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One-to-one courses in Australia

One-to-one tuition is appealing to more than just business people, and combining personal learning with group tuition is also growing in popularity. We profile some of these study options available in Australia.

Personal language learning certainly has its advantages. According to Laurence Stallman, Business Development Coordinator at Language Studies International in Brisbane, QLD, the beauty of one-to-one courses is that they can be modified to meet an individual's needs. "They are flexible both in timing and curriculum. They are specific to individual needs and can be tailored to changing situations," he relates. Leanne Everett at Language Links in Perth, WA concurs. "Not all students need to focus on the same areas and not all students can slot into a classroom type scenario."

Indeed, many students who opt for this more private form of tuition are after something bespoke and one-to-one courses have traditionally attracted business professionals with a strict timeframe. Jenny Byatt at West Coast College of English in Bunbury, WA explains, "We receive requests from Asian businessmen, particularly those who work in Western Australia's booming mining and construction industries and need to brush up on their English very quickly before going out into the bush."

Damien Vanderwolf at Joy of English in Sydney, NSW, agrees that their one-to-one courses are particularly attractive to business students. "As more people and businesses have moved to Sydney over the last seven years, so has the opportunity to take advantage of these courses," he says.

However, David Hurford from Port Douglas English Language Centre in Port Douglas, QLD, relates that business executives aren't the only clients interested in specialised study and says their own one-to-one programmes are particularly popular with an older clientele.

The intensive nature of one-to-one language programmes can in fact be appealing for many different types of student. At Burleigh Heads Education Centre on the Gold Coast, QLD, Patsy McLachlan reflects that university-aged students also benefit from one-to-one tuition and notes that the school offers several exam preparation modules that are taught on a one-to-one basis. "We run a Cambridge Exam preparation course in the mornings – five days per week – and in the afternoon students receive a very specialised exam preparation curriculum which they follow at their own pace." She adds, "Our Cambridge teacher is there to go through every piece of work the student does on a one-to-one basis which includes all exam papers and a grammar programme."

She adds that students wishing to take the IELTS exam can seek additional instruction by taking an afternoon one-to-one course in conjunction with their General English course; something that has proved particularly successful among candidates. "We have had great success with the IELTS preparation afternoon course and found that morning classes with General English combined with afternoon specific exam preparation has benefited students immensely," she says.

Everett notes that focused one-to-one learning also attracts foreign nationals taking up residency. "[Courses] tend to appeal to older/mature students," she recounts. "Sometimes they are university students that speak fluently but are having problems with their writing and sometimes they are new residents that have a sound knowledge of the language and can read and write but are not confident to speak."

She relates that course costs are a deterrent to some students. "At this stage, only about two-to-five per cent of our clients would select this option, I think this may be due to the fact that one-to-one programmes are more expensive than classroom options."

Del Childs from Sun Pacific College in Cairns, QLD, however, relates that their own one-to-one programming generates a healthy amount of interest, particularly from students who have already benefited from personalised tuition elsewhere. "Some of our Korean students have come to Australia via the Philippines and had enjoyed one-to-one English classes there." She also notes a growing trend whereby students enrol on a one-to-one course in addition to their normal programming. "Since its introduction it has become a popular optional programme with about 40 per cent of our students enrolling as an add-on to their full time classes."

On the whole, most Australian providers see personalised one-to-one tuition maintaining its place in the language learning market. Although not as popular as some of the other programmes out there, its methodology certainly procures results, as Sarah Charles from Sydney College of English in Sydney, NSW concludes. "The one-to-one approach guarantees [students] a goal-oriented, personalised training which they need."

Selection of programmes available

Location	Name of school	Year round provision?	Min. course length (weeks)	Min. hrs tuition per day
Adelaide, SA	SA Adelaide Language Centre	req	1	n
Brisbane, QLD	Language Studies International	•	1	45 mins
Bunbury, WA	West Coast International College of English	•	1	3
Cairns, QLD	Sun Pacific College	•	1	1
Gold Coast, QLD	Burleigh Heads Language Centre	•	v	4
Perth, WA	Language Links	•	req	2
Queensland, QLD	Port Douglas ELC	•	1	5
Surfers Paradise, QLD	Geos Queensland Coll. of Eng. Gold Coast	•	n	n
Sydney, NSW	Sydney College of English	•	2	2
Sydney, NSW	The Joy of English	•	12	4
Sydney, NSW	OISE / Regent Sydney	•	1	3

n none req on request