Information Technology Standard
Project Selection and Management

Scope:

These project management practices apply to all information technology projects of the university whether performed by the central Information Technology organization or elsewhere in the JMU community.

An information technology project is a temporary effort undertaken by or on behalf of the university that:

1. establishes a new technology-based system or service;

2. facilitates a significant business process transformation using technology; or

3. includes a major change in technology architecture or a system migration beyond that considered as general maintenance, enhancement, or refresh (MER) activity.

   For Example:
   - a general patch update or interim version upgrade (i.e. 3.2 to 3.25, 3.2.2 or 3.3) would generally be MER activity; and

   - migrating to a new version of an application (i.e. 3.x to 4.x, etc) would also be considered MER activity unless it poses an significant infrastructure or architecture change or notable change in functionality (such as with PeopleSoft 8, Viking web, etc.);

   - Also, designing/establishing a new lab facility might be a project while upgrading equipment/software in one would generally not).

Activities in support of academic programs are subject to project management requirements. However, such requirements generally do not apply to use of technology in academic instruction or research, unless the technology is used to collect, process or store sensitive information. In such cases, information protection requirements and other aspects of project management do apply. Contact Information Technology at 8-7063 for specific guidance.

Requirement:

As outlined in JMU Policy 1202 (Information Systems Implementation & Project Management), if an individual/department is considering an information

technology project, they must work with Information Technology to assure appropriate analysis, classification, approval and documentation steps are undertaken. In addition to promoting good technology management decisions within the university, these steps also assist the university in meeting requirements set forth in Commonwealth of Virginia policies and standards.

Process:

Prior to soliciting acquisition or development of an information technology project, the following steps must be completed.

1. Define the idea or need to be addressed by this project. Be able to communicate the project purpose and scope clearly to others.

2. Submit the Project Initiation Questionnaire (PIQ) on-line at https://remedy.jmu.edu/PIQ.asp. Additional information and a MS-Word version of the PIQ that can be used for your convenience in capturing your initial thoughts about the project is available at http://www.jmu.edu/computing/standards/piq.doc. Any inquiries should be directed to the AVP for Information Technology at 8-7063.

3. After receiving the PIQ, Information Technology will respond within 10 business days regarding further analysis of the project. IT will work with the project initiator to collect additional information and complete any further analysis that may be necessary.

4. Based on its impact, cost, technical requirements and complexity, Information Technology will recommend classification of the project. Based on the classification, IT will advise the initiator of the approvals and other project management and documentation steps necessary for the project to proceed.

   In general, the level of oversight during the selection and management of technology projects varies with the cost and complexity of the project. For this purpose, projects are classified as either major or non-major projects of various complexity.

   A **major information technology project** is one:
   a. for which the costs, from project initiation to project closeout (generally operational production go-live), are greater than $1M. These costs are to include all hardware and software costs Salaries for technical and functional personnel are to be considered part of project costs only if their involvement displaces their regular duties to an extent that it is considered a temporary reassignment. In such circumstances, the appropriate

supervisor(s) will establish a Memorandum of Agreement describing the scope and duration of the reassignment and the individual's involvement will be tracked as a project expense.

b. that is of such significance to the university that failure to achieve its expected outcomes could prevent JMU from accomplishing its mission or meeting its legal obligations until a workable alternative could be established; OR

c. set forth by the Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA) as having "statewide application".

Non-major information technology projects are those technology projects that have an estimated total project cost of less than or equal to $1 million and are neither mission critical to the university or designated by VITA as having statewide application.

Among these non-major projects, end-user technology projects support a specific department or unit need and impact only the department or unit developing or purchasing the system. End user computing systems typically reside on microcomputers within the departmental work area and may include applications developed in-house or purchased turnkey from a commercial vendor.

Regardless of project cost, there are some identifying characteristics that signal elevated complexity for technology projects. Of particular concern are projects which include systems that:

a. interface to the university's central systems databases (Human Resources, Finance, Student Administration, University Advancement, Card Services, Viking, etc.);

b. use the university's directory services for authentication (i.e. they authenticate with LDAP);

c. collect, process or store sensitive data (e.g. personal data such as SSN, birth date, grades, etc; financial transactions, data related to grant-funded research, etc.); or

d. provide critical capability to work beyond that of the person or department that owns/operates the system.

If a project contains one or more of the complexity factors above, or if there is reasonable expectation that IT will provide space, system administration services, development assistance or other support/resources for the project, IT is required to review and offer

written risk assessment and service-level planning feedback. Depending on its cost and complexity, the project will be assigned classification that involves certain approvals and documentation requirements. The following oversight approvals generally apply.

Project Management Step	Major Project	Non-major Project		
		$100K to $1M and High or Medium Complexity	< $100K and Medium Complexity	< $100K and End-user or Low Complexity
Approval to Propose Project	Assistant Vice President for Business Unit/Dean	Director/Department or Program Head	Director/Department or Program Head	Director/Department or Program Head
Approval to Initiate (RFP, procurement, etc.)	Division Heads	Assistant Vice President for IT	Assistant Vice President for IT	Assistant Vice President for IT
Approval to Proceed with Implementation (Final contract negotiation or development approval)	Division Heads	Assistant Vice President for IT/ and Assistant Vice President for Business Unit/Dean	Assistant Vice President for IT and Director/Department or Program Head	Assistant Vice President for IT and Director/Department or Program Head
Project Oversight Authority	Division Heads led by Sponsoring Vice President	Assistant Vice President for IT or Assistant Vice President for Business Unit/Dean	Assistant Vice President for IT or Director/Department or Program Head	Assistant Vice President for IT or Director/Department or Program Head

However, specific parameters of the project may make additional oversight approvals necessary.

JMU's President has final project management oversight authority for the university and at his discretion, may demand review or discontinuation of any project.

5. As the initial analysis is completed and the project selection is approved IT, in conjunction with the initiator and appropriate management approvers, will assign a final project classification and outline more specifically the project management and documentation requirements to be fulfilled as the project proceeds. These may include expenditure approvals, project plans, status reports and/or management reviews at specific project intervals. The specific requirements vary with project classification. Project Documentation Requirements for major, non-major projects of various complexity are available at: http://www.jmu.edu/computing/standards/pmdocs.pdf.

Definitions:

Maintenance, Enhancement or Refresh (MER) Activity:

Development, migration or upgrade activity undertaken as part of the normal, on-going operation of an information technology system and that

is not of such significance to be considered a system replacement or major architectural change.

Project Charter:

A document issued by senior management that provides the project manager with the authority to apply organizational resources to project activities.

Project Initiation Questionnaire (PIQ):

A series of general information questions to be completed by the project initiator and submitted to IT as the basis for preliminary analysis and project classification.

Project Initiator:

The individual proposing the selection or development of an information technology project.

Project Manager:

The individual assigned responsibility for management and documentation of the project.