

# I can't open the assignments nor the "starter" files - I thought the course was free?

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Coursera allows anyone to audit any course for free. "Auditing" means that you can watch the Videos and read the Readings, but you cannot interact with any assessments (other than the in-video quiz questions, which auditors can interact with for free). In addition, auditors do not have access to the starter .xlsx/.xlsm files, which I reference and work through in the majority of the educational videos.

Assessments include end-of-week Quizzes and end-of-week Assignments. These are only available if you have purchased a Course Certificate and are NOT available if you are simply auditing the course. For compelling reasons why you should purchase a Course Certificate, please see "*The importance of a Course Certificate and the future of higher education.*"

To me, there is nothing better than the feeling of interacting with and teaching others how to solve problems in Excel. It brings me great joy! I love it when someone around the world emails me or comments in the course review section about how this course helped them with a project or a career goal, and it's such a great feeling when I have helped them improve their career and/or life, no matter how small that improvement. There is nothing more fulfilling and I cannot imagine doing anything else with my life and career.

On the flip side of the coin, putting together the educational material - screencasts, starter files, quizzes, and assignments - requires a tremendous amount of effort. I am a "one man band" and I do not rely on any other people to help in developing these courses. When I create a course, I essentially bury and immerse myself in the project, oftentimes working late nights and weekends and during campus holidays. It is a lot of work to put together a course on top of all the other teaching responsibilities that I have for the university!

In order to encourage instructors (not just me, but many others who bring quality courses to Coursera) to create, update, and administer online courses, there must be some financial incentive, and this incentive comes from a portion of Course Certificate revenue.

I realize that many of you are in between jobs, struggling financially, or not yet established in your career. If this is the case, then I encourage you to audit the course and I am happy to help you towards achieving your career goals. However, if you are in a position to contribute financially and you value Coursera online courses, please consider purchasing a Course Certificate.

Thanks!

Charlie