

Frequently asked questions

At Pearson, we partner with 35 institutions and speak with Presidents at many more. So we've compiled the questions we hear most often to help you find the right partner and your best path forward.



Who is Pearson Online Learning Services?

We're the pioneers in online program management. First as Embanet and then as Pearson, we've spent 25 years building and perfecting comprehensive services for successfully planning and operating online programs. We're experts in online strategy, digital marketing and recruitment, course development, and student support for higher rates of retention.

We currently partner with widely diverse institutions. As their strategic partners, we help them launch, evolve, and scale programs in disciplines ranging from business to allied health and social work.



Why should my institution partner with an Online Program Management (OPM) company?

Partnering allows you to achieve better performance and reduce risk.

In 2017, leading independent researcher Eduventures reported that "On average, schools partnering with traditional, end-to-end OPMs have outperformed their peers in increasing enrollment." There are several reasons why.

First, the online marketplace has become extremely competitive. Success now requires many specialized skill sets, and relatively few institutions possess them all. Filling gaps by hiring multiple individual vendors often leads to finger-pointing and poor performance. Even if the institution has all the capabilities it needs, these can be difficult to scale. An institution may be able to develop courses for one or two online programs, but not for an online initiative large enough to move the needle on its mission. Scaling online programs in-house can be even more difficult when course developers or marketers must serve multiple masters throughout the institution. Working with an OPM can help you avoid these problems.

For more details about the decision to operate your own program or partner with an OPM — including some specific cost projections — download our new white paper, [*Build or Buy: Key considerations for strategic, successful online growth.*](#)



Why should my institution partner with Pearson specifically?

The best answer is: ask our partners. Contact us, and we'll give you references.

In the meantime, here are some of the characteristics we believe make us unique:

More experience. After delivering hundreds of degree programs over the past 25 years, we've learned a lot about what works and doesn't — and know how to help you anticipate where your prospects are headed. You'll benefit from our proven track record of making the upfront investments needed to make your program successful over the long-term.

Strategic expertise. Expect added value in helping to develop online strategy — from identifying opportunities to choosing program names.

Integrated marketing and recruitment expertise. We have deep skills and a strong track record of helping institutions reach national audiences of online prospects, leverage advanced digital marketing techniques, and convert leads into successful students.

Strong course development expertise to the extent you want it. By bringing together multiple technical and pedagogical disciplines, we help build online courses that truly engage students, while also supporting your LMS and user devices of choice, along with today's surprisingly challenging ADA accessibility requirements. But we're also happy to work with institutions who prefer to handle some or all of their own course development.





When will my institution see revenue from a partnership?

Online programs typically take 3–5 years to break even, and revenue generated after the recovered investments will vary based on performance. Launching a meaningful online presence generally requires seven-figure start-up capital and large ongoing investments. Institutions that choose to partner with us can offload much of the risk, and Pearson can work with the institution to develop a strategy that can create revenue as soon as students enroll. However, if the institution decides to go at it alone and advances this upfront cash and the program comes up short, the institution bears the loss alone.

We're confident in our projections and the ability to achieve them. We invite your internal team to put together a plan or justification that indicates how they'd support the enrollments we're projecting. This is often a good way to understand how resources at your institution may or may not be limited.



How do I get faculty buy in?

Faculty can often be the most challenging audience to get on board when choosing to go online. Often, they feel that online programs are “watered down” versions of on campus programs, or that they will require extra work on their behalf. We work closely to provide a one-stop link to your institution's critical services, freeing faculty to focus exclusively on teaching and learning, not program and course logistics. From this direct support, we've found that some of the biggest faculty challengers become an institution's greatest advocates.



What is Pearson's role in strategy?

We bring data, based on our experience spending over \$1B since 2013 in lead acquisition and marketing alone; our up-to-the-minute insights from our portfolio of roughly 250+ degree programs; and our extensive ongoing research into higher education and career trends.

Then we help you apply that data to make the best possible decisions, so you maximize your chances of success and minimize risk to your institution.



How will I hold Pearson accountable? What if there are problems, or Pearson doesn't meet the recruitment and retention goals we've agreed on?

We work hard to avoid problems upfront by making sure everyone's expectations are clear, establishing specific accountability metrics, and building cross-functional teams where our professionals work closely with their institutional peers towards shared goals. Your experienced Pearson partnership director collaborates especially closely with you and your academic leadership, providing regular progress reports and accountability at the highest levels.

Pearson responds quickly when problems arise, and we work collaboratively and vigorously towards solutions. If, however, our services ultimately don't perform to the performance criteria we've both agreed upon in advance, either side can terminate the partnership.



How do I get more information?

That's easy. Contact us for more information or to request a free consultation. We also encourage you to visit [pearson.com/opm](https://www.pearson.com/opm), review our partner case studies, and download our new white paper: *Build or Buy: Key considerations for strategic, successful online growth.*

Today's increasingly competitive landscape requires a strategic approach to successfully reach more of the right students where they are. Partnering with Pearson can help you accelerate strategic change while reducing the risks associated with growing your online presence. Our online program management services and community can help your students thrive as you build the brand and reputation you're striving for.

Dare to change.

Digital learning removes limits and gives us the freedom to provide education anytime and anywhere, empowering us to overcome our most difficult challenges.



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