

ISSC OPERATING PROCEDURES

Version 3.0

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Office of the Chief Information Officer
Information Technology Services



Canada's Capital University

This Document outlines the procedures and processes for the efficient management of IT Projects.

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OVERVIEW

The primary mandate of the Information Systems Steering Committee (ISSC) is to operate as the strategic enterprise-level committee for Information Technology (IT) governance. This Committee is the prime venue for discussing IT proposals and initiatives, approving those that best align with the University's strategic priorities, and providing funding as required.

The ISSC will guide the strategic directions and priorities of IT as they relate to the business of the University, and ensure that IT resources are allocated to the most advantageous benefit of the University.

Information Technology proposals and initiatives must first be vetted by the appropriate sub-committee and gain support from the sub-committee to present to the ISSC.

The sub-committees are

- Academic Computing Committee (ACC)
- Teaching and Learning Computing Committee (TLCC)
- Research Computing Committee (RCC)

ISSC approved proposals become part of the portfolio of IT projects under the management of the ITS Project Management Office (PMO), using a methodology based on the internationally recognized Project Management Institute framework. The project management methodology is tailored to meet Carleton University's requirements, and strikes a balance between a rigid, complex process and one that is flexible, adaptable, scalable, and easy to follow.

This document is to be read in conjunction with the "IT Governance at Carleton University" document found on the ITS website.

1.0 Organization

1.1 ISSC Membership

The membership of the ISSC includes the Vice Presidents, representative Associate Vice-Presidents from Academia, Assistant Vice Presidents from Professional Services, Deans, as well as the Chief Information Officer, and University Librarian. The membership list may be found in the “IT Governance at Carleton University” document.

1.2 ISSC Meetings

ISSC meetings are pre-scheduled by the ISSC Secretary for the year and occur on the second Tuesday of every month. An Agenda, including supporting documents are provided to Committee members approximately 5 days prior to the meeting. Minutes of ISSC meetings are recorded by the Secretary and distributed approximately 3 days after the meeting.

The Committee requires a quorum of at least seven (7) members be present (in addition to the Chair and Secretary); otherwise, the meeting will be cancelled. Members may send delegates in their absence; however, to maintain familiarity and continuity, the delegate should be the same person for each meeting.

A meeting may also be cancelled at the discretion of the Chair depending on the number and/or the urgency of Agenda items. The Chair may also call special meetings as required.

2.0 Project Definition

2.1 Definition

A project is an endeavour undertaken to create a unique product or service. It is made up of defined processes and tasks, and has a definite beginning and end. The objectives of a project are to deliver on time, on budget, and meet customer expectations.

2.2 Criteria

Many low level activities could be considered a project according to the definition above, but may not require extensive planning or funding to warrant using the full formal process; therefore, the ISSC project portfolio only includes projects with one or more of the following conditions:

- Fiscal funding of a minimum of \$25K.
- ITS resources required for more than 20 days of effort to complete the project.
- Project will have an impact on users from multiple areas of the Carleton community either during the project or as a result of the project deliverables.

- Project will have an impact to the work of users within the Carleton community who are outside the sponsoring department; for example, project will change the way they work or require changes to a business process.
- The person who sponsors the project considers the initiative has a strategic importance.

With the exception of enterprise-wide administrative systems (such as the student information system, the learning management system or the constituent relationship management system), routine departmental upgrading of systems, applications, hardware, etc., is not considered an IT project under the ISSC mandate.

3.0 Project Life Cycle (Overview)

The lifecycle of a project consists of four phases outlined below, each with a key project management deliverable document indicating the phase completion:

- Initiation Phase
 - Call for Proposals
 - Project Definition
 - Deliverable: Project Proposal
- Planning Phase
 - Planning the implementation of the product or service
 - Refining objectives and details, and selecting the best course of action
 - Deliverable: Project Charter
- Execution and Control Phase
 - Executing the project according to the Plan
 - Monitoring and reporting project progress and budget
 - Submitting Change Request
 - Deliverable: Product or service (Project Change Request, if applicable)
- Closure Phase
 - Formalizing acceptance and closure of the project
 - Deliverable: Project Closure Report, Project Final Report

3.1 Initiation

During the initiation phase, ISSC's main role is to review proposals, assess them, and approve or deny them.

Approval to proceed to Project Charter does not imply automatic approval for the "project"; this is determined when the Charter is presented to ISSC.

An annual call for proposals is sent by the Office of the CIO. Proposals are submitted to the PMO for tracking purposes. Proposals may be submitted outside of the call for proposal if an initiative is identified as being critical, mandatory, or urgent. In such instances, the ISSC may approve an urgent or critical proposal, which may take precedence over current approved initiatives.

3.2 Planning

Approval to Plan is requested in a case where a project is large or complex and requires detailed planning, and funding or resources before it is possible to develop a realistic course of action.

Approval to Execute is requested in a case where a project has been clearly defined, a budget developed, staffing and resources identified, and a schedule to complete the project established.

In this phase, the role of the ISSC is to assess the Project Charter to confirm the initiative will bring value to the University, that it can be successfully executed, that the impacted users and clients of the system can integrate it in their operational process and that the system will not negatively impact the student, faculty, staff experience or the general public at large.

3.3 Execution and Control

In the execution and control phases, ISSC's role is to monitor the progress of the project, to make decisions on change requests brought forward by the Project Director, and resolve issues if necessary. The project team executes the implementation of the product or service according to the Project Charter.

3.3.1 Control – Progress Reporting

The progress of a project is reported to all stakeholders at defined periods, usually monthly. Project Managers provide detailed monthly status updates on project progress and budget for each project with input from the project team.

For the ISSC, status updates are reported annually or as required if the project requires attention or needs intervention at a governance level, namely:

- If the project is not on track to meet the target finish date
- If the project's spending is not on track
- If the project is stalled and a solution cannot be achieved or implemented

3.3.2 Change Management

Changes to the project "Scope" resulting in increases to the budget and/or schedule follow a formal Change Management process. The Project Manager completes a Project Change Request form and submits it to the PMO. Depending on the size of the change, the following courses of action may be taken:

- If the dollar amount requested is less than 10% of the original funding and up to a maximum of \$20K, the ISSC Chair has the authority to approve the Change Request and allocate the additional funding; however, this must be reported at the next ISSC meeting
- Similarly, if the schedule increase is less than 10% of the original schedule, approval may be at the discretion of the ISSC Chair, but must be reported at the next meeting
- For amounts in excess of the above, the Change Request must be submitted for ISSC approval

The project Sponsor is advised of the Change Request and has approved it prior to its submission to the Project Management Office.

3.4 Project Closure

A Project Closure Report is prepared by the Project Director – with input from the project team – and presented to ISSC shortly after the system or product is in production (go-live). It captures a summary of the project overall performance and lessons learned. The Closing Report formally closes the project.

In the year following the closing of the project, the Project Director is required to complete and present a Project Final Report in which the key success criteria are presented and assessed to quantify and qualify the values brought by the new system. The report described the impact of the user community and the groups touched by the system.

4.0 Project Budget

Project funding is allocated annually by the Vice-President (Finance and Administration) to the ISSC. As Project Charters are approved by ISSC, the projects are recorded in Banner and the funding is dispersed to individual projects by the ISSC Secretary. Project funds remain in the project until completion. Balances (including commitments) at the end of a fiscal year are carried forward to the following year.

Fiscal funding may be requested for set up costs, hardware, software, and internal and external professional services.

Base funds for such things as software licenses, maintenance and support contracts, are not funded by ISSC, but are identified for the purpose of informing the user department of future budgetary obligations.

4.1 Project Spending/Reporting

Expenses are charged to the project according to the line items identified in the Charter. The Project Manager is responsible for managing the budget and keeping expenditures within budget for each individual project. The Project Management Office retains all financial documents; i.e.; Purchase Orders, Cheque Requisitions, Internal Chargebacks, etc.

The ISSC Secretary is the contact for budget queries on the overall portfolio; and provides the Committee with a monthly report on all project spending. The report includes a summary of “Total Funding, Committed, and Available” for the entire portfolio as well as individual projects.

4.2 Surplus

At the completion of a project, surplus funds are transferred back to the ISSC account “Unallocated Budget Provision”. In either case, the balance must be zero in order to close the project in the system (Banner/FAST).

5.0 Version Control

Version Number	Author/s	Date	Comments
3.0	Claude Phaneuf	September 2017	Review and re-organization of the document.
2.0	Susan Nesrallah	May 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revision of the Project Management Methodology Sections 2 – 5 & Appendix - Revision of Base funding section - Membership – added Manager, PMO Minor wordsmithing/clarifications
1.0	Susan Nesrallah	August 2013	Update draft with feedback from ISSC, PMO
1.0	Susan Nesrallah	July 2013	Update Draft
1.0	Susan Nesrallah	May 2011	Initial Draft