



University of Lucerne and ZHB expand digital collaboration in research, teaching and administration

Digital workplace

University of Lucerne & ZHB introduced flexible, mobile working with M365 (Teams, OneDrive, Planner).

Protection in the Cloud

Established high-security standards for protecting data, identities, and clients in the cloud.

High acceptance

Adoption & Change Program supports users in adopting new tools immediately.

Client

University of Lucerne and the ZHB

Industry

Education

Plattform

Microsoft Azure

Services

Microsoft Teams Migration including Adoption & Change Management Services, Project Management, and Managed Service UCNext

Learning, teaching and research with collaborative IT solutions

The University of Lucerne may be the youngest in Switzerland, but it has big plans for the future. With its focus on the humanities, it is unique in Switzerland and aspires to be among the best European universities centered on humanities. Achieving this requires excellent research, teaching, and the most modern education and learning environment. The phased introduction of Microsoft 365, including Teams, OneNote, Planner, Whiteboard, and OneDrive, is the logical step to becoming a digitally networked educational institution. The university plans to implement these changes with the Central and University Library of Lucerne (ZHB). However, the university first needed to overcome several challenges. How can the sensitive data of all users be protected in the cloud? How can students and staff successfully learn to use new tools such as Teams and OneDrive? How can an IT project of this size and complexity be managed effectively? Close collaboration with experts at SoftwareOne helped constructively answer these questions and successfully implement the transformation.



The challenge

Digitisation in higher education: finding the best way forward

At the University of Lucerne, nothing is more important than people. The university is focused on the human sciences, such as theology, social sciences, economics, and health sciences. To attain a top position in the European higher education landscape, it invests not only in its faculties, junior research, and international networking with other institutions but also in state-of-the-art working conditions to attract researchers and students to an appealing educational location.

The Corona pandemic accelerated requirements for digitalization as indispensable in the world of work. It is essential for flexibility, productivity, and efficiency. During the pandemic, the University of Lucerne created conditions to gradually implement a digital and mobile workplace for all 750 employees and around 3,350 students. Individual tools such as Zoom were already in use, but collaboration across the university and communications with external companies had increasingly shifted to Microsoft Teams. Now, users can choose from a broader range of collaborative tools to make it easier for university members to access internal and external knowledge. Document collaboration is more efficient, and communications flow smoothly among connected educational institutions, libraries, businesses, and partners.

The IT department needed to ensure the new cloud environment met the university's high data protection and security requirements. But which security and compliance solution was right for the University of Lucerne? Which M365 collaboration tools make sense, and what steps are required to implement a central platform that integrates existing tools? What are the best ways to prepare users for new processes, working methods, and application choices? To answer these questions, the University of Lucerne collaborated closely with SoftwareOne as a partner bringing relevant experience in technical implementation of M365 and assurance of successful user adoption, change management, and practical project management.

SoftwareOne also supports the implementation of Microsoft Teams Telephony and provides ongoing support to the University with its UCNext-managed service.

The solution



We quickly realized that a change of this magnitude could only be successful if we gained the acceptance of all stakeholders, especially the university's staff. So, we involved them as early as possible implementing our new M365 digital communication and collaboration tools. SoftwareOne's experience in the higher education environment and its expertise in adoption and change helped us to develop a strategy that would meet the needs of the University of Lucerne and successfully support the transformation process of all users.



Marco Antonini, Head of IT Services, University of Lucerne

Best practices for a digital campus

SoftwareOne conducted a comprehensive consultation and analysis of the current IT environment considering all aspects of digital transformation using M365 to create an appropriate strategy and action recommendations for the University of Lucerne.

Key issues and associated steps include:

Cloud Readiness Check: To successfully connect the on-premises environment to Microsoft 365, SoftwareOne reviewed all necessary measures for connecting, authenticating, and synchronizing users. The chosen hybrid connection included planning and designing Azure AD Connect and Single Sign On (SSO) and establishing concepts that clarify permissions, administration, and governance.

Security & compliance approach: An assessment workshop and M365 security roadmap produced a single-tenant M365 solution that ensures seamless communication between students and university staff. Guided by the university's security requirements, the team designed a best practice security roadmap covering required Microsoft cloud security services such as Conditional Access and Azure Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA).

Hybrid Exchange environment: The hybrid Exchange environment benefits users with enhanced protection using Exchange Online Protection and Data Loss Prevention. The app and all its features can be used flexibly at any time, including on mobile devices.

Step-by-step collaboration with M365 applications: After consulting with SoftwareOne on selecting appropriate tools, the university chose Teams (initially without telephony), OneDrive, OneNote Planner, Whiteboard, and ToDo. A pilot group assisted with initial testing and provided individual support to the rollout across the university.

To demonstrate Teams for future telephony use across the university, SoftwareOne created a proof-of-concept pilot. In the future, the outdated cantonal telephone system for all university employees will be replaced by Teams telephony.

Adoption & Change Management Discovery & Advisory Services: As projects introduce change, individuals need supportive guidance to bring them on board. To identify the needs of the University of Lucerne and the ZHB employees, SoftwareOne conducted workshops with selected users and developed a tailor-made orientation roadmap, core message, as well as a visualisation of the strategy to accompany project adoption and change management.

The university introduced a mix of learning on demand and instructional support via two central web-based knowledge platforms (SharePoint Online) to train all users. Working with SoftwareOne and Soluzione42, a Learning-on-Demand application was made available to all university staff. Students are provided with a user-centric solution through Microsoft 365 Learning Paths to independently access tutorials, guides, and a range of information on the new collaborative tools anytime.

Project Management: Thanks to transparent communication and regular meetings between the university and SoftwareOne, the project was implemented efficiently and within the framework of all specified milestones and deadlines.

The outcome

Powerful tools for all

- **Attractive workplace:** With the phased introduction of M365, the University of Lucerne is taking a significant step towards becoming a modern, digital, and mobile workplace and a digitally networked, future-proof educational institution. These modern working conditions increase the university's attractiveness as a place to work and study.
- **Greater flexibility for research and teaching:** M365's new digital communication and collaboration tools enable users at the University of Lucerne to access and process internal information anytime, anywhere. Above all, it brings enormous gains in flexibility and independence to the university's working environment and positively impacts user motivation, productivity, and efficiency. It also contributes to promoting high-quality research and teaching in support of the University's goal to take its place among the best humanities universities in Europe.
- **Enhanced collaboration:** The new collaboration tools, such as Teams, OneDrive, and Planner, not only promote practical cooperation among students and staff within the university but also improve and strengthen national and global collaboration with other educational institutions, businesses, and partners. With Teams in particular, the university is well-equipped to communicate across this network.
- **Enhanced security and compliance:** Thanks to underlying security and compliance concepts, the University of Lucerne meets the high-security requirements for protecting the data of all university members in the cloud. Microsoft's best-practice cloud security services provide enhanced protection against data loss, a simple single sign-on process, and strong identity protection with cloud-based MFA.
- **User adoption from the start:** With the help of SoftwareOne's Adoption & Change Management Services, the University of Lucerne was able to advance the technical implementation of the new collaboration tools and gain user acceptance. Taking their needs into account from the beginning, identified potential stumbling blocks and removed them in the planning phase.

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