

Guidance on Specific Procedures and Forms

This guide does not focus on the specific thresholds for review. Strictly speaking, under either the laws of Washington state or University policy, *any and all* IT investment might be subject to further review. Instead, this guide sheds some light on the general rationale behind why additional reviews happen and their function. Having this understanding will empower you to work through any and all additional reviews in the ordinary course. Additionally, the basis of your investment will be better informed, and you will have opportunities to cultivate intra institutional support that will benefit your organization throughout the life of the system.

As a practical matter, the occurrence and extent of further review tends to be a function of three things:

1. Clarity and transparency of all information provided.
2. Extent and breadth of impact on stakeholder communities.
3. Estimated total cost of ownership.

Procurement

Procurement Services at the University of Washington have the responsibility for helping UW organizations achieve their strategic objectives from the vendor relationship and to deliver that benefit to the state of Washington. Washington public procurement law reforms went into effect in 2013 and they deal with how competing vendor bids are to be compared, communication with vendors and parameters for good faith negotiation. Depending on the context of the procurement, there are other laws which may apply to public records, accessibility, Information Technology, payment, and many other regulated aspects of how the University does business. Additionally, Procurement Services administer the policy directives of the Board of Regents and President of the University. As such the contract managers within Procurement Services bear a significant responsibility for verifying that the information provided to explain why the University's (and the public's) money is being invested is in order and that the process of selection is fairly and consistently applied and administered.

Towards this end, the procurement services provide a tremendous amount of liability protection for the University and for the Executive Heads of University Organizations. Largely, the timeline for proceeding through the procurement process is determined by the level of clear and transparent disclosure by the requesting organization and the level of alignment between the vendor with UW values as demonstrated by their behavior during the sales cycle.

Rule of Thumb:

- Engage Procurement Services as early on in your selection process as possible in order to get the maximum benefit.

Initiating the RFX process form

In terms of the information collected and analysis process, there is not a huge difference between formal and informal competition. However to determine the correct course of action, Procurement Services may ask for some initial information in order to understand what the required processes are for administering the procurement process.

An example of the [Initiating the RFX process](#) form can be found here [\[LINK\]](#)

The information requested in the form corresponds to your preparation as follows:

- Purpose and Background, corresponds to the narrative, supplemented by the specific background information preparatory material.
- Selection Criteria and Functional, technical and performance requirements both correspond to the 5 Holistic Strategic Objectives.

RFX Guidance and Bid Tabulation Job Aid

If a formal competition is the appropriate course of action, then it will be necessary to draft a formal RFP or RFQ document. The UW IT Vendor Risk Management services team has written specific guidance that provides slightly more detail about how to utilize the 5 Holistic Strategic Objectives to meet the formal drafting requirements. That guidance can be found here [\[LINK\]](#).

Additionally, you can contact help@uw.edu with the subject line “IT Sourcing” and request supplemental coaching and training for yourself or other personnel within your organization, or you can request drafting assistance. Within RFQs the objective of Accountability is expressed as Design Maturity, but all 5 Evaluation Criteria in the RFP guidance are substantively identical to the 5 Holistic Strategic Objectives and the same rules of thumb described in this guide all apply.

Whether you do a formal or an informal bid competition, you will want to be able to do a side-by-side apples-to-apples comparison of the vendor offerings. Towards that end, an RFX Bid Tab Scoring Worksheet was created as a job aid. That spreadsheet can be downloaded here [\[LINK\]](#).

Information Technology

UW-IT is responsible for conducting IT projects and IT acquisitions as part of its role as strategic stewards of UW’s information technology resources. The scope of this review is broader than purely system engineering or IT operational risks. Topics such as sustainability, accessibility and consideration of other individual civil rights are also in scope. As such, the substantive focus of the inquiry are the 5 Holistic Strategic Objectives.

Concept Briefing Document

The concept brief is a short, high-level description of the proposed IT investment project. An example of this form can be found here [\[LINK\]](#).

The information requested in the form corresponds to your preparation as follows:

- ***Describe the business problem you are trying to solve with this project.***
The situational narrative tends to be the answer to this question.
- ***...describe any additional relevant factors that further motivate this project...***
Here is where you may want to add additional detail from the background information. Identify the extent to which the motivation is purely about the organizational mission versus other practical considerations of a particular Program or Service, Duty to customer, legacy system, pressure on the existing system architecture due to changes in an adjacent or external system, resource constraint, or new strategy from the executive head of your unit. If there are organization specific considerations, then this is a good place to discuss them.
- ***Describe how this concept aligns with your unit's or UW's Strategic Objectives.***
From your collected background information, point out the aspects of the proposed plan that improve UW's position vis-a-vis performance quality, vendor accountability, investment value, practical operability issues, or consideration of ethical human values.
- ***What are the biggest concerns about the project at this point in time?***
 1. If this implementation project does not occur or the outcome of this effort is not adequate, what will be the adverse effects on the mission, programs and duties to the customer ?
 2. What are the scariest known issues arising from the legacy system or the interconnection with systems upstream and downstream in the workflow?
 3. If there a known unknowns, then this is a good place to discuss them.
- ***Describe project outcomes and how they will be measured.***
If the IT system will support a specific Program or Service, then which existing metrics of that Program or Service will the IT investment have an effect on?
If the IT investment will modify/replace a legacy system or is being driven by an upstream or downstream change in the workflow, then what existing metrics are already in place that the IT investment have an effect on?
- ***Will this project deliver customer-facing value?***
This is a question about the relationship between the duties to customers and the quality of the proposed system.
- ***What discovery or market analysis will you do to inform the technical solution?***
Here is where you describe the results of engaging with Procurement Services.

IT Project Assessment

The IT Project Assessment is a multiple-choice questionnaire; very little writing is required. However it is necessary to make a realistic guess about the *five year operations cost*, which (roughly) corresponds to the Holistic Strategic Objective concept of value, or more specifically, *total cost of ownership*.

Rules of Thumb:

- **Total cost of ownership** is never just the cost of the license and maintenance. Limiting the calculation and disclosure to the cost of license and maintenance sometimes indicates that the organization has a limited understanding of their own total cost of ownership and would benefit from more support.
- The estimated range of cost outcomes tends to be greater (or at least lower confidence) if the investment involves something *new* in the sense of either this is a totally new capability with no previous legacy or the existing system is not a formal IT system.
- The more resources on the team roster who are familiar with the technologies required to implement and operate the system, the narrower (and more confident) the estimate tends to be.
- If the investment requires *vendor resources (professional services and consultants)* either to implement or operate the investment, the total cost of ownership tends to be higher. The team roster can be familiar with technologies and still need more help.
- If the investment is replacing a legacy system, whether in whole or in part, then the total cost of ownership tends to be both greater and more difficult to estimate in relation to both: the amount of turnover there has been on the team roster since the initial implementation of the legacy system and the number of known unknowns.
- If the investment is primarily driven by changes in the workflow either upstream or downstream of the system and some *other organization* owns the upstream or downstream system, then both the cost containment and the confidence in the estimate are directly related to the amount of support that the team roster gets from the *other organization*.