Driving **academic process efficiency** in higher education

The Client

Our client, a leading research university ranked in the top 2% of global education institutions, offers various undergraduate, postgraduate, and research programs spanning multiple disciplines. The university was seeking solutions to relieve academic staff of their administrative load.

CHALLENGE

The client's academic staff faced the challenge of managing administrative processes alongside their teaching and research responsibilities. These administrative tasks added a significant burden on the academic staff. Stakeholders wanted to enable educators to focus on delivering high-quality teaching, nurturing learning, and advancing research.

Exent was engaged to review critical processes across the university, identify pain points, and explore opportunities to reduce the academic workload.

APPROACH

Following **Exent's Business Process eXcellence (BPX)** methodology, the firm identified numerous process improvements which were both impactful and practical.

| PROCESS DISCOVERY & PRIOTIRISATION | PROCESS EXPLORATION & ANALYSIS | SOLUTION EXPLORATION & PRIORITISATION | DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS & FUTURE STATE |

KEY ELEMENTS OF OUR APPROACH

+ Process Architecture

In the initial phase, Exent established a robust process architecture tailored to the university, facilitating structured and sustainable process analysis and enhancement.

+ Impact Based Prioritisation

By engaging representatives from diverse schools and campuses, we identified and prioritised critical areas requiring improvement. This allowed us to focus our efforts on providing prompt and substantial relief to the academic staff.

+ Iterative Approach

We implemented an expedited, two-week sprint-oriented strategy for each critical process. In the first week of each sprint, Exent conducted interviews and observational sessions with key stakeholders to gather comprehensive insights into the current state of each process, identifying pain points and potential areas for enhancement. The second week included a workshop aimed at validating process mapping and consolidating analysis and ideas. A sprint report was generated and presented to stakeholders for their review and feedback.

+ Practical Recommendations

Upon completing all sprints, the findings were amalgamated into a final report encompassing recommendations and an outline. To ensure that recommendations translate into actions and outcomes, we drafted a detailed implementation plan with identified activities and resource requirements.

OUTCOMES

Our recommendations resulted in significant improvements in process efficiency and effectiveness, including:

+ Simplifying and standardising processes and procedures to ensure consistent and streamlined operations.

+ Clarifying roles and responsibilities related to policies and procedures and aligning expectations across all schools. This included providing comprehensive training and establishing a robust monitoring system to ensure process compliance.

+ Identifying key process metrics and categories to drive improvements, reduce rework activities, and minimise duplication of effort.

+ Enhancing data transfer and integration between systems, reducing manual inputs and checks, and improving overall efficiency and usability.

+ Implementing a practical strategy and roadmap to enhance the university's process maturity, moving it closer to the goal of Business Process eXcellence.