

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA CASE STUDY

A single platform for identity, access
and remote learning outcomes

The University of Western Australia lays the foundation for a single platform for identity, access and remote learning outcomes

The University of Western Australia (UWA) has set the ambitious goal of achieving an international ranking in the world Top 50 Universities by 2050. Underpinning this goal, is the University's Vision 2030: to create the next generation of global leaders through experience-rich education and world-leading, trustworthy research.

To support the vision, UWA looked to overcome the challenges of a disparate technology environment and increasing technical debt, through an Identity and Access Management (IAM) solution to remove inefficiencies, improve user experience and accelerate UWA's digital transformation.

Eliminating technology roadblocks to support a modern way of teaching

"Traditionally teaching and learning was done inside the confines of bricks and mortar. Today we provide our product offering to digital natives who are very used to contemporary tools and want the flexibility to work from anywhere and that can be from the comfort of their own lounge room or could be in a virtual lecture theatre or in a virtual laboratory," explains **Warwick Calkin, Chief Information Officer, UWA**.

"Unlike a corporate environment where everyone fits into an organisational chart nice and neatly, the university environment doesn't have those nice clean lines around it. We had a legacy environment where we had 17 schools and each one of those schools had their own IT team. User personas were almost localised, determined by the local school. So a student ID might have 30+ attributes where only 10 attributes might be common to another faculty. Blurring the lines even further is that some users are both staff and students, which meant the parameters around user identity are even more complex," says Calkin.

With a complex mixture of outdated systems and processes catering for a plethora of identity personas, it was apparent UWA needed a consolidated identity solution and to move into a streamlined environment to improve both staff and student experience.



UWA is ranked 86th in the world in the QS World University Rankings and one of Australia's leading research universities among the Group of Eight (a coalition of top research universities in the country).

UWA has:

- Over 25,000 students
- More than 3,300 academic and professional staff
- More than 32 research and training centres
- 5 stars for Student:Teacher Ratio, Student Retention and Student Demand (QS 2018)



The Insight & UWA Strategic Partnership

Insight has been a long-standing strategic partner of UWA, delivering a range of project outcomes for the institution's 'Digital Student Experience' program initiatives.

Insight was appointed to implement an Identity and Access Management solution (IAM) based on the Microsoft Office 365 platform for both staff and students. Identity control was consolidated into a central, 'single source of truth' end-to-end platform, putting in place a trusted environment for future single sign-on to other in-house applications, such as HR, e-learning solutions and third party applications.

The Insight team worked with UWA to deliver a centralised access solution based on Microsoft Azure Active Directory (AD) - a solution that also took advantage of Microsoft's enhanced security features such as Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) conditional access.

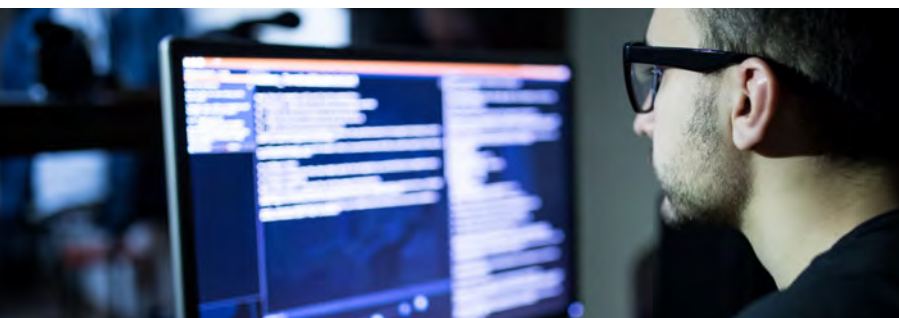
Project components delivered:

- **Complex identity and access management consolidation** involving the reduction of multiple Active Directory forests, Office 365 tenants and the integration of existing business applications to leverage Single-Sign-On.
- **Migration of 60,000 identities and mailboxes** from both on-premise and Google suite to Office 365.
- **Multi-factor Authentication (MFA) and self-service password reset** rolled out to all UWA staff and students (through a student-opt-in process to increase security posture of student accounts).
- **Zero Trust approach for security** that has been adopted as part of UWA's Network Access Control strategy

By January 2020, all 60,000 identities were successfully mapped and migrated over to the new environment. Now, when a staff member or student logs in to Office 365, they have access to the Microsoft collaboration tools, and can access relevant, on-premises university-provided applications and other third party applications, based on their user persona.

"Insight brought with them the experience on other higher education projects. Having completed similar projects with other universities, there were some lessons learned that we didn't need to relearn, and those learnings got us to a shorter and quicker outcome. Insight's knowledge of technology and their understanding of how we intended to use the technology delivered success for UWA," says **Warwick Calkin, CIO, UWA**

He continues, "One of the biggest concerns for the students was that they may lose some of their historical mail. But no one lost anything, there was not one person who lost any data and there were 60,000 mailboxes involved. We have had nothing but positive feedback on the project. The students are also well aware of the benefits of using Microsoft applications as they provide the collaboration skills for the modern workplace."



Accelerating Collaboration and Remote Learning capabilities

Insight rolled out Microsoft Teams to all students on Day One of go-live as a replacement to Google Hangouts to boost collaboration and complement existing inhouse tools for teaching and learning.

The IAM solution also laid the foundation for UWA to rapidly spin up Microsoft Teams through the single O365 platform to support collaboration and online learning in response to the COVID-19 circumstances.

Working together, Insight then supported UWA's immediate remote learning initiatives through:

- **Deployment of Microsoft Teams to support 3,144 course units.** This was achieved through the creation of Microsoft Team Groups for each unit, adding defined channels, tabs and meetings to facilitate online and remote learning.
- Leveraging the Microsoft partnership UWA could take advantage of **Azure Labs which has now been extended to more than 2,000 lab sessions across UWA.** Insight supported UWA's deployment through facilitation of user assignments for students based on course data.
- **Deployment of business-specific Microsoft Teams groups** to reflect UWA's Organisational Structure.

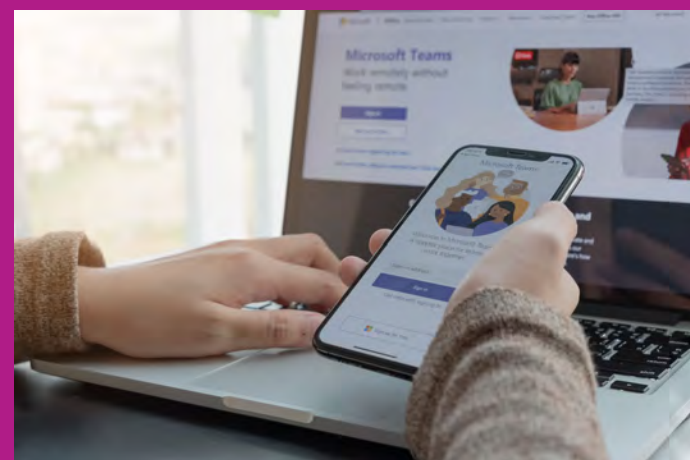
"It happened so smoothly which was amazing, and the intuitive nature of the Microsoft platform and Teams definitely helped make it easy for students to adjust to remote learning. Currently, Microsoft Teams is being used to support tutorials and labs as well as group assignments. The biggest value from my perspective, is that Microsoft products are used in the workplace. I see the real value in upskilling students and preparing them for that environment early on, while they are still studying."

Brehany Shanahan, Student Guild President, UWA

In just two weeks, UWA deployed online learning across thousands of units, becoming a game-changer for its learning environment.

"UWA blends digital technology with flipped classroom models of learning and teaching – providing streamed and downloadable recorded lectures and virtual labs"

Warwick Calkin, CIO, UWA



Insight's Technical Leadership and Blended Team approach

"Insight brings the right people to the table at the right time. They make a difference by bringing in-depth knowledge across the Higher Education Sector and the ability to navigate complex IT projects in a far more seamless and elegant way than what we could do on our own," says Calkin.

Insight's blended team approach to working with UWA, helped to demonstrate technical leadership and supported the UWA IT Team with knowledge transfer at all stages of the project, ensuring UWA was well placed to drive business value forward.

"As opposed to some of the more transactional vendors, Insight has proven to be a true strategic partner and is there for the longer term. Insight's resources operate very much as a part of our team, so much so it often hard to discern whether they are UWA employees or Insight employees," he adds.



The road ahead

UWA is now well on its way to support a modern, online way of learning with a single, extensible platform to help drive digital resilience and deliver learning, research and information sharing 'beyond borders'. Most importantly, the project has accelerated UWA's digital roadmap in alignment with its vision and ranking goal to 2030.



"Working with Insight we know we make the right choices, at the right time, with the right partner. Together we have achieved significant progress in a relatively short time. We still have years of technical debt that we are trying to overturn here and have a lot more heavy lifting in front of us. However, working as a team with Insight, I am confident that we can do it. There are a number of areas in the digitisation and modernisation of our environment where Insight absolutely brings value."

Warwick Calkin, CIO, UWA

