

Welcome

Back in 2021, changes introduced by the UK Government to school exam policy led to a threefold increase in the number of students accepted onto the undergraduate economics programme at University College London (UCL).

Alongside this, new and augmented forms of student assessment added multiple layers of complexity to already stretched departmental processes.

It is not uncommon for processes, which were once fit-for-purpose, to find themselves quickly overwhelmed – often becoming reliant on staff working long hours and weekends.

In this quarter's newsletter read how Emer Girling's background in customer service led to her realisation that either something had to change, or something was going to give.

NEWSFLASH!

London, UK – January 2024
British Academy launch programme of Processfix workshops across grant application, award management and monitoring & evaluation.



Increasing complexity requires a simpler process

Emer Girling has worked at UCL since 2000, most recently as Teaching and Learning Manager for the Department of Economics. Having previously worked in customer services at Heathrow airport, Emer is used to keeping customers happy. This background has served her well at UCL as one of the key drivers of her role is to ensure that students are given the best possible experience.



What issues had you been facing?

"Before Covid, our assessments were traditionally all exam-based and sat in person. When everything shifted online, these were split into multiple sub components and diversified across a range of categories, from groupwork to coursework and online tests, which added significant complexity to our work."

"We struggled to fit our assessment process around this new reality, but not through lack of trying! My teams worked diligently and tirelessly to apply the same rigour to the new assessment patterns, but this was simply impossible without working long hours and at weekends."

Why approach Processfix?

"We tried to tweak the process to improve the outcomes and staff experience. But, despite our best efforts,

the process ended up either not being followed as it was too time consuming, or there were so many steps that human error crept in."

"we reduced the process from 54 steps down to 19, less than half!"

"After a year of trying, we decided that Processfix was our only option. I figured that a rapid improvement workshop would be equivalent to another year's worth of meetings and would mean that change could happen sooner if we concentrated our focus into three days."

Did the workshop help?

"There were so many tangential parts to the process that our focus could have easily mushroomed.

Processfix helped us stay focused on what we actually wanted to achieve. We performed a detailed dissection of the current process and looked at the data which pointed toward other improvements."

"The workshop wasn't just about the process, however, there were some really nice moments of team building and some very interesting theory - all tailored to help us understand how we had got to where we were and how we could move to a more efficient way of working."

What were the outcomes?

"Having a mix of academic and professional service staff at the workshop meant that we had the whole process represented. One of the key outcomes was greater understanding and learning about what we could do to help each other. Moreover, we reduced the process from 54 steps down to 19, less than half!"

"We designed the new process around a single source of truth, so that we can now rely on reports generated by the process, rather than producing local spreadsheets and workarounds. Overall, we have not just fixed our process, we have initiated a culture change in the way we work."

What happens next?

"The new process has already reduced pressure on my team. It frees us up to focus on student casework and wellbeing and less on spreadsheets. We have more time to investigate where marks are missing and explore the reasons. Our academics have found the format for the information we ask them to provide is simplified and less time consuming."

"Throughout the workshop Processfix made sure we stayed on track. They were very perceptive in their response to our issues and have a wealth of experience of higher education. We look forward to our review meeting to go over all the improvements that we have made!"

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.

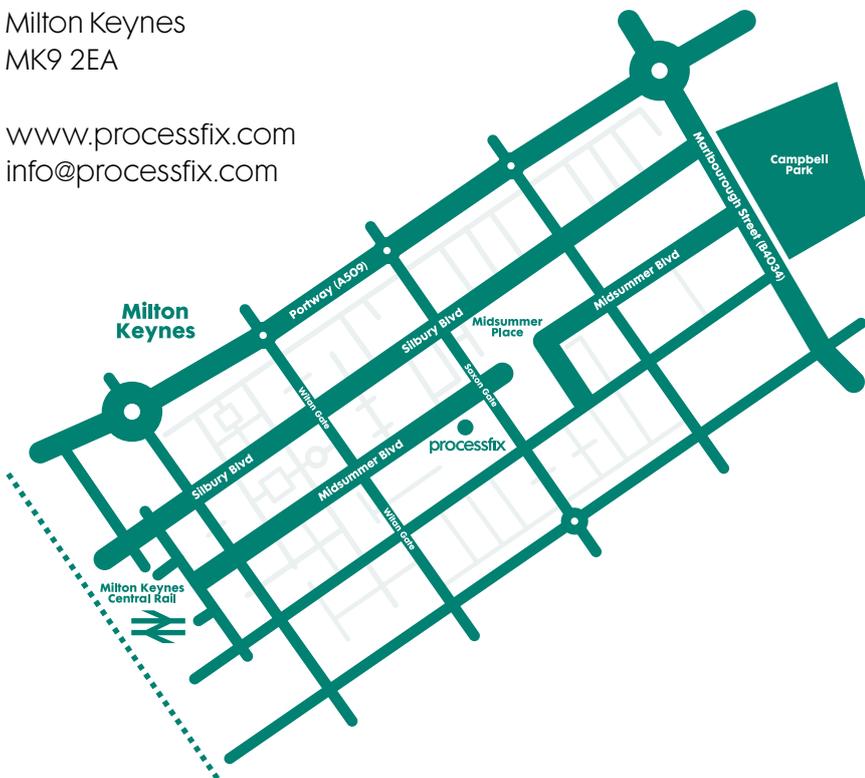
We focus on engaging your teams in their own improvement, empowering them to re-evaluate the way they do things and to develop new and improved ways of working that transform performance and deliver immediate results.

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...

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