

	INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STANDARD	
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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROJECT MANAGEMENT		

PURPOSE

The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) is committed to continuously improving the delivery of IT solutions in such a way as to significantly contribute to accomplishing the goals set forth in the VCCS Strategic Plan and the Information Technology Strategic Plan. This standard establishes the required processes and documentation for information technology projects to ensure that they are completed successfully and are completed on budget, on schedule, and within the desired scope. To this end, the Project Management Office (PMO) of Information Technology Services provides this Project Management Standard to assist in the planning and management of IT Projects within the VCCS System.

SCOPE

The project management practices described herein applies to all Enterprise, Non-Enterprise, College-Centric/System Office, and Data Center IT projects that are a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result that:

- establishes a new technology-based system or service;
- facilitates a significant business process transformation using technology; or
- includes a major change in technology architecture (upgrade) and/or involves a system migration

Out of Scope

This standard does not apply to systems/projects that are defined as general Maintenance, Enhancement, or Refresh (MER) activities. Examples of MER activities are:

- a general patch update or interim release upgrade (i.e. 3.2 to 3.25);
- migrating to a new version of an application (i.e. 3.x to 4.x) unless it poses a significant infrastructure or architecture change or notable change in functionality (such as with Oracle/PeopleSoft version 8)
- upgrading equipment/software in a class/lab (whereas establishing a new class/lab facility might include an IT project)

Also out of scope are those activities which are research projects, research initiatives, or instructional programs at any of the community colleges. Contact the System Office PMO for specific guidance to determine if project management guidelines apply.

The following are examples of special situations involving academic programs which might require the application of the project management principles contained in this standard:

- Project activities in support of academic programs when the technology is used to collect, process, or store sensitive information.
- Project activities in support of academic programs when the system/project requires an operational interface with another system, is hosted off-site, or has potential for multiple deployments in the VCCS community.

APPLICABILITY

The IT Project Management Standard is applicable to the System Office, colleges, departments, auxiliaries, research and administrative entities (organizations) supporting the programs or services provided by the twenty-three colleges and VCCS.

DEFINITIONS

College-Centric/System Office Project – An IT project, purchase, or undertaking of varying complexity that addresses the business or technology needs of one of the 23 community colleges, or the System Office.

Data Center Project – A project, purchase, or undertaking to maintain or enhance a data center, associated components or servers, storage systems, telecommunications equipment, power supplies, environmental controls (e.g., air conditioning, fire suppression, security devices, or the physical space required to house a data center).

Enterprise – Initiatives that include projects, purchases, or undertakings that are especially difficult, complicated, or risky that involve the entire VCCS community (23 colleges plus System Office). These software or technology projects provide business logic support functionality with the aim of improving productivity and efficiency for the entire VCCS community.

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.

Non-Enterprise – Software or technology which provides business logic support functionality with the aim of improving productivity and efficiency for a subset of the entire VCCS community (23 colleges plus System Office).

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

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.

Project Plan – Refers to all of the planning materials required to develop a complete set of working documents which guide and control the activities of a project through the entire project life-cycle. (Note: A Microsoft project plan represents only one of the many planning items which compose a complete information technology project plan.)

Technology Procurement or Project Request Form (TPPR) – A form to be completed by the project initiator and submitted to ITS as the basis for preliminary analysis and project classification.

STANDARD

As per Information Technology Project Management Policy VCCS-ITS-08-5300, if an individual, VCCS College, or the VCCS System Office is considering initiation of an information technology project, they must work with Information Technology Services to assure appropriate analysis, classification, approval and documentation steps are undertaken. In addition to promoting good technology project management decisions within VCCS, these steps also assist in meeting requirements set forth in Commonwealth of Virginia policies and standards for information technology project management.

1. PROCESS

No matter how small or large, simple or complex, VCCS IT projects are managed in accordance with best practices promoted by the nationally recognized Project Management Institute (PMI), appropriately tailored to the specific circumstances of the community college system.

These processes include:

Define & Initiate:

- Define the idea or need to be addressed by this project and communicate the project purpose and scope clearly through submittal of the VCCS Technology Procurement or Project Request Form (TPPR) in accordance with the VCCS IT Project Management Guidelines.
- Information Technology Services responds to the TPPR within 10 business days indicating if there is a need for further clarification, analysis, and/or decomposition. The System Office PMO will then work with the initiator to collect additional information and complete the project review/initiation phase processes.

Classify & Plan:

- During the planning phase, the System Office PMO will recommend classification of the project based on its impact, cost, technical requirements and complexity and advise the initiator of the approvals and other project management and documentation steps necessary for the project to proceed.

Execute & Control:

- The execution phase includes carrying out the project plan and evaluating project performance on a regular basis. Schedule, cost, and scope control as well as Integrated change control, risk monitoring and quality control are paramount to a project's overall success. Recommended processes are further described in the VCCS IT Project Management Guidelines.

Project Closeout:

- During project closeout, the product(s) is verified and formal acceptance is recorded. Lessons learned are documented and the project records are archived.

2. PROJECT CLASSIFICATION

Projects are classified into Major and Non-Major

Major Information Technology Project:

A project is classified as a Major information technology project if any of the following three conditions apply. A Major project shall be treated as a High Complexity project and follow the applicable project management processes.

- **Greater Than \$1M** - Project 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.
- **Mission Critical** - That is of such significance to VCCS that failure to achieve its expected outcomes could prevent VCCS from accomplishing its mission or meeting its legal obligations until a workable alternative could be established; and/or
- **Enterprise** - Initiatives that include projects, purchases, or undertakings that are especially difficult, complicated, or risky that involves the entire VCCS community (23 colleges plus System Office). These software or technology projects provide business logic support functionality with the aim of improving productivity and efficiency for the entire VCCS community.

Non-Major Information Technology Project:

A project is classified as Non-Major if it is estimated to cost less than \$1M, it is clearly not mission critical, and is not (and will not in the future) serve the entire VCCS Enterprise.

- **Non-Enterprise** - Software or technology which provides business logic support functionality with the aim of improving productivity and efficiency *for a subset* of the entire VCCS community (23 colleges plus System Office).
- **College-Centric/System Office** - A project, purchase, or undertaking of varying complexity that addresses the business or technology needs of one of the 23 community colleges, or the System Office.
- **Data Center** - A project, purchase, or undertaking to maintain or enhance a data center, associated components or servers, storage systems, telecommunications equipment, power supplies, environmental controls (e.g., air conditioning, fire suppression, security devices or physical space required to house a data center).

3. PROJECT COMPLEXITY RATING

This project management standard uses project complexity assessment to help determine the associated oversight and the degree of management and documentation required during project planning, execution, and closeout. These may include expenditure approvals, project plans, status reports and/or management reviews at specific project intervals. In general, the level of oversight during the selection and management of technology projects varies with the cost and complexity of the project.

The VCCS IT Project Complexity Model is specified in the VCCS IT Project Management Guidelines and serves as a rule of thumb used to help determine the recommended documentation and level of oversight. Regardless of project cost, there are some identifying characteristics that signal elevated complexity for technology projects. Of particular concern to VCCS are projects which include systems that:

- Interface to VCCS enterprise systems databases (Human Resources, Finance, Student Administration, University Advancement, Card Services, Viking, etc.);
- Uses VCCS directory services for authentication (i.e. they authenticate with LDAP);
- 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
- Provide critical capability to work beyond that of the person, department, office, or college that owns/operates the system.

4. FINAL AUTHORITY

- The Vice Chancellor for Information Technology Services has final project management oversight authority and at his/her discretion, may request review or discontinuation of any project at any time.

REFERENCES[Project Management Institute](#)

The website to the world's leading not-for-profit professional association in the area of project management.

[Virginia Tech Project Management Standards and Guidelines](#)

(<https://secure.hosting.vt.edu/www.itplanning.org.vt.edu/pm/process.html>)

REVISION HISTORY

Date	Version	Author	Revision Description
08/24/2009	0.1 Draft	Scott McCombe	Initial draft version
08/25/2009	1.0	Scott McCombe	Version for Tech Council Review 09/23/09