The Academic Year Reform (AYR) and the Professional Services Tasks (PST) Application

Last week there were two briefing sessions for IMT Staff on the academic year reform and what it will mean for Professional Services teams across LSE.

In a bid to improve the learning experience of our students, August marks the start of the AYR restructure which will see the Michaelmas and Lent terms extended to eleven weeks and the Summer term reduced to only seven.

As Professional Services (e.g. estates, finance, records management, IMT and HR) we perform numerous complex tasks as part of our daily work; with many tasks seasonal in nature, aligned to the academic year calendar and dependent on other service departments.

Therefore to help with the migration, the eDevelopment Team from IMT has developed a new tool, the Professional Services Tasks (PST) Application, which will enable oversight of our Professional Services activities to allow for an assessment of the impact on your operations.

**Why is this important?**

This is the first time the academic year has changed in living memory which means we have many processes which traditionally have taken place at certain times and have automatically involved different teams.

For example, for Admissions to be able send out their invites to the new intake, the eDev team has to roll forward the academic year in LSE for You first. This interdependency may not be known to each group; therefore a problem could arise when planning for the new academic year if Admissions re-schedules their activity before eDev have completed theirs.

The PST application will provide an easy way of keeping an overview of these annual tasks and will help with planning your activities for the new academic year.

**How does the PST work?**

The PST tool is a SharePoint calendar which has variety of functions, including allowing you to:

* enter tasks in your personal team calendar for the current academic year (2014/2015) and the new year (2015/2016)
* to view your data as an aggregated calendar, which will allow you to compare the current and new calendars side by side
* to overlay up to 10 calendars from other Professional Services teams
* be alerted when changes are made to another team calendar or an individual task you are interested in
* to view the Professional Services calendar which displays an overall view of all tasks from all PST team calendars

A full user guide will be provided to all teams who have access to the PST application.

**What happens now?**

It is time for your team to start thinking in terms of annual tasks and systems – what you do when, why and how – do you need to secure new resources because of the change?

Also importantly, you need to meet and discuss the new academic year change with your customers, who you may find have yet to start planning for 2015/2016 and ask them to enter their current tasks into their PST calendar.

A provisional schedule to gather and input this information has been proposed by the AYR committee as follows:

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| --- | --- |
| January 2015 | * Identify your annual tasks |
| February 2nd | * Enter your tasks into your team calendar * Ask your customers to enter their tasks into their calendars |
| February 16th | * Ensure your and your customers calendars are complete * Subscribe to any tasks which you want to be notified about should they be re-scheduled |
| March 2nd | * Tasks can now be re-scheduled and/or added to the new academic year\* |
| March 31st | * Target date for completion |

*\*Please note, all tasks added to the current year calendar will be automatically added to the new year calendar. E.g. an activity which takes place in week two of Summer term 2014/2015 will be added to week two of Summer term 2015/2016. From March 2nd you will then be able to amend items in the new year calendar.*

The goal of the PST is to enable teams to notice when they need to re-schedule a task, or start performing a new one as a result of the academic year restructure.

If you have any questions about the PST application or would like a demonstration for your team, please contact Ron Riley, Enterprise Technologies Manager, who would be happy to assist you.