

Continuous Improvement Guide

Continuous improvement of processes, practices, services and products occurs on a regular basis at AIM with it being a normal part of business to improve products or services or to make processes work more efficiently and/or effectively. There are many accepted methods for ensuring that the value from one change can be carried over into other projects or can be demonstrated for compliance purposes.

One of the most common methods that supports a regular cycle of continuous improvement is the **Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle** that basically states, you must plan what you are going to do, then actually carry out your plan, review the outcomes/results of your plan and based on that identify areas for improvement for the next cycle or plan.

Depending on your project, *some or all of these steps* may be used within each part of the cycle.

The key aspects of the continuous improvement cycle are:

1. planning occurs before implementation
2. regular checking of progress and communication with relevant teams is sustained, and
3. a review of the project or program is documented so that 'lessons learnt' can be applied to future business and continuous improvement opportunities.

Plan

Step	Action	Example
Set up the plan, program, or project	Define what you want to achieve, the standards to meet, and the steps to follow.	If you want to improve customer service, include training programs, feedback systems, and performance metrics.
Review schedule/timelines	Plan when to review all requirements (technical, quality and compliance) throughout the duration or year of the program or project ensuring you take note of business priorities and timelines.	Schedule regular reviews to check compliance with industry standards, business priorities and internal policies.
Assign Ownership	Appoint someone to oversee aspects of the project, program, or Continuous Improvement Register.	Assign a senior manager to ensure everyone knows their responsibilities.
Internal Review/Audit (If required)	Prepare for reviews/audits by reviewing the process and making improvements beforehand.	Conduct a mock audit to identify and fix potential issues.
Decision Making	Plan to provide regular updates with the relevant decision maker(s) to review progress, address gaps or non-compliances and improve procedures.	Hold monthly/regular meetings to review progress and make necessary adjustments

Do

Step	Action	Example
Implement the Plan:	Allocate (additional) resources, if required, for planned improvements.	Allocate budget and staff time for training programs and system upgrades.

Step	Action	Example
Review process:	Verify the plan is meeting requirements (technical, quality and compliance) business OKRs, student/staff satisfaction, and progression.	Track and assess outcomes from the assessment validation processes
Implementation Plan	Communicate with management, students, and staff.	Send regular updates to all relevant stakeholders about the progress of improvement initiatives, advise relevant committee members

Check

Step	Action	Example
Monitor Compliance:	Undertake regular reviews to measure and report on effectiveness of the improvement and any related risk level	Schedule a Course Review Committee meeting to assess course performance against business OKRs, student satisfaction and compliance requirements.
Collect Evidence	Gather evidence during reviews to show if improvements are needed.	Collect data from student surveys, assessment results, course reviews, registers, complaints, and meeting minutes to see alignment between data sources.
Communicate	Regular meetings and updates to keep the register/project/program plan updated and complete an annual review schedule where required.	Hold regular team meetings to discuss progress and update the continuous improvement register.

Act

Step	Action	Example
Address Risks	Identify and act on options to address risks and low performance and improve compliance.	If a risk is found in course performance data, undertake an audit or review to locate the root cause, implement a process to fix it and record the change.
Reporting	Summarise project, program or internal review results and report on outcomes, performance, compliance, risk ratings, and action items.	Prepare a quarterly report summarising findings and actions taken to the relevant governance committee for action or information.
Project Management	Manage projects based on size, non-compliances, and risks.	For major issues, create a project plan with tasks, deadlines, and responsible team members.
Continuous Improvement Register	Record improvements and ensure clarity on what has been implemented. Confirm if the improvement has delivered on what was required.	Update the register with details of completed projects, changes to procedures, and annual submissions to regulators or relevant governance committees.