

# processfix

Summer newsletter 2024

## Welcome

There is an old adage often quoted in relation to performance measurement that goes something like “you can’t fatten a pig by weighing it.” In other words, while measurement is important, it cannot be treated as the sole basis for improvement.

Yet, unless we measure, it is impossible to quantify the effect of any given action across your organisation. Therefore, to realise true demonstrable process improvement, action and measurement must work together in harmony.

For Doug Akins, Director of Research Contracts and Compliance at the University of Southampton, measurement was essential in demonstrating to senior leadership and the wider organisation just how far his team had progressed.

In this quarter’s Processfix newsletter, Doug explains how measurement was the difference between simply feeling that performance had changed and being able to speak for just how much the research contracting process had improved.

## NEWSFLASH!

**Norwich, UK – July 2024**  
University of East Anglia launch Processfix programme across professional services.



## Quantifiable improvement in research contracting

Doug Akins is Director of Research Contracts and Compliance at the University of Southampton. Doug has been involved in research contracting for over 20 years, both in the US and the UK. Last summer his department, Research and Innovation Services (RIS), commissioned a Processfix workshop to review its contracts process. One year on we returned to Southampton to ask Doug if there had been any demonstrable improvement.



### Were there any key outcomes?

Along with transparency of the process for all stakeholders, the key outcomes included the mandatory use of artificial intelligence for contract review, simplified communications for users and utilisation of the shared platform between contracts and finance to progress awards. Last month we brought the workshop group back together for our Processfix review. So far we have reduced the median number of days from 43 to 34, that’s a 21% improvement!

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### What was the catalyst for improvement?

During the pandemic we implemented a shared platform across RIS and had a number of new technology tools at our disposal - including e-signature and artificial intelligence. Following the shift to hybrid working, research contracts had become a lightning rod for criticism and we wanted to see if there were efficiencies to be found. It was important for us to demonstrate real improvement which would be helpful for our senior leaders.

### How did you come across Processfix?

Processfix have delivered many workshops across the university over the last twelve years and I was fortunate enough to participate in a

previous event in 2020 where we looked to fine tune our research funding application process. We were confident that Processfix would facilitate the identification of areas of waste and collectively trim the process to something more efficient.

### What happened at the workshop?

During the workshop we brought together a fantastic group of professional service and academic representatives to help us unpack what turned out to be a hugely complex process. Together we came up with a new process and implementation plan with the aim to reduce the number of days from contract request to completion 25% across all contract types by the end of July 2024.

### Where will you go from here?

We are continuing to work with our academic and professional service colleagues to make them aware of the improvements, especially where they have an activity that feeds into the contract lifecycle. We are also continuing to look for areas of waste and make further adjustments as needed, as we try to improve upon our already successful outcome, prior to our end of July 2024 deadline and beyond.

## 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.

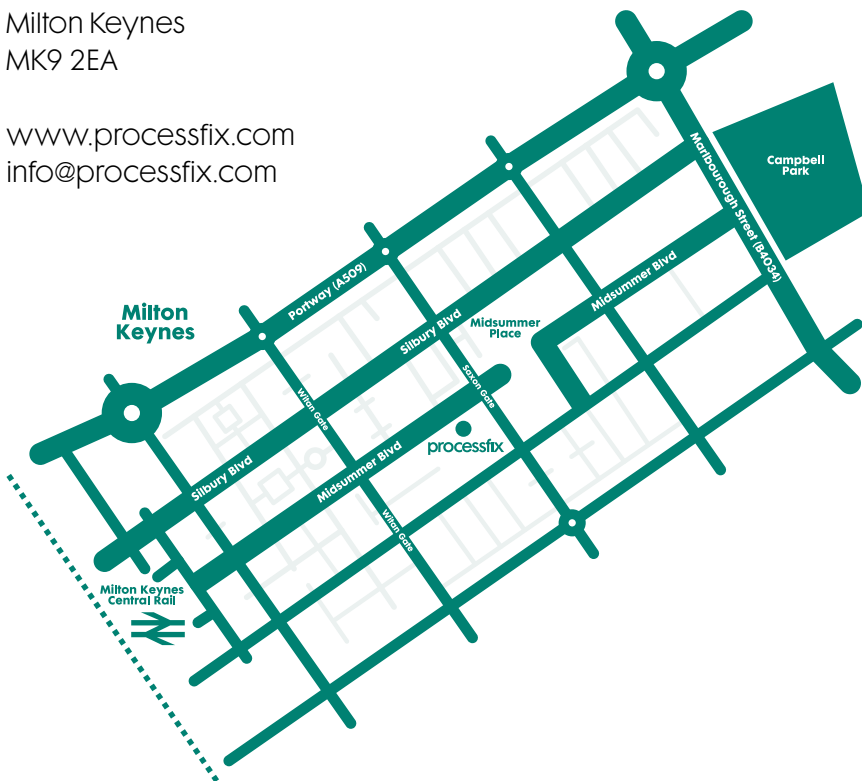
We focus on engaging your teams in their own improvement, empowering them to re-evaluate the way they do things and to develop new and improved ways of working that transform performance and deliver immediate results.

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...

Processfix training helps University of Warwick achieve Gold award for student experience in government's Teaching Excellence Framework



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