

# Project Readiness

Digital projects can take a significant amount of time and resources. Delivering the wrong solution can be very costly. It wastes time and effort *and* leads to prioritisation of one project over others that may offer greater benefits. Working through this checklist before requesting a project will help you understand the factors you need to consider and help set your project up to deliver the most impact.

## Vision

Requests are often for pre-defined solutions or to build a specific thing when there may be alternatives or existing solutions that could address your need. Reframe the issue as a problem to be solved or an opportunity to take advantage of, rather than a solution to be delivered. We can work together to identify the best approach to fulfil that vision.

## Strategy

Solving a problem or taking advantage of an opportunity should help us fulfil our strategic objectives. Consider our [university strategy](#), its enabling and sub-strategies and how the project will contribute to those.

## Need

Projects must have a compelling need. Think about what the project will enable the university to do or what we will not be able to do if the project does not go ahead. Identify the efficiencies and business benefits the project will deliver and how to measure them.

## Sponsorship and leadership

Effective change needs support from leaders at all levels. Think about the impact of the changes you are making for our senior leadership team, line managers and informal leaders in teams. Consider the information and support they need to advocate for the project.

## Timescales

If you have set deadlines, these must be achievable and made clear from the outset. We can then propose solutions and advise on factors such as time, cost and quality so that the project can deliver within those timescales.

## Costs

Projects can involve more project or operational costs. For example, internal costs to free up your staff to work on the project or external costs to buy in goods or services. Your budget will need to account for these.

## Policies

Policies, regulations and rules are often needed to define how new systems and processes will work. Identify these policies and update them as needed to clarify the project's requirements and improve its chances of success.

## Operational Changes

Consider changes to roles, responsibilities or team makeup that may be required following the project. Speak to the People team if significant changes are needed. This may help you identify team members to nominate to work on the project.

## **Future changes**

If the context around a project is likely to change, that can affect its value and its benefits over time. For example, if a system or a service connected to your project is due to go through other changes, it may be better to incorporate your changes into that work.

## **Existing processes (the 'as-is')**

When you have well defined and understood processes, it is easier to see how they might need to change. You may need to review your existing processes and document them. We can then work with you to identify the changes needed and design an effective solution.

## **Data protection**

The university is committed to protecting the personal data which it processes. If your project involves processing personal data in new ways you will need to complete a [Privacy Impact Assessment](#).

## **Other teams**

Changes to digital systems may need to happen alongside work carried out by other teams. Collaborate with teams who may be impacted by the project and include their requirements in your project request.

## **Downstream impacts**

Business processes do not operate in isolation. Consider the impact your changes may have elsewhere and to those other teams around the university. For example, if it involves changes to how we collect data, are there other services or processes that depend on that data? The scope of the project may need to increase to include changes to those processes.

## **Upstream processes**

If a new or updated business process relies on activities elsewhere, consider whether they can support the changes you need. For example, do those upstream processes work well or supply good quality data? If they don't, the scope of the project may need to increase to address those upstream processes as well.

## **Engagement**

When your staff engage with a project, it increases the chances of the project being a success and the solution meeting your needs. To engage effectively with the project, colleagues should:

- Be supported and able to commit significant time to the project.
- Be capable and entrusted to make decisions on behalf of colleagues and the team.
- Want to see change, able to act as an agent for that change, and support colleagues through the change.
- Be digitally confident, able to follow and engage with the development of a solution.
- Understand the wider organisational context in which the change is taking place.
- Bring their subject matter expertise and be able draw on expertise from their colleagues.

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