UW-MADISON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
Connecting & Supporting Our Digital Campus

Office of the CIO, IT Center of Excellence
IT Governance Initiative
IT Project Intake, Evaluation and Decision-Making Process

IT Project Intake Process Guidelines

Table of Contents

Please review the following Guidelines prior to **Completing the IT Project Intake Form**.

About the IT Governance Initiative

Principles

The process is mandatory. All IT project proposals from all units on campus will go through the project proposal intake, evaluation, and decision-making processes, regardless of their funding sources.

This is NOT a "request for funding" process. It is expected that the majority of projects will have their own funding. A prioritized list of approved projects that need campus funding are presented to campus leadership three times a year: September 15, January 15, and May 30.

Service Catalog and Project Portfolio. A campus-wide Service Catalog and a Project Portfolio (will) house information that is available to IT governance and project submitters for the identification of essentially similar existing services and projects and to support analysis and periodic reporting on the status and progress of ongoing campus projects.

Objectives

Rationalization. Creating a rational, effective and consistent framework for the evaluation and decision-making processes of IT project proposals across campus. The objective is to make decisions that are aligned with and support the mission and objectives of the campus in the areas of teaching, learning, research, administrative excellence, and outreach, and that represent an effective and efficient use of resources.

Prioritization - no more "one-off" project evaluation and requests for funding. An essential element of rationalization is to get out of the practice of "one-off" project proposal evaluations, funding requests, and "back-door" funding. Rather, the project proposal intake, evaluation and decision-making process collects information about all proposals, allows evaluation and prioritization by IT governance, and, if needed, approaches campus leadership periodically with a prioritized list of requests for funding.

Minimize duplications and redundancies. The intake process includes mechanisms to identify potential duplications and redundancies of IT services and of on-going projects across campus, and allows IT governance to scrutinize these proposals to minimize duplication and redundancy.

Assess impact on IT infrastructure/resources. The intake process seeks to identify and, to the extent possible, assess the impact of proposed projects on the campus IT infrastructure and resources. This helps to develop awareness of resource capacity issues and assist the IT leadership in assessing the campus resource and infrastructure capacities and gaps.

Innovation. The framework recognizes the importance of encouraging the development of new and innovative IT services. The main objectives of IT governance with respect to innovation proposals are to provide a means to raise awareness of and garner support and funding for strategic IT innovation projects that will ensure the UW-Madison IT project portfolio is balanced between efforts to run, grow and transform campus services and to include information about innovative proposals in the Project Portfolio, recognizing that these projects may be conceptual at the time of submission but that project information will be updated as it becomes available.

Governance-driven, collaborative, transparent, and expert-based processes. IT governance plays a leading role in the evaluation and decision-making processes. These processes should be done in a

collaborative and transparent manner. Different perspectives in vetting project proposals by experts from across campus lead to better evaluation and decision-making.

Agility, flexibility. The evaluation and decision-making framework is designed to be agile and flexible so it can be modified and improved in the future. Flexibility also means that not all project proposals are treated the same way in the data collection, review and decision-making processes. ("One size does not fit all.") For example, research computing proposals are evaluated differently because IT governance is solely concerned with the impact research proposals and grants have on campus IT infrastructure and resources.

Pace/speed. The framework allows for rapid evaluation and decision-making processes, especially with respect to project proposals that are classified as having "low impact." Making the process less onerous and more responsive is a key success factor. To speed-up the process, we collect minimal information on the Intake Form that allows quick classification of proposals, and collect additional information on Medium and High Impact proposals.

Benefits

The IT governance process aims to benefit the campus users of IT services and solutions by:

- Highlighting the existence of similar services that satisfy the needs/requirements of a proposed project
- Creating awareness of existing campus licenses for the software that a proposer requests
- Provide better visibility of projects and services for resource planning
- Creating a better framework for collaboration and transparency
- Assessing the impact on campus infrastructure and IT resources – will benefit everyone
- Allowing for early detection of Cybersecurity needs
- Creating visibility to a comprehensive Services/Projects Repository

Before you begin

Does a solution already exist?

It is recommended to check the IT Service Catalog and Project Portfolio beforehand as there may be a solution that removes the need for your project. Contact any existing service owners or project managers to discuss possibilities.

What is an IT project?

Definition. For purposes of UW-Madison IT governance, an IT project is an undertaking by a campus unit to create or modify an IT service that is owned by the campus unit *(department, college, school, administrative unit, research center)* and is designed to support the mission and the operational and managerial needs of the unit with well-defined outcomes. The service employs information technologies and resources, people, and processes to collect, manipulate, store and disseminate information to achieve its objectives.

Types of IT projects

Customer-facing. Customer-facing projects aim to develop new services or re-design existing services that deliver value by facilitating outcomes customers want to achieve. Users or customers are those who directly use the service or benefit from the outcomes. They may be internal *(faculty, students, staff)*, or external *(e.g., parents, prospective students, alumni, donors, and visitors and guests, and users of conference services).*

Infrastructure services. Infrastructure projects aim to develop or re-design core infrastructure services that enable customer-facing services. This includes moving services to a new deployment method such as hosted *(cloud)* vs. on premise.

Innovative. Innovative projects aim to create new, innovative IT services that differentiate or set UW-Madison apart from its peers.

Examples of what IS and IS NOT an IT project

The following are provided as examples to guide submitters in determining what qualifies as an IT Project based on the definition above. To limit the number of examples, the focus is on gray areas that may not be obvious to everyone. ***Contact the IT Center of Excellence (icoe@cio.wisc.edu) if you are uncertain if your activity is an IT Project.***

Examples of what IS an IT Project:

- Developing, acquiring or making available new software or services to students or for a campus operational need
- Changing the hosting location/provider or existing technologies underlying an IT Service (including major version upgrades)
- Changing the revenue model or cost recovery of an existing IT Service
- Business process change initiatives that require IT changes (see below for possible exceptions)
- IT changes that have implications to other IT services/solutions or to processes external to the sponsoring division
- Agile product and service roadmaps with significant changes or impacts that have not yet been approved by IT governance, or requires more than nominal additional resources not already allocated to the service team
- Creating a new computer lab for a department
- Automating a manual business process

Examples of what IS NOT an IT Project:

- Consuming an existing IT service, such as campus event management (EMS) or using the WiscWeb (WordPress) service to create a new website
- Creating a new report
- Purchasing IT consulting services that does not result in any technology development or change

- Replacing hardware in an existing data center or desktop computers for a department
- Acquiring or developing specialized lab software or instrumentation that includes digital technology
- Operational support and maintenance activities, such as minor or cosmetic UX changes, bug fixes, applying server patches and minor software upgrades
- Incremental development for existing products and services, such as Agile backlogs, sprints, epics and releases that are minor in nature
- Any tactical implementation of an objective that already has IT governance approval such as product roadmaps when the larger objective has already been approved
- Business process customizations enabled by new vendor releases, such as turning on new ERP functionality

Who is qualified to submit a project proposal?

Individuals must have the authority to submit project proposals on behalf of a unit. Key stakeholders who must be identified and are notified of the project proposal submission to IT governance are the project sponsor and the director.

The project sponsor is someone from the 'business,' meaning a Dean's office, academic department chair, CIO, etc. The sponsor can speak to whether the project has been vetted and how it will serve a well-defined business need.

The 'director' is the individual in your school, college, or administrative unit who is responsible for the area relevant to the proposal (ex. Dean, Assistant Dean, CIO, CFO, Center Director, IT Director) and is aware of the project. Directors are selected from a dropdown list in the intake form. The director can decide to make other relevant individuals aware of the project proposal (Business Office, CFO, department chairs, center directors, etc.).

At what stage of project development should a project proposal be submitted?

There should be a clear business case that supports the project. The business case can be formal or informal, depending on the size of the project. Items that should be analyzed and understood are:

- Scope of the project
- Objectives and expected outcomes
- Feasibility, both operational, and cultural or political
- Cash flow analysis (economic feasibility)
- Justification *(rationale/reasoning/evidence of success elsewhere)*

There should also be a commitment from the sponsor to proceed as well as identified funding.

How much time should I allow for the IT governance process?

Proposed projects that score and are validated as low impact with no IT governance interests raised will be approved within five business days. For all other proposal, please allow up to 30 to 60 days for the IT governance process as the campus governance groups such as the technical advisory groups and IT

Steering Committee meet monthly. The project must be approved by IT governance before it can be considered for campus funding.

IT resources

Consider consulting with the following IT resources as a project is taking shape:

On campus

- UW Data Governance *(when new data content is created or stored)*
  - https://data.wisc.edu/accessing-data/
- Cybersecurity Governance, Risk Management and Compliance team
  - cybersecurity@cio.wisc.edu
- DoIT Middleware Systems Technology team
  - Email list: mstsupport@lists.wisc.edu
  - Web page for UW-Madison services/policies: https://it.wisc.edu/services/iam/
  - Web page for UW-System services/policies: https://www.wisconsin.edu/systemwide-it/iam-integration/
- Campus or Unit Purchasing Services
  - See Campus Purchasing Services
- Enterprise and IT Architects *(for larger or strategic initiatives)*
  - Enterprise Architects: https://it.wisc.edu/about/division-of-information-technology/doit-departments/enterprise-internet-services-eis/
  - Cloud Architect: IT Center of Excellence, Office of the CIO
- Other campus subject matter experts

Off campus

- External subject matter experts in the project domain

Additional resources

The IT Center of Excellence can provide direction and support for the project intake process. They can also assist with identifying existing services or projects listed in the campus Service Catalog or Project Portfolio that are similar to those you are considering.

IT Center of Excellence, Office of the CIO:
Email: icoe@cio.wisc.edu
Phone: (608) 263-7318

If you identify an existing similar service or project, please proactively contact the service owner or project sponsor to explore opportunities to collaborate vs. duplicating services.

After a project proposal is submitted

Acknowledgement. When the proposal is submitted, an automatic email acknowledgement is sent to the submitter, the project sponsor and the director.

Initial impact classification and validation. After the intake form is submitted, the project proposal is automatically scored and classified as low-impact, medium-impact or high-impact. The proposal and initial classification are reviewed by the IT Center of Excellence and TAG Chairs along with the help of other campus IT project experts as necessary.

Issues or concerns that require further scrutiny (IT governance interests). The initial review group will focus on proposals that need further scrutiny in the review and decision-making process. IT governance interests that prompt further review include:

- Proposals that seek campus funding
- Proposals that duplicate existing IT services or IT projects
- Proposals with significant impact on campus IT infrastructure, resources; systems, and/or people
- Proposals that have the potential to become shared, campus-wide services, and/or the proposed solution could benefit multiple campus units and offers opportunities for collaboration
- Proposed projects that may have Federal, state or campus policy compliance implications

Low-impact projects. For projects confirmed as low-impact with no IT governance interests, the IT Center of Excellence emails the submitter, project sponsor and director with an approval to proceed.

Medium- and high-impact projects. For project proposals confirmed as medium- or high-impact, IT governance works with the submitter to collect additional information use to support recommendations, decision making and any necessary prioritization. Campus Technical Advisory Group/s (TAG/s) make recommendations and, if needed, suggests priorities to the IT Steering Committee (ITSC), which then makes final decisions and prioritizations.

The campus Technical Advisory Groups are:

- Divisional TAG (See Divisional Technology Advisory Group for description)
- Teaching and Learning TAG (See Teaching and Learning Technology Advisory Group for description)
- Research TAG (see Research Technology Advisory Group for description)
- Infrastructure TAG (see Infrastructure Advisory Group for description

Some projects may also be routed to the IT Steering Committee (ITSC) for a decision. The ITSC may prioritize high-impact projects, assemble a prioritized list of requests for campus funding, and take other necessary action.

The project submitter and other key stakeholders are engaged and involved throughout the evaluation, recommendation and decision-making process.

Project Proposal Recommendation and Prioritization Process

This section describes the processes from when a project proposal has been received by the Center of Excellence to when the TAG(s) has completed their responsibilities related to recommendation and prioritization.

Recommendation: A Recommendation is a TAG's support on whether an IT project should proceed. It is used to convey the TAG's point of view to the project sponsor and the ITSC after an assessment is made. The focus is on the proposal's IT or related aspects. Typically, non-IT project motivations, problems and opportunities are accepted as-is.

Prioritization: A Prioritization is a TAG's suggested ordering of IT projects based on its assessed value or importance relative to other IT work. It is created when IT projects are vying for the same IT resources. Actual project order may be subject other factors, including resource capacities and allocations.

Initial review group: A team that reviews and validates the IT project proposal submission, project classification, obtains additional information needed for medium and large proposals, identifies stakeholders, and assigns TAGs to review, provide a recommendation and prioritization. The team includes members of the IT Center of Excellence, TAG chairs, professional staff (e.g. Enterprise Architects, Business Analysts) and subject matter experts as needed.

Cross-TAG review group: A standing team, authorized to act on behalf of the TAGs, which assesses medium and high impact IT project proposals and proposes a recommendation and prioritization to the TAG(s). The team includes TAG members, professional staff (e.g. Cloud and Enterprise Architects), and other subject matter experts as needed. Stakeholders and additional participants are identified on a project-by-project basis.

Pre-TAG Activities

Validate Project Classification

- Ensure sponsors, divisional CIO/etc. have been notified of submittal.
- Review submittal answers to validate the project classification as follows:
  - All Submittals
    - Scoring answers seem correct based on project descriptions and business case
    - Answers are logically consistent with each other
  - Low Impact Submittals
    - Low impact answers where the actual impact is likely to be significantly greater than its score
    - "IT governance interests" (e.g. new shared service, duplication, etc.) answers that may be significant enough to warrant further IT governance discussion
    - Other items that may require further scrutiny not captured as part of Intake Form

        - Areas supporting IT efforts not engaged as required (e.g. Data Governance, Cybersecurity, Purchasing, etc.)

    - Medium/High Impact Submittals
        - Scored answers where the actual impact is likely to be significantly less than its score (e.g. Aesthetic changes to a campus-wide service used by all of campus)

- Seek clarifications when submittal issues are found or the classification merits changing
    - If classification merits changing, discuss with the submitter the reasons and the what the change means regarding IT governance. Seek clarification if the submitter doesn't concur with the change and re-review classification as appropriate.

Acquire Supplemental Information

- The initial review group determines what supplemental information is needed and requests it
- If a duplicate service/solution or project is proposed, ask the submitter to contact the existing service owner(s) and project manager(s) to discuss options.

Identify Stakeholders

- The initial review group identifies stakeholders and subject matter experts (SMEs) and their status as either required or recommended invitees to participate in the assessment and recommendation creation steps. Required invitees include:
    - Project sponsor or submitter
    - When a duplicate service/solution, the existing shared service/solution owners
    - When a duplicate project, the existing project's sponsors or project managers
- Initial review group confirms with stakeholders their assessment and recommendation creation steps participation status (Stakeholders and SMEs may opt-out of participating at any time)

Assign TAG

- The initial review group determines which TAG receives recommendation/prioritization
- Forward appropriate material to the cross-TAG review group, including the stakeholder and SME invitee list

Tag Recommendation and Prioritization

Assess Proposal

Cross-TAG review group:

- Identifies any additional stakeholders and SMEs needed
- Contacts stakeholders and SMEs
- Shares material with all participants
- Identifies areas of focus/concern and determine assessment approach and schedules
- Schedules discussion and creates agendas
- Discussions are held trying to reach consensus on any areas of concern. Decisions, concerns, pertinent discussion and follow-up should be documented and shared with all participants.
- Assessment criteria that support the Recommendation include:

- IT governance interests: Are the issues or concerns, either individually or in aggregate, significant enough to affect the recommendation?
- Areas affect and the impact: Do the IT aspects of the proposal create any significant and likely impact to:
  - UW brand, principles, values or objectives
  - Organization or cohorts
  - Business processes or services
  - IT Resources, capacity or capabilities
  - Data
  - Technology
- Reasonableness: Does the proposal as a whole (including costs, justification, timelines, impacts, etc.) seem reasonable and feasible?
- TAG Domain Alignment: How consistent is the proposal with the objectives, directions and trends within the TAG's domain and purview? And how well does it support or further them?
- Technical Alignment: How consistent is the proposal with the UW Enterprise Architecture & IT Architecture and technology directions? And how well does it support or further them?
- Do the IT aspects of the proposal conflict with or risk violating any policy, standard or principle?

Waiver Discretion

- The cross-TAG review group has the discretion to waive the need to complete an assessment and recommendation if the proposal meets all of the following conditions:
  - Is a medium impact project
  - Consensus achieved that there are no concerns or items needing IT governance scrutiny
  - No need for prioritization (shared IT resources or Campus Funds sought)
- Waiver notification is given to the Office of the CIO, TAGs & submitter, including reasons why

Create Recommendation and Prioritization

Create Recommendation

- The cross-TAG review group drafts the recommendation, trying to obtain consensus from all participants
- Recommendation should include:
  - Recommendation status is endorsed, not endorsed, or the TAG remains neutral
  - If not endorsed, the reasons why
  - Outstanding conditions/concerns needing resolution and the relevant actors/actions
  - Any follow-up required by the submitter/sponsor, participants, or other groups
  - For any new service, recommendation if it should be targeted as a strategic (long term) campus-wide solution
- The cross-TAG review group informs submitter and sponsor of intended recommendation, giving them the opportunity to review and comment on the draft recommendation.
- Certain conditions may prevent a project from receiving a TAG endorsement, including:
  - Violates a UW or UWS policy or IT standard without documented dispensation from the proper authority

- Other UW policy implementing bodies (e.g. Data Governance, Purchasing) have decided to not approve some portion of the proposal within their purview. It will be noted in the recommendation what decisions from these bodies are still pending.

Suggest Priority (if required)

- Prioritization is needed for any of the following conditions:
  - Significant IT shared resources required
  - Campus Funding sought
- The cross-TAG review group creates suggests its priority and the rationale to the assigned TAG
- The priority may be created using the following criteria:
  - Value proposition and expected benefits expected from the Business Case, intake answers and supplemental answers, including:
    - Improved/new capabilities
    - Better user experience
    - Cost savings
    - Exploration/Innovation
    - Generate or increase revenue
    - Efficiency
    - Risk mitigation
    - Regulatory/compliance
  - Costs - Deployment and operating costs weighed against value proposition and benefits
  - Critical dates – Proposals with critical dates might be prioritized higher
  - Dependencies - Proposals that:
    - Are part of a previously approved initiative might be prioritized higher
    - Other projects are dependent upon might be prioritized higher status.
    - Depend on other projects might be prioritized lower based on the status of the other projects.
  - Areas affected – Proposals needing stakeholder support might be prioritized lower in order to allow that support to be obtained
  - Issues/Constraints - Proposals that needs issue/concern resolution before the project commences might be prioritized lower to allow for resolution
  - IT Resource Needs - Proposals might be prioritized lower if it needs so much shared IT resources that multiple high priority projects can't be done (I.e. uses too much capacity)
  - Campus strategic objectives – Proposals that advance UW or division strategic objectives, principles or values might be prioritized higher

Finalize TAG Recommendation and Prioritization

- The cross-TAG review group presents the draft Recommendation & Priority to the assigned TAG for review and acceptance
- The Office of the CIO and stakeholders/SMEs are notified of the result

ITSC Notification

ITSC notification is determined:

- ITSC decision needed:
    - A new shared service is being created
    - A duplicate service/solution or project is being proposed
    - The TAG does not endorse the proposal
    - Sponsor and TAG consensus lacking on a significant issue
- ITSC prioritization needed:
    - Significant IT shared resources required
    - Campus Funding sought

TAG sends Recommendation/Prioritization to ITSC

- Contents of Recommendation should include:
    - Recommendation status indicating endorsed, not endorsed, or the TAG remains neutral
    - If not endorsed, the reasons why
    - Outstanding conditions/concerns needing resolution and the relevant actors/actions, including:
        - Duplicate solution/project needing ITSC decision
        - Creation, implementation & operation considerations for new shared solutions
    - Any follow-up required by the submitter/sponsor, participants, or other groups
    - For any new service, recommendation if it should be targeted as a strategic (long term) campus-wide solution
    - TAG Priority (if applicable)
        - Reasons for the priority (if applicable)