Academic Policies

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StraighterLine's policies are published on our website and annually updated. Students are notified of these changes either on the website or within the courses themselves. StraighterLine makes every effort to not disrupt the learner experience.

Updated Aug 8, 2025

Student Code of Conduct

As part of our shift to the LEAP Learning Model and a mastery-based learning experience, StraighterLine expects all students to engage with academic integrity, personal responsibility, and respectful communication. The Student Code of Conduct is not only a set of rules–it's a foundation for creating a trusted, equitable learning environment where all students can succeed.

The Code of Conduct applies to all StraighterLine students and governs academic and administrative behavior. Students are expected to review and uphold the Academic Integrity Policy, AI-Use Case Policy, and related standards of behavior outlined here and in each course.

Students are expected to:

- Answer application or registration information questions truly and accurately.
- Keep passwords and other account access information for StraighterLine and its partners confidential.
- Complete and submit all assessments personally without unsanctioned use of artificial intelligence tools, resources or other technologies; do not permit another student, a family member, person or digital entity to act on their behalf in the completion of graded work.
- Use AI tools only when explicitly permitted within a course and according to the designated Capstone AI Use-Case Policy. If permitted, students must clearly disclose how AI tools were used.
- Communicate professionally in all interactions, including with support staff, faculty-help sessions, and course communications (e.g. forums), to maintain a collaborative and inclusive environment.
- Engage respectfully with assessment feedback and apply it in good faith. Faculty feedback is intended to support academic growth, not just assign grades.
- Report suspicious or known violations of this Code promptly.
- Provide documentation to verify identity, respond to verification questions, and participate in biometric or behavioral verification as requested during exams, assignment submissions, or other interactions.
- Understand that data collected through interactions with StraighterLine's digital platforms (including device data) may be used to verify learner identity and uphold academic integrity. Violations may result in invalidation of coursework or transcript denial.
- Refrain from conduct that is hostile, threatening, or discriminatory toward others in any form.

Academic Integrity Policy

At StraighterLine, we believe academic integrity is not just a matter of compliance but a critical component of learner competence. Our goal is to help students build ethical decision-making skills, especially in a digital and AI-enhanced world. Policies are designed to uphold credibility while also guiding students toward responsible, reflective academic practices.

StraighterLine reviews and updates its Academic Integrity Policy annually, and as needed, to ensure alignment with current educational trends, evolving technologies, and student needs. All updates are published on our website and communicated within our courses to ensure transparency and clarity.

Academic Integrity Statement

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an honest, truthful and responsible manner. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and academic misconduct. Failure to comply with the Academic Integrity Policy can result in a failure and/or zero on the attempted assignment/examination, a removal from the course, disqualification to enroll in future courses, and/or revocation of an academic transcript. Penalties for academic integrity violations can be retroactively applied upon discovery, and at our discretion.

Definitions and Examples of Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism

At StraighterLine, we define plagiarism as the use of someone else's words, ideas, images, or data—whether published, unpublished, or AI-generated—without proper attribution or authorization. Plagiarism undermines the learning process by misrepresenting a student's original thinking. As a core value of academic integrity, all learners are expected to credit the sources that shape their work and to distinguish between independent work and any form of external contribution.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- Quoting another person's exact words, sentences, or paragraphs without citation or quotation marks
- Paraphrasing another person's ideas or theories without proper attribution
- Reusing one's own previously submitted work in a new context without clear disclosure (also called "self-plagiarism")

- Using facts, statistics, or visuals that are not common knowledge without citing their source
- Copying another student's work or allowing another student to copy your work Collaborating on an individual assignment and submitting it as your own work
- Submitting content—text, images, code, or ideas—generated or assisted by artificial intelligence tools (e.g., ChatGPT, DALL·E, Grammarly, Quillbot) without authorization or without disclosing usage, when disclosure is required under the course's AI Use-Case Policy

By submitting their name or credentials on an assignment, students affirm that the work reflects their own intellectual effort and, where applicable, clearly identifies any external contributions.

Cheating

Cheating is an act or an attempted act of deception by which a student seeks to misrepresent that they have mastered information or a skill on an academic assessment, such as (by example, not limitation) a test, exam, essay, presentation, or quiz, that has not in fact been mastered.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Copying from another student's work
- Knowingly and/or actively allowing another student to copy from an assignment, exam, essay, quiz, or similar assessment
- Unauthorized use of a course textbook, artificial intelligence (AI) writing tool (e.g., ChatGPT), or other resources (e.g., websites, apps, notes) during an examination or other assessment
- Collaborating on an exam or other graded activity with any other person(s) or technological entity without permission
- Inappropriately hosting, posting, or accessing course content in online forums, group chats, or file-sharing sites
- Using or processing unauthorized materials during an exam, such as formula sheets, calculators, or smart devices
- Taking an assessment for someone else or allowing someone else to take an assessment for you
- Using an AI tool to complete part or all of an academic assessment when not authorized by the course's AI Use-Case Policy
- Misrepresenting the extent of AI involvement when disclosure is required

Fabrication

Fabrication is the use of invented, manipulated, or misrepresented information in academic work. This includes falsifying research findings, misrepresenting sources, or generating fictitious data.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Citing information not taken from the referenced source, including fabricated or misattributed materials
- Listing sources in a bibliography that were not consulted or used
- Submitting a written work, lab report, or other academic product that contains falsified, invented, or fictitious data
- Deliberate concealment or distortion of the true nature, origin, or function of presented evidence
- Submitting as your own any work created by another individual, AI product, or technological entity
- All forms of scientific or laboratory misconduct, including data manipulation or reporting false outcomes

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct includes dishonest acts that compromise the authenticity, fairness, or validity of any academic process, whether assessments are completed independently or through supported tools. These violations typically involve unauthorized access to, distribution of, or manipulation of academic content or systems.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Stealing, buying, or otherwise obtaining all or part of an administered or unadministered examination, written assignment, quiz, project, or assessment
- Selling or distributing all or part of an administered or unadministered test, essay, or exam—including questions, answers, or grading rubrics
- Bribing or paying a person or entity to obtain an assessment or access assessment information
- Logging in as someone else or permitting someone else—or a technological entity (e.g., AI bot)—to log in for you or complete academic work on your behalf
- Failure to comply with assignment, exam, or test-taking protocols as outlined in the course or testing environment, including but not limited to:
    - Use of earbuds/headphones
    - Presence of a visible cell phone or smart device
    - Use of video recording or screen-capture tools
    - Background noise, communication with others, or the presence of unauthorized individuals in the testing environment

- Buying, selling, or otherwise exchanging an assessment, essay, exam, AI-generated submission, code, artwork, lab, or recording for the purpose of fulfilling academic requirements
- Using or distributing content obtained through generative AI platforms (e.g., ChatGPT, DALL·E, or similar) in violation of course AI Use-Case Policies or without proper disclosure when required
- Posting StraighterLine course content, assessments, or student work on unauthorized websites, forums, or digital marketplaces (e.g., Course Hero, Chegg, Reddit, Discord, Fiverr, etc.)

Creating or contributing to shared answer banks or unauthorized repositories of course content or solutions

Methods for Promoting Academic Integrity

A. Upon registration, students must read and accept Terms and Conditions along with the information stated in the Handbook.
B. The Academic Integrity Policy shall be posted to our website along with the Student Code of Conduct.
C. The Academic Integrity Statement will be posted on every syllabus.
D. Students must review the Academic Honesty and Integrity Lesson at the start of every course.
E. Students are required to sign a statement of agreement or "click" of agreement after reviewing the Academic Honesty and Integrity Lesson.
F. To support student success, StraighterLine provides a variety of tools to help learners understand and apply academic integrity in their coursework. These include
    a. rubrics and exemplars for Capstone assignments,
    b. access to Academic support (faculty) and the Writing Center, and
    c. opportunities to engage with faculty feedback through our "Grow and Show" model.

    These supports are designed to help students develop ethical academic habits and produce original work with confidence.
G. We shall subscribe to an electronic plagiarism and artificial intelligence (AI) detection service and shall notify students of the fact that such a service is available for use by our faculty members; we shall instruct both students and faculty on how to use this software.
H. Identity Verification:
    a. Identity verification includes, but is not limited to, out-of-band processes (calling/texting a number and verifying student information), embedded question verification (answering questions based on publicly available information about the student), biometric verification, passive activity monitoring, analysis of voluntarily-provided electronic device data, and account comparison against established publicly available networks (such as social networks) to our authentication system or monitoring services.

H. We shall subscribe to an online monitoring service using one or more of the following methods: browser lockdown, automated proctoring, live proctoring, and/or blended proctoring. This service will work in conjunction with our Learning Management System.

Reporting

Administration, Faculty and Staff are required to report and record any academic integrity violations they detect on submitted assessments or work fulfilling an academic requirement, including (by example, not by limitation) an assessment, essay, exam, computer software, other written work, painting, drawing, sculpture, scholastic artwork, science lab, and/or video/ audio

recording. Documentation of the violation, including the submitted work, is kept on file as a matter of record, and to determine instances where multiple infractions have occurred.

Instructors use detection tools such as Turnitin not only to identify potential violations but also to provide formative feedback and coaching on source use, paraphrasing, and originality—especially for early-stage or first-time errors.

Responses to Academic Integrity Violations

When StraighterLine faculty, staff, administration, or partners encounter a possible or known violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, the matter will be addressed in writing with the student—typically through annotated feedback on the submitted work and/or a formal communication outlining the concern. StraighterLine reserves the right to request documentation of sources, AI use disclosures, or other forms of verification to confirm the authenticity of submitted work. Students are expected to respond to such requests in good faith.

Penalties for academic integrity violations may be assigned at the time of review or retroactively if the violation is discovered after grading. StraighterLine typically uses detection tools such as Turnitin, originality reports, and monitoring data to inform decision-making, but a software flag is not required to initiate a review.

If a faculty member determines that a violation has occurred, they may assign an immediate sanction, including but not limited to a grade penalty—such as a zero for the assignment. In these cases, faculty will also provide instructional feedback and “next step” recommendations, such as revision guidance, source attribution clarification, or resubmission eligibility (if permitted).

If the violation is severe, repeated, or not resolved through faculty-led remediation, the case may be referred to StraighterLine’s Academic Integrity Committee for formal review. Further failure to comply with the Academic Integrity Policy may result in additional sanctions, including removal from the course, ineligibility to enroll in future courses, and/or revocation of a transcript or course completion record. All determinations will be explained in writing and documented internally.

The Academic Integrity Committee

The Academic Integrity Committee is composed of StraighterLine faculty and academic administrators. Its purpose is to review complex, escalated, or repeat cases of potential academic integrity violations on a case-by-case basis, especially when the nature or severity of the concern warrants further review beyond faculty action. The Committee meets regularly and follows a consistent, documented review process designed to ensure fairness, transparency, and alignment with our institutional standards.

Students will be notified in writing if their case is under committee review and may be asked to provide additional context, sources, or documentation. Final decisions made by the Committee are binding and will be communicated to the student in a formal outcome letter.

In addition to internal review, StraighterLine's academic partners and partner institutions may, at their discretion, review student work submitted for transfer credit consideration. These reviews may include the use of plagiarism detection tools, identity verification data, AI-use disclosures, and device-related activity logs. StraighterLine works collaboratively with partner institutions to uphold the integrity and credibility of all coursework evaluated for credit.

Assessment Policies and Guidelines

Grading Policy*.

StraighterLine organizes assessments into three primary categories: Checkpoints, Benchmarks, and Capstones. These categories reflect increasing levels of complexity and are intentionally aligned with StraighterLine's LEAP Learning Model, which emphasizes mastery, reflection, and progression. Assessments vary by course but typically include a combination of quizzes, exams, writing assignments, activities, and presentations. Formative assignments may also be included to support learning and practice without direct impact on the final grade.

- Students are permitted to **resubmit certain assignments or retake assessments** as noted in the course syllabus. In most cases, **the highest earned score will be recorded**.
- All graded assignments are returned within **3–5 business days** from the date of submission.
- Students have **multiple attempts to complete their first graded Checkpoint or Benchmark** (unless otherwise noted). See "First Assignment Retake Policy."
  Final exam Benchmarks are typically permitted **one attempt only**, unless noted otherwise.
- Capstone assignments (e.g., essays, lab worksheets, oral presentations) may be submitted **up to two times**, unless otherwise indicated in the course.
- Students have **three total attempts to complete each Checkpoint or Benchmark**, with some exceptions (e.g., **one attempt on the final exam**; multiple attempts on the first quantitative Checkpoint).
- **If a technical issue affects an assessment submission**, students may be allowed to resubmit the assignment with approval from faculty, staff, or administration.
- **All required assessments must be submitted and graded** for a course to be considered complete. See "Course Completion Policy."
- **Any violations of the Academic Integrity Policy may result in a zero on the assessment and could impact overall course completion and transcript eligibility.** See "Academic Integrity Policy."

Our grading model is designed not only to evaluate performance but also to support growth**.** We believe that mastery develops through iteration, feedback, and authentic effort. Faculty feedback, rubrics, and structured retake policies are intended to help students demonstrate what they've learned—not just what they missed.

*At StraighterLine, we recognize that an equitable and consistent grading policy is essential for student trust and institutional credibility. **Grading practices are reviewed regularly** to ensure that grades reflect both knowledge and skill development.

If changes to our grading policy occur, students will be notified within the course and provided **adequate time to adjust or complete coursework** under the current policy. StraighterLine reserves the right to amend the Grading Policy as needed to maintain fairness, alignment with learning outcomes, and academic standards.

Grading Scale

StraighterLine provides both a letter grade and a percentage score for each completed course. Students should be aware that partner institutions may have different policies regarding how grades are posted or evaluated for transfer credit. It is the student's responsibility to consult with their intended college or university to understand how StraighterLine grades will be applied.

Transcripts will reflect the following grading scale:

SCORE	**GRADE**
90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
Below 60	F

*A grade of at least 69.45% is required for ACE CREDIT recommendation or credit recognition at most StraighterLine partner colleges. ACE transcripts reflect P/F (Pass/Fail) only.

AI Use-Case Policy

StraighterLine Capstone assessments operate under one of three AI Use-Case Policies. These designations are selected intentionally to support learners in developing digital literacy, ethical reasoning, and authentic communication skills. Each model requires students to engage meaningfully with the course outcomes while adhering to academic integrity standards.

Independent Work Requirement: Capstones with this designation must be completed independently without using AI tools. The goal is for learners to showcase their own understanding and skills without AI assistance. Students are expected to generate and submit original work developed solely through their own reasoning and effort.

AI-Assisted Planning Option: Capstones with this designation may allow AI tools to support brainstorming and assessment planning. If allowed, students will be asked to document any AI assistance by noting how it informed their work. Documentation must be included within the assignment or in a designated reflection field. Examples include describing how an AI tool helped organize an outline, generate ideas, or surface sources for further exploration.

AI-Integration Requirement: Capstones with this designation require AI tools as part of the learning process. Students will be asked to reflect upon their AI interactions and AI contributions to the assessment. Reflections must include which tools were used, how they were used, and what insights the students gained from the process. This promotes transparency, ethical use, and metacognitive skill-building.

AI tools are not allowed for any Benchmark or Checkpoint assessments. These assessments are designed to measure individual mastery of course concepts without external assistance.

Course Completion Policy

In order for a course to be considered complete, all required coursework must be attempted, submitted, and graded. Required coursework includes all graded Checkpoint, Benchmark, and Capstone assessments, as designated in the course syllabus.

- Capstone assessments must be completed in alignment with the course's AI Use-Case Policy, and any required reflections or disclosures must be submitted for the work to be eligible for grading and credit.
- Courses may not be marked complete if any portion of the required work is missing, incomplete, submitted in violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, or under active review for authorship concerns. Students are responsible for responding to requests for clarification, documentation, or revision, and for ensuring that all work reflects the standards of academic honesty outlined in StraighterLine's policies.
- Course completion is required for transcript issuance, credit transfer, and successful progression toward academic or career goals.

Course Retake Policy

A student may retake any course. If, upon completion of a course, a student has not achieved a satisfactory score (69.45% and above, as per the American Council on Education–ACE CREDIT), a

student may retake a course by repurchasing and reattempting it in full. Students are required to wait a minimum of 3 business days between attempts. The highest final score will be recorded as the final course grade.

First Assessment Retake Policy

Unless otherwise indicated in the course (e.g., lab or writing assignments), students may take advantage of multiple attempts on their first quantitative Checkpoint or Benchmark assessment (e.g., quiz or exam) in an effort to demonstrate content mastery and earn a higher grade. This policy is designed to support student success early in the learning journey and to provide low-stakes opportunities to build confidence.

Capstone assessments, such as essays, lab work, and oral presentations, generally allow for two submissions, including for first assignments. Students are encouraged to use the feedback from their first submission to reflect, revise, and improve—in alignment with course outcomes and integrity expectations.

In most cases, first assignments are intentionally designed to align directly with core learning outcomes, setting the foundation for future progress and feedback.

Benchmark Examination Policy

Benchmark examinations are an integral part of many courses; these assessments are designed to accurately assess student knowledge and competence; thus, we uphold the highest of academic honesty standards throughout all testing processes. Violations of academic integrity during an examination include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication and academic misconduct. Failure to comply with the Academic Integrity Policy may result in a failure and/or zero on the attempted examination, a removal from the course, disqualification to enroll in future courses, and/or revocation of an academic transcript.

Benchmark assessments are question-based, quantitative, and summative. These assessments include: quizzes (in all forms), midterm examinations and final examinations. Materials that are permitted for each testing scenario differ by course; however, and as a general rule, Benchmark quizzes and midterm examinations permit some materials, while final exams may impose a stricter use of materials wherein the textbook and all course reading materials and notes may be limited and/or restricted.

Some final Benchmarks may require the use of a LockDown Browser to promote academic integrity and ensure fair assessment of independent work. A LockDown Browser prevents students from switching to other applications, accessing unauthorized websites, or using unapproved external resources during the exam. It does not record students or their screens, and

does not restrict access to any approved course materials permitted for that specific exam. Students should carefully read and review any course-specific examination requirements prior to taking an examination.

Benchmark examination policies include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Students are permitted to take a final exam once.
2. Unless otherwise noted, upon completion of Benchmark, a student may review examination questions and answers.
3. Unless otherwise noted, a student may not redo or resubmit a final examination once the exam is submitted.
4. If technical issues arise, a student may be permitted to retake the exam.
5. Students are asked to report all questions that may appear to have an error. After a careful review, the student may receive credit for the question. In these cases, there is no negative impact on the student's exam grade.
6. Unless otherwise noted, assessments will open in the same window (e.g. there are no pop-ups).
7. Some graded assessments are timed. Time limits for exams and graded assessments vary by course. Students must complete the timed exam within the reserved block of time.
8. Exams may contain a portion that must be graded by the Faculty or by hand. This additional component will be graded within 3-5 business days. Once this grading is complete, a final grade for the exam/assessment will be posted.

***We are currently transitioning to a new learning model (LEAP), and shifting to an assessment strategy based on 3 categories: Checkpoints, Benchmarks, and Capstones. You may see language that refers to old nomenclature, but our Code of Conduct and Academic* Integrity Standards remain the same, regardless of assessment name or type. **

Assignment Resubmission Policy

Assignment resubmission availability is determined by course, and ultimately, by assignment. Resubmission opportunities are designed to support student learning, reinforce feedback, and promote mastery—not to serve as unlimited retries. Students should consult the specific assignment's guidelines and rubric to determine whether a resubmission is permitted, how feedback should be addressed, and whether revisions must be accompanied by reflection or clarification (e.g., AI use disclosure when applicable).

Faculty feedback on the initial submission should be used as a learning tool to guide revision and improvement. Resubmitted work must reflect the student's original thinking and comply with all Academic Integrity and AI Use-Case Policies.

Attendance and Due-Date Policy

StraighterLine courses are self-paced and self-directed. There are no required logins, synchronous sessions, or formal attendance requirements. Students are in full control of how—and when—they engage with learning materials and assessments.

Because courses are asynchronous, there are no fixed due dates. There is no “late” work policy—students are encouraged to set personal pacing goals using the course roadmap and to monitor their progress regularly.

While flexibility is a core benefit of the StraighterLine model, students are responsible for managing their time, planning ahead for assignment feedback and resubmission timelines, and ensuring that all required work is submitted for grading. Learners aiming to transfer credits should also be aware of any external deadlines from partner institutions or funding sources.

Course Design and Instructional Approach

Role of Faculty

StraighterLine Faculty are duly credentialed experts, having earned a master’s degree or higher in their field of study. This expertise allows them to serve as subject matter experts (SMEs), helping StraighterLine to create innovative courses–using the most up-to-date pedagogical practices and technologies related to online, asynchronous, non-deadline driven learning. Faculty are not assigned to instruct within the course, as courses are designed to be asynchronous and self-paced. Instead, they serve as graders in courses, interacting with students through tailored assessment feedback promoting critical thinking, high expectations, and scaffolded success. Finally, Straighterline Faculty help us to uphold the highest standards for academic integrity and honesty, guiding students in the creation of authentic and original assignments. Faculty review AI use disclosures, promote transparency, and provide targeted coaching to support ethical decision-making. By using detailed rubrics and our “Grow and Show” feedback model, faculty ensure learners receive not just grades, but meaningful insights into their progress and opportunities for growth.

Course Design and Development

Straigherline’s courses are built using a mastery-based, student-centered design model that supports flexibility, integrity and skill development in equal measure. Grounded in the LEAP Learning Framework, each course is intentionally structured to promote authentic learning, guided feedback, and academic autonomy–while maintaining rigorous standards of quality and assessment validity. Notably, all courses are designed uniquely with discipline-specific elements recommended by our faculty.

Assessment-Aligned Design

- Each course is structured around measurable learning outcomes, with Checkpoints, Benchmarks, and Capstones aligned to assess progress and mastery at varying levels of cognitive complexity.
- Capstone assignments are designed to assess higher-order thinking and application; where appropriate, AI Use-Case Policies are assigned to promote responsible use and transparency.

Integrity-Built-In

- Courses include integrity lessons, clearly labeled AI expectations, and multiple mechanisms for identity and authorship verification (e.g., embedded verification, Turnitin, faculty feedback checkpoints).
- Rubrics and exemplars are integrated to help students understand assignment expectations and produce original, outcome-aligned work.

Scaffolded + Self-Paced Learning

- Learning activities are sequenced to build knowledge progressively, with formative tasks and feedback opportunities embedded throughout.
- Support structures such as pacing guides, tutoring, and faculty feedback promote persistence and progression without compromising flexibility.

Inclusive and Equitable by Design

- All course elements are built to support diverse learners: asynchronous access, multiple modalities of content delivery, and design strategies that reduce cognitive load and support self-regulation.
- Optional retakes and “first attempt forgiveness” policies are incorporated for many assessments to balance high expectations with high support.

Use of AI in Course Development

StraighterLine integrates generative AI tools—such as ChatGPT (OpenAI) and Claude (Anthropic)—at targeted stages of the course development process. These tools are used under faculty and instructional designer supervision to support efficiency, quality, and accessibility in content creation.

Current use cases include:

- Research support and content synthesis from credible sources
- Drafting and structuring early versions of instructional content
- Summarizing, reformatting, and adapting materials for multimodal delivery
- Iterating prompts and generating formative assessments, quizzes, and practice exercises

- Refining tone, clarity, and accessibility to align with StraighterLine's LEAP learning model

AI-assisted content is always reviewed, validated, and edited by StraighterLine's human faculty and designers. Final course materials are the product of expert judgment, intentional pedagogy, and careful alignment to course outcomes.

We follow the principles outlined in the **AI Fluency Framework** developed by Anthropic, applying the **4D model** to guide how we teach and use AI:

- **Delegation** – Deciding when and how to use AI tools in learning and assessment
- **Description** – Crafting effective prompts and instructions
- **Discernment** – Evaluating the relevance and reliability of AI outputs
- **Diligence** – Taking ownership and responsibility for all final content decisions

Assessment Design and Grading

StraighterLine assessments are designed to reflect real-world skills and support academic integrity. Our LEAP Assessment Model includes:

- **Benchmarks** – Mastery-based assessments with up to three attempts (finals limited to one)
- **Capstones** – Project-based assessments aligned to authentic tasks
- **Checkpoints** – Low-stakes knowledge checks to support formative learning

Grading is conducted via a hybrid model:

- **Objective assessments** are auto-graded where answers are definitive
- **Capstones and qualitative assignments** are evaluated by human graders based in the U.S. and abroad

Capstone assignments also include structured guidance on AI use. Learners are presented with one of three models, based on course and partner expectations:

1. **Independent Work** – No AI allowed
2. **AI-Assisted Planning** – AI permitted for brainstorming, with documentation required
3. **AI Integration** – AI use required as part of the assignment, including learner reflection

Our Commitment to Transparency and Innovation

While AI tools contribute to our development process, all instructional content and pedagogical decisions are made by human experts. This disclosure reflects our commitment to transparency, learner trust, and academic excellence in an evolving educational landscape.

StraighterLine is proud to lead with integrity, blending the best of human judgment and technological advancement to create rigorous, relevant, and future-ready learning experiences.

Course Sunsetting and Upgrades

To ensure the highest standards of academic quality and relevance, StraighterLine reviews and revises its course offerings on a regular 1–3 year cycle. Updates are driven by changes in disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical best practices, faculty recommendations, accreditation guidance, and ongoing quality reviews.

Because StraighterLine courses are self-paced and asynchronous, there is no fixed course end date. However, when a course section (also referred to as a “version”) is retired and replaced with an updated version, students in the retiring course will be offered a 120 day completion window to finish their work before the course sunsets. Upon the 120 day closure, the course topics are hidden so that no further course progress can be made.

Students who do not complete the course within this window can elect to be upgraded to the newest course version once the **120 day completion window** has closed.

Students that elect to upgrade are enrolled in the latest version within 1-3 business days. Upgraded students will start the new version from scratch.

StraighterLine will make every effort to support students during this transition and to maintain progress toward course completion and transfer goals.

Course Sunsetting and Migration Definitions

Course Version or Section: The terms are used interchangeably and refer to the active iteration of a course available to students.

Course Sunsetting or Retirement: The process of phasing out an existing course version and closing access to further submissions.

Course Upgrade: The process of moving a student from a sunsetting course version to the new version in which they will start the new course from scratch.