

8 Wastes

What is it?

Waste is anything that does not add **value** to your product or service and the **8 Wastes** is a classification of **waste** sources into the following categories:



Figure 1: The 8 categories of waste

In a university context, the simplest definition of **value** is that it is something that is useful to others, whether they are internal or external to the University, Eg. a colleague, student, visitor etc. Anything that does not add value, in the eyes of the recipient of a service is **waste**. Understanding the needs of the recipients of services helps us see value through their eyes.

There may be activities that do not ostensibly 'add value' to the process but are necessary for legal purposes or to comply with the University internal regulations, customs and/or traditions.

The key wastes to identify and eliminate are those that don't 'add value' and are unnecessary.

TIP: You may find the mnemonic **TIM WOODS** helpful in helping you to remember the 8 Wastes.

When to use it?

When developed as a way of thinking, **8 Wastes** works effectively, in identifying what you could stop doing or when redesigning processes. You might like to think of it as using 'X-ray specs' vision when it comes to uncovering waste!

TIP: Whilst **waste** is usually a symptom and not the root cause, it often indicates where problems are.

The following examples are illustrative of the type of **wastes** that you should be looking out for:

Benefits at a glance....

- by developing **8 Wastes** thinking, you can use 'X-ray specs' vision when it comes to uncovering **waste**
- it reduces stress by identifying and eliminating bottlenecks and saves time and budget whilst increasing quality
- use it to examine your own workspace, both physical and virtual, to minimise the **waste**
- eliminating waste gives you increased capacity to meet your customer needs
- waste will always be present, so there is always something that you can do to improve your performance

'The most dangerous kind of waste is the waste we don't recognise'.

Shigeo Shingo, continuous improvement pioneer



Transport	Unnecessary passing around of information, physically or electronically, between people or departments in order to complete a task
Inventory	Piles of forms, books, articles or email to read or respond to; not enough space to satisfy demand for classes at peak times and too much at other times; excess stock; electronic or paper archives; office supplies
Motion	Searching for data/documents; too many mouse clicks; passing responsibility between people or departments. People moving within and between buildings.
Waiting	Bottlenecks caused by people being held up by decisions awaiting approval; information (waiting for results); systems (for equipment to be returned / your computer to start or reboot)
Over-processing	Multiple authorisation or checking of processes beyond that needed to manage governance or risk; keeping or creating multiple copies of stuff just in case; storing the same document in multiple locations (digitally where it could be accessed from any location); duplication of processes; information missing which isn't even required; over-complicating things generally
Over-production	Producing too many copies of documents (publicity materials that are never used); copying more people than required on an email/replying to all; PowerPoint presentations too long; a lack of knowledge management; processing the work before the next person is ready for it. Too many hard copies of meeting papers.
Defects	Unclear instructions mean that work needs to be redone before submission; missing information (process cannot proceed); employee turnover; mistakes, errors, omissions; illegible handwriting
Skills	Under-utilising people's skills; command and control leadership style; making decisions without gaining proper insight; delegating tasks without gaining proper insight; siloed teamwork

How to use it?

TIP: Take incremental steps, focus on eliminating a single form of waste at a time, rather than multiple forms or all eight forms at the same time. Don't try to fix everything at once.

Ideally activities should flow smoothly from one to another, meeting student or staff requirements in a timely, efficient and effective manner. Without an overarching understanding of the process, those involved can forget that the activities and people are all interconnected and this disruption of the flow of **value** can create **waste**.

A good starting point for the eradication of **waste** can be through doing a **6S** workspace organisation or managing electronic files. The **waste** that is created through disorganisation can be huge.

Waste may not always be obvious until it has been pointed out and is often just a symptom. To discover the root cause, we can use the **5 Whys** to stop us jumping to conclusions and just going for a quick fix. It works best if you use this line of questioning with those who have hands-on experience of the problem or issue. If at all possible, **Go See**.

Case study: The Casual Payroll project aimed to speed up registration of casual workers; make it easier to record hours and pay data for casual workers and simplify the process of submitting and validating the hours and pay data. **Focus Practitioners** held three workshops with key stakeholders in order to understand the process and the problems.

Participants identified at least 26 possible **wastes** in seven out of the eight categories! However, the most important thing to remember is that identifying waste is more important than which category it falls into!