

processfix

Autumn newsletter 2024

Welcome

English universities have long punched above their weight in the world university rankings. But alarm bells are sounding about the sustainability of the wider sector's finances.

A recent report by the UK's Office for Students forecast that 40% of English universities will run a budget deficit this year. Domestic tuition fees are not keeping up with the rising cost of higher education, prompting calls for a radical rethink.

Having identified a £30m shortfall last year, and a total of £45m over the following three years, the University of East Anglia (UEA) has taken the initiative by refocusing their effort on process improvement. As vice-chancellor Professor David Magure said a "period of correction is required to get the university back on the path to financial sustainability".

In this quarters newsletter we speak with Dr Jon Sharp, Director of Academic Services, as UEA concentrate on balancing the books to ensure the university remains an engine of growth, excellence and opportunity for staff and students alike.

NEWSFLASH!

Paris, France – August 2024

Processfix review spectator flow across sporting venues ahead of Paralympic games.



Balancing the books at the University of East Anglia

Despite being ranked 21st in the Complete University Guide for 2025, applications to the University of East Anglia were down again this year, with fewer students seeking places at the Norwich-based university. Amidst this sector wide challenge Dr Jon Sharp, Director of Academic Services, tells us how process improvement has once again become central to their strategy to balance the books.



"I have worked at UEA for nearly thirty years in a number of management and leadership roles and so have a wide understanding of the processes within a University that impact on the student experience and the academic administration of our courses."

Jon first came across Processfix over twelve years ago when he attended a three-day workshop aimed at developing an understanding of process improvement for senior managers at UEA. "The workshop had a lasting impression on me as the approach combined both theoretical rigour with a decidedly pragmatic model of implementation."

"I particularly liked the requirement that all stakeholders within the process were represented at each workshop. This was a significant change from the 'top down' model that had previously been used at the university."

"this enabled us to make changes that were... not reliant on costly technology"

"As I took over leadership of our Student Services team, the department performed no better than sector norms in relation to

key aspects of provision such as talk therapy (counselling). We worked as a whole department to restructure our teams; our service culture; and our processes."

"Since then we have found that the approach works equally well for improving and streamlining discrete processes and for larger scale structural projects. In those large scale projects we parcelled complex operations into a series of manageable end-to-end processes to which we could then apply the Processfix methodology." In particular, Jon placed emphasis on our process-based approach over jumping immediately to a system solution "this enabled us to make changes that were deliverable as well as structurally sound and not reliant on costly technology."

"The application of the Processfix approach has been crucial in the delivery of significant improvements across our full range of services. A notable example was the improvement of our service waiting times to a sector leading level, a position which has been maintained over the last twelve years."

"We are now reviewing all of our core processes within Academic Services to streamline them in light of the current financial situation. We have already undertaken workshops to improve our timetabling process, our approach to extenuating circumstances; and our course approval process. This will be followed by a review of our research grant application processes in the autumn."

"As the sector continues to face financial challenges, things have gone full circle. Process improvement has once again become central to ensure we can deliver services that are affordable and meet our customer expectations, whether they be students, staff, academics, or parents, within the resources we have."

About us

Organisations rely on processes to get things done. Often these simply evolve over time and become inefficient ways of working. Processfix bring powerful, proven and behaviour-changing techniques to bear in a professionally facilitated environment.

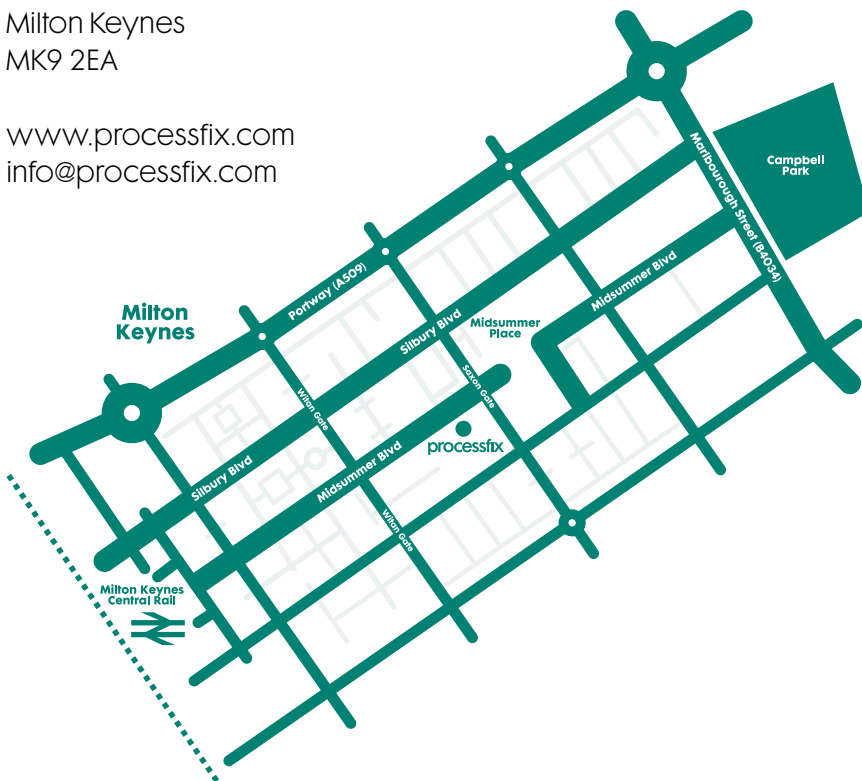
We focus on engaging your teams in their own improvement, empowering them to re-evaluate the way they do things and to develop new and improved ways of working that transform performance and deliver immediate results.

Whether you require rapid improvement workshop facilitation, an organisational wide process improvement programme or to develop and train your team. Processfix specialise in engaging your people, delivering immediate benefits and instilling continuous improvement across your organisation.

If you would like to find out how Processfix can benefit your organisation, please contact us at:

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And finally...

Latest data from the University of Southampton reveals the time to complete licence agreements has halved since their research contracts workshop last year!



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