Helping make academic life a joy

Abu Dhabi University automates access management, giving new students and staff access to applications fast and helping to dramatically reduce help-desk enquiries.

Key Facts

Company
Abu Dhabi University

Industry
Higher Education

Country
United Arab Emirates

Employees
500 staff; 6,390 students

Website
www.adu.ac.ae

Challenges

Students and staff members at the university faced delays gaining access to the applications they required, and the IT team had no tools for access reporting to satisfy auditors.

Results

- Reduced helpdesk tickets
- Enabled detailed view of application access and usage
- Increased access time to applications for students and staff

Products

Identity Manager

Abu Dhabi University is a thriving centre for higher education in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It runs faculties for law, arts and sciences, engineering and business administration — all of which offer undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Demand for places is high, with applicants coming not just from the UAE, but around the world.

Manual processes cause delays
The university faced significant challenges around access management. There were delays in giving new students access to the university applications they required. In addition, because the entire process was manual, de-provisioning students at the end of their courses wasn't instant. This left the university open to risk as students who had left still had active accounts. It wasn't just students who were affected. New staff didn't always get access to what they needed straightaway.

Shabeer Mangattuparambil, Senior IT Manager at Abu Dhabi University, says: "It could take up to three days or more to provide a student or member of staff with access to the systems they required. In the first weeks of an academic year, we could receive hundreds of help-desk

requests from new students saying they still couldn't reach their applications."

The access management challenges were highlighted in a gap analysis report by the university, which also showed a lack of tools to support governance. There was nothing in place to give auditors an instant view of which students or staff had access to what systems, and when and why that access was granted.

A extensible solution through a trusted partner

The university engaged with longstanding technology partner Exceed IT to find a solution. Exceed IT proposed One Identity Manager, and provided Shabeer and other key stakeholders with a demonstration. Says Shabeer: "The demonstration and a small proof of concept that followed showed the wide range of capabilities within Identity Manager for access control and governance. What's more, we saw that we could phase the implementation of Identity Manager, automating access first and then implementing the governance features later."

Automation eliminates access delays for students

Shabeer and his colleagues worked with Exceed IT on the deployment of Identity Manager — and within two months they had completely automated access management. Today, Identity Manager runs a check on the Student Information System every three hours to see if there are any new students or changes to the status of existing students. If a new student arrives, it automatically updates the access systems for each of the applications the student needs to use. After completion, an email is generated and sent to the new student's personal email address with the user name and password or passwords they'll need when they start at the university.

"Students quickly gain access to the applications they need. The number of help-desk inquiries at the start of the academic year has fallen significantly because access management is no longer an issue," says Shabeer.

IT recoups time for strategic projects

There is no longer the risk of errors during the access management process because of the high levels of automation. Importantly, the IT team is saving staff time — time it can spend on more strategic tasks. For instance, Shabeer and his team are looking to incorporate the Identity Manager's governance functionality into their operations. "We will be able to provide detailed reports in real time, giving a 360-degree view of our user base," he says.

Effective provisioning ensures security

Human resources personnel at the university have told Shabeer that they're highly satisfied with the adoption of Identity Manager. A connector between Identity Manager and the HR system means that data on new starters is automatically pulled from the HR system and the right levels of access provided to those individuals. In addition, there is less risk because Identity Manager also identifies the date when employees are to leave the university, and on that day, all access rights are terminated.

About One Identity

The One Identity family of identity and access management (IAM) solutions, offers IAM for the real world including business-centric, modular and integrated, and future-ready solutions for identity governance, access management, and privileged management.

View all One Identity case studies at OneIdentity.com/casestudies

ONE IDENTITY