



For Phoenix Academy's online students, engagement and interaction are made possible by technology embedded in the classroom — upholding the feeling of a campus with a living community of learners. Photo credit: Phoenix Academy

# Western Australia's Phoenix Academy rises from the ashes

Western Australian education and training provider Phoenix Academy has developed a new integrated learning system using the latest technology to deliver training globally

Local education and training provider Phoenix Academy has been providing leading English, pre-university pathways, teacher education and customised corporate training for over 30 years, with clients from more than 50 countries across the world.

The events of 2020 had a major impact for the academy but Phoenix rose to the challenge and emerged stronger thanks to the company's innovative approach to creating new products.

Internationally, the accepted English language teaching model is based on face-to-face teaching of multinational student cohorts in small classes, with usually 12 to 15 students with one teacher.

Border closures around the world in response to the COVID-19 pandemic upended this approach overnight and the academy had to reimagine how language teaching and business training could be delivered effectively.





## Phoenix on the rise

Phoenix Academy delivers immersive and accessible online learning experiences that result in students being engaged, while the company builds a pipeline of future enrolments (online and offshore).

The academy's teaching innovation has been recognised, with Phoenix accepted as one of Austrade's ASEAN E-Learning Teaching webinar providers (partnering with The University of Western Australia), together with Sydney University, University of Queensland and Monash University.

Phoenix is also working with the Western Australian School Curriculum and Standards Authority, utilising its online teaching expertise to commence a Vocational Education and Training in Schools project with several schools internationally.



A new system caters for both face-to-face and live stream online students. Photo credit: Phoenix Academy

"We have forged new partnerships as understanding has increased around the need for a more integrated international education industry," Phoenix Academy Principal Robynne Walsh said.



"We understood the challenge would be to adjust the interactive nature of our teaching discipline and for it to be of high interest, otherwise students would cease to be motivated and engaged," Phoenix Academy Principal Robynne Walsh said.

Initially, Phoenix pursued a 100% online teaching environment, however, students were expected to return to physical classrooms as COVID-19 restrictions eased.

When students did start to return, the academy found around half its students chose to stay at home rather than attend a class, with many reporting they enjoyed the new flexible teaching style offered online.

The academy has also enrolled students offshore who were 100% dependent on the online live stream teaching.

"We had to develop a new system that catered for both face-to-face students and live stream online students," Mrs Walsh said.

"This required innovative planning and teaching techniques. We invested in new technology and staff development to adapt to this new environment.

"For online students, engagement and interaction is made possible by technology embedded in the classroom — upholding the feeling of our campus as a living community of learners."



Phoenix Academy re-trained training providers in the new technology and classrooms were upgraded to allow students to participate globally. Photo credit: Phoenix Academy

## Innovative new teaching method developed in Western Australia

One of the main issues Phoenix Academy had to address was acceptance of the new online environment and questions around its effectiveness, from both teaching staff and students.

In response, the academy's experienced staff identified 4 elements to facilitate successful online learning: a well-designed learning management system, a user-friendly video conferencing service, cutting-edge technology connecting online learners with the classroom in real time and teacher expertise to synthesise these elements into a seamless lesson.

"Our trainers had to be re-trained to understand the new technology, and how to navigate a modern system – and they had to adapt to a more teacher-centred approach," Mrs Walsh said.

"They also had to learn how to interpret the curriculum and map it against the new system, and session plans had to be re-written and

embedded into our new learning portal."

Classrooms were upgraded to allow students to participate globally, including new audio visual systems, multiple flat screens, ZOOM technology, daisy-chain microphones, mobile cameras, soundproofing and upgraded PCs.

"We knew that our new enrolments would be studying online, meaning a transition to a hybrid model of face-to-face and online," Mrs Walsh said.

"All courses and classes are available on an 'on-demand' basis through our new learning system.

"We have empowered our staff to explore, experiment and reflect and, as a result, we can confidently offer our online students experiences that are unique and exciting."

