Education | Saudi Arabia

Powering digital learning

University of Jeddah

Students and faculty at the University of Jeddah rely on virtual desktops to access resources both on and off campus. To deliver a smooth user experience even during peak hours, the university modernized its virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) environment with Lenovo ThinkAgile HX Series powered by 5th Gen Intel® Xeon® Scalable processors—enabling faster logins and improved availability.

1 Customer background

Who is the University of Jeddah?

The University of Jeddah (UJ) is one of the youngest universities in Saudi Arabia, established in 2014. With 19 colleges and four research centers on campus, the university offers 109 academic programs and is home to more than 22,000 students and 2,250 faculty. UJ aligns with the Saudi government's Vision 2030 through specialized programs that meet the needs of the job market and prepare future leaders.

جامعة جدة
University of Jeddah

2 The challenge

With a diverse portfolio of colleges and a growing student population, UJ relies heavily on digital platforms to deliver academic content, computer-based labs, and secure access to university systems—both on campus and remotely.

As UJ expanded its digital learning services, more students and faculty depended on virtual desktops to access specialist software, virtual labs, and university systems from both on and off campus. The university needed to ensure a consistent, high-performance experience—even during peak academic periods such as registration and exams, when hundreds of users access the platform simultaneously.

2 The challenge

Previously, the university ran its virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) on a dedicated three-tier architecture. The siloed compute, storage, and networking components were becoming increasingly complex to manage. And with the systems almost at capacity, performance issues began to creep in, resulting in an inconsistent user experience.

> “We had concerns about the availability and scalability of our previous VDI platform, particularly during peak academic usage periods.”

Amrah Alshebani

Administration of Digital Transformation and Information Technology, University of Jeddah

“To deliver **the very best user experience for students and faculty**, we set out to modernize our VDI platform with the aim of increasing availability, performance, and scalability.”

Amrah Alshebani

Administration of Digital Transformation and Information Technology, University of Jeddah

3 The solution

HCI for VDI

After evaluating its options, UJ decided to move away from its previous three-tier setup to a hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI) solution based on Lenovo ThinkAgile HX Series, pre-integrated with Nutanix software.

“What attracted us most to HCI was the simplicity; having the compute, storage, and virtualization integrated into a single stack with centralized management,” comments Alshebani.

Hardware

Lenovo ThinkAgile HX650 V3
5th Gen Intel® Xeon® Scalable processors

Software

Lenovo XClarity
Nutanix Cloud Infrastructure

Services

Lenovo Hardware Installation
Lenovo ThinkAgile Deployment
Lenovo Premier Support for Infrastructure

3 The solution

UJ worked closely with Lenovo to analyze current and predicted future VDI usage patterns, designing the HCI solution for peak concurrency rather than average usage. Next, Lenovo dispatched an on-site technician to perform the physical installation of the hardware, ensuring a smoother, more coordinated deployment with less burden on the university's IT team.

> "The Lenovo ThinkAgile Deployment service gave us confidence that the environment was correctly configured, validated, and ready to support peak academic demand from day one."

Amrah Alshebani

Administration of Digital Transformation and Information Technology, University of Jeddah

3 The solution

Close collaboration

UJ took advantage of Lenovo's Hardware Installation and Lenovo ThinkAgile Deployment services. A team from Lenovo implemented seven Lenovo ThinkAgile HX650 V3 servers, powered by 5th Gen Intel® Xeon® Scalable processors and preloaded with Nutanix Cloud Infrastructure software, delivering a single virtual pool of compute and storage resources.

"The Lenovo team helped make the deployment and integration a success, and Lenovo experts were always on hand to answer our questions during the migration phase," notes Alshebani.

Purpose-built to support VDI classrooms, computer labs, and remote access scenarios, the Lenovo HCI platform enables consistent virtual desktop delivery both on and off campus. By eliminating single points of failure, the HCI solution delivers high availability and resiliency. Centralized management via Nutanix Prism and Lenovo XClarity, meanwhile, significantly simplifies IT operations.

3 The solution

The HCI solution is backed by Lenovo Premier Support for Infrastructure, giving UJ peace of mind that assistance is always just a phone call away. If any issue were to arise, the university has 24/7/365 direct access to dedicated support engineers.

“The Lenovo HCI solution hosts critical registration and examination applications, and Premier Support helps us to meet the high service-level agreement and minimum downtime requirements during these crucial periods of the academic year,” says Alshebani. “This ensures that hundreds of students at a time can register for classes and complete their exams, without disruption. Lenovo Premier Support for Infrastructure helps ensure greater operational resilience and confidence during peak usage periods.”

“We really appreciate the time and effort that Lenovo put into **understanding our VDI usage patterns and designing a future-proof solution**. The Lenovo team sized the solution to give us headroom for growth, and the scalable nature of HCI means that we can **easily add capacity** as the number of VDI users increases.”

Amrah Alshebani

Administration of Digital Transformation and Information Technology, University of Jeddah

4 The results

With the Lenovo HCI solution, students and faculty can now reliably access virtual desktops, specialist software, and digital learning resources whenever and wherever they need them—including during the busiest periods of the academic year.

Reliable anytime, anywhere access enables students to complete exams, coursework, practical labs, and research without disruption, whether on campus or learning remotely. UJ is proud to deliver an enhanced user experience, with faster logins and more stable virtual desktops.

Crucially, the Lenovo HCI solution also lays a scalable foundation to support a continuously growing student population.

- Faster logins
- More stable virtual desktops
- Improved availability

“Our Lenovo HCI platform for VDI has simplified IT operations, enabled faster scaling, and established a **future-ready foundation aligned with the university’s digital learning objectives** and Vision 2030 initiatives.”

Amrah Alshebani

Administration of Digital Transformation and Information Technology, University of Jeddah

Why Lenovo and Intel?

Having identified hyperconverged infrastructure as the best long-term approach for VDI, UJ evaluated several vendors. Lenovo distinguished itself through its consultative approach, taking the time to understand both current usage patterns and future growth plans before designing the solution.

“Lenovo took the time to gain a deep understanding of both our academic and operational needs,” recalls Alshebani. “By analyzing our VDI usage patterns, Lenovo was able to design a solution that delivered the high performance required for large numbers of concurrent users—ensuring a smooth user experience even during peak times.”

Powered by 5th Gen Intel® Xeon® Scalable processors, the Lenovo ThinkAgile HX650 V3 servers deliver trusted performance and exceptional efficiency.

How can universities ensure peak performance for virtual desktops even during peak hours?

Working with Lenovo, the University of Jeddah modernized its VDI environment with a simple, scalable, high-performance HCI solution powered by 5th Gen Intel® Xeon® Scalable processors. **That's the power of Lenovo with Intel Inside®.**

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