

CENTRAL TEXAS COLLEGE

Information Technology Division
IT Information Systems Department

SERVICE REQUEST POLICY AND PROCEDURE

For

Requesting Development and Programming Services

March 8, 2005

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to describe the process by which requests for programming services are to be submitted to Information Technology, and subsequently reviewed and prioritized. The objective of this process is to ensure the efficient use of programming resources to provide those services most needed by the College.

ABSTRACT

The service request policy and procedure described on the following pages is consistent with industry best practices for controlling and monitoring the development of software components to ensure quality, prevent unauthorized changes to the production system and efficiently utilize programming resources. This policy was the driver in the creation of the IT Information Systems Department as part of the greater restructuring of the IT Division on September 1, 2004. Upon implementation of this policy, programmers will no longer have the authority to work on projects that have not been approved by the Director of IT Information Systems.

WHAT IS A SERVICE REQUEST?

A service request is a petition initiated by an employee of Central Texas College that:

1. Documents a specific need related to the collection, maintenance, retrieval, and presentation of administrative data.
2. Suggests a possible solution (what the petitioner would like done).
3. Justifies the solution in terms of the expected benefits (short term and/or long term) to the institution.
4. Requests the allocation of resources to study the need, evaluate the suggested solution, and recommend other solutions.

SERVICE REQUEST CLASSIFICATIONS

Service requests will be organized into a meaningful structure by the Director of IT Information Systems that includes the following classifications.

1. Emergency
2. Housekeeping
3. Mandatory
4. Development, Major
5. Development, Minor
6. Enhancement

EMERGENCY

Emergency requests require a correction to a system when (1) application software fails completely, (2) a computer failure occurs and support from Information Technology is required to reestablish computer processing, or (3) an interruption in service occurs because of human error. A request for information that has executive sponsorship may also be considered an emergency.

Emergency requests receive the highest priority despite the amount of labor required. Emergency requests are considered satisfied only when a permanent solution to the problem is installed. When an emergency occurs, the request for service is implicit; hence there is generally no need for a formal, written request to solve the problem. A request to fix a fatal error in the payroll system would be an example of an emergency request.

HOUSEKEEPING

These are internal projects, initiated by Information Technology, to increase productivity, within and outside of Information Technology, by enhancing existing technology or by removing old technology and introducing new technology. An example of such a project is the installation and implementation of a robotic tape storage device to automate system backups.

MANDATORY

Mandatory requests require change to a system by a specific date. Usually, the item required is a minor enhancement that adjusts for changes in the law, strategic direction, accounting conventions, or similar conditions. Mandatory requests are necessary to support the institution or to comply with legal requirements. Requests in this category have a specific target implementation date, and priority for these services is driven by that date. A regulatory update to the financial aid system would be an example of a mandatory request.

DEVELOPMENT

Development requests require considerable investments of labor and money. Development projects are divided into two categories: major development and minor development.

Major Development. Before a major development project is undertaken, the users and the IT Information Systems Department should conduct a joint feasibility study. Major development projects require substantial commitments of labor and money and result in the purchase, development, or significant enhancement of the information system. The results of such feasibility studies should be presented to a steering committee before the projects are scheduled. Major development projects typically require more than 60 labor days of effort and may last several years. In addition, the project development team should produce a substantial deliverable every six months. Designing and developing a student information system would be an example of a major development project.

Minor Development. A minor development project most frequently consists of an improvement to an existing information system. It is more complex and labor-intensive than an enhancement, but less involved than a major development project. Additionally, a minor development project requires the completion of multiple, interdependent phases to accomplish a goal, while an enhancement does not. A minor development project should take more than 10 but less than 60 labor days of effort and six or fewer

calendar months to complete. Designing and developing a system to record and track hardware maintenance agreements would be an example of a minor development project.

ENHANCEMENT

Enhancement requests address minor modifications to existing information systems to:

1. correct minor deficiencies in the software,
2. request the retrieval of data in the form of on-demand reports or online inquiry screens to provide value-added functionality, or
3. handle ad hoc requests for information that cannot be satisfied by one of the standard end-user reporting tools.

Enhancement projects are often defined as projects that require less than 10 days of labor and can be completed within one calendar month. An enhancement project could have significant financial returns or productivity gains with a small investment. Other reasons for doing enhancement projects include availability of resources (labor), or the timing might be right to implement such a change. Adding new selection criteria or additional sort options to an existing report would be an example of an enhancement. A report containing payroll information for a fiscal audit would be another example.

To the extent possible, enhancement projects should be scheduled at least 10 business days ahead of the date they are needed. Once completed, an enhancement project will remain open for at least two business days to allow for minor adjustments.

HOW ARE PROGRAMMING SERVICES REQUESTED?

INITIATING A SERVICE REQUEST (See also Appendix A, Service Request Workflow)

1. A service request may be initiated by any employee with the concurrence of their immediate supervisor. The IT Information Systems Consultant may be contacted if assistance is needed. Appendix C, service request checklist, is a content guide for completing the service request.
2. A service request should be submitted in writing, via memo or email, to the employee's respective Dean or Division Director, whomever is applicable.
3. Prior to endorsing the request, the Dean or Division Director should ensure that the request cannot be reasonably accommodated through existing reports, processes, etc.
4. After endorsing the request, the Dean or Division Director forwards the request to either:
 - a. the Division Director who is the functional custodian of the system for which the service is being requested (e.g., a request for human resources data would be forwarded to the Director of Human Resources who then, after endorsing, would forward to the Director of IT Information Systems. In this example, if the Director of Human Resources can provide the information requested, he/she should so inform the requestor), or
 - b. the Director of IT Information Systems if the endorsing Dean or Division Director is the functional custodian of the system (e.g., a request from an employee in student services that has been endorsed by the Dean of Student Services).
5. Any supporting documentation including suggested report formats, etc., should be attached to the service request.
6. A service request will be a requirement for any programming services (excluding emergencies) to be performed by the IT Information Systems Department.
7. The delivery of the requested service, when completed, will be to the Dean or Division Director who is the system functional custodian (e.g., a process to generate enrollment reports would be delivered to the Dean of Student Services for testing, acceptance, and, if applicable, delivery to the Dean or Division Director who endorsed the request in the first place).

VALIDATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The receipt and validation of a service request will be accomplished by the Director of IT Information Systems. The Director will record the date the request was received, and complete validation of the request as follows within three working days following receipt of the request.

1. Review the request for completeness and clarity.

2. Contact the Dean or Division Director from whom the request was received, if necessary, to clarify what is being requested.
3. Record the request in the IT Project and Resource Management System (PRMS).
4. Make a preliminary estimate of complexity and amount of resources necessary to satisfy the request. A preliminary estimate is a high-level assessment of the effort, in hours, to develop the service requested. If the request is approved, this estimate is subject to change following a detailed analysis of need.
5. Classify the request according to the previously discussed classification structure.
6. Contact the Dean or Division Director from whom the request was received and communicate current status of the service request including complexity, estimated effort, and the estimated start and completions date (if the service request was approved).

STATUS

Service requests are reviewed and assigned one of the following statuses:

1. **Approved.** Accorded project status.
2. **Disapproved.** Returned to the Dean or Division Director (the Dean or Division Director who is also the functional custodian) from whom the request was received. Note: Few, if any, service requests should be disapproved provided the requestor first has a conversation with the IT Information Systems Consultant.
3. **Referred.** Referred to the Director of Technology or the Deputy Chancellor for Resource Management as indicated in Appendix B, Service Request Approval.
4. **Suspended.** Pending additional, clarifying information. Following 30 days, the request will be returned to the Dean or Division Director from whom the request was received with remarks, recommendations, and/or specific instructions.

The table in Appendix B specifies the priority and level of approval for each service request classification.

ESTIMATING EFFORT

Following validation and acknowledgment, the IT Information Systems Department will review the request and render effort and time estimates as follows:

1. Analysis (requirements, general design, external design, internal design).
2. Development.

3. Testing (including end-user testing and quality assurance).
4. Turnover to production.

PROJECT SCHEDULING

Projects are scheduled based on their relative priority, and only if the project backlog does not exceed 120 calendar days. If the backlog exceeds 120 calendar days, projects are queued according to their relative priority and subsequently scheduled when the backlog forecast is less than 120 calendar days. The Director of Information Technology will periodically inform the Deputy Chancellor for Resource Management of any and all requests that are queued but not resourced.

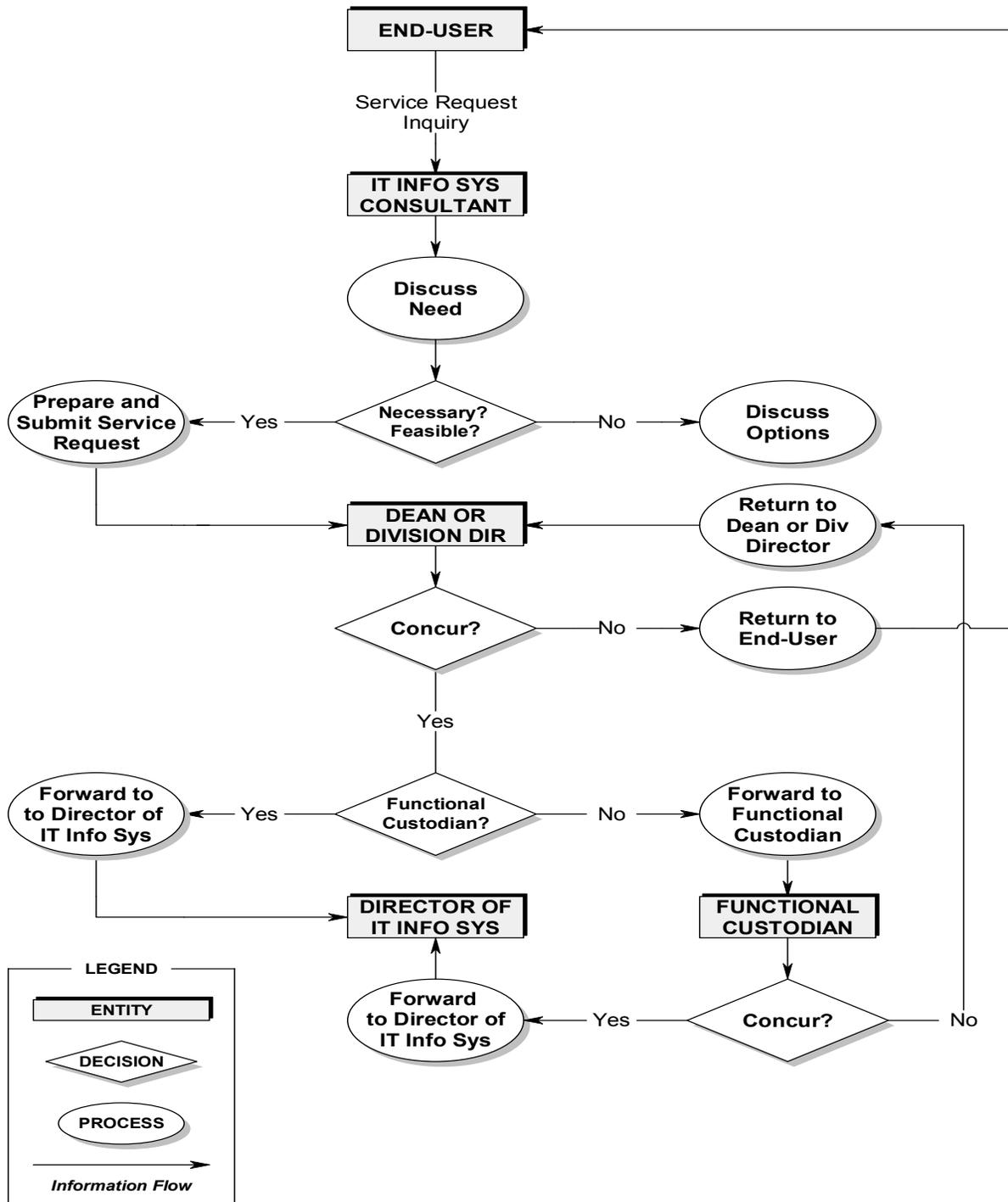
PROJECT TRACKING AND REPORTING

Projects will be tracked at three levels by academic unit or administrative division: 1) active (in-progress), 2) scheduled (may or may not be resourced), and 3) queued (not scheduled, not resourced).

Reporting will consist of the following:

1. **Detail.** Individual project status, including estimated and actual start dates, estimated completion date, original and revised estimated labor hours, labor hours worked to date, and total labor hours remaining.
2. **Summary.** Fiscal year to date summary of projects scheduled, projects queued, and projects completed, labor hours worked, and labor hours remaining.

Appendix A SERVICE REQUEST WORKFLOW For Requesting Programming Services



Appendix B
SERVICE REQUEST APPROVAL
 By Priority and Classification

PRIORITY	SERVICE REQUEST CLASSIFICATION	APPROVING AUTHORITY	APPEAL	REMARKS
1	Emergency (system malfunction)	Depending on the specific nature of the emergency, either the Director of IT Information Systems or the Director of IT Infrastructure.	1. Director of Information Technology 2. Deputy Chancellor for Resource Management	Emergency requests take precedence over <u>all</u> other projects for resources.
2	Housekeeping (installation, maintenance, or reinstallation of system components)	Depending on the specific issue, either the Director of IT Information Systems or the Director of IT Infrastructure.	1. Director of Information Technology 2. Deputy Chancellor for Resource Management	The Director of Technology, or designee, reviews timing of housekeeping activity with administrative end-user departments.
3	Mandatory (regulatory changes, yearly setup, shift in strategic direction)	Director of IT Information Systems	1. Director of Information Technology 2. Deputy Chancellor for Resource Management	Mandatory requests take precedence over other projects, except emergency projects, for resources.
4	Major Development (60 or more labor days of effort and may last several years)	Central Texas College Executive Management	1. Deputy Chancellor for Resource Management 2. Chancellor	Major development projects take precedence over minor development and enhancement projects for resources.
5	Minor Development (10 - 60 labor days of effort, and no more than six calendar months to complete)	Director of IT Information Systems in consultation with the appropriate Deans and Division Directors.	1. Director of Information Technology 2. Deputy Chancellor for Resource Management	The Director of IT Information Systems may alter the priority of previously scheduled minor development projects following consultation with the appropriate Deans and Division Directors.
6	Enhancement (less than 10 labor days of effort and completion within one calendar month)	Director of IT Information Systems (Relative priority is based on the date the request was received)	1. Director of Information Technology 2. Deputy Chancellor for Resource Management	The Director of IT Information Systems may alter priority to maintain full-staff utilization.

Appendix C
SERVICE REQUEST CHECKLIST
For Completing the Service Request for Programming Services

Service requests must include the following:

1. Request date
2. Name of requestor, department and telephone number
3. Endorsers (Deans or Division Directors)
4. Statement of problem or need
5. Proposed solution
6. Justification/cost benefit
7. Date desired
8. Priority (relative to other requests scheduled and/or in progress)
9. Permissions (who will have access to this process?)