

Project Document Cover Sheet



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Project Information			
Project Acronym	PiP		
Project Title	Principles in Patterns		
Start Date	1/09/08	End Date	31/07/12
Lead Institution	University of Strathclyde		
Project Director(s)	Veena O'Halloran and Ray Land		
Project Manager & contact details	Jim Everett (jim.everett@strath.ac.uk)		
Partner Institutions	n/a		
Project Web URL	www.principlesinpatterns.ac.uk		
Programme Name (and number)	<i>Institutional Approaches to Curriculum Design</i>		
Programme Manager	Sarah Knight		

Document Name			
Document Title	<i>Additional Interim Report</i>		
Reporting Period	<i>October 2010 – March 2011</i>		
Author(s) & project role	Jim Everett (Project Manager)		
Date	30/04/2010	Filename	PiP Additional Interim Report March 2011.doc
URL	http://www.principlesinpatterns.ac.uk/resources.aspx		
Access	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project and JISC internal		<input type="checkbox"/> General dissemination

Document History		
Version	Date	Comments
0	13/03/11	Initial draft
1	18/03/11	Draft shared with Project Team and Co-Directors
2	23/3/11	Final version

Interim Reporting Template

Project Name: *PiP (Principles in Patterns) University of Strathclyde*

Report compiled by: *Jim Everett*

With contributions from: *Donna Cullen, Dariusz Jabrzyk, Ray Land*

Reporting period: *October 2010 onward*

Section One: Summary

1.1 Focusing project aims

In 2010 the PiP Project Steering Group agreed a refined set of project aims, which were communicated to the JISC Programme Manager, Sarah Knight, in June 2010. In light of the outcomes of the reorganisation of the university's academic and professional structures and refocused institutional priorities these project aims have been subject to further minor revision to better reflect the current requirements of the institution.

- (i) to develop and test a prototype on-line expert system and linked set of support materials that, if adopted, would:
 - improve the efficiency of course and class approval processes at the University of Strathclyde
 - support the alignment of course and class provision with institutional policies and strategies
 - integrate the course and class approval processes into the corporate information environment
- (ii) to use the findings from (i) to share lessons learned and to produce a set of recommendations to the University of Strathclyde and to the HE sector about ways of improving class and course approval processes¹

1.2 Consolidation of the project team

The restructuring of Professional Services at the University of Strathclyde has meant the departure of a number of members of staff who had previously been involved in the PiP Project and changes to the roles of others. This has been a lengthy process and has only recently been completed with the new Professional Services Directorates only taking shape at the end of 2010. The outcome has meant further changes to the PiP Project team.

¹ The aim “help stimulate reflection about the educational design of classes and courses and about the student experiences they would promote” has been replaced by “integrate the course and class approval processes into the corporate information environment “

	Institutional Role	Role on Project
Dr. Veena O'Halloran	Director, Student Experience and Enhancement Services (SEES)	Co-Director
Prof. Ray Land	Head of Enhancement Services, SEES Professor of Educational Development	Co-Director
James Everett	Senior Developer/Analyst , Information Services Directorate (ISD)	Project Manager
Donna Cullen	Senior Developer/Analyst, ISD	Analyst, work package management (technical)
Dariusz Jabrzyk	Developer/Analyst, ISD	Technical Analyst/Support
<i>TBA (Approval is currently being sought for this short term post.)</i>	<i>Research assistant</i>	Undertake user and system evaluation
Senior Management / Project Champions		
Prof. Colin Grant	Associate Deputy-Principal for Learning and Teaching	Project Champion/Chair of Steering Committee

No further changes to the project team are envisioned before the end of the project, apart from the addition of a researcher to undertake evaluation. The establishment of Student Experience and Enhancement Services and the Information Services Directorate marks the end of the current phase of reorganisation and these organisational units will remain in place through the end of the project and beyond. Both Co-directors have committed to the successful completion of the project, and the outcomes of the project are being included in the forward planning of the Directorates as they take shape.

Similarly all the project staff, Jim, Donna and Dariusz, have contracts that extend beyond the end of the project in the wake of the reorganisation and the attendant job matching process. This process has demonstrated the value the ISD places on their skills and contribution to the institution.

1.3 Project Steering Group

Institutional reorganisation and changes outwith the university have also necessitated changes to the project Steering Group. The final composition of the group has yet to be finalised however the broad areas of involvement are clear:

Internal members

- Prof. Colin Grant, Associate Vice-Principal for Learning and Teaching, chair
- Senior Faculty representative (has been Professor Val Belton, Vice-Dean, Business School, but may change with her new role)
- Senior representative from the Governance, Management and Planning Team
- Senior representative from Information Services Directorate (change may be required reflecting reorganisation)
- Senior representative from Registry/Student Records (new member of Steering Group)

External members

- Professor Peter Bullen, critical friend to project
- Sarah Knight, Programme Manager (attending)
- Representative from Higher Education Academy (Eddie Gulc has been suggested)

The remit and responsibilities of the Steering Group will remain unchanged and the next meeting will take place in April 2011.

1.4 Revised Outputs and Outcomes

Changes to the project aims are manifest in changes to the PiP Project outputs and outcomes, however the change is minor with the substitution of two new outputs:

- a common core set of approval questions
- an online system that will allow faculties and departments to deliver the common core information to the institutional management while allowing the integration of local approval requirements that extend or refine the core institutional requirements in a single system

for the earlier output:

- A prototype set of educational questions that, if incorporated into curriculum approval documentation offers better fit with university educational strategy and potential to create a valuable re-purposable resource to support enhancement.

1.5 Technical development

Changes to the aims and outputs of the project have had a minimal impact on the technical objectives, however the new institutional focus on integration and corporate information management has meant that integration with institutional information systems, which had always been an aspiration of the project, has become a key requirement.

1.6 Institutional impact

As previously reported, the PiP Project, and the process analysis and online system in particular, has generated considerable interest among those engaged in course and class approval at Strathclyde and have played a significant part in wider discussions and reviews in this area. This impact is expected to be strengthened by the re-focusing of the project.

- The PiP Project is now clearly “owned” by the Student Experience and Enhancement Services (SEES) Directorate which includes registry and student records functions, who are key process owners
- Project Management and technical delivery is now located within the Business Systems department of the Information Services Directorate, which has responsibility for all the corporate information systems including the student records system, and course and class catalogues, which not only makes integration with these systems a higher priority than before but also opens the way to achieve this integration
- The project now has a more clear and straightforward message within the institution, one of process renewal and facilitation, which makes it easier for stakeholders to understand the value of the project to the institution and for them to engage with the project

The HE sector in Scotland is experiencing a different set of challenges to those facing English institutions. The sort of far reaching changes to HE finances that have already been imposed in England are unlikely to emerge until after the Scottish elections and the situation is liable to remain unclear for some time. However, despite this uncertainty in the Scottish sector, Strathclyde is responding to the challenges of falling state funding and demographic changes within Scotland with an ambitious plan to become recognised as a *Leading Technological University*. This plan has many facets including enhanced links with industry, research enhancement, internationalisation, etc. Within the Professional Services this has been expressed as a strategic drive to simplify, streamline and standardise business processes across the board, and to improve access to and reporting of information at all stages of the process. Within the domain of the PiP Project this drive has been further reinforced by the recent Enhancement Led

Institutional Review which, although uncovering no causes for concern, did note the lack of standardisation and transparency in the course and class approval processes

Section Two: Activities and Progress

2.1 Revisions to work-packages

The changes to the project focus are manifested in minor changes to the project work-packages. While the majority of the remaining work-packages remain unchanged, the original work-packages related to the development of curriculum designs and support materials (i.e. packages 5 and 10) are rewritten to refer only to “support materials” and these support materials will focus on contextualising the existing (and emerging) institutional guidance and policies

2.2 Revised project plan

The new project management team is developing a revised project plan that reflects the new team structure, revised project focus and the reprofiled budget. The broad outline of the revised plan is:

Activity	Timing
Complete the working prototype system based on a common core of questions supported by contextualised guidance and integrating into existing data management systems	March – May 2011
Re-launch the PiP Project within Strathclyde and recruit staff engaged in all stages of the approval process to participate in the piloting	Launch event June 2011
Prepare pilot environments for participating departments/faculties including any data, business rules, etc. required in addition to the core question set	June – August 2011
Recruit and induct research assistant to undertake evaluation during the piloting phase	June – August 2011
Pilot approval support system through full approval cycle with participating departments and faculties, SEES (i.e. Registry) and Corporate Services/Secretariat (i.e. Ordinances and Regulations Committee, Senate), and corporate information services. The pilot phase will include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● evaluation of the user experience, systems and tools, impact on business processes ● incremental technical improvements in response to user feedback ● regular liaison with corporate stakeholders impacted by the pilot 	August 2011 – March 2012
Package online system version with end user, technical and deployment documentation. Including preparing system components for open sourcing where licensing permits ²	April – June 2012
Prepare evaluation report	April – June 2012
Submit continuation proposals to the relevant Strathclyde committees (i.e. Information Strategy, Educational Strategy, and Executive committees)	June 2012

² Although the system is built on the proprietary Microsoft SharePoint platform, this platform is amenable to the creation and distribution of applications. Indeed there is a thriving open source ecosystem around SharePoint and PiP intends to contribute to that ecosystem. The most active repository for open source projects in this ecosystem is CodePlex which is the most appropriate host for those elements that can be packaged for distribution to the community.

Activity	Timing
Prepare reports to JISC Programme	April – July 2012
External dissemination	April onwards

Section Three: Risks, Issues and Opportunities

3.1 Opportunities

The changes to the team and project emphasis gives rise to several opportunities

- As part of the Business Systems Department within the Information Services Directorate the PiP Project now has
 - commitment to integrate PiP with existing corporate systems, including Strathclyde's bespoke student records system
 - more direct access to those managing the corporate information systems
- With the Director of Student Experience and Enhancement as a project director the project now has
 - direct access to staff engaged in student records and registry processes
 - renewed commitment from senior management of these areas to release staff for PiP Project act
- The Development and Innovation unit, where the PiP Project team is based, is leading an institutional project on Business Process Review (project manager Donna Cullen who is also on the PiP team) which
 - emphasises the project team's expertise in this area
 - creates further opportunities to promote the business process analysis work undertaken through PiP on the course/class approval processes
 - allows lessons learned from the Business Process Review project to be fed back into PiP
- The institutional emphasis on standardising and streamlining business processes
 - provides additional drivers for the university to engage with the PiP Project

The changes in project emphasis and personnel also provide an opportunity to “re-launch” the project in Strathclyde with a renewed focus and more straightforward message to stakeholders. We plan to hold a re-launch event to mark the completion of the system as a prelude to the pilot phase.

3.2 Issues

The re-focusing of the PiP Projects objectives and deliverables means that some areas of work have not been brought to fruition, i.e. the development of revised questions that explore the pedagogical aspects of new course/class descriptors. Where work has been undertaken in these areas the project team will write or commission reports that synthesise the achievements to date and the lessons learned.

While the institutional priorities are now clear, there are a number of areas of activity where decisions are still to be made over a number of initiatives that pre-date the reorganisation. Of particular interest to the PiP Project are the reviews relating to course and class approval and review, which are currently on hold. PiP has contributed to the work of the reviews and would expect that to inform and be informed by any further activity in this area. The project team maintain close links with the staff involved and will engage as appropriate when the situation becomes clearer.

3.3 Risks

The re-profiling of the PiP Project is a response to one of the key risks identified in the original project plan; the loss of project staff. With the completion of the reorganisation and the creation of the new Professional Services Directorates further staff changes caused by institutional pressures are much less likely.

Similarly, changes to the institutional priority to create standardised, streamlined business processes is highly unlikely to change over the remaining months of the project. Scottish Higher Education faces a greater degree of uncertainty than in other parts of the UK as we approach the Scottish election, however it is unlikely that any changes that flow from the election of a new government will detract from the objectives of the project.

Section Four: Outputs and Deliverables

4.1 Revised Project outputs

Changes to the project aims and objects have consequences for the project's outputs. In practice these changes are minor and the following continue to form the expected outputs of the project

- A baseline map of the sequence of institutional processes and procedures that support decision-making and approval of curricula.
- A prototype online class and course approval workflow system that, as far as possible, reflects the needs of different constituencies involved in course approval processes.
- A sample of online support resources for academic staff involved in curriculum design and curriculum approval decisions.
- Recommendations for the future of the online system, including a development roadmap and business plan to inform investment decisions.
- Recommendations and a roadmap for future provision of support for curriculum development at the university, drawing on the lessons learned in PiP.
- Dissemination events to institutional audiences including senior managers, academic staff etc.

The only output that has been superseded by the changes to the project is

- *A prototype set of educational questions that, if incorporated into curriculum approval documentation offers better fit with university educational strategy and potential to create a valuable re-purposable resource to support enhancement.*

Initial piloting of questions had found little appetite for questions that focus on pedagogy. This implicit emphasis on the approval process as an essentially administrative/business decision has been further reinforced by the institutional drive for streamlined procedures and more effective decision making. In this environment the project team have agreed to drop this objective.

In its place is a commitment to work with the relevant strategic committees and institutional reviews to develop:

- a common core set of approval questions
- an online system that will allow faculties and departments to deliver the common core information to the institutional management while allowing the integration of local

approval requirements that extend or refine the core institutional requirements in a single system

The development of a core set of questions is clearly dependent on progress at an institutional level and this may not coincide with the timing of the project, however while the relevant committees and reviews work in this area the project will be able to use existing model questions as a basis for development.

An additional output which also reflect the refocused institutional emphases is a commitment to

- integrate the approval workflow expert system with existing corporate information systems

4.2 Deliverables

In the wake of the refocusing of the project outputs, deliverables most likely to be of interest to the wider community include:

- Recommendations about the development of online systems to support curriculum approval.
- A technical report on the use of SharePoint, integration with corporate information systems, etc.
- An evaluation report detailing successes and lessons learned.
- Interim and final reports to JISC
- Dissemination activities including conference participation, activities with cluster/programme partners, project website, etc.

Outputs will be uploaded to the Design Studio wherever possible. While there is no concern over the community focused deliverables, some sensitivity has been expressed over the more institutionally specific outputs and public versions of these may need to be developed.

Section Five: Evaluation

To date evaluation has primarily used a range of formative embedded approaches to capture and reflect on the progress and outputs of the project. We expect to continue this strategy through the remainder of the project with particular emphasis on the teasing out and learning lessons on the conduct and management of a strategic project such as PiP. However, we also intend to undertake a more structured evaluation.

The planned pilot phase will engage not only the project team but a group of piloters and their respective departments/offices. The piloting process will be an iterative one with frequent updates, enhancements and fixes to respond to the piloters' feedback throughout the pilot phase. The process will also draw in other staff across the university who are engaged in the approval process.

As this is a concentrated period of activity surrounding the core deliverables it will be the focus of a dedicated evaluation which, unlike the other evaluation activities which have looked at the project, will focus on the deliverables

- assessing their fitness for purpose,
- gathering and interpreting user responses,
- identifying opportunities for enhancement and improvements

- discerning the perceptions and reactions of stakeholders not directly engaged in the pilot
- etc.

These ongoing evaluative activities will feed into the iterative development process and also inform the ongoing communication activities. However, we recognise that not all the suggestions, feedback, observations and opportunities can be acted on during the pilot phase, and the evaluation will provide a foundation for continuation and sustainability planning.

Recognising that this is a significant piece of work we intend to recruit a new member of the team to undertake the evaluation activities. This new team member will be an experienced evaluator/researcher and will contribute to the detailed planning of the evaluation activities. However, it is vital that the evaluator works closely with the technical development team to deliver “in-pilot” evaluation to deliver outcomes that can be acted on and themselves evaluated in a short cycle iteration, as well as broader evaluation of the pilot and its impact.

Section Six: Outcomes and Lessons Learned

As has been explored in earlier reports, the initiative to develop more powerful questions on the pedagogies underpinning the course/class as a means to introduce themes of pedagogical enhancement raised a range of complexities and issues. Across the range of stakeholders it is clear that some have little or no interest in pedagogical issues, i.e. administrative staff, registry, etc. Academic managers and those with an interest in planning and quality assurance have shown an interest in deriving metrics that characterise courses/classes, and some of the metrics that have been identified have a pedagogical aspect (e.g. how much group work, how much lab time). However this interest is very much in the “nice to have” category rather than a core requirement, and is best seen in the context of broader institutional drive to surface management information rather than specifically educational. Among the academics engaged in preparing course/class descriptors there has been considerable debate over the detail and depth of information required at the approval stage as opposed to the delivery stage once the learning opportunity has been approved, marketed, recruited and the decision ultimately taken to deliver it.

This analysis has called into question the extent to which the approval process can be used as an entrée into pedagogical enhancement and renewal. Within the current project context and with institutional emphasis on surfacing information and standardising practice the project directors have agreed that this aspect of the project will no longer be pursued as part of PiP., however we will prepare a report on this work so that the lessons learned can be shared with the community.

Section Seven: Communication and Dissemination Activities

7.1 Internal Communications

Internal communication over the coming weeks will be focused towards the re-launch of the project. A Steering Group meeting with revised membership is the first step towards this.

7.2 External Communications

No significant changes to the external communications already planned are envisaged. The project website (www.principlesinpatterns.ac.uk), which includes blog entries and key documents

and other resources, will continue to be the principle means of updating the community on the progress of the project and, along with the Design Studio, for making available deliverables.

Section Eight: Collaboration and Support

8.1 Cluster engagement

The increased emphasis in the PiP Project towards business process and information management highlights new opportunities to engage with projects within the Programme. Discussions with the Programme Support Team have already identified several projects whose activities resonate with those being undertaken through the PiP Project, e.g. Staffordshire, City, and Cardiff. Over the next phase of the project PiP will map these points of intersection with other projects and explore ways of sharing experiences.

The Enterprise Architecture group of projects and community of practice has also been identified as another potential point of engagement. Although PiP is not an enterprise architecture project, the approach clearly has relevance to the project and also to the Information Services Directorate more widely. We will be exploring how best Strathclyde and PiP can engage with this community.

8.2 Programme support

The PiP Project will be looking to the Programme Support services and our critical friend, Peter Bullen, during the next phase of the project as we shift the emphasis to the revised objectives and deliverables. We have already received valuable suggestions on which of the other projects in the Programme to contact; the role of the support team in bringing to our attention these potential synergies is vital. We will also be making use of support in the revised evaluation plan