

3 online high school trends gaining traction this year



By [Rebecca Pretorius](#)

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In the past, South African students have been largely restricted to local curricula and qualifications via traditional, brick-and-mortar schools. With the growth of online schools, access to international curricula is not only in higher demand, but is becoming increasingly easier to access. With some lockdown restrictions likely to still be in place, back-to-school will take on an entirely new meaning as we head into 2021.



Remote learning and online schools have seen accelerated growth, due in part to the Covid-19 lockdown. Besides offering a reliable alternative where face-to-face schooling has been limited or where schools have struggled to make the shift to online, these new schools also offer students a wider selection of curricula and qualifications to choose from. At the same time, they also provide flexibility for sporting, academic and other activities of interest, to ensure a holistic school life online. Moving forward, we're likely to see emphasis on three main areas:

Flexible schedules

One aspect of remote learning or online schooling that has stuck in most people's minds is the flexibility this affords. While studying online helps students get ahead and build their depth of expertise, it has also given students an opportunity to learn additional skills, such as time management, which will be instrumental at university and in their careers where learning is more independent.

Accessibility

Technology can be tailored to meet any need, and EdTech in particular offers infinite opportunities for accessibility. This is revolutionary for those with disabilities, whether they be physical disabilities or learning disabilities. With increased focus on inclusivity and equal opportunities, ensuring that learning materials are available to every type of student will be essential across the board in 2021.

Internationally-recognised curricula

University admission is top of mind for ambitious students, with many seeking opportunities beyond South African borders. Having access to internationally recognised qualifications makes it easier to navigate global admission requirements. Online schools offer students greater options of subjects and curricula, something which traditional schools are also expanding into in response to greater demand. This includes the International GCSE and A-Level curriculum, which are internationally recognised and accepted around the world. The following are likely to see an increase in demand from South African students:

- **A-levels:** These are the most widely studied qualifications in the world. The A-level qualifications offered by Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) are studied in more than 125 countries, while schools in 80 countries offer A-levels from Pearson Edexcel.
- **US Advanced Placement (AP) courses:** US AP courses allow high school students to take classes at the US university level and is one of the most recognised curricula for top universities. With top scores in AP courses, students are able to get college credit for these subjects at most US universities. With 38 subject options available, more students will be looking to invest in their futures through in-depth study alongside their traditional or online schooling.
- **The International Baccalaureate (IB):** A global standard academic programme run by the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO), an independent not-for-profit based in Switzerland. While not available online yet, it is a growing, internationally recognised curriculum. Offered in over 140 countries around the world, the IB Diploma Programme (DP) is a two-year “pre-university” course that students start in their second last year of high school.

ABOUT REBECCA PRETORIUS

With over 15 years industry experience in digital education and publishing, Country Manager for Crimson Education South Africa, Rebecca Pretorius, has geared her career towards using technology to help learners access their full potential. Pretorius focuses on exposing young ambitious South Africans to international study and networking opportunities, ultimately unlocking their potential in a competitive global arena.

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