Project Assessment and Management Framework - Operational Policy

1. Purpose of policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a standard university-wide approach for smart project management and governance, including project approval, assessment and assurance, to inform investment decisions and provide for successful delivery of project outcomes that are aligned to organisational strategic priorities.

2. Policy scope and application

This policy outlines the organisational project management and assessment framework and with the exception of research grant projects and consultancies, applies to all projects across the University.

This policy applies to all staff, consultants, and contractors involved in the initiation or delivery of organisational projects.

3. Definitions

Please refer to the University's Glossary of Terms for policies and procedures. Terms and definitions identified below are specific to this policy and are critical to its effectiveness:

Project means a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service or result. A project can create: a product or enhancement; a service or a capability to perform a service; an improvement in existing product of service lines; or a result such as an outcome or document.

Project assessment means a common, rigorous approach to assessing projects at critical stages in their lifecycle, from the initial assessment of the proposal, through to delivery. At each stage of a project, the project's progress and quality is assessed to ensure that the project (and associated investment) meets strategic objectives and achieves value for money.

Project governance means comprehensive, consistent method of controlling the project and ensuring its success by defining and documenting and communicating reliable, repeatable project practices. It includes a framework for making project decisions, and related roles and responsibilities.

Project lifecycle means a series of phases that a project passes through from its initiation to its closure, and provides the basic framework for managing the project.

Project management means the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements (focus is on doing projects right).

Project portfolio refers to the University's portfolio of projects and the process in which they are selected and managed. The project portfolio is strategically selected to advance the University's organisational goals (focus is on doing the right projects at the right time).

4. Policy Statement

4.1 The University is committed to the implementation and maintenance of an organisational Project Assessment and Management Framework, providing a consistent but scalable approach for the selection, governance and management of projects; and clearly articulating for all stakeholders the acceptable components of project management. All organisational areas (excluding research grant projects and consultancies) will adopt this framework for the selection and management of organisational projects.

Diagram 1 – Project Assessment and Management Framework

5. Principles

5,1 In its application of this policy, the University is committed to:

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- Aligning project activity to organisational strategic plans;
- Ensuring appropriate and effective investment and project approval decisions;
- Establishing an organisational-wide portfolio view of projects;
- Maximising project benefits across the whole organisation;
- Minimising the impact of project risks;
- Ensuring appropriate and scalable project governance and control is established and maintained;
- Providing consistent and scalable project processes and outputs;
- Enhancing project communication between business areas;
- Ensuring that project management methodologies and tools incorporate privacy by design principles and privacy impact assessments will be included as key project deliverables, where appropriate, to protect personal information; and
- Continually improving project management processes and skills.

5.2 The University will establish a Project Portfolio Advisory Group to provide advice and recommendations to the University Executive regarding the Project Assessment and Management Framework and report regularly to Executive on project assessment and portfolio performance.

5.3 The University will develop a Project Management Manual that will document the minimum requirements and processes in accordance with this policy for assessing, selecting and managing projects. It will also detail project roles and responsibilities.

5.4 The University's approach to project assessment is consistent with the Queensland Government's Project Assessment Framework.

5.5 The University's approach to project management is based on PMBOK, the Project Management Body of Knowledge (developed by the Project Management Institute) and provides a clear project governance foundation on which project lifecycles and various methodologies can be applied.

5.6 The University supports predictive, incremental, and adaptive project lifecycles, executed across six project phases: ideation, initiating, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling, and closing. Project phases are aligned to gateway reviews as a tool to determine whether, or not, to proceed with individual projects. Gateways are scalable and requirements will be dependent on project categorisation.

5.7 All organisational projects are designated a project category (basic, standard, substantial, complex), as articulated in the Project Management Manual with required governance, actions and outputs advised. A tool to determine project category is available from the Managing Projects section of MyUniSC (staff login required).

5.8 All projects must be approved in accordance with the University's Delegations Framework – Governing Policy and the authorities outlined within this policy.

5.9 For Substantial and Complex projects, the Project Sponsor role must be held by a member of University Executive. For Standard projects, the Project Sponsor role must be held by a member of University Executive or their delegate. For Basic projects, the Project Sponsor role must be held by a member of University Senior Staff. Any variations to this are considered a policy exception that must be approved according to the authorities within the Policy Framework – Governing Policy and associated procedures.

5.10 Project quality management and independent project assurance will be applied as determined by the scale, complexity and risk of the project:

- Project quality management will form part of the project's internal governance andincludes processes and activities to determine and monitor tasks, outputs and responsibilities to ensure that the project outcomes meet the stated project objectives and requirements.
- Independent project assurance, if required, will provide an external, independent and objective assessment (i.e. to be undertaken by non-project resources) ofthe effectiveness of the project's internal governance processes in evaluating, controlling and monitoring the project's performance and deliverables. Project assurance costs will be funded from the project budget.

5.11 The Project Management Manual outlines requirements for project information, including a suite of project outputs, and related system utilisation. All project reporting must be via established framework outputs and delegated project systems. All project records and outputs must be captured in an approved records management system.

5.12 All project staff must be trained in the use of the Project and Assessment Management Framework and ensure all related project work aligns with related requirements.

6. Authorities

The following authorities are delegated under this policy and associated procedures:

ACTIVITY	UNIVERSITY OFFICER/COMMITTEE*
Approve any new projects categorised as complex	Council (on recommendation of Planning and Resources Committee and endorsement of Executive Committee and Project Portfolio Advisory Group)
Approve any new projects categorised as substantial	Vice-Chancellor and President (on endorsement of Executive Committee and Project Portfolio Advisory Group)
Approve any new projects categorised as standard	Vice-Chancellor and President (on endorsement of Executive Committee and Project Portfolio Advisory Group)
Approve any new projects categorised as basic	Relevant member of Executive Committee (on endorsement of Project Portfolio Advisory Group)
Approve the Project Management Manual	Chief Operating Officer (on endorsement of Project Portfolio Advisory Group)
Approve consequential or minor amendments to the Project Management Manual	Chief Operating Officer
Chair Project Portfolio Advisory Group	Chief Operating Officer

*All project approvals must be consistent with other relevant delegations and authorisations as identified under the University's Delegations Framework – Governing Policy, including but not limited to financial delegations.

END

RELATED DOCUMENTS

• Delegations Framework - Governing Policy

• Information Management - Governing Policy
• Risk Management - Governing Policy

SUPERSEDED DOCUMENTS

• Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Project Management - Managerial Policy

RELATED LEGISLATION / STANDARDS

• Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009 (Qld)
• Financial Accountability Act 2009 (Qld)
• Queensland Procurement Policy 2019
• Queensland Project Assessment Framework (PAF)
• Project Management Manual [staff login required]

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