

PPI Implementation at Aston University



Opportunity

Aston University is a very successful research led university based in Birmingham, known for its world-class teaching, quality and strong links to industry, government and commerce. Excellent results on graduate employment is one of the factors that have created strong growth. However, the university executive was keen to continue investing in the university buildings and infrastructure. Therefore, the aim was to generate additional surplus by growing overheads at a slower rate than student numbers. They needed a programme to make their processes more effective and efficient.

Action

A pilot PPI project was run at the start of the academic year, with a cross-functional team looking at reducing the time taken to approve research grant applications. The success in this initial project led to a full implementation of PPI, re-branded as APEX (Aston Process Excellence). The PPI books and training materials were redesigned to incorporate the APEX logos and Aston University colours and branding; this included a foreword for the books written by the Chief Financial Officer. Two further rounds of APEX projects were run, along with training for the leadership, facilitators and Aston trainers.

Results

By the end of the academic year, Aston University was completely self-sufficient in PPI (APEX). Over 60 people had been trained and successful projects had been run aimed at reducing the time for the exam appeals process, reducing the number of manual purchase orders and increasing the in-house bookings for the Aston conference centre.