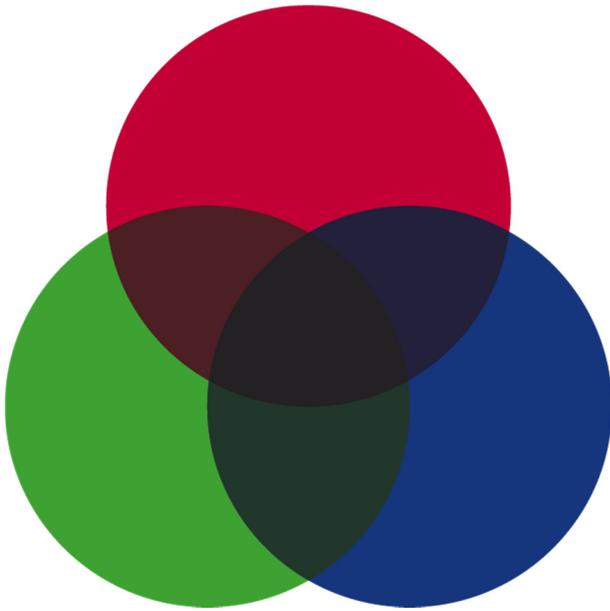


Sustainable Futures Year End Report AY 2012-13



Senior Consultants Andrew McKendrick & Steve Yorkstone
September 2013

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Executive Summary

Sustainable Futures as a function within Edinburgh Napier University has been successfully re-launched as part of Planning & Intelligence, with the purpose of developing an integrated and targeted programme of activity¹.

Sustainable Futures' has been developing their activity to meet the Principal's intent to improve quality and team working across functional areas, to support the University's strategic objectives, and to support the universities cultural aspirations.

"As Principal and champion for Sustainable Futures I am committed to growing a culture where people work together to improve the quality of everything we do.

I would encourage you to take every opportunity to question constructively and work collaboratively to identify and embed improvements both in the way you work and in the quality of what you deliver to our students, your colleagues and to all those with whom we do business."

Professor Andrea Nolan, Principal and Vice Chancellor

This year the team has reinvigorated and engaged the Sustainable Futures function², introduced themselves as the face of Sustainable Futures, and built up a network of contacts across the university.

It has been an extremely successful year in terms of the above goals and setting up the required back office processes to support this function.

There has been reasonable success in benefit terms for year 1 of a start-up initiative.

Additionally the team's approach has been externally recognised as sector leading, evidenced by approaches for information and support from other HEIs.

"We are fully aware of the key role played by Scottish Universities in pioneering and taking forward the lean agenda, [... including] centres of excellence such as Edinburgh Napier"

Sheffield University, Process Improvement Unit

¹ Taken from: Planning & Intelligence Operational Plan 2013/15 – 2014/15

² *ibid*

Reflections

Key Observations

Critical to success of the Sustainable Futures programme is leadership, giving the team appropriate parameters within which to operate. This has been exceptionally well achieved as part of the Planning & Intelligence team.

The team's most successful projects have been run from an operational level. This reflects positively the ability of Edinburgh Napier staff to organically manage change across organisational functions.

Critical to successful activity is a zero-blame approach, affording staff across the institution the psychological space to experiment and innovate.

Consistent resistance has been met in releasing the time required to adequately attend to improvement. This reflects on the relative priorities of business as usual over developmental activity. So, as in any organisation, staff need excellent leadership to further develop the confidence required to take responsibility for change.

There continues to be a risk of developing processes to a stage where there is no function stepping forward to take organisational ownership.

The team has successfully mitigated misperceptions around financial drivers being the primary or only motivation for process improvement. These misperceptions are consistently based on the organisational placement of the team in Finance, Planning & Commercial Services³. This does however require ongoing effort.

Looking Forward to Academic Year 13/14

The team will continue to apply the process of continuous improvement to its own operations, including in the following areas:

Programme and Portfolio development

- Continuing to build working relationships with the new Principal and executive members to support strategic activity
- Opportunities afforded by upcoming strategic review

Project activity

- Continued success working across the university to maximise impact; efficiency, effectiveness and quality
- Completion of Rapid Improvement Event (RIE)

³ Taken from: Planning & Intelligence Operational Plan 2013/15 - 2014/15

Product development

- Developing further “Coaching” product to potentially include all training activity
- Developing further “Rapid Impact Analysis” product to reflecting the timescales of activity in the University sector

Administrative development

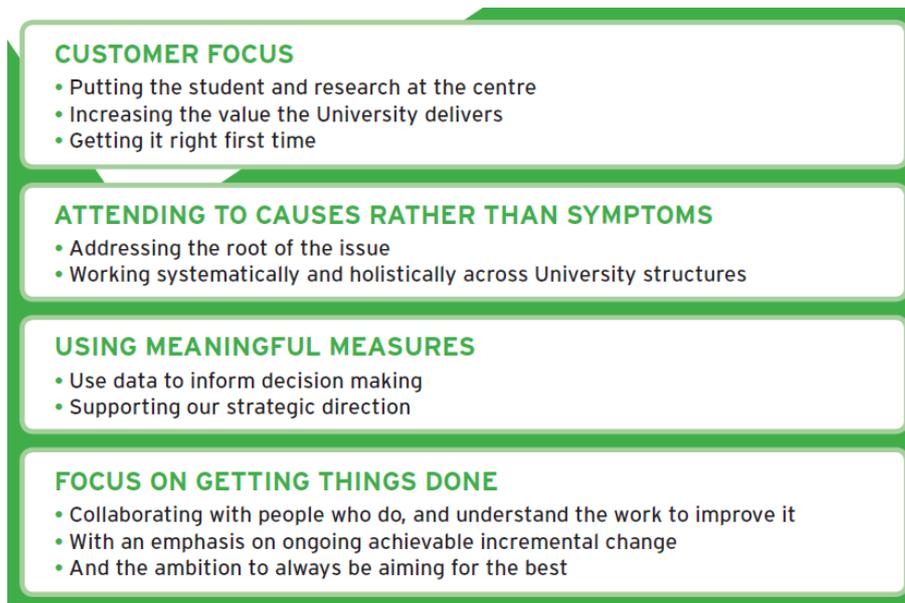
- Continuing to develop back office operations to support delivery
- Involvement in the Universities Graduate Trainee scheme

Re-launch and Communications

Approach

In developing their approach the team have aimed for consistency with the previous iteration of Sustainable Futures, while bringing their knowledge skills and experience in lean for Higher Education and Six Sigma in industry.

Figure 1; Principles of Sustainable Futures



Staffing

Steve Yorkstone was recruited in August 2012 and Andrew McKendrick Recruited in November 2012 both as Senior Consultants.

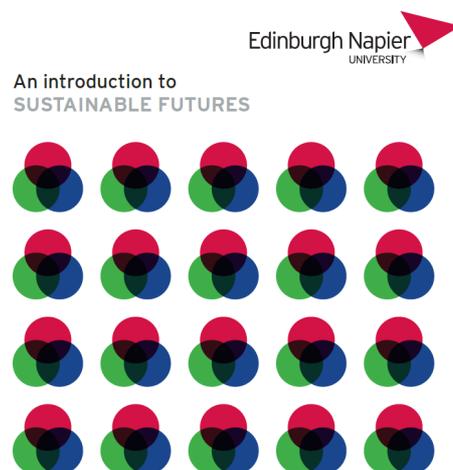
The team moved line management from the Director of Finance, Planning and Commercial Services to Peter Wallace, Head of Intelligence and Planning in October 2012, and in doing so moved to being an integrated part of the Planning & Intelligence function.

Organisational Spread

Both team members have presented at the senior management forum ensuring they are visible and known as the points of contact for Sustainable Futures. These have been supported by meetings with the Vice-Principals, University Secretary and both the Principals who have resided in this academic year.

To ensure accessibility and brand awareness the team commissioned IDEA to design a professional leaflet (for use on paper and online) which explains the why, what and how of Sustainable Futures and outlines the four main products we have designed: Coaching, Process Review, Rapid Impact Analysis, Rapid Improvement Event (RIE) (see below).

Figure 2; Leaflet cover



Online the team has:

- 1) Developed a staff website which draws upon the SharePoint back office information to a) publicise the work undertaken and b) provide key information, such as contact details/leaflet/outcomes

www.url.napier.ac.uk/staff-sustainable-futures

- 2) Refreshed the standard webpages on the intranet linking in to the Planning & Intelligence site.

<http://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/finance/PI/sustainable-futures>

- 3) Created an externally facing website accessible to all, advertising what we do for the university and providing contact details.

www.napier.ac.uk/sustainable-futures

For activity that involves a project team a SharePoint sub site is created to allow sharing of information, document development, storage of pictures and emails. This is intended to encourage co-ownership of the improvement initiative, alongside providing an efficient, safe storage medium that meets our security, sharing and data retention requirements.

The team's contact measures show we have worked with⁴ over three quarters of university areas⁵, including all areas at Faculty and

⁴ i.e. have spent time with in a meeting or facilitated session, for the purposes of a named project

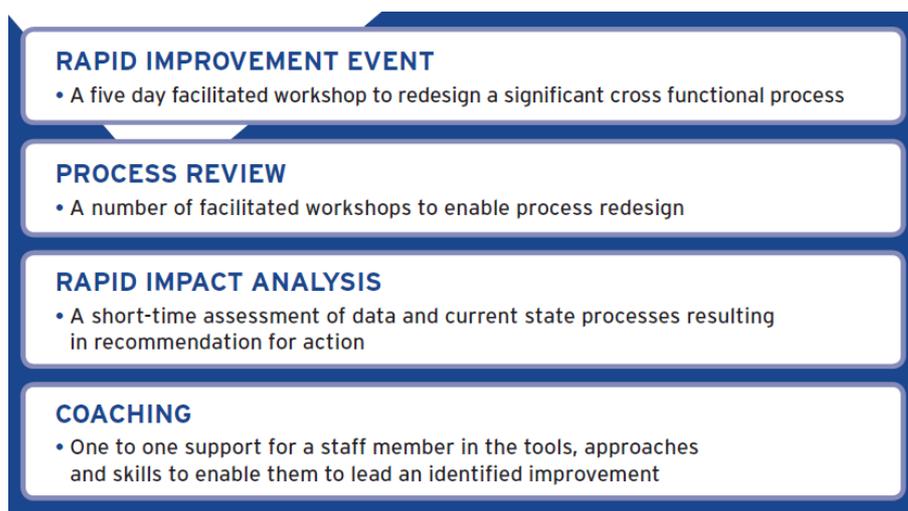
⁵ i.e. University Faculties, Schools or Professional Services

Professional Service level, and over 10% of individual staff which is a great achievement in the first year.

Breadth & Depth:
171/1612 individual staff (10.61%)
22/29 functional areas (75.86%)⁶

Product Review

Figure 3; Products offered



1) Rapid Improvement Event

An RIE is a significant organisational cost, and as such over the past year there have not been conditions identified for such a commitment. However, at time of writing the team is at advanced stages of planning for an RIE around the Matriculation process.

See Appendix 1: Rapid Improvement Event Model for the RIE model the team has designed.

2) Process Review

The majority of activity undertaken over the past year has been in the form of facilitated process review workshops, which have consistently received positive feedback. However, the team is careful to mitigate for the risks to implementation that exist with this product, due to nature of the workshops as being spread out over a number of weeks.

"Excellent experience, would recommend the team across the institution"

3) Rapid Impact Analysis

Rapid Impact Analysis is closest to traditional consultancy, and has been applied in a small number of areas, primarily around the Exams process, at the commission of Student and Academic Services. In this area the report produced was well received, and has prompted

⁶ Taken from: Planning & Intelligence Operational Plan 2013/15 – 2014/15

significant changes at local level, and promises good institutional benefits.

4) Coaching

The team has undertaken one formal coaching assignment, which successfully delivered its commissioned output, with the additional benefits of significant knowledge transfer and skills development for the staff member involved.

"I wanted to thank you for your help and advice with the production of the paper on recommendations for [project name removed]. It has been reported that it received high praise"

Back Office

The team has developed a paperless back office system on SharePoint which allows logging, updating, storage, monitoring, sharing and reporting. This allows the team to work both efficiently and ensure business continuity. This system also acts as the golden copy store for their key performance indicators.

Activity and reporting

The current work stack is looking very healthy and testament to the effort put in by the team to promote their services and encompasses initiatives large and small.

The team has developed a prioritisation system which rates the initiative against importance (looking at meeting the principal's intent, strategic fit⁷ and benefits) and ease (how much effort it will take of our time to do). In reality this year the team has been flexible enough to be able to take on all pieces of work, fitting in activity according to timescales and resource availability.

Table 1; prioritisation matrix

Importance (Strategy, Benefits, Principal's Intent)	Priority B		Priority A	
	<i>High Importance / Low Ease</i>		<i>High Importance / High Ease</i>	
	Consultant	Manager	Consultant	Manager
	Plan to resource activity	Approval required	Reschedule other activity	Notified at work request
	Priority D		Priority C	
	<i>Low Importance / Low Ease</i>		<i>Low Importance / High Ease</i>	
	Consultant	Manager	Consultant	Manager
	Refer or redesign activity	No notification normally required	Undertake if workload allows	Notification at regular update
Ease (Resources to complete activity)				

The team provide an overview portfolio report⁸ which summarises the project priority and stage as well as summary level benefits overall. This is reviewed with line management fortnightly and is available for upward dissemination when required.

For a complete overview of activity at time of writing see; Appendix 2: Work stack at year end.

Outcomes

The team publicises their goals in the leaflet as at figure 5, and tracks them through the Planning & Intelligence Operational Plan⁹.

⁷ i.e. "...growing a culture where people work together to improve the quality of everything we do ... [for] our students, your colleagues, and all those with whom we do business." (For full reference see executive summary).

⁸ Unofficially known as the "Blue Dot Report", produced in a3 format

⁹ Taken from: Planning & Intelligence Operational Plan 2013/15 - 2014/15

Figure 4; Outcomes

1	STUDENTS & STAFF <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved student experience and satisfied staff
2	CULTURE & BEHAVIOURS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuous improvement & respect for people• Supporting our values (Professional, Ambitious, Innovative, Inclusive)
3	ORGANISATIONAL IMPACT <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff & University areas engaging
4	ESTIMATED SAVINGS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resources released to grow value adding activity

Benefits this year (01 August 2012- 31 August 2013) have been consistent with a first year launch of this type of initiative. The benefits seen are from four initiatives completed, with the healthy work stack in progress the initiative can be expected to bear greater benefits in year two.

Survey and feedback analysis

Survey feedback from Improvement Activities in 12/13 show that staff would recommend using Sustainable Futures in all responses received.

While a response rate of under 7% to the team's annual online survey is disappointing, responses indicate that Sustainable Futures clearly have had a strong positive impact on staff, workplace relationships & behaviours and also help the teams that they work with to achieve their goals.

Importantly in all the activities where Sustainable Futures could directly improve on students experience respondents said that activity would positively impact.

Qualitative data

Quotes from activity feedback include:

"Improved efficiency + high morale will improve working relationships"

"Working closer with people allows me to know people better and be a team player"

"SF [Sustainable Futures] help to focus teams on process & workflows & identify how improvements can be made"

"Applicant experience will improve, hopefully converting more applicants into students"

"[Sustainable Futures] Helped to structure what & when. Useful having input from people not involved in [...] process."

Quantitative data

Estimated Staff Time Released:

132.8 annually recurring days (~0.6fte)¹⁰.

This is an estimated figure, and not suitable for planning purposes. Staff indicate that time released will enable them to further add value to services offered to staff and students.

For specific projects:

Working days released to do more value adding activity:

- Fee Forecasting -9.2 Working Days
- Financial Aid -22.3 Working Days
- Module & Programme Board Process -37 Working Days
- UCAS Business Process -64.3 Working Days

Estimated process speed improvement:

Average 25% reduction

- Financial Aid 20 % (3.5 Calendar Days)
- Fee Forecasting 30 % (9 Calendar Days)

Estimated Non-Staff Costs Released

Estimates of non-staff costs released are small, totalling around £500¹¹. This reflects the teams focus on releasing staff time, but primarily on supporting organisational development.

¹⁰ Taken from: Planning & Intelligence Operational Plan 2013/15 – 2014/15

¹¹ *ibid*

Developing Organisational Culture

To support the re-launch and integration of Sustainable futures and the principles of continuous improvement the team has engaged in a number of activities outside their core products, recognising that values and culture are fundamental to organisational effectiveness.

Figure 5: Sustainable Futures Model



University Values

In this we are working alongside Human Resources colleagues in enhancing the university's cultural vision to be:

Professional, Innovative, Inclusive and Ambitious.

Training and Development

Working with the support of Learning and Development the team is taking a blended-learning approach to training and development.

Moodle Module

The team has developed an online training module which is used to develop awareness of Sustainable Futures and the principles of continuous improvement, particularly those of lean and Six Sigma. To date there have been 35 participants¹² enrolled for the course and good feedback from people who have completed the course.

"I found this module very useful, it's really made me think about how I can improve the way I work."

In collaboration with Learning & Development this module is now embedded in the university induction programme so all new staff (and staff transferring to a new internal post) should now complete it.

¹² Taken from: Planning & Intelligence Operational Plan 2013/15 – 2014/15

Investors in People

We are supporting the University in aiming for Investors in People (IIP) Gold status through embracing the IIP three stage improvement cycle as the standard improvement cycle; i.e. Plan, Do, Review.

Figure 6; Investors in People Model (<http://www.investorsinpeople.co.uk/>)



See Appendix 3: Nested Continuous Improvement Model. This diagram aims to illustrate to staff how they can apply the PDR cycle at each organisational level. The model is sent to staff who participate in the team's online training module, and aims to support the integration of continuous improvement institutionally.

Administrative Development

At time of writing the team are working on developing a training session to Learning & Development's "Thinking and Working Creatively in Administration" event in October 2013. This is intended to promote Sustainable futures and the concepts of continuous improvement, focussing on enhancing creativity and problem solving.

Informal Advice & Consultancy

The team works with colleagues a cross the university sharing knowledge and best practice through sharing advice and through short-time consultancy. Examples of these include:

- Developing an IIP assessment tool to enable HR to systematically and measure performance against IIP standards
- Discussions with staff member in our School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Care to support her in developing a business case for aspects of curriculum enhancement

External

Edinburgh College

Sustainable Futures were approached to support implementing lean into the HR department in Edinburgh College, which was undertaken in support of the University's partnership agenda. This has taken the form of initial consultancy, a training session on lean, 2 separate day workshops to map the as is and future state process and follow up coaching support for the college's process redesign activity.

"We are really excited to have the opportunity to work with you and have access to your expertise to assist us get started. This work is much needed and will be excellent for the HR team as well as the College as a whole."

Scottish Higher Education Improvement Network

The team founded the Scottish Higher Education Improvement Network. This forum for improvement enables practitioners across the sector to meet with the aims of sharing knowledge, best practice, and issue resolution.

The forum was subsequently recognised by Universities Scotland in their report "Working Smarter, Progress Report 2013". Our initial commitment to this is attendance at 4 thematic meetings across one year to include assessment of the value of the network.

Figure 7; Extract from "Working Smarter", Universities Scotland 2013

Sectoral savings made through Business Process Improvement are estimated at £12 million in 2011-12, £16.9 million for 2012-13 and a projected £18 million in 2013-14 and a further £10 million in 2014-15.	Business Process Improvement
	The HE sector in Scotland has taken up the latest advances in Business Process Improvement (BPI) enthusiastically and with impressive results. Institutions are seeing substantial savings, as well as improvements in student experience and the research environment, as a result of applying methodologies such as LEAN and Six Sigma, which facilitate a systematic approach to processes and procedures to maximise effectiveness and efficiency. The Scottish Higher Education Improvement Network has been created to help share expertise and best practice in these approaches. Sectoral savings made through BPI are estimated at £12 million in 2011-12, £16.9 million for 2012-13 and a projected £18 million in 2013-14 and a further £10 million in 2014-15.

Conferences

The team has participated in several conferences throughout the year growing and contributing knowledge to the sector and beyond, and developing the reputation of Edinburgh Napier University. These include:

- *Lean Thinking in HE Event, Coventry University*
- *First International Conference on LSS for Higher Education, University of Strathclyde*
- *LMJ 4th Annual Conference, Lean Management Journal*
- *Lean Forum Konferens 2012, Lean Forum Sweden*

Publications

Steve Yorkstone presented a paper at the first Lean Six Sigma Conference in Glasgow, focussing on the implementation of lean in the HE sector from a practitioner's viewpoint¹³. This drew on the team's experience from the start of the application of lean in HE up to and including the work being done here in Edinburgh Napier by Sustainable Futures.

The Lean Management Journal published an interview with Steve Yorkstone in advance of their conference, serving to further enhance the profile of the Sustainable Futures initiative and Edinburgh Napier University¹⁴.

¹³ Paper entitled "Leaning Universities Old and New", available on request.

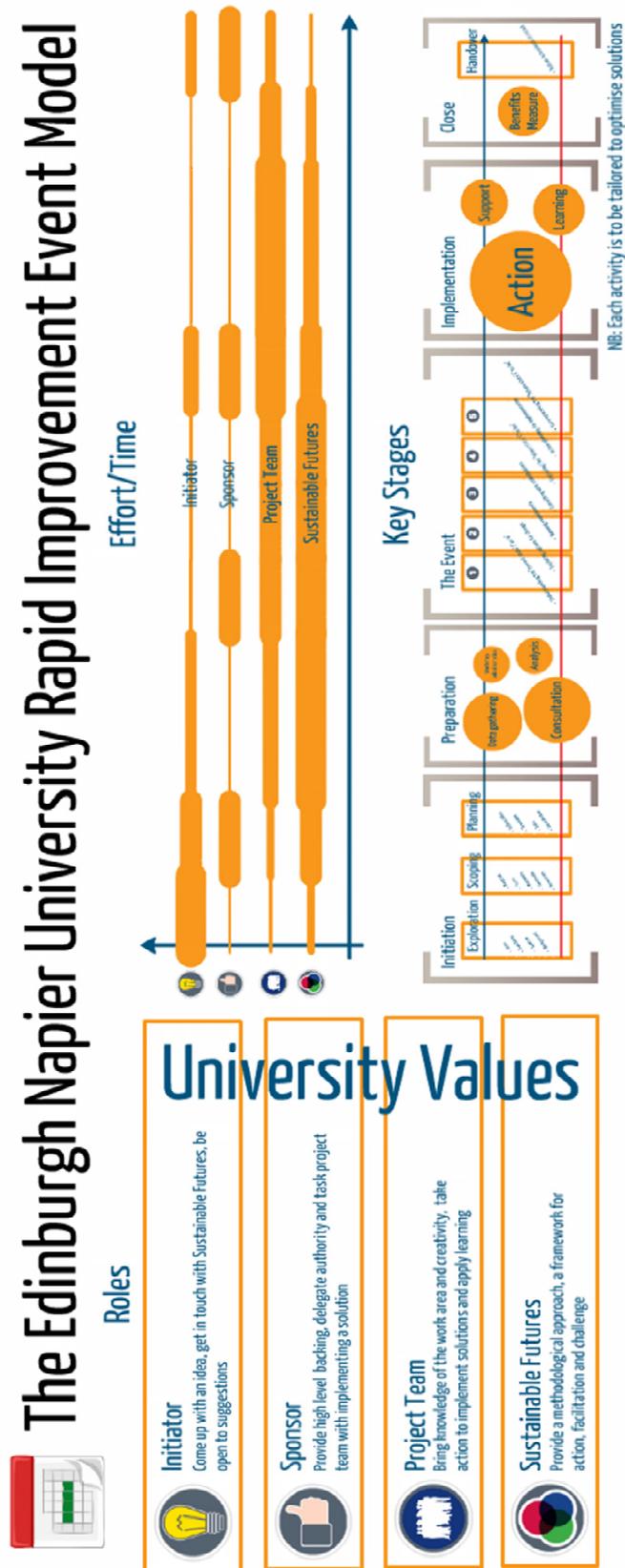
¹⁴ Interview from Lean Management Journal, May 2013, available on request.

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Appendix 1: Rapid Improvement Event Model

See:



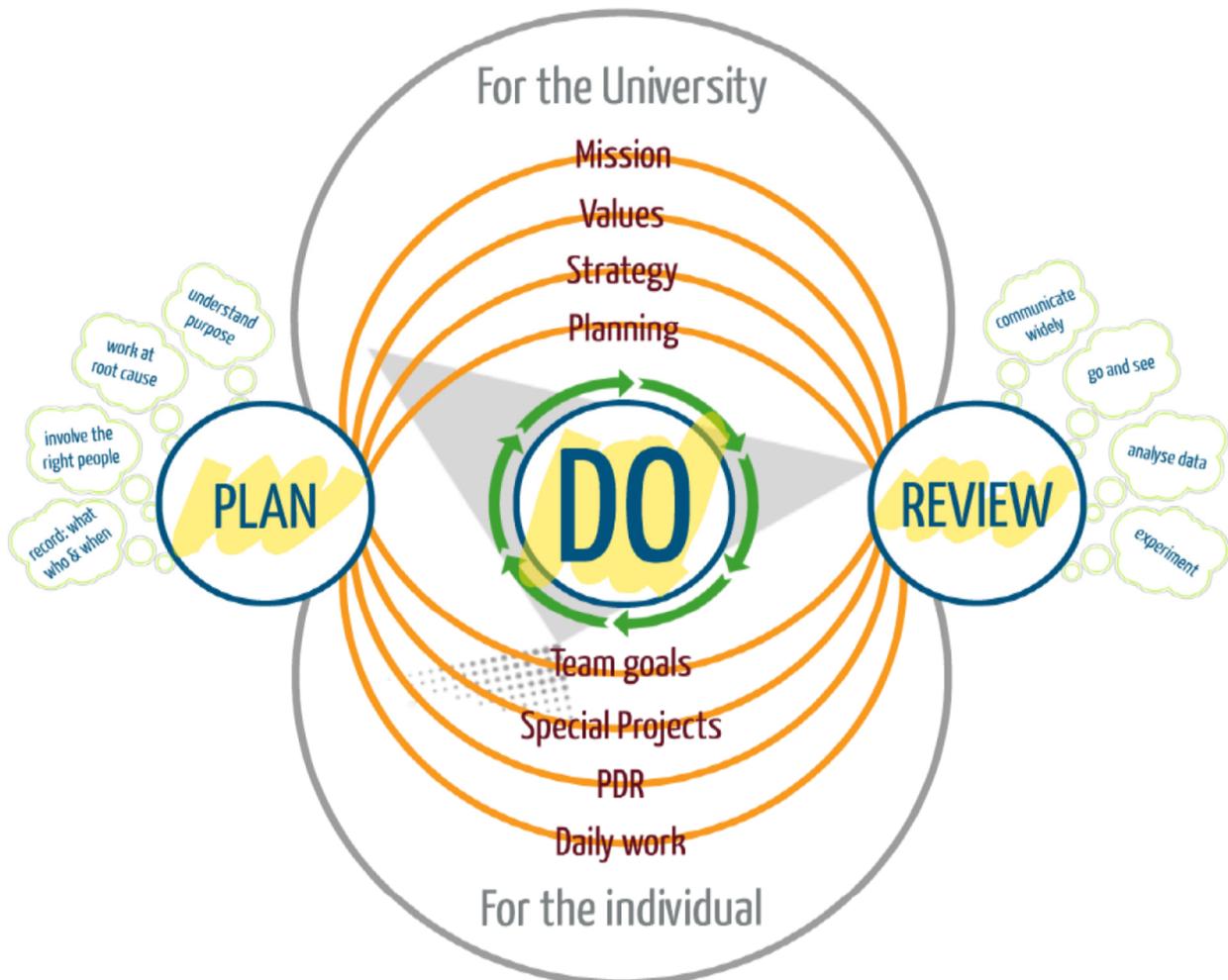
Appendix 2: Work stack at year end

Stage at 31/08/2013	Initiative
0.Pipeline	Support for International Students
0.Pipeline	Courses Database
1.Initiation	IDEA Support
1.Initiation	IS CSE Support
1.Initiation	PEEP
1.Initiation	Healthcheck Proposal Support
1.Initiation	IS CSD Support
2.Planning	Matriculation
2.Planning	Timetabling (Space Utilisation)
2.Planning	Exam Administration Process
3.Product	Practice Learning Project
3.Product	Supporting ILM - Going for Gold
3.Product	International Staff Travel
5.Close	Collaborative Provision Business Process Review
5.Close	Financial Aid
5.Close	Fee Forecasting
5.Close	Target Setting
6.Complete	Cognos Phase 3
6.Complete	Module & Programme Board Process
6.Complete	UCAS Business Process
6.Complete	IDEA 50th Anniversary Support
7.Hold	Journals
7.Hold	Staff Approval Form (SAF)
7.Hold	Business School Collaborative Provision
7.Hold	FECCI Process Review
7.Hold	Complaints Log
7.Hold	Understanding Overseas Conversion
7.Hold	Identification of Different Student Pathways

Applying Continuous Improvement in Edinburgh Napier University: a visual prompt



Respect for people enables continuous improvement



How can we improve this for next time?

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