University of Maine System

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE LETTER

SUBJECT: BUSINESS CASE PROCESS FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS

A comprehensive business case is a document which captures the reasoning for initiating a project or task. A business case is essential to provide a broad analysis and plan of an overall information technology project to facilitate early buy in and provide a verifiable basis for conducting the project. The business case should clearly identify the current situation leading to the need, the project expectations including the key benefits, stakeholders, and challenges and estimated financial costs associated with the project.

This Administrative Practice Letter applies to technology projects except for technology named in a self-contained research proposal which is specifically related to the research to be accomplished.[1]

The purpose of a sound business case is to clearly demonstrate value added to the University, to convey a consistent message to all stakeholders and to provide the roadmap for how the project would be developed, procured, implemented and managed. Factors used to determine how the success of a project would be measured should be provided in the document and shall serve as a factor for the remainder of the project if implemented.

A business case should be drafted after a project has been conceptually designed and vetted. It is important to develop a business case within the context of the University's core mission and other programs, functions or services. A business case is a living document through the execution of a contract. If key assumptions or the methodologies change, or as additional information is made available, the business case should be updated.

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[1] To insure the best outcomes for research based technology projects, the Chief Information Officer recommends that researchers seek the services of the Advanced Computing Group for support in technology proposals for grant applications or to meet the needs of their research. The Office of Research and Sponsored Research at the University of Maine, and the Office of Sponsored Programs at the University of Southern Maine provide support for the grant process for those campuses. Additionally, the IT directors at the campuses are excellent resources to faculty and researchers. Researchers with large technology projects are encouraged to use the Project Management Office.

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A business case is **required** when one or more of the following conditions exist:
- an Information Technology investment is expected to require an investment of $50,000 or higher.
- a project impacts a high number of users.
- a project includes access to, processing, transmitting or storing highly sensitive compliant data.

The value of a project includes the initial cost of the project including one-time costs such as license fees and implementation fees, anticipated annual maintenance or licensing fees for the duration of the contract, and the value of personnel and/or IT effort spent on the project. Highly sensitive compliant data is data that if compromised could lead to identify theft or result in high risk to the University. Examples of highly sensitive compliant data include Social Security Numbers, driver's license numbers, financial data such as credit card or banking accounts, personal health information.

A business case **may** be required in the following situations:
- When the project requires data from existing systems.
- When the technology is proposed in a grant application and will impact the existing financial, human resources or student administration processes/activities of the University of Maine System.

Examples of data required from other systems include interfaces to or data extractions from MaineStreet Financials, Human Resources, Campus Solutions, Marketplace, Advance, campus card systems, or other campus or system-wide applications housing enterprise or business sensitive data.

Campus Information Technology Directors and Project Management Office are available to support business case development. The Business Case Templates are available on the Project Management Office site of the Information Technology Services website (http://www.maine.edu/its/project-management-office/submit-idea-project-request/). For assistance with or questions regarding the business case process and requirements, please contact the Project Management Office at 973-3236.

The project sponsor, after approving the business case, will receive approval from the campus Chief Financial Officer. The sponsor will forward the Business Case to the University of Maine System Associate Chief Information Officer for review.

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If a business case is not needed, then the project initiator should follow campus processes for how the project is to be developed, procured, implemented and managed. Such projects must include approved procurement practices, review by appropriate functional stakeholders (e.g. finance, student records, enrollment management, academic affairs, financial aid) and appropriate reviews by University Counsel and the Office of Information Security. US:IT Information Technology Directors or the US:IT Project Management Office will support Project Initiators in following appropriate processes.

A waiver to this APL may be requested by submitting a request in writing to the Chief Information Officer. See the CIO Waiver APL VI-D.

This Administrative Practice Letter has been approved by the Treasurer of the University of Maine System.

Business Case Analysis

Instructions: Please complete this form for all projects that include an initial IT investment of $50,000 or more.

Project :	

A. Summary

Date prepared:		Prepared by/contact:	
Original or Revision:		Email address:	
Campus:		Phone number:	

B. Sponsors, Proponents and Collaborators

Name	Title	E-mail address	Phone number

C. Executive Summary

What is the service?	
What is the purpose?	
Why is it needed now?	

D. Project Description

Description of project?	
How long will it be useful?	
How will this project contribute to the UMS mission over the useful life of the project?	

E. Alternative analysis

What alternatives were considered and why is this alternative preferable?	

F. Value

What makes this a valuable project?	

G. Risks to project's Success

Level (H,M,L)	Description	Management/Mitigation strategy

H. Contingencies and Dependencies

Description	Impact on this project

I. Budget

Which cost centers will benefit from this project?	
Which cost centers will fund this project?	

J. Cost estimates (include staff, capital and other):

	ITEM	AMOUNT	COMMENTS
Development			
Implementation			
Annual Maintenance			

K. Project Staffing

What skills are needed during project development, implementation and operation?			
Who will participate in the project development, implementation and operation and how do their skills match the needed skills?			
Phase (Dev, Implementation. Operation.)	Skills Needed	Participants	Skills Present

L. Training

How will staff be trained initially?	
How will ongoing training be performed?	

M. Success Measurement

Which specific results, if achieved, would make this a successful project?	

N. Success Evaluation

Measurable Factor	How this data will be collected?	Who will report this data?

This form has been prepared in accordance the APL Section VI-C: Business Case Process for IT Projects