IT Project Management Standard

September 2024

Purpose:

This project management standard applies to all information technology projects of the University whether performed by Information Technology (IT) or elsewhere in the JMU community.

Definitions:

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

Technology Project: 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 a general maintenance, enhancement or system refresh activity.

Technology Solution Request (TSR): The IT Service Portal form used by faculty and staff to submit requests to purchase, develop, and/or implement new technology solutions. A TPR is required to be submitted prior to proceeding with a new technology project.

Standard:

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 a general maintenance, enhancement, or system refresh activity.

As outlined in JMU Policy 1202 (Information Technology Project Management), if an individual/ department is considering an information technology project, they must work with Information Technology (IT) to ensure appropriate analysis, classification, approval, and documentation steps are undertaken. In addition to promoting good technology management decisions, these steps also ensure efficiency/less duplication of technologies and assist the university in meeting requirements set forth in relevant policies, standards, and regulations.

Procedure:

1. The Project Initiator submits a Technology Solution Request (TSR) that clearly communicates the project purpose and scope. Any questions regarding the TSR should be directed to IT Policy & Compliance.

2. After receiving the TSR, IT will work with the Project Initiator to collect additional information and complete any further analysis that may be necessary.

3. Based on the project impact, cost, technical requirements, and complexity, IT will recommend classification of the project. IT will also determine the appropriateness of the project and may deny any project that does not increase efficiency or is not in the best interest of the University. Based on the project classification, IT will advise the Project 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 based on the cost and complexity of the project. For this purpose, projects are classified as either major or non-major projects of various complexity.

The complexity of a project can be classified as high, medium, or low based on the overall work effort required to complete the project and the overall impact to the University. The following table provides guidelines for determining the level of complexity for a given project:

Determining Complexity			
	High	Medium	Low
Work Effort Required	Greater than 5,000 hours	Between 1,000 to 5,000 hours	Less than 1,000 hours
Organizational Impact	Impacts many divisions, departments, or individuals	Impacts moderate number of divisions, departments, and individuals	Impacts a few departments or individuals

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 $1 million (including all hardware and software costs) or complexity level is high. Salaries for technical and functional personnel are to be considered part of project costs only if their involvement displaces their regular duties to the 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.

A non-major information technology project is one in which the costs, from project initiation to project closeout (generally operational production go-live), have an estimated total project cost of less than or equal to $1 million, the complexity level is low or medium, and is neither mission critical to the University or designated by VITA as having statewide application.

Among these non-major projects are end-user technology projects that 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 purchased turnkey from a commercial vendor.

Regardless of whether the technology project is determined to be major or non-major, there are certain components that indicate elevated risks or impacts, which include:

a. interface to the University's central systems (e.g., Human Resources, Finance, Student Administration, or University Advancement);

b. use of the University's authentication services (e.g., LDAP, Shibboleth, and/or Duo);

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

d. provide critical technology capability across many departments.

If a project contains one or more of the risk or impact components 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 may require the information technology project to go through the risk assessment process. More information on the risk assessment process is available in the Standard for Acquisition and Assessment of Technology Systems.

4. The Project Initiator is responsible for obtaining the following approvals for their specific information technology project:

Project Management Step	Major Project	Non-Major Project	
	Greater than $1M OR High Complexity	$100k to $1M OR Medium Complexity	< $100K OR Low Complexity
Approval to Propose Project	Assistant Vice President/Dean	Director/Academic Unit Head	Director/Academic Unit Head
Approval to Initiate Procurement	Vice President	Assistant Vice President/Dean	Director/Academic Unit Head
Approval to Proceed with Purchase & Implementation	• Vice President • Associate Vice President for IT	• Assistant Vice President/Dean • Associate Vice President for IT	• Director/Academic Unit Head • IT Policy & Compliance

Project Oversight Authority	• Vice President • Associate Vice President for IT	• Assistant Vice President/Dean • Information Technology, as applicable	Director/Academic Unit Head

Certain information technology projects may require additional approvals, and guidance will be provided by IT as applicable (i.e., University Business Office (UBO) approval for systems that process payment).

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

5. Based on the project's impact to the University, cost, technical requirements, and complexity, Information Technology may decide to manage the project. Information Technology will advise the Project Initiator of the approvals and other project management and documentation steps necessary for the project.

6. Project Initiators are required to complete the documentation listed in the chart below for all information technology projects. IT may require Project Initiators to complete additional documentation for non-major information technology projects.

Project Documentation Requirements			
Project Classification	**General Project Characteristics**	**Documentation Level**	**Documentation Required**
Major	Greater than $1M	Full	All Standard documentation requirements COV Documentation
Non-Major	Between $100k & $1M OR Medium Complexity	Standard	Technology Solution Request Project Charter Project Schedule Budget Tracking Risk Register and Mitigation Plan Communications Plan Project Status Reports Project Test/Acceptance Plan Lessons Learned Project Closure Checklist Operating Documentation *(e.g., User Guides/Standard Operating Procedures, Training Guides, Process Maps/Workflows, etc.)*

	Less than $100K OR Low Complexity	Minimum	Technology Solution Request