

**University of
South Wales**
Prifysgol
De Cymru

Back to the Future: the 21st Century Adviser

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Overview



- Background to the conference/presentation
- Self audit and 5 useful tools
- Selling your ideas
- The art of self promotion
- Looking forward
- Discussion /Worksheets

Background



- Lots of debate within the Executive about this year's theme and what would be of real value to ISAs/AISA members
- Thought about issues being discussed across the various regions and through UKCISA forums etc.
- UK wide theme around re-focusing on delivering a more holistic international experience and not just immigration- as highlighted in Bobby's introduction (going *back* to pre-Tier 4 emphasis on student experience- as per the title of this section of the conference)
- Members appeared to currently looking for guidance on how they could challenge perceptions about their roles and develop and promote the work they do in their institutions
- What could AISA do to help members with this which is different from that being offered by UKCISA?
(Encouraged that this theme was included in at least one of the UKCISA regional conferences recently)
- Could we risk moving away from 'traditional' AISA conference format or subject?

YES!

Background



OK. Great. Now what?!

- What can we do to protect and develop our roles and achieve the success and recognition that we deserve (and is often lacking)?
- How do we make our voices heard and gain support in an increasingly corporate climate?
- How can we make ourselves more 'business savvy' in a changing educational environment?

(This is where we really started off roading from normal AISA behaviour!)

Though we *didn't* have all the answers, we realised we *could* give people some much needed time and space to think about these questions.

We could also give you a few suggested tools in your kit to help you work things out, a 'business' vocabulary to express this and some ideas about areas for development and promotion that you can take away...

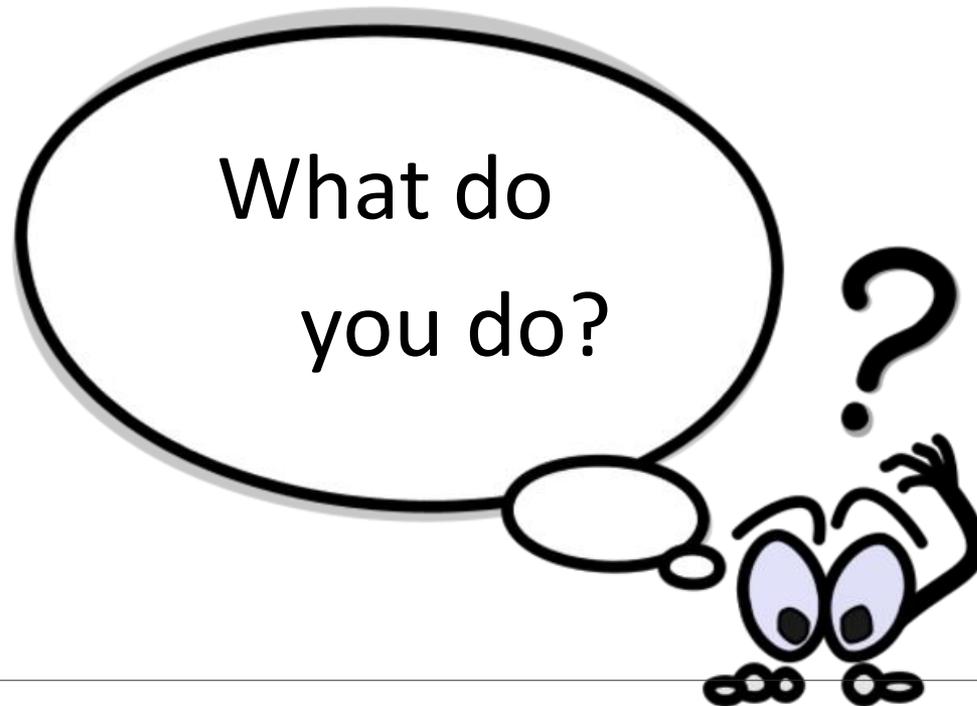
And so here we are...

Self Audit

to begin at the beginning....



Ask yourself the \$1million question.....



Self Audit

My experience



- Asked to produce a 'document' outlining what my team does and how we deliver/measure this and in a format that could be shown to other teams/senior management etc.
- **Unbelievably** difficult to express and quantify what we do on day to day basis
 - Incredibly varied & diverse
 - Developed through 'gap plugging' and/or student demand
 - Crosses many different areas
 - Range of 'soft' and 'hard' responsibilities
- Personal lack of experience in producing this sort of corporate assessment
- No suitable 'tools' to help me or vocabulary to express what I was trying to say

Self Audit

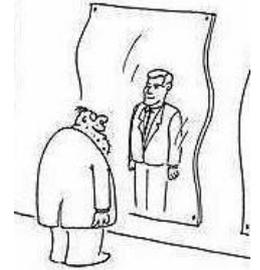
My experience



- USW Core Business Process Review!
- Training involving 'lean thinking' and 'self audit' tools which have proved invaluable for coming up with a set of measurable objectives and service outline for my team
- I never would have perceived this type of training as of use to me or sought it out
- Useful to the whole team as platforms for discussion and making changes (big and small)
- Some of the tools that have been most useful to my team I am going to share with you now (and you will have the opportunity to use in our discussion groups afterwards)

Self Audit

Runners/Repeaters/Strangers



Runners: a day to day activity that is (usually) part of your core service.

For IISA is the ability for students and staff to access us for advice. This is something that we do on a day to day basis and is core to our service.

Repeaters: an activity that is not necessarily day to day but which crops up regularly at certain times of the year.

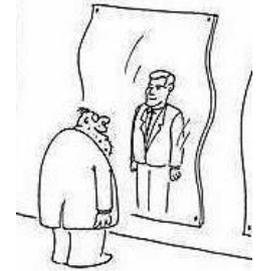
For IISA this could be our responsibility for the International Welcome Programme, it is core business but it does not happen every day but at defined points of the year.

Strangers: an infrequent activity that can be expected or unexpected.

For IISA are any UKVI driven immigration changes that crop up effecting existing processes or an internal staff request for a cultural awareness session

Self Audit

Runners/Repeaters/Strangers



- Excellent tool for drilling down what you actually do and how much time/effort should be spent on each activity. Do you undertake time intensive activity that is not actually part of your core service?
- Good for promoting debate within teams and highlighting any difference in perceived priorities

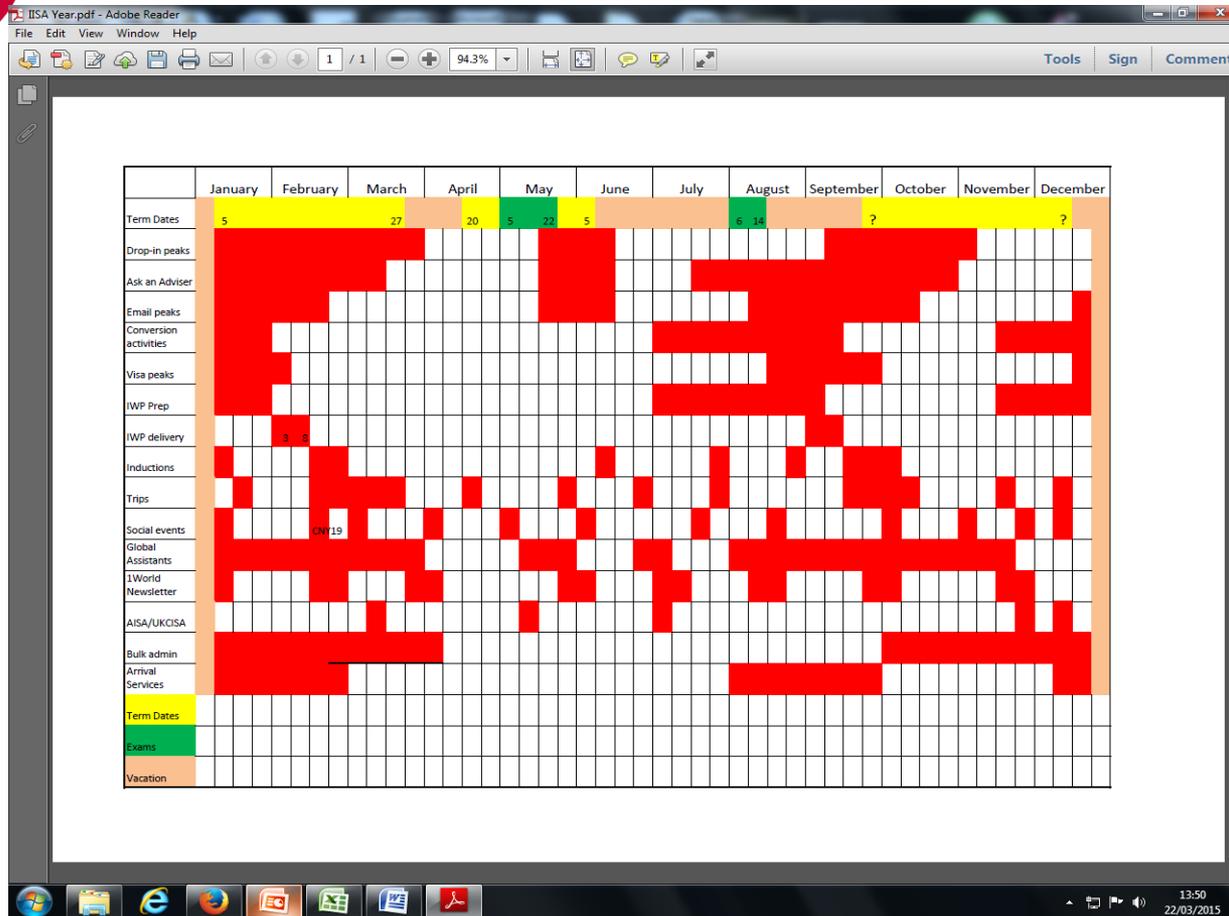
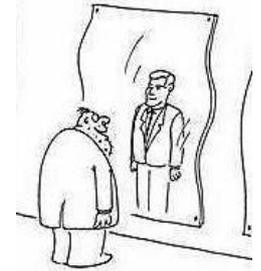
For IISA- where do visa applications sit?

Initially considered a runner (as we do 100's apps/annum) but actually a repeater (even more so with one course one CAS shortening application timeframes)

- Helps to re-prioritise 'runners' where their importance may have been forgotten
For IISA- this was easy and consistent access to the team for our users across all 4 campuses
Resulted in us developing a real time chat service called 'Ask an Adviser'
- Helps 'whole team' buy-in to priorities as everyone knows where these lie (including management)
- Being aware of 'strangers' helps to focus on how these unexpected activities can effect the team and stretch resources. Can you build in a little slack?

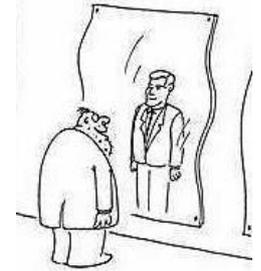
Helps to develop the next useful tool....

Self Audit Timeline of activity



Self Audit

Tools for reviewing process and procedure



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- **Linear process review:** the assessment of a single strand of activity from start to reaching the required goal. This helps to identify gaps in efficiency, delays or dead time (*Muda* in Lean Thinking)
- **Control testing:** the assessment of who has control over a situation- is it you? Can you adjust situations to improve your level of control?
- **Customer perspective review:** how does your process or procedure work from the customer's viewpoint? Would you be happy with the service you offer in the way it is presented?

Self Audit

Example: student visa workshops



Student requests information and/or visa workshop appointment via email/drop-in/phone/ask an adviser

Stage 1: Staff assesses student situation/explains visa application process/books workshop

- Can be several interactions as we assess the situation and find out whether the student needs a visa extension. Liaising regarding workshop booking date. The next workshop could be one week away or more dependent on booking time and student availability. Advisers may end up doing an 'ad hoc' visa process if the student's visa is due for expiry. Potential for many 'dead days' waiting for the workshop before the process can continue.
- Student controls when they want to attend the workshop- the Adviser cannot progress the application until the student reappears and that may be the day of visa expiry resulting in a monopoly on that Adviser's time (and a lot of stress!)
- Customer wants all the information there and then, not happy to have to wait up to a week or more to find out their individual situation. Especially frustrating if they are 'ready to go', if the sessions are at a time not convenient to them or it is fully booked one week meaning they have to wait even longer.

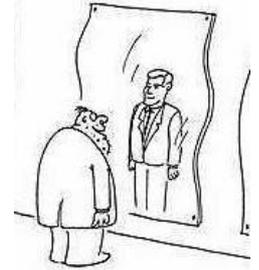
Stage 2: Student attends (weekly) workshop (1-2hrs) , sets up HO account, partially completes Tier 4 form , presentation about rest of Tier 4 requirements

- Always booked into someone's diary even if no students or only one student booked on- 80 hrs/yr (more than 2 weeks). Approx. 20mins dead time per booked but non attended session.
- Up to the student whether they turn up- sometimes they are booked 3 or more times per extension- adviser does not know this until after they have waited 15mins per workshop. Workshop can only progress at the rate of the slowest student and forms can only be partially completed and dependent on the student bringing requested documents.
- Customer wants to progress at their own pace and with reference to their own situation- workshop situation does not necessarily meet this.

Linear Process Review- control testing- customer viewpoint review

Self Audit

Example: student visa workshops



Using these tools to assess our (wider) visa application processes has resulted in some huge changes to the way we work.....

- Abolished student visa workshops altogether
- Set up HO account, request CAS statement, gather all information needed to complete the Tier 4 form, prepare a bespoke 'what to do next sheet', book visa application submission appointment all at the initial drop-in point (using supplementary information recorded on University systems if necessary)
- Liaise with other depts to ensure CAS production and receive all CAS
- Complete the Tier 4 form so it just needs checking by the student at final appointment
- Large cohorts we prepare as much documentation and individual bespoke 'what to do next sheets' *before* initial individual meetings (as soon as enrolment details available)
- Named student groups per Adviser so each student/Adviser has case knowledge and no confusion over responsibility and each Adviser has responsibility for a known caseload and can set their own timeframes for preparatory work

These methods have allowed us to give us maximum control over the application process, with the minimum of wasted time, the ability to undertake work when we want to (and according to our 'timeline of activity') and with a quicker, enhanced and more personalised service to the student- it is now possible for a student to make their application at point of initial drop-in....

This works for us but I know each team is different.....!

Selling your ideas

How to win funds and influence people!



- Know your institutional ‘buzz words’ and key phraseology (employability/integration/student experience/value for money) You can often find these on your websites
- Make sure you consider resources (time/timing/money/people) and include these in any proposals, undertake a Control Test to identify and address any potential pitfalls
- Identify ‘quick wins’, can you start small in order to build confidence in your project for later development and exploitation (**IISA Study Abroad Helpsheets**)
- Learn to think (and present) strategically

Selling your ideas

How to win funds and influence people!



I want to set up an International Film Club because I think it would be a great thing to do and the students will really like it

VS

I want to set up an International Film Club as it will help build a sense of student community. We can widen it out to all students to assist with integration and promote discussion afterwards resulting in shared cultural experiences. Resources wise, I have checked we hold the relevant institutional licence to show films for educational purposes and we can use the lecture theatre in B block for films and this holds a maximum of 150 students. Purchasing a film to show is approximately £10/film and we can keep those for reuse year on year adding to the collection as we go along. We can provide biscuits or popcorn and squash for approximately £5/showing. Therefore if we aim for 9 films per year we are looking at a maximum cost of £135 per annum and costing 10p per student per activity if we reach capacity. We can also advertise 2 Volunteer International Film Club Officer posts to run/advertise it and take photos and produce monthly reports- we will highlight how this will boost their employability skills and we shall provide them with a reference. Should it prove successful, there will be possible further opportunity to develop links with our local community cinema and their International Film Festival.

The art of self promotion



- Traditionally something we are not particularly strong at (we are too busy/not marketers/think people should automatically understand the value of what we do)- **IISA repeatedly referred to as the International Office**
- Not telling people what you do leads to the **‘oh they syndrome’!**
 - If you don't know what you do how can anyone else...? Back to the \$1million question and self audit....
 - This syndrome *always* results in an undervaluing or misconception and so it's important we get in there first
- Keep statistics (people understand these!) you might be shocked by the results
- Understand and promote how your activities impact on others -**IISA 0% refusal rate**
- Proactively contact people with your team activity review/statement of service
- Proactively contact people whose activities you are interested in to see if they are willing to share ideas & resources (and credit!) -**IISA/Chaplaincy**

The art of self promotion



- Learn to use social media as a quick win
- The student voice is louder than yours and Marketing Depts LOVE student stories! Use your students to big you up...
- Research and use your internal/external communication forums
- Add deadlines for publications to your timeline of activity
- Develop your own communication tool:

<http://intsupport.southwales.ac.uk/1World/Newsletter/>

Looking forward

Some final thoughts...



- Be open to & explore the possibility of working relationships within your institution (and thus potential resources for projects)
- Within the AISA Executive we are working in the following areas alongside our 'day jobs':
 - employability, study abroad, IRO, conversion, student experience, compliance, alumni, students union, induction, cultural awareness
- Our/your knowledge and experience of international students/institutional process/getting stuff done is vast do not underestimate this
- Add your details to the new AISA directory of skills & experience-coming soon....

Part 2: Discussion/Worksheets

Group A: C17

Group B: C24

Group C: D20