source learning destination offering online courses from more than 100 member institutions, composed of both leading global universities and colleges, and a diverse group of prominent organizations from around the world. Founded by Harvard University and

the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and based in Cambridge, MA, USA, edX is focused on transforming online and classroom learning through groundbreaking methodologies, game-like educational experiences and cutting-edge research on an open-source platform.

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