About Schoolhouse

As soon as COVID-19 hit, schools transitioned to online learning and students around the world craved more social interaction. Sal Khan, founder of Khan Academy, saw that access to individualized and personal help was more inequitable than ever. This urgency, along with his vision of a peer tutoring platform originating from his 2012 book, *The One World Schoolhouse*, prompted him to start Schoolhouse.world. Although established as a separate non-profit from Khan Academy, the two are complementary.

Schoolhouse is a free, peer-to-peer tutoring platform in which anyone, anywhere can receive live help, and then certify their mastery to also become tutors and share their certifications with the world. The current focus is high school math, SAT preparation, and AP test preparation, with plans to expand to other areas soon. All the small-group tutoring sessions happen over Zoom.

The platform has been used by thousands of students from over 100 countries. Students have overwhelmingly rated their tutoring sessions as "helpful" or "super helpful" (97% of the time). The platform currently hosts hundreds of sessions a week, with aspirations to expand to the millions.

The Certification Process

To demonstrate mastery in a topic, candidate tutors must become certified in that topic. There are two paths to certification:

1. **Video Certification:** For core math topics, ranging from pre-algebra through calculus and statistics, candidates submit a video of themselves completing the Khan Academy test in that topic. Tutors must explain their reasoning out loud and receive at least a 90% to become certified. These certifications go through a peer review process, where other candidates check for signs of cheating, before being approved by a vetted volunteer committee. For reference, here is a snippet of a certification video. You can refer to this page for more information about Khan Academy's curriculum and efficacy.
2. **Honorary Certification:** For certain topics, candidate tutors can receive an "honorary certification" by detailing their qualifications. For example, tutors can

attach their SAT score report to apply for an honorary certification in SAT preparation. These certifications are reviewed by a vetted volunteer committee.

Before hosting their first session, tutors must also go through a training process, and are shadowed by volunteers to ensure quality and safety.

The Schoolhouse Portfolio

Tutors on Schoolhouse build a portfolio showing which certifications they've completed, along with the video submission if available. The portfolio also includes information about tutoring activity: number of students impacted, selected testimonials, and more. For reference, here is an [example portfolio](#).

The portfolio comes with multiple benefits that distinguish it from a traditional assessment:

- **An equitable credential:** Getting certified and tutoring on Schoolhouse are completely free–students just need a phone or computer.
- **Focused on content, not test-taking skills:** Certifications focus on a student's knowledge of the subject area–not test-taking skills or unrelated variables. Students can retake the certification as many times as they'd like.
- **Service-oriented:** Tutors not only demonstrate mastery, but also dedication to making the world better by giving back to other students.
- **Rigorous academic signal:** Students must score at least 90% or greater on a Khan Academy unit test in order to get certified.

Collaboration with UChicago

In Fall 2020, Schoolhouse collaborated with UChicago to accept the portfolio in the University's undergraduate admissions application. Here are some materials developed through this collaboration:

- UChicago added the Schoolhouse portfolio as a dropdown item in the [UChicago portal](#).
- The University sent an [email](#) to prospective applicants.
- Jim Nondorf (Dean of Admissions) and Sal Khan collaborated on a [video](#), which also features admitted students.
- UChicago mentioned Schoolhouse in various parts of the admissions website, including [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

In total, **44 applicants** submitted Schoolhouse certifications during the Fall 2020 admissions cycle. These applicants came from across the world, representing **15 countries** — from Brazil and Ghana to Poland and Turkmenistan — and 14 US states.

In the end, **13 students committed** to UChicago for the Fall 2021, of which five were international. Of these students, 4 were first generation, 2 came from rural backgrounds, and 2 were admitted under the university's test-optional policy. Although a small initial sample size, these statistics are a testament to the efficacy and approachability of the certification process.

The College Pioneer Program

Given many colleges and universities will be test-optional for the upcoming admissions cycle(s), additional credentialing can be a vital resource in understanding a student's academic readiness for college. To meet this need, Schoolhouse created the **College Pioneer program**. The College Pioneer program allows colleges and universities to gain greater insight into their applicants and give applicants an opportunity to showcase their academic strengths in the admissions process. Schoolhouse's no-cost model ensures that this opportunity is equitable and accessible to all students.

Partnership opportunities range from endorsing Schoolhouse to explicitly adding space for the portfolio in the undergraduate application. Pioneer schools will also have access to the following benefits:

- Your school will have access to a diverse pool of service-oriented applicants, and you are more than welcome to host informational sessions on the platform.
- For each applicant, you will be able to view their **verified** mastery of Khan Academy content. The portfolio includes information about tutoring activity.
- The Schoolhouse team is happy to co-design this portfolio to suit your school's needs.
- Through this partnership you will also welcome new tutors onto the Schoolhouse platform, helping increase access to education across the world.
- You will be joining forces with colleges like UChicago, MIT, and Case Western to pioneer a more equitable and accessible admissions credential.

Interested in joining Schoolhouse as a College Pioneer? Visit schoolhouse.world/college-pioneer to fill out an interest form, and we'll be in touch!