



Case Study

The challenge

Keele University, in line with much of the HE sector, was facing growing cost pressures. Previous approaches to reducing budgets had seen schools and professional services asked to decrease costs by a standard percentage across the board, but this approach was proving too blunt to realise the real change that was required to make a significant longer-term impact. There was therefore a need for a more nuanced approach to cutting costs and identifying more efficient ways of working.

What happened?

SUMS consultants carried out a benchmarking exercise for all schools and professional services, looking at costs and outcome data and comparing them internally across the University as well as against external competitor institutions. The consultants worked with Helen Galbraith, Academic



Registrar and Secretary, and her team to identify how to visualise the large wealth of data in a way that told a clear story of where the opportunities to make efficiencies lay.

The outcome

The resulting scorecards were used as the basis for 3-year planning conversations and to take ownership of the actions required to reduce costs at the university. They also enabled investment in some areas where the cards indicated that this would give an appropriate return. In addition, the data provided credible evidence for decision-making in areas such as vacancy approval and fulfilment.

Longer-term, the team at Keele are using the scorecards to identify system and process changes that will deliver on the University's ambitions. They are now able to prioritise transformation programmes for the greatest impact.

We do not want to compromise on our values and so we want to be realistic about where we can grow whilst maintaining that vision. SUMS helped us work though where we could make efficiencies without cutting who we are.

HELEN GALBRAITH,
ACADEMIC REGISTRAR AND SECRETARY

Identifying efficiency opportunities at Keele University

For More Information

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