



REFERENCE STORY

Bochum University of Applied Sciences: becoming a digitalization pioneer with easy



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about Bochum Univer- sity of Applied Sciences

Bochum University of Applied Sciences (BO) has a student population of around 10,000. It offers 49 bachelor's and 25 master's degree programs in the fields of technology, business and health, spread across eight departments at three locations in Bochum and Velbert Heiligenhaus. Around 960 employees run the university, almost half of whom work in non-scientific areas.

Department 6, Campus IT, is responsible for managing the university's entire IT infrastructure, including software and hardware and the associated processes in research, teaching and administration.

even universities depend on efficient processes

Digitalization is one of the greatest opportunities and also one of the greatest challenges faced today by modern educational institutions such as Bochum University of Applied Sciences, or BO for short. On the one hand, the rising number of students and the increasingly complex degree programs and examination rules need to be taken into account. On the other, as an educational institution, BO also has to meet modern compliance requirements such as the GDPR or GoBD and organize its administration in an efficient and modern way.

The example of BO shows that universities are definitely among the pioneers in the digitalization of internal processes. Thomas Lohrmann and Oliver Gall, who are responsible for the ERP software, databases and campus management systems in Department 6, Campus IT, have to go back a long way in their records to find out when easy archive was launched:



"We have been using easy archive for document archiving for 25 years",

says Thomas Lohrmann. Two more important areas of administration were later also implemented based on easy document management: software for managing student files and for quality improvement workflows.



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paper invoices still dominate day-to-day business

The level of efficiency attainable at universities through digitalization measures can be seen in Bochum University's use of the document archive. The administration uses easy archive in conjunction with the easy Capture scanning module to digitize and archive all invoices in the university's central purchasing department:

"This covers everything from EU-wide tenders for major projects to a pencil that a professor might order from a local retailer", explains Oliver Gall.

To this day, the university still receives the majority of these invoices on paper. Thomas Lohrmann estimates that they account for around 90 percent of all incoming documents. After receipt, these are scanned and digitized with easy Capture and then indexed with relevant data via an interface with the software MACH, a special ERP system for public administrations. After that, the invoices are archived in easy archive in an audit-proof and GDPR-compliant manner. All electronic invoices are also stored in easy archive.

Since the software was launched in 2001, almost 350,000 incoming and outgoing invoices have been stored in digital form this way at the university. The university had this process externally certified very early on in order to document the legally compliant use of the easy archive software for archiving invoices. The interface that connects easy archive to MACH was programmed by BO's internal IT department. The IT experts deliberately decided not to use MACH's own document storage system as an archive because the easy system was even better technical fit for those processes as well.



a reliable system that has now become indispensable

easy archive still runs reliably on the university's servers this way today. Oliver Gall describes the administrative workload for the system as being extremely low:

"Sometimes adaptations need to be made, but we handle most of them ourselves. Only version updates are carried out by easy's technicians." And Thomas Lohrmann adds: "Basically, the system is very stable."

In their day-to-day work, administrative staff can conveniently access the archive via the easy web portal. This generally means using the search functions and viewing the resulting documents directly on the screen. Oliver Gall emphasizes how natural working with the digital archive has become for employees over the years:

"People have long since become accustomed to the archive's ease of use – especially in procurement. If it cannot be reached for any reason, we receive the first call within an hour at the latest."

digital student file: long-term archiving made easy

Following the successful introduction of easy archive, BO implemented another digital project with easy in 2004: the digital student file. A complete digital student file was created based on easy Documents that covers the entire process cycle at the university. The process begins with enrollment, when a file is created for every student. At the outset, the file contains all application documents and, in the case of dual studies, the associated cooperation agreements. Over the course of a student's studies, this file is continuously updated with further applications and supporting documents and finally with the degree certificate and diploma.

After de-registration, a clearly defined workflow ensures legally compliant archiving. All documents from the application phase that are not subject to retention requirements are deleted. All essential core documents – certificates and performance overviews in particular – are transferred to the archive in an audit-proof manner. This long-term archiving is essential, as these documents must be kept by a university for up to 50 years so that former students can be issued with an official certificate decades later to verify their achievements.

efficient & transparent: digitalization of quality improvement measures

In 2011, Bochum University of Applied Sciences used easy Documents to digitalize the internal process for applying for quality improvement measures. In this process, the departments apply for funding for the purchases or personnel they need. These requests were previously processed via paper forms, which were sometimes processed in lengthy email chains and handwritten notes.

Today, applications are submitted via the easy Documents web portal, which automatically starts a predefined digital workflow. If necessary, an application undergoes a technical review before it is forwarded to the Executive Committee for a final decision. After approval, the budget department is automatically informed that the funds have been approved and the procurement process can be started. To date, more than 3,000 applications for quality improvement measures have been submitted digitally at BO in this way.

This example shows how digital document management not only simplifies document filing but can also be used as a central workflow system. Oliver Gall emphasizes the advantages this yielded for the university's work:

"The beauty of this system is that it makes the process visible. Applicants can immediately see whether and where their application is being processed at the moment. Has it already been forwarded to the executive committee or are there still any pending queries?"

Once the application has been approved, the administration knows that the funds can be made available and the applicants see that the procurement process can be started or the student assistant can be hired."



“we’ve even had cases here where someone wanted to have their university certificate reissued after 35 or 40 years. thanks to long-term archiving with easy archive, this is no trouble for us to handle.”

Thomas Lohrmann

Administration ERP-Software

Bochum University of Applied Sciences



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