



# Easier Identity and Access Management

The last thing IT should burden students with is a fog of logins. The use of an identity cloud makes accessing their digital lives easier and more secure.



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## LEARNING HASN'T BEEN EASY FOR STUDENTS.

In the past, the biggest worry may have been confusion about the latest assignment or concerns about financial aid. Now, they're just as likely to be boggled about whether it's their day to go into the classroom, wondering how their projects will be done when half the team is working strictly from home, or dealing with the fallout of a positive COVID test or food and housing insecurities.

In a realm where technology has become essential, the last thing the IT organization should burden students – or any other users on campus – with is a fog of logins. Yet it can't be helped. Nowadays, the college experience requires a litany of applications. The basics include network access, the SaaS-based productivity application suite, the learning management system, a videoconferencing program or two, and maybe library collections. Then, depending on the major, there's software for statistics, design, math and science, simulation and business. And let's not forget university services for advising, financial, tutoring, plagiarism checking and help desk. Every single one of those programs or services needs to authenticate the user before granting access.

## The Problems of IAM Sprawl

Single sign-on (SSO) has long been a boon for making the authentication process more efficient. Yet, because of their distributed structures, most institutions haven't gone all the way with SSO. It may be that program control for the identity and access management (IAM) layer is maintained for some applications by central IT and for others by a given college or department. IT may lack the staff to keep up with the programming requirements and/or the sudden influx of new demand. Or the college or university may be working with other institutions, each operating autonomously even as they need to share people, programs and research data.

Then there are the security aspects. While SSO makes

for a centralized approach to application access, that access also poses a big risk: If a cybercriminal gets unauthorized access through the SSO, they will be able to access all of the associated applications.

Embedding multi-factor authentication (MFA) into the login process adds a needed level of protection to authentication processes to keep accounts truly secure. But students are still stuck with multiple logins, and institutions have to try to keep up with a sprawling and complicated IAM system.

## The Power of an Identity Cloud

Tackling identity and access management in an IT modernization initiative can do a lot of good for campus users. Not only will it improve the learning experience and lessen software access frustrations, but the right solution can add an extra layer of security up front through deeper identity proofing and by enabling organizations to track and manage changing user roles based on predetermined policies.

The **Okta Identity Cloud** serves as an independent and neutral platform that securely connects the right people to the right technologies at the right time, reducing the effort required by IT to balance the needs of access and security.

The Okta Identity Cloud incorporates **Single Sign-On**, **Adaptive MFA** and **API Access Management**. But the magic ingredient is really the architecture, which empowers organizations to unify services across disparate organizations through a hub-and-spoke model that serves as a centralized identity layer:

The **hub** acts as the centralized identity provider, using standards such as security assertion markup language (SAML) and OpenID to integrate with numerous downstream applications, whether those are in the cloud or on-premise, to provide access and provisioning capabilities across the network.

Each **spoke** represents a unique campus, school or

department, whether part of the same institutional system or a separate university or college. The spokes tap Okta's **Universal Directory** for storing information about the user profile and group. The **Org2Org** connector enables spokes to share user profiles with the hub or other spokes, allowing SSO and **multi-factor authentication** to work across all shared applications.

Each campus can marry its own Active Directory repository on one side of the hub with the advantages of SSO, MFA and provisioning on the other side, giving users efficient and secure access to college or university applications – both their own and those of their institutional partners.

## Lightening the Load

The benefits are numerous. Nailing down IAM makes login frictionless. The result is that students spend more time on learning instead of chasing after IT help. IT spends less time provisioning users, configuring applications to work with certain profile attributes, pursuing investigations and maintaining a fleet of dedicated IAM servers.

Just as importantly, an Identity Cloud helps schools keep pace with the fluid nature of user identities by taking a more meaningful view of the full identity lifecycle – the student who's a learner as well as an intern one day; a graduate and alumnus

the next; and then a master's student, part-time professor and donor. The use of a centralized user repository provides enhanced visibility and useful insights on what's happening and when across the entire user lifecycle. Integrations with new applications and gateways or new groups go much faster. And institutions can manage user identities at scale, rather than on a one-off basis.

Nobody is having an easy time on campuses these days. But students are getting hit the hardest. Investing in efforts to simplify and secure their digital identities and make them more effective as learners will see the biggest payoff. That starts with adoption of a robust Identity Cloud.

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# Modern identity solutions for education institutions

The Okta Identity Platform provides easy, centralized, and secure identity and access management for all key campus user groups: students, staff, partners, parents, applicants and alumni.

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Simplify campus complexity

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Streamlined access for campus users

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Automate on/offboarding for all campus users

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Enhance campus cybersecurity

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