



Enhancing Western Sydney University's digital experience with an innovative approach to Azure



Microsoft Partner of the Year
2024 Azure ANZ Winner

Western Sydney University (WSU) is one of Australia's leading universities with a comprehensive range of study areas in undergraduate, postgraduate and Higher Degree Research programs. In 2024, for a third consecutive year, the University was ranked number one in the world in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings. With more than 47,000 students and 6,000 staff across 13 campus locations in Sydney, Western has a diverse IT environment designed to provide a rich technology-enhanced learning experience.

Challenges

Technology forms a critical part of the University's strategic plan and the University's IT team had several objectives to deliver on. These included enhancing the digital experience, facilitating world-class research, promoting university engagement, building digital capability, and empowering innovation. However, due to the complexity of its environment across on-premises servers, co-located data centre hosting and a private cloud, several challenges were faced in delivering on these objectives.

These included:

- A critical requirement to exit its data centre within a tight 6-month timeframe, as infrastructure had reached end-of-life, and the vendor was ceasing support for its managed platform
- Due to the specific storage used and its limitation the University were using workaround solutions
- The existing legacy infrastructure, including backup, lacked agility and innovative features leading to problems with reliability and performance
- Western had a significant amount of production workloads on virtual machines (VMs) that needed a migration path to Azure Public Cloud. The University had already identified the potential benefits of moving services, infrastructure, and applications to Azure Public Cloud, allowing for faster deployment, agile development, flexible expenditure, high security and scalability. They went out to tender to find a trusted partner with deep expertise to support their migration to Azure.

Logicalis and Microsoft: A partnership built on collaboration and expertise

Logicalis and Microsoft have a robust partnership both in Australia and around the world. As a certified Azure Expert Managed Service Provider (MSP), global Managed Security Service Provider (MSSP), and member of the Microsoft Intelligent Security Association (MISA), Logicalis holds five key solution designations in Security, Azure, Data and AI, Digital and App Innovation, and Modern Workplace.

In March 2024, Logicalis earned Microsoft's verified Managed Extended Detection and Response (MXDR) solution status, highlighting its excellence in security and service delivery.

Leveraging these certifications, Logicalis applies its expertise to help clients unlock their potential through Microsoft solutions. The team uses their designations to implement advanced security measures, optimise Azure deployments, enhance data-driven decision-making, innovate digital and app solutions, and modernise workplaces. This partnership ensures customers have access to local and global expertise, guaranteeing quality, assurance, and positive experiences that deliver tangible value to their organisations.

Solution

In response to the tender, the team at Logicalis explored a variety of Microsoft technologies to determine the most suitable option for Western Sydney University. According to the University, while several vendor proposals were received, Logicalis stood out with its agnostic approach and detailed analysis process and methodology. By leveraging its strong relationship with Microsoft, the Logicalis team sourced data around each solution, allowing for a comprehensive evaluation of migration, ongoing costs, licensing, and functionality. This meticulous approach yielded valuable actionable insights into determining the platforms that would best align with Western's requirements.

To align with the future cloud strategy for the University in Azure, Logicalis designed an enterprise-scale Azure Landing Zone based off Microsoft's modular and scalable Cloud Adoption Framework. This approach provided a foundation for good practices and standards within Azure while creating an environment for hosting workloads in the cloud. The enterprise-scale landing zone architecture represents Microsoft's recommended strategic design and technical state for an Azure environment. This ensures the environment can continue to evolve alongside future developments to the Azure platform by Microsoft and authorised vendors.

Outcome

Both Logicalis and Microsoft were deeply involved with key stakeholders at the university, which played a significant role in the success of this project. Through active engagement with important decision-makers at all levels, including the C-suite and IT departments, the project team fostered collaboration and understanding which gained support and buy-in. This approach ensured that each stakeholder understood the significance of the solution for them and, most importantly, what it would mean for their user experience.

The Microsoft technology leveraged was the integrated native Azure suite including the complementary operational services. Given the major technology change and rapid adoption of Azure, Logicalis developed a shared services model that was impactful and allowed the IT team at Western to scale internal operations whilst ensuring the right governance frameworks were in play from the first day of onboarding. This consultative process covered cloud analysis, landing zone build, cloud governance, and fast-track migration planning and execution. The newly built platform enabled the University's applications team to consume native Azure services safely supporting arrange of student services such as the [Western Mobile App](#).

Microsoft Partner
Azure Expert MSP



“Logicalis developed an innovative solution with meticulous planning, detailed analysis, and a collaborative approach with key stakeholders at Western Sydney University. This was the best IT project that I have ever worked on. One of the reasons for this was the way they adapted to meet our team where they were at, adopting some of our practices and processes to run the project in a way that was comfortable for everyone.”

Karina Foley

IT Leader, Western Sydney University

The project delivered several key benefits:

- Agile Development and Deployment – Logicalis was able to streamline application deployment by delivering a platform and process that allows the University to accelerate application deployment and lower operational efforts
- Reduced Costs – The shift to the new environment has allowed for a reduction in IT operational / MSP costs each year
- Greater Security & Resiliency – The University's new cloud environment now keeps track of all changes made and leverages the latest firewalls and security features to reduce the likelihood and impact of cyber-attacks and internal misconfiguration
- Continuous Improvement – With thousands of new services released each year, Western can now gain access to continual innovation and maintain the agility of their new solution
- Centralisation & Visibility – The University's new well-governed cloud environment helped to decentralise its IT environment, providing clearer visibility of services used and IT costs
- Improved Automation - Platform and application automation is enabling a greater ease of management across IT environments and improved self-service capabilities. The University has seen an increase in process efficiency since the deployment of their new solution

The solution developed for Western is a scalable and replicable engagement model that can be leveraged far beyond the higher education sector.

This innovative solution for Western Sydney University led Logicalis Australia to be named Microsoft's 2024 Azure Partner of the Year for Australia and New Zealand.