



# Cisco network solution delivers enhanced performance, security and user experience

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Established in 2005, the University of Worcester (UoW) provides high-quality education and innovative facilities where students build the skills needed for the world of work.

It's been ranked top five for Quality Education by the Times Higher Education's University Impact Rankings, as well as being shortlisted three times for University of the Year, every year since the rankings were introduced. It delivers a wide range of courses and provides leading edge facilities, including Europe's first integrated university and public library, The Hive, state of the art

medical/scientific environments, digital and traditional arts centres, and multimedia recording studios. All students have access to comprehensive IT and eLearning resources and specialist facilities to enhance their research capabilities. In 2022, UoW achieved a top twenty ranking for student experience in the Times/Sunday Times Good University Guide.

## Key Facts



## The Challenge

With the type of courses on offer and the facilities it needs to support, it's essential that UoW has a robust, high-performing, and above all, secure network infrastructure. Its existing network had been in place for many years. It was becoming slow, time-consuming to manage and was unable to deliver the security or reliability UoW

needed. Performance issues meant staff had a poor user experience, and slow, unreliable network access risked undermining the student experience. In 2020, UoW contacted Softcat to investigate an alternative solution to deliver the network capabilities it needed.

## Critical Success Factors



## The Solution

Softcat's first task was to truly understand the issues UoW faced. Its network and security specialists held face-to-face workshops with the in-house IT team to get a grip on the problems faced.

Shortly after beginning the engagement, the Covid 19 pandemic meant that face-to-face meetings were no longer possible and subsequent meetings were held online.

Throughout this process, Softcat collaborated closely with the in-house team to both transfer critical knowledge around optimal network design and ensure the team had a firm understanding of how the solution would operate in practice.

Softcat's high-level design (HLD) team worked closely with UoW to clearly specify exactly what kind of network environment it needed, as well as its expectations around performance, reliability, and security. Multiple outputs were considered, including the challenges faced, precise design requirements and network components that would be needed. As a result of this extensive collaboration, Softcat produced and 60-70-page report specifying the capabilities and hardware the client would need going forward.

Softcat recommended replacing the existing network with a full Cisco Network Infrastructure solution. It would leverage Cisco Nexus datacentre switches, Catalyst core and edge switches, Catalyst Access Points, and a DNA Centre for managing the campus network. Softcat would also provide professional services for the required upgrade and migration of the refreshed datacentre and campus core, as well as a Break/Fix incident management and hardware replacement service.

## Solution Highlights



## The Benefits

UoW now has access to a highly performant, and secure network capable of delivering the capabilities it needs to face the future with confidence. It's a significant

improvement on the previous network, providing improved security, better visibility of ongoing issues and the capacity to rapidly solve problems when required.

“ We've not had a network this performant before, and it's going to make a real difference. ”

Martin Whiteside , UoW chief information officer (CIO)

Despite the significant upfront cost, the Cisco solution will eliminate much of the ongoing firefighting issues the in-house IT team regularly faced, freeing up its time and enabling it to concentrate on core activities that enhance

the student experience and add value to the university. And with ongoing break/fix support provided by Softcat, UoW has minimised the risk of reputational damage as a consequence of poor network performance.

## Benefits at a Glance



## Why softcat

“ The University has worked with Softcat for many years on many projects and have found it really focuses on what is best for the customer. It has a breadth of expertise on hand to offer impartial views on solutions and back that up with the technical knowledge to deploy solutions and support them. ”

Ged Attwood, Head of IT Operations at UoW

“Softcat has become a reliable and trusted partner that we depend on to help keep critical parts of our business running smoothly. The account management is proactive and Softcat's always happy to go the extra mile to help.”