

University of Phoenix Announces Collaboration with OpenAI to Advance AI- Powered Learning, Workforce Innovation and Research



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Collaboration will accelerate AI integration across teaching and learning, student services, operations, workforce readiness and collaborative research to help prepare working adult learners for the AI economy

PHOENIX, July 14, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Artificial intelligence is transforming nearly every profession, creating a vital need for working adults to continuously develop new skills while they are already in the workforce. Recognizing this challenge, University of Phoenix today announced a collaboration with OpenAI designed to help working adult learners build the AI capabilities they need to succeed in a rapidly changing economy.

With OpenAI, University of Phoenix will explore high-value AI applications across teaching and learning, student support, career services, institutional operations and collaborative research, all with a singular focus on helping working professionals develop practical AI skills they can immediately apply in their workplaces.

The collaboration builds upon University of Phoenix's comprehensive, institution-wide AI strategy and reflects a shared commitment to ensuring AI is implemented responsibly, ethically and with measurable impact for learners, educators and employers.



"Artificial intelligence represents one of the most significant shifts in the future of work since the emergence of the internet," said Chris Lynne, Chief Executive Officer of Phoenix Education Partners and President of University of Phoenix. "Our students aren't preparing for tomorrow's workforce—they're already shaping today's. Together with OpenAI, University of Phoenix has an opportunity to help working adults build practical AI capabilities they can immediately apply in their careers while advancing new understanding of how AI can improve learning, career mobility and workforce success."

"AI has the greatest impact when institutions combine access to advanced technology with the expertise, vision and support needed to put it to work in meaningful ways," said Kevin Mills, Head of Education Go-to-Market at OpenAI. "We're excited to collaborate with the University of Phoenix to expand access to ChatGPT Edu while helping foster the capabilities, culture and confidence needed to accelerate responsible AI adoption across the institution. Together, we're laying the foundation for new approaches to teaching, learning and student success in the age of AI."

Built Around the Working Adult Learner

University of Phoenix offers a uniquely valuable environment for advancing the future of AI-enabled learning because of the learners it serves. With an average student age of approximately 38, University of Phoenix students are working adults balancing careers, families and education simultaneously. They are not preparing to enter the workforce—they are already driving it.

Together, OpenAI and University of Phoenix will explore new ways to help these learners build AI fluency and workplace-ready skills that can be applied immediately on the job. By integrating AI into learning experiences and studying how working professionals use those capabilities in real-world settings, the collaboration aims to accelerate skills development, improve learning outcomes and better understand how AI can help today's workforce adapt to rapidly changing industries.

Because University of Phoenix serves professionals actively applying new knowledge in their workplaces, the partnership also creates a rare opportunity to observe, measure and continuously improve AI-enabled learning in real time—generating insights that can help shape the future of higher education and workforce development.

Accelerating AI Across the University

The collaboration creates opportunities for University of Phoenix to explore AI innovation across multiple dimensions of the university, with OpenAI, including:

- AI-powered teaching and learning experiences that deepen student engagement and improve educational outcomes.
- Expanded AI skills development integrated throughout academic programs to prepare graduates for an AI-enabled workplace.
- New tools and resources that increase faculty productivity while enhancing personalized student support.
- AI-enabled career services that help learners better understand emerging workforce demands, identify skills gaps and navigate evolving career pathways.
- Administrative innovations that improve institutional efficiency while enhancing the student experience.
- Workforce-aligned solutions that help employers address rapidly changing AI capability needs within their organizations.

Building on a Strong Foundation

This collaboration will build upon a significant body of work University of Phoenix has already undertaken to thoughtfully and responsibly embed artificial intelligence throughout the institution.

Recognizing early that AI literacy would become an essential workforce competency, the University established a comprehensive AI strategy centered on three academic pillars:

- Embedding AI competencies into academic programs and curricula.
- Leveraging AI to enhance teaching, learning and student support.
- Integrating AI into institutional processes and operations through a human-centered, responsible AI framework.

Today, AI is already integrated across most of the University of Phoenix experience. More than 20 different degree programs are being systematically embedded with AI skills and literacy, and students have access to Microsoft Copilot and AI-powered academic support through the Phoenix Academic Support System (PASS); while Phoebe®, the University's AI-powered student support assistant, helps thousands of learners each day with real-time assistance. Additionally, the University's Center for AI Resources serves as a centralized hub for AI literacy and responsible use, faculty have completed institution-wide AI training, and students are increasingly engaging in classroom-based, scenario-driven AI experiences that simulate real workplace applications.

The University's philosophy regarding AI is simple: it should amplify human potential—not replace it. Every AI initiative the University has designed, thus far, and will going forward, should strengthen critical thinking, problem solving, ethical judgment and career readiness while helping learners develop the confidence to responsibly and ethically use AI throughout their professional lives.

Together, these initiatives demonstrate how University of Phoenix is moving beyond conversations about AI, to actions implementing it at scale in ways that are practical, ethical and directly aligned with workforce needs. This collaboration with OpenAI will advance this important work and more.

Advancing AI Research for Working Adult Learners

The collaboration also aligns with the University's ongoing leadership in workforce research, including studies examining career optimism, AI adoption, employer readiness, workforce transformation and the changing relationship between education and work. This collaboration with OpenAI could fuel deeper exploration of how AI can transform higher education while strengthening workforce outcomes.

Because many of University of Phoenix's students apply new knowledge while actively employed, the collaboration creates an uncommon opportunity to understand how AI influences learning, workplace performance and career advancement in real-world settings. The resulting insights have the potential to inform employers, policymakers and higher education institutions seeking more effective ways to prepare today's workforce for tomorrow's economy.

As AI continues to reshape nearly every industry, University of Phoenix and OpenAI share a vision of ensuring working adult learners have access to the education, experiences and tools necessary to remain competitive, adaptable and successful throughout their careers. Together, the organizations aim to demonstrate how higher education can become an engine for lifelong AI capability—preparing learners not simply for their next job, but for a lifetime of learning, adaptation and opportunity.

About University of Phoenix

University of Phoenix is Built for Real Life. 50 Years Strong. The University innovates to help working adults enhance their careers and develop skills in a rapidly changing world through flexible online learning, relevant courses, academic AI pillars, and skills-mapped curriculum for associate, bachelor's and master's degree programs. Active students and alumni have access to Career Services for Life® resources including career guidance and tools. For more information, visit phoenix.edu.

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