



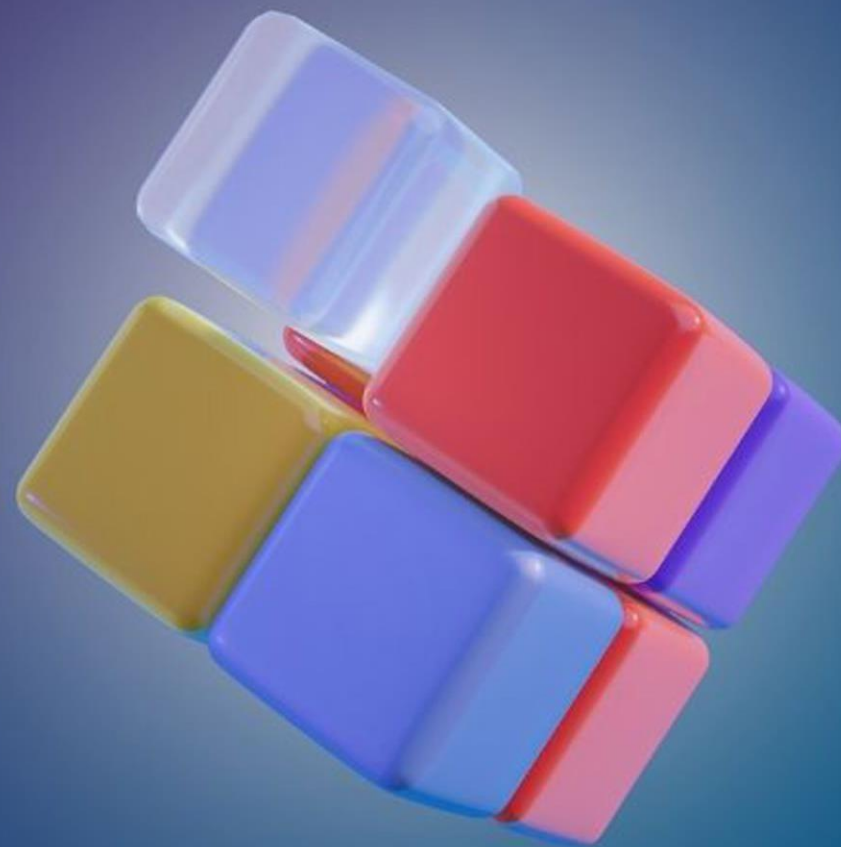
# UHR Conference 2025

Online 13 - 15 May

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Nottingham Trent  
University

# **Managing change at a large-scale university: Working in partnership to deliver a new approach to academic workload planning**

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# A university in transition

- Sector challenges
- Preparing for arrival of a new Vice Chancellor
- Continuing to monitor financial challenges
- Ambitious and forward looking
- Remaining highly competitive in the sector
- Next University Strategy

# HR/OD as an enabler

- Collaborative working with Academic and Professional Service stakeholders
- Programme Management and consultancy approaches
- Business Partnering model – HR, OD and EDI
- Strong focus on continuous improvement
- Horizon scanning and accessing thought leadership (e.g. OD and NBS)

# Case Study

## Academic Workload Management Project



# Context: HR in partnership

- Academic Workload Management
  - Consumes significant academic management capacity
- Model evolved by adding more
  - Tariffs, multipliers, work categories, calculations
- Often a focus on what should go where
  - Not *how* we should engage in workload
- No pause in the workload cycle

# Goal: alignment, focus and cycle

- Aligned to our strategic ambitions
  - Empowering People
- Instead of focusing on everything
  - The most important focal element
  - The infrastructure helps to facilitate meaningful discussion
- Connected with university cycles
  - Course enrolment target setting, appraisal and timetabling

# Goal: change and responsibility

- Affect change
  - More than changing one policy document for another
- Supporting a principles-based, streamlined, approach
  - Move from no clear responsibility to devolved school responsibility



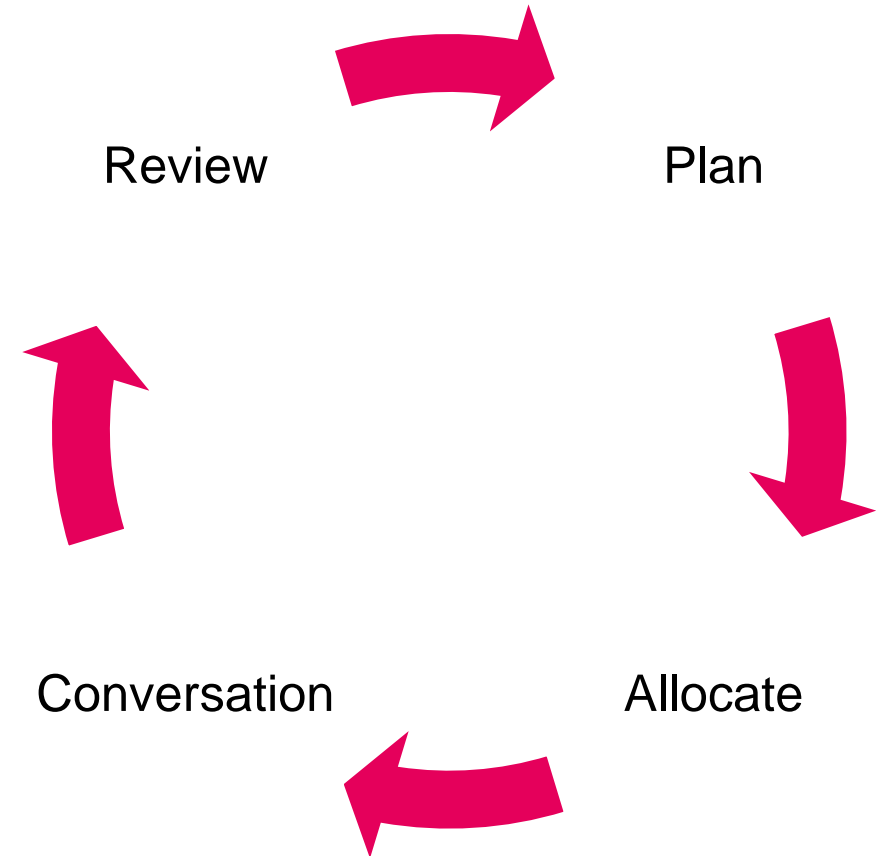
# What we achieved

- Cultural shift in the way the organisation saw workload
- Delivered on time and business as usual, September 2023
  - Policy, process and platform
- NTU 2023 Team Excellence Awards (Highly Commended)



# Three ingredients

- Our plan
- Our people
- Our conversations



# Our plan

- Clear and articulated purpose
  - Aligned with strategy and values
  - Principles first
- The delivery mechanism mattered
- Worked with the academic cycle
  - Project launch was planned in from the start
- Change is not often linear
  - Letting go of old ways
    - Change curve: Kubler-Ross (1969)

# Our people

- The right people in the room: Project Board
- Support from University Executive and the School Deans
  - Provided as much signalling as possible
  - Made it clear who owns this new approach
- Saw each of the schools as separate stakeholders
  - Eight school leads
    - Supported through stages of group development (Tuckman, 1965)

# Our conversations

- De-escalating fear of change
- Listening and dialogue
- Communications at different levels
  - Focused on supporting communication at School and Department level
    - Where communication was likely to resonate the most
      - Context setting for university level communications
      - Communication packs for local teams

# Discussion questions

Section break subtitle



# Discussion questions

- What are some of the challenges
- How do we grow through limitations
- What can we do to future proof
- Where do meaningful conversations happen and how does HR and leadership make them happen







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# Thank you



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