

CASE STUDY:

# Griffith University

## Improving Accessibility and Increasing Student Engagement with Active Learning

### Overview

Griffith University in Queensland, Australia is a progressive and highly respected university dedicated to learning, leadership, and innovation. Active learning has become a key pedagogy at Griffith and the University needed a technology platform that would allow academics to incorporate active learning activities within the classroom.

Additionally, the solution had to be easy to deploy and be easy for academics to use. Finally, the technology had to support a wide-range of student engagement and response activities, ranging from simple student polling and response to facilitating group discussion before, during, and after class.

To meet these goals, Griffith University selected Echo360. Echo360 lecture capture and active learning tools are helping the University to more fully engage students and improve their learning experiences and outcomes.

### Transitioning to Active Learning

“Although there are many pockets of innovation at Griffith, there still were many students who were not experiencing an active learning environment during their lectures,” explains Professor Heidi Blair, Deputy Director of Innovative Design and Development at Learning Futures, the central learning and teaching unit for Griffith University.

“Rather than design complex classroom activities, we needed to find a way to help academics make an easy transition to active learning,” Professor Blair explains. “Since we already used Echo360 for lecture capture, academics were already familiar with the platform and were comfortable with it.”

“The advantage of Echo360 for us is that it is an enterprise tool that offers academics a continuum of features – from the simple to advanced – that are available to them whether they are teaching online or in-person. It’s easy for our academics to get started with active learning. They can upload their PowerPoint presentation and include one or two polling slides. As they become more comfortable with the pedagogy, they can add more complex engagement activities to their classroom.”

### FAST FACTS

- **Easy Transition to Active Learning Pedagogy:** Reliable technology with a continuum of features helps academics at Griffith get started with active learning to address their strategic plan that focuses on student-centred learning and student-centred experiences.
- **Improved Access to Teaching and Learning:** Echo360 helps Griffith University meet the demands of the modern student by providing access to teaching and learning “on-demand,” not only in the classroom, but also at a place or time of student’s choosing.
- **Key Component of Student Retention:** Engagement activities such as polling and group discussion have become a critical part of the learning experience at Griffith and are critical to student engagement and retention. In one cohort, 96% of students are active within the platform.



## Improving Access to Teaching and Learning, “When and Where Students Want It”

Like at most universities, the “traditional student” is a vanishing species. Many students at Griffith hold part-time or full-time jobs, they may be parents with young children, they may have travel or work obligations. These students may not always be able to attend scheduled classes on-campus. But, with Echo360, students can not only view recorded lecture presentations, but they can also remotely participate in classroom activities.

“The ability to view recorded lectures along with the classroom activities is a definite advantage of Echo360,” says Professor Blair. “With Echo360, distance learning can be an interactive experience, not just a one-way presentation. Students can participate in polls, answer questions, and engage in the full range of activities remotely the same way they would if they attended class in-person. Students can now engage in their learning wherever and whenever they want or need,” adds Professor Blair.

## Supporting Students “On-the-Go”

The Echo360 mobile app has also become a popular tool for students at Griffith. Students, especially those who may not always have access to reliable high-speed internet or those who will be offline for a long period are encouraged to download the app to take advantage of the secure offline viewing feature. Once downloaded, students watch recorded lectures at any time or place, even when they are traveling or otherwise offline.

## Impact of Technology

Griffith University has a long track record with lecture recording and the number of students engaging with classroom activities is also on the rise.

“It’s difficult to determine the direct impact of technology because there are so many variables in the classroom,” explains Professor Blair. “However, we do know that engagement matters and in the short time we have deployed Echo360, we’ve seen a steady increase in student activity within the system. Echo360 offers students a multitude of ways to engage with learning before, during, and after class. It allows students to interact with their instructor and with one another. Such engagement is critical to their learning and to their retention within a course of program of study. Echo360 is an important component to our retention strategy because it offers us at scale, the tools and capabilities to engage students online or face-to-face.”