

Project Benefits Management Framework

Organisational unit All of University

Version 1.0

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Framework

Project Benefits Management Framework



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Document Version

Version	Date	Name	Changes made
0.1	26 Mar 21	Mikail Ruutu	Split the ACU Project Benefits Management Guideline document into two: guideline and framework (this document). This is to simplify the adoption of the benefits management model.
1.0	11 May 21	Mikail Ruutu	Adjustments to align with the guideline document and template updates. Published (no specific approval required).

Purpose of the Document

This document describes the background for how project benefits are managed within the Australian Catholic University (ACU). It introduces the framework and principles underpinning the ACU Benefits Management Model. A separate Guideline document and templates have been developed to guide staff on applying the model. Assistance and further information on benefits management can be sought from the [Portfolio Projects Office \(PPO\)](#).

WHAT ARE BENEFITS?

Benefit is typically defined as follows:

*A benefit is the **measurable improvement** resulting from an outcome perceived as an **advantage** by one or more stakeholders, and which **contributes** towards one or more organisational objectives.¹*

1. What is a benefit?

Benefits are the core reason a project is set up. A project produces outputs which enable an outcome – a sustained business change – to take place. When the change is implemented, the resulting improvements are expressed as benefits. Without benefits to be achieved, there would be little reason to spend effort and expense in a project.

All business changes should initially identify the desired outcome and how to measure it, then define what business changes are required to achieve the outcome. These are initially outlined in a Proposal for Business Change and further defined in a Project Business Case. On approval of the Project Business Case, projects commence and implement outputs (deliverables) which enable the intended outcomes. These outputs and outcomes will result in benefits to ACU.

Three key requirements for a benefit are:

- 1) **Results from an output or the outcome** – Benefits are often received only after a project has completed, once the outcome is fully in use (outcome benefit) and some may take years to be fully realised. Some benefits occur already during a project or when an output has been produced (output benefits, e.g. licence cost or rent savings). However, all benefits are based on the output or outcomes created by a project.
- 2) **Advantage** – Each benefit brings an advantage which moves the University forward. It is often expressed in financial terms, or as student or staff satisfaction, or other similar ways.
- 3) **Organisational objectives** – All business change in the University should be aligned with an organisational objective, whether it's expressed in the ACU Strategic Plan or other goals. Only the compliance-related, mandatory changes are exempt from this.

Project success is traditionally measured by the delivery on time and in budget. The addition of how well a change delivers the intended benefits provides a more holistic view of success.

Success of the outcome and therefore the resulting benefits is heavily reliant on business change management. For complex process and system changes, it is recommended that a business change manager or specialist is engaged to plan and guide the impacted stakeholders through the change.

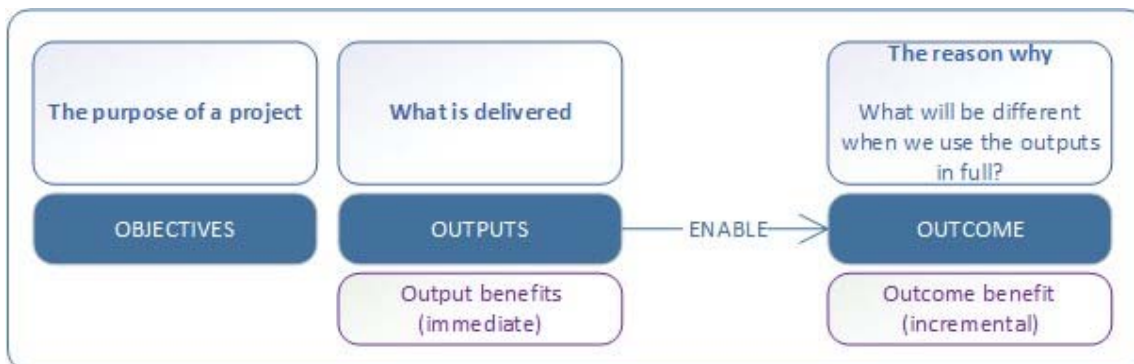
Benefits are at the heart of a Project Business Case: what will the University gain from carrying out a change, how is this change proposed to be completed, what resources are likely to be required, and how much risk is involved before the benefits have been fully realised?

2. Objectives, outputs, and outcome

ACU's benefits management model relies on three components:

- Objectives – What changes are required to the status quo to achieve an improvement?
- Outputs – What does a project need to deliver to enable those changes to happen?
- Outcome – The reason why, the end goal. Expresses what the improved service will have resulted in.

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The objectives are always written as a verb (e.g. “To increase...”) and outputs as nouns (e.g “A new course unit”). Each output and the outcome result in a benefit. Conversely, without a benefit there’d be no reason to implement them.

3. Two benefit types

Benefits in projects can be categorised into two types: output benefits and an outcome benefit. Both types are results of elements in a business change being taken into use. A change is beneficial and has the desired impact only when the outputs and capabilities developed in the projects are used as intended.

i. Output benefits

The project outputs (deliverables) enable the intended outcome (business change) to be achieved, resulting in the desired benefits. Therefore, there is a direct link between the project outputs and benefits and one would not exist without the other: a project output is warranted only when it results in a benefit and is directly linked to the outcome. Outputs are expressed in tangible terms, e.g. “new database”, “a reporting module” or “new role descriptions”. Each output in itself has a benefit associated to it, e.g. cost reduction or improved staff experience.

ii. Outcome benefit

An outcome expresses the future state, the “end game”, typically 6-12 months after the project closure. The outcome benefit refers to the impact of a successful business change. It is the result that flows through after the business change has been completed, e.g. “increased enrolments”. In this example, the measurement would be through enrolment numbers (EFTSL). Success with the outcome should always contribute to a strategic or other goal.

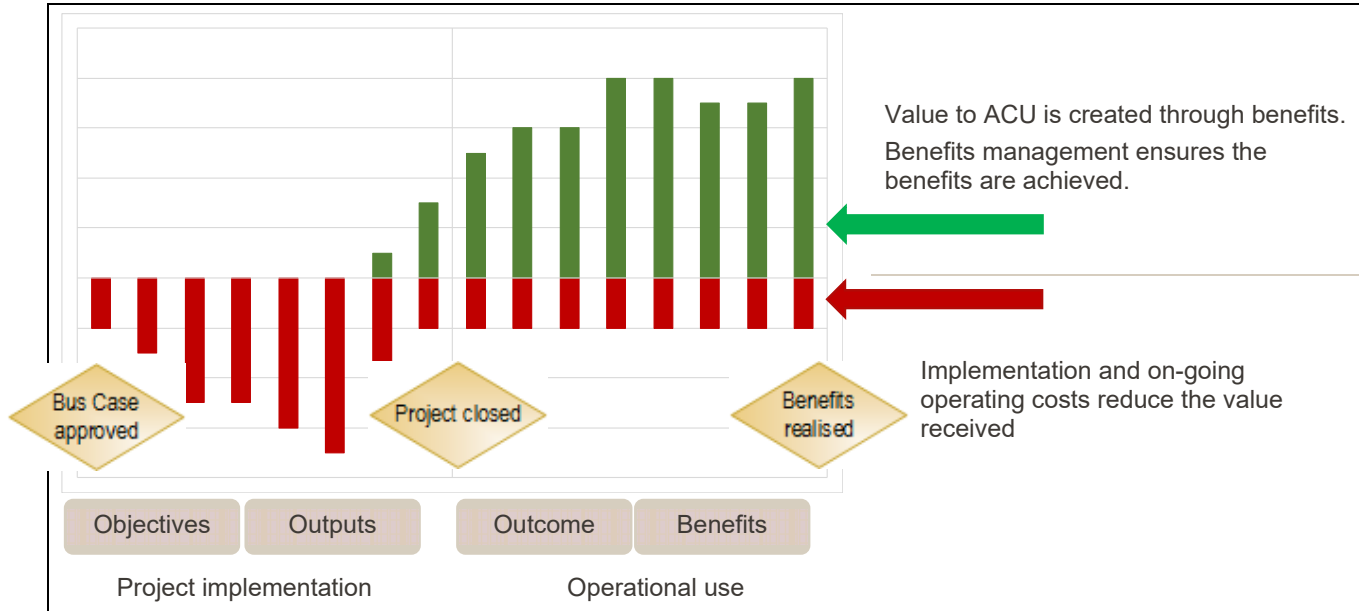
4. What is Benefits Management?

Benefits realisation means us ensuring that benefits are received from outputs and outcomes. Benefits management incorporates the activities of managing benefits throughout their lifecycle, from initially identifying the intended benefits to fully realising themⁱ. Benefits management focuses on securing and sustaining the benefits, and then further improving the benefits achieved. It enables a project to be defined and implemented so that it leads to the delivery of outputs which best enable the desired outcome.

Benefits management starts together with the development of a Project Business Case and continues until the outcome benefit has been achieved.

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WHY BENEFITS MANAGEMENT?

Benefits management shows the long-term sustained effect and success of a business change. This is done by measuring the outputs and outcome resulting from a change. To support this, the ACU Benefits Management Model provides guidance, roles and templates for ACU to define, measure and confirm that the desired impact is created and sustained.

The key purpose of benefits management is to enable funding and resources to be targeted to work which results in the most valuable impacts to the University. It also provides a mechanism to ensure that impact is achieved. This applies specifically to business changes done through projects. The practice is based on starting with “the end in mind” and then working to maximise the impact created.

5. Rationale at ACU

In June 2018 ACU Corporate Services portfolio undertook a P3M3 maturity assessment. The organisation’s capabilities in project benefits management was part of this assessment. Responses to the assessment were provided by 27 staff consisting of the COO, Deputy COO, Directors, Associate Directors and National Managers.

For project benefits management, the formal score was 0 on a scale 0 (weak) – 5 (strong) across all three domains assessed: project, program and portfolio management. The individual responses provided variance and their average across the three domains were 2.4, 1.4 and 1.6, respectively. However, the formal score indicates the level where the organisation operates consistently, thus any occurrence of benefits management relies on individual skills rather than organisational capability. This guideline is part of the response to improve ACU capabilities in the area.

6. How does it improve the University?

At ACU, applying benefits management consistently results in directing funding and resources to project work with the most valuable impacts to the University. Therefore, benefits should be outlined upfront before any funding or other approvals are sought. The benefits will be used as part of the decision-making and competing proposals are weighed against each other based on their merits, including targeted benefits, versus the effort and costs required and risk level.

In any business change delivered, *project management* carries the responsibility of producing the outputs required so that the intended change can occur, often complemented by a structured *business change management* approach. *Benefits management* commences already during the project and carries the responsibility of achieving the intended impact after project has completed.

This supports the focused development and prudent financial management of the University, thus maximising the value delivered to the students and staff from the resources available. Additionally, it allows the management to ensure the University’s goals are met.

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HOW TO MANAGE BENEFITS?

Every change should **start with the end in mind**, a discussion about the intended benefit to ACU – what & why?

Key questions to ask:

- How will we be better off a year after the project completion? What makes it worthwhile?
- How do we show the change is sustained?

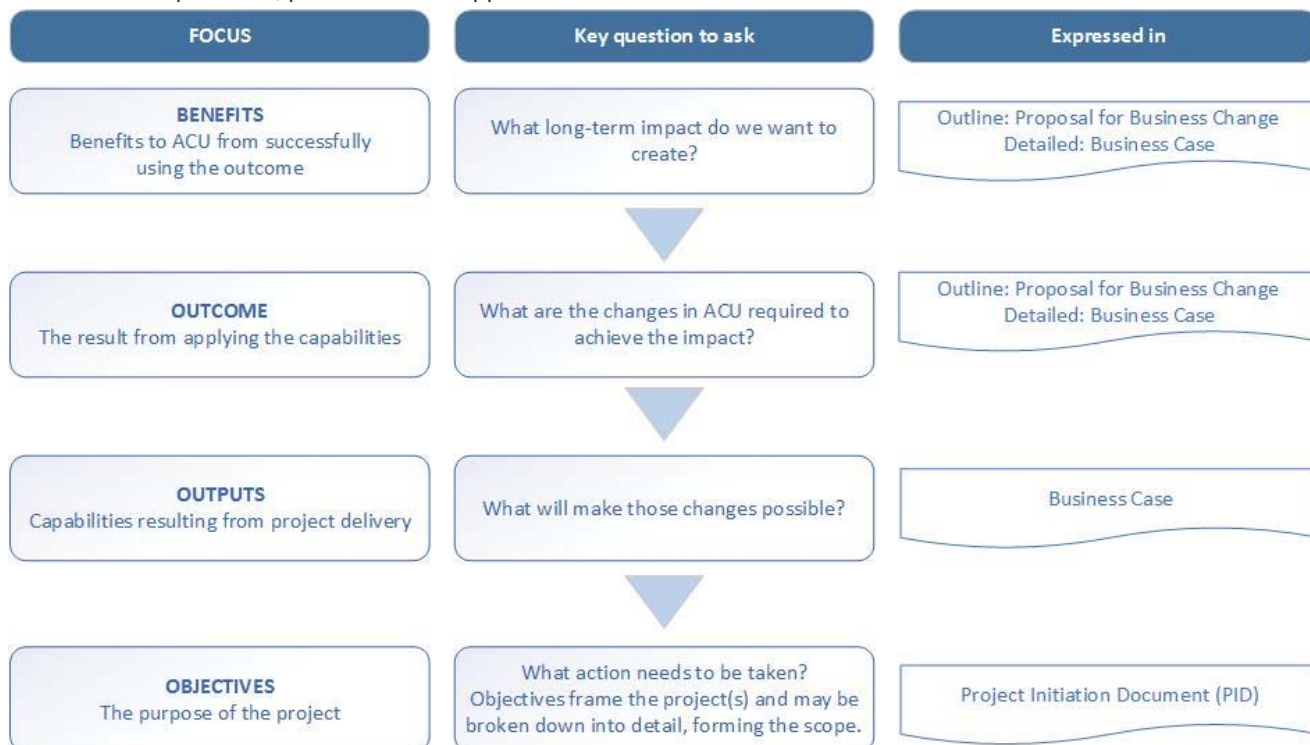
Only after that it is time to think of the best approach to achieve the benefits – how?

7. Developing benefits

Successful benefit realisation starts by outlining the **desired change and resulting benefit**: what improvement do we want to see in ACU. This is expressed as an **outcome**.

The **outcome** can be achieved when new capabilities are developed or current ones improved. The results of that work form the **outputs** which are typically delivered through a project (or a set of related projects). For each output, an **objective** is given to express what the project is to achieve.

For additional questions, please refer to Appendix 3.



8. Benefit categories

ACU recognises two types of project benefits: financial and tangible, with altogether seven benefit categories.

i. Financial

Whenever the benefit (impact) of a change can be quantified in financial terms, it should be done. This allows for comparison against the investment made (project cost) and the University's resulting financial position considered. These benefits can also relate to the University's ability to operate. They typically relate to regulatory compliance but can also include replacement of end-of-life equipment or facilities so that a service can continue to be provided (e.g. replacement of core technology to maintain warranties or support).

Financial position		
Increate revenue Reduce cost	Repurpose	Secure
Improve the ACU financial position	Efficiency gains (repurpose staff time or resources)	Retain revenue Comply / avoid a penalty

ii. Tangible

Non-financial benefits can be measured objectively but not in financial terms. In ACU, this refers to student or staff experience which is measured through recurring standardised surveys. These benefits are typically expressed in time, units or quantities, % rates, etc. In some instances the benefit can refer to ACU's reputation.

Improve experience		
Student	Staff	Reputation
Improve or maintain experience	Improve or maintain experience	ACU image and position as an academic institution

Please see [Appendix 2](#) for details of each benefit category.

Many tangible benefits can also be developed into a financial measure and this should be done where possible. E.g. increased efficiency means a reduction in repeated work when assessing applications, leading into savings in time spent (effort), resulting in a saving in the cost of processing applications.

iii. Intangible benefits

Intangible aspects cannot be quantified in an objective manner and the respective improvement in the University shown (through evidence). Therefore they are not considered in the Project Business Case and decision-making. They should be seen as supporting qualitative information rather than targeted results from a change.

An example would be employee well-being. If such an aspect is presented in a Project Business Case, a respective measure will need to be developed for it.

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9. Benefits Management Lifecycle

Benefits management in projects is closely aligned with the project delivery lifecycle but commences before the project. The key activities or outputs are listed in the table below.

The Portfolio Projects Office (PPO) provides support in this from the start to up to 12 months after the project closure.

	Pre-Initiate	Initiate	Plan	Implement, Close	Operational use
Focus	Define the need or opportunity	Approve funding and approach	Plan & prepare to implement	Deliver outputs into use	Outcomes, resulting benefits
	Business Case approved		Project delivered		
	Identify benefits		Plan realisation	Track benefits	
Executive Sponsor	Outline benefits and outcome Benefit Map Proposal for Business Change	Detail benefits and outcome Project Business Case		Oversee benefits realisation	Oversee benefits realisation. Embed change, continuous improvement
Benefits Owner		Baseline benefits	Plan how to realise benefits Benefits Realisation Plan	Measure and realise benefits	
Business Change Manager		Identify change	Plan change delivery Business Change Plan	Manage and reinforce change	
Project Owner			Ensure business change is managed, governance, project oversight		
Project Manager			Project Initiation Document (PID)	Milestone reports, Post-implementation review (PIR)	

Table 1 Benefits management lifecycle and key outputs

10. Process

i. Identify benefits

Benefits identification defines the benefits expected from an outcome or business change. The outcome will have an associated benefit resulting from the outcome (business change).

A visual representation of the outcome (business change), changes required, project outputs and benefits – a Benefit Map – is created by the Executive Sponsor and other stakeholders in benefit identification workshops. This forms the basis for more detailed work.

Key questions to ask are:

- 1) What is the outcome the project is seeking to achieve?
- 2) What benefit will that have to ACU students, staff and/or partners?
- 3) Who will own and ensure this will be achieved?



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- 4) Which ACU Strategic Plan goal(s) or other priorities are progressed by the outcome?

Information produced during identification:

- A) Benefit Map – A visual representation of the outcome, outputs and objectives, and associated benefits.
- B) Proposal for Business Change – Outline of the opportunity or need we have, and the benefit of acting on it.
- C) Project Business Case (section 'Benefits') – Details of the intended benefits.
- D) Benefits Realisation Plan – Identification: outcome and outputs, intended benefits and benefit categoriesⁱⁱⁱ.

ii. Plan benefit realisation

Planning benefits realisation articulates the benefits in full by providing details to questions like who, what and when. This amends the outline produced earlier in benefits identification by adding information about the measurement methods and data, and actions required to achieve the benefits.



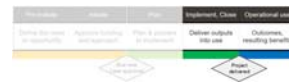
Information produced during planning:

- A) Measurements to be used, measurement or monitoring frequencies, confirm the baseline and target values (how much change will be produced), confirm total \$ (value of financial benefits).
- B) What actions are required for output and outcome benefits to be realised.

All benefits should always be tested prior to approving the Benefits Realisation Plan. This ensures they are defined well and can realistically be achieved, thus setting you up for success with them. See Appendix 3 for details.

iii. Realise and track benefits

Tracking of benefits allows the Benefit Owner(s) to confirm the progress of them. This verifies the impact delivered through the business change. The tracking commences when the Benefits Realisation Plan is approved and continues until all benefits have been achieved.



For the first 12 months after the completion of the respective implementation project (delivery of outputs), the Portfolio Project Office (PPO in Corporate Services) will assist in tracking benefits. If the targeted timeframe for realising the outcome benefit is more than a year, the remaining time will be tracked by the relevant Benefit Owner.

A key activity during benefits tracking is the periodic measurement of benefits. The measurement is done at the frequency set for each benefit and results recorded in the Project Benefits Register. Based on this, the Benefits Owner(s) can review their plans, as needed, so that the benefit targets will be met or exceeded.

Information produced during tracking:

- A) Measurement date, measurement values, potential commentary.
- B) Review, any potential adjustments to the plan.
- C) The measurement results are forwarded to the Portfolio Project Office (PPO) for consolidated reporting.

Please note: The approved Project Business Case must be actively monitored and maintained. Any changes to the project (including cost, duration, or benefits) or the surrounding environment must be governed by the Executive Sponsor with the assistance of the Benefit Owner(s), Project Owner and Project Manager.

11. Reporting

The intended and realised benefits are reported in two ways:

- 1) The progress of the output benefits is attached to the monthly project status report (PSR) at the frequency set in the Benefits Realisation Plan. This allows the Executive Sponsor and Project Board members to direct the project in a way that maximises the realisation of the benefits.
- 2) The progress of the outcome benefit is tracked at the frequency set in the Benefits Realisation Plan. The Benefit Owner reports directly to the Executive Sponsor in the format agreed between them. This continues until the benefit has been fully realised.

All measurement results are also forwarded to the Portfolio Project Office (PPO) for inclusion in their quarterly portfolio-level benefits reporting. This report goes to the COO and Portfolio Executive Committee (PEC) and lists all benefits currently active (being realised) in the portfolio.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

The roles involved in managing benefits are introduced in the guideline document. They are also shown in an overview diagram in [Appendix 1](#). A more comprehensive description of these roles is included in the ACU Program and Project Roles guideline.

12. Executive Sponsor

A senior role who is accountable for the success of the project outcome and owns the associated benefits. This role is integral in defining and realising benefits. The role is long-term, covering the time when the intended business change and resulting outcome are defined, implemented through project(s), and until the respective benefits have been achieved.

13. Benefit Owner

Benefit Owner is responsible for achieving the benefits. They oversee the work done to realise the benefits and ensure the tracking is done, as planned. They work closely with the Business Change Manager to ensure the business change activities successfully support the benefits.

14. Business Change Manager

A Business Change Manager develops and manages the “people change”. The Business Change Manager is a key liaison to the other key stakeholders in ensuring the project outputs are adopted and used by students, staff or partners the desired way. This work enables the benefits to be realised.

15. Other roles

Additional roles relate to project delivery and program management. They are introduced in the ACU Program and Project Roles guideline.

LINKS TO SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT

When developing and managing benefits, the following linkages to the surrounding environment need to be observed to ensure the benefits are aligned with the University’s goals and direction, and project-related material.

16. ACU Strategic Plan

The most significant driver for any business change in ACU is the [Strategic Plan](#). Meeting the goals expressed in the plan underpins most business changes implemented and the resulting benefits directly link to the strategic goals. This linkage also allows the University to effectively monitor the progress towards those goals and ensure all objectives receive adequate attention and investment over time.

17. VC priorities and portfolio priorities

Other significant contributor to business change in ACU are the Vice-Chancellor’s priorities, portfolio-level and potential local priorities. Where a project outcome directly contributes to those, the resulting benefits are linked to them. Should an outcome be seen to contribute both to the strategic goals and other priorities, the strategic goals take precedence and the outcome should be linked to those.

18. Proposal for Business Change

Proposal for Business Change is the first step in defining a proposed future project. It is the result of the thought process which leads to expressing the opportunity or business need and a change is proposed. It also introduces the resulting outcome and benefit to ACU.

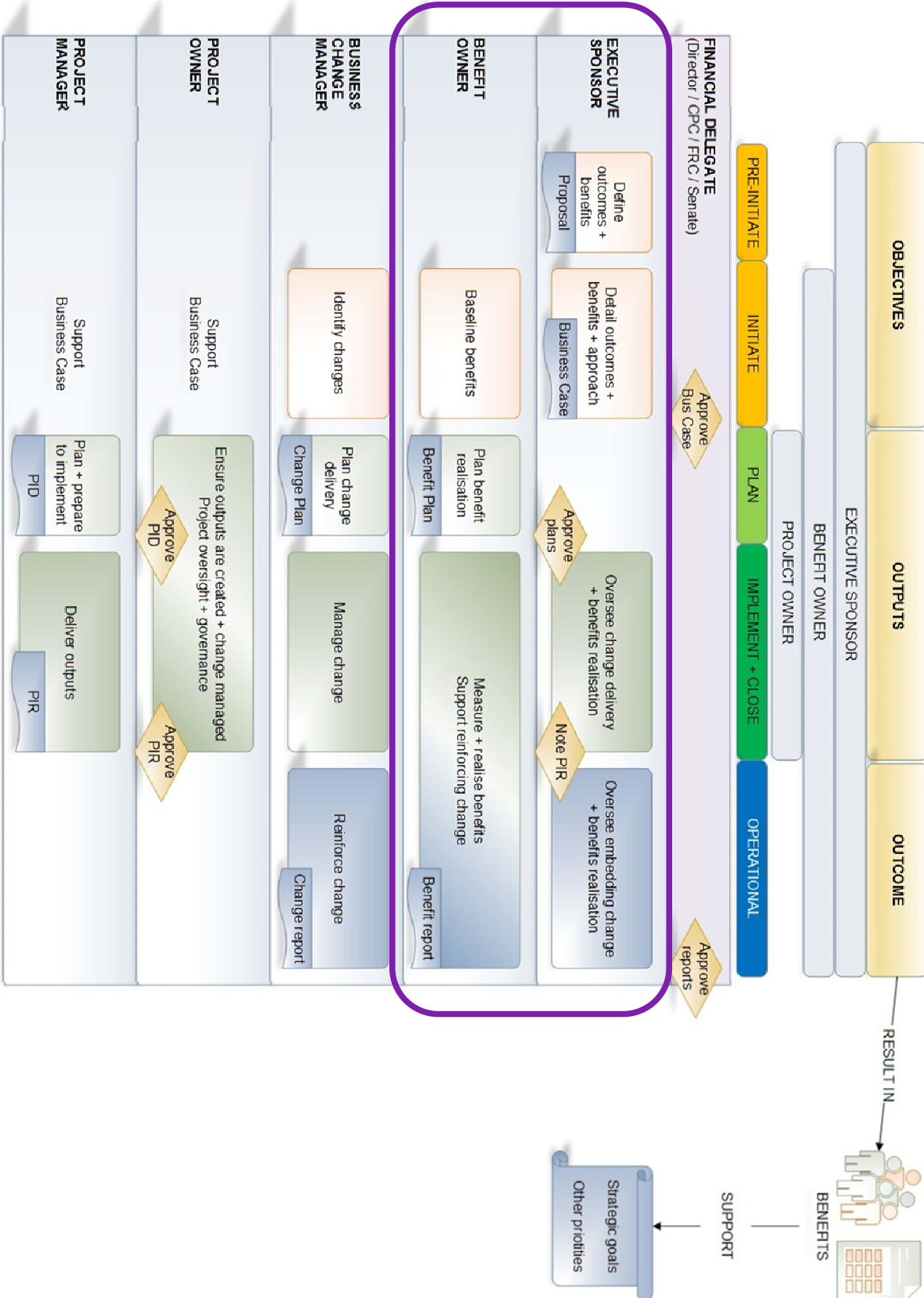
19. Project Business Case

The Project Business Case is the key document submitted for a decision about the project. Articulating the benefits is one of the most critical aspects to a well-informed decision along with well-estimated costs, risks and timeline.

The Project Business Case should also be seen as a contract between the Executive Sponsor and the University to create the intended outcome and benefit to ACU. Additionally, it guides the Project Owner and Project Manager in the project delivery. The document needs to be actively maintained until the benefits have been realised.

APPENDICES

1. Overview diagram



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2. Benefit categories explained

The benefits are grouped into six categories. Each benefit belongs to one category.

The categories were introduced in section B.2 above and are defined further in this Appendix.

Category	Explanation	Measure & calculation
FINANCIAL BENEFITS		
Increase revenue	<p>An improvement in the ACU bottom line through increased revenue.</p> <p>Payback expected (benefits > project costs). Impacts the future budgets at the ACU level.</p>	<p>Measured in \$. Reported using data in TechOne.</p> <p>Revenue (income) increases. This is added to the respective unit's or ACU shared future budgets.</p> <p>E.g. Reduction in business system annual license fees from \$120,000 to \$50,000 = \$70,000 annual saving.</p>
Reduce cost	<p>An improvement in the ACU bottom line through reduced cost.</p> <p>Payback expected (benefits > project costs). Impacts the future budgets at the ACU level.</p>	<p>Measured in \$. Reported using data in TechOne.</p> <p>Reduced cost will lower the respective expense lines in future budgets.</p> <p>E.g. A cohort increases by 100 students * \$12,000 fee per annum = \$1.2M revenue pa.</p>
Repurpose	<p>Resources (staff, facilities) are moved to other uses, along with the respective costs following efficiency gains (e.g. saved staff time).</p> <p>On-going position at the ACU level remains as is, but project costs are added to the expenses. Impacts the future budgets at local levels.</p>	<p>Measured in \$. Reported using data in TechOne.</p> <p>Service delivery costs per unit or team's staff costs decrease due to efficiencies. Calculated in units of time and converted into salary / unit cost.</p> <p>If staff are transferred, respective reductions and increases in the sending and receiving units' budgets are made.</p> <p>E.g. Work effort moved equals 1.5 FTE at HEW 8(3) with on-costs = 1.5 * (\$106,927 * 1.27) = \$203,696 worth of staff time.</p>
Secure	<p>Secures revenue against loss or expenses against an increase. Maintains the ACU bottom line as is, instead of a potential or expected weakening of the position.</p> <p>On-going position remains at the ACU level, but project costs are added to the expenses. Budgets are expected to remain as they are.</p>	<p>Measured in \$. Reported using custom surveys. The reference point is often an industry study or a regulation.</p> <p>The secured revenue or avoided cost does not show up in TechOne, but the project costs do appear as expenses in TechOne. Budgeted and actual (realised) revenues will appear in TechOne.</p> <p>E.g. Retention of 50 students per year in a course * \$10,000 revenue each = \$500,000 retained per year. E.g. Avoiding increased maintenance costs \$130,000 per year after a warranty or support period ends.</p>

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Category	Explanation	Measure & calculation
TANGIBLE BENEFITS		
Improve student experience	<p>Improve or maintain experience in any or all parts of the student lifecycle in their interactions with the University services.</p> <p>Can also have financial value but project costs > benefits.</p>	<p>Measured in %, survey score points, or quantities (e.g. # of elective enrolments). Reported using standardised or custom surveys.</p> <p>A comparison against the previous level, expressed as an amount of change.</p> <p>E.g. Student Experience Survey (SES) score on 'Online learning materials' lifted by 2 points (from 85.9 to 87.9).</p>
Improve staff experience	<p>Improve or maintain experience in any or all parts of the staff lifecycle in their interactions with the services.</p> <p>Can also have financial value but project costs > benefits.</p>	<p>Measured in %, survey score points, or quantities (e.g. # of voluntary actions). Reported using standardised or custom surveys.</p> <p>E.g. My Voice score on '29 Our processes are efficient' lifted in this service by 10 %-points (from 41% to 51%).</p>
Reputation	<p>ACU's image and position as an academic institution. Usually impacts research impact ratings, academic rankings, 'place to work' scores, and similar.</p> <p>Can also have financial value but project costs > benefits.</p>	<p>Measured in %, survey score points, quantities (e.g. number of citations). Reported using specialised surveys.</p> <p>E.g. Number of ACU first author citations in impact factor 3.0 (or above) journals increases by 20 each year during 2022 – 2024 (to total of 120 in 2024).</p>

3. 10 principles of Benefits Management

When benefits are defined and managed well, the benefits realisation fulfills the 10 principles listed below^{iv}.


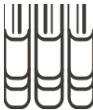




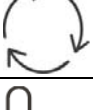



Principle		Implications
1. Measurable improvement		A benefit is a measurable improvement – resulting from an outcome – which is perceived as an advantage by a stakeholder. By measuring it, we can show the actual improvement delivered through the change.
2. Aligned to goals		The outcomes and benefits delivered by a change help achieve ACU's goals which describe how an organisation wishes to evolve (refer to the Strategic Plan, VC Annual Priorities, and portfolio priorities). If benefits are not aligned with ACU's goals, their overall value should be questioned. To provide best value to the University, all funding decisions must consider benefits and how they support the delivery of the ACU goals (except for compliance-related changes).
3. Reason for change		Ultimately, it is the realisation of benefits which helps achieve one or more program or project outcomes. Conversely, if benefits are not identified in the Project Business Case then this could result in incorrect prioritisation of the project or program, and funding allocation may not serve the University well.
4. Evidence-based		When benefits are measured, sufficient data and evidence exists to justify the effort and funding allocated to a change. Only through measuring a baseline (starting point) and progress, the positive impact can be shown.
5. Sustain change		Benefits can only be realised through business change. Likewise, change can only be sustained by realising benefits. Collaborating with stakeholders impacted by a change will support the implementation of lasting improvements and benefits realisation.
6. Owned by executive		Benefits are owned by appropriate champions and executive, not by the program or project manager. Accountability and responsibility at the right level is key for successful benefits realisation. It is important that responsibility for benefit realisation remains with those professional or academic units affected and it helps them to tie the impact to the “big picture”.
7. Tracking benefits		Regular measurements will give confidence that benefits realisation is on track. This also allows corrective actions to be taken, if needed, and adjusting the plans when an opportunity emerges to exceed the targeted benefits.
8. Dynamic		Benefits identified for the Project Business Case may change over the life of the project or program as the environment or needs evolve or new opportunities emerge. The benefits and the plans to realise them should be regularly reviewed.
9. Focused		Priority should be given to those benefits with the greatest likelihood of being realised. This helps to focus on those benefits which realistically can be achieved and, of those, where the impact is the greatest.
10. Integrated		Benefits management is intertwined with the strategic development of the University, increase in organisational maturity and project delivery capabilities. Benefits should be a standing agenda item at each Project or Program Board meeting to ensure projects work to enable a long-lasting change to commence at the right time. Thus, the projects and benefits realisation are interlinked.

Table 2 10 principles of benefits management

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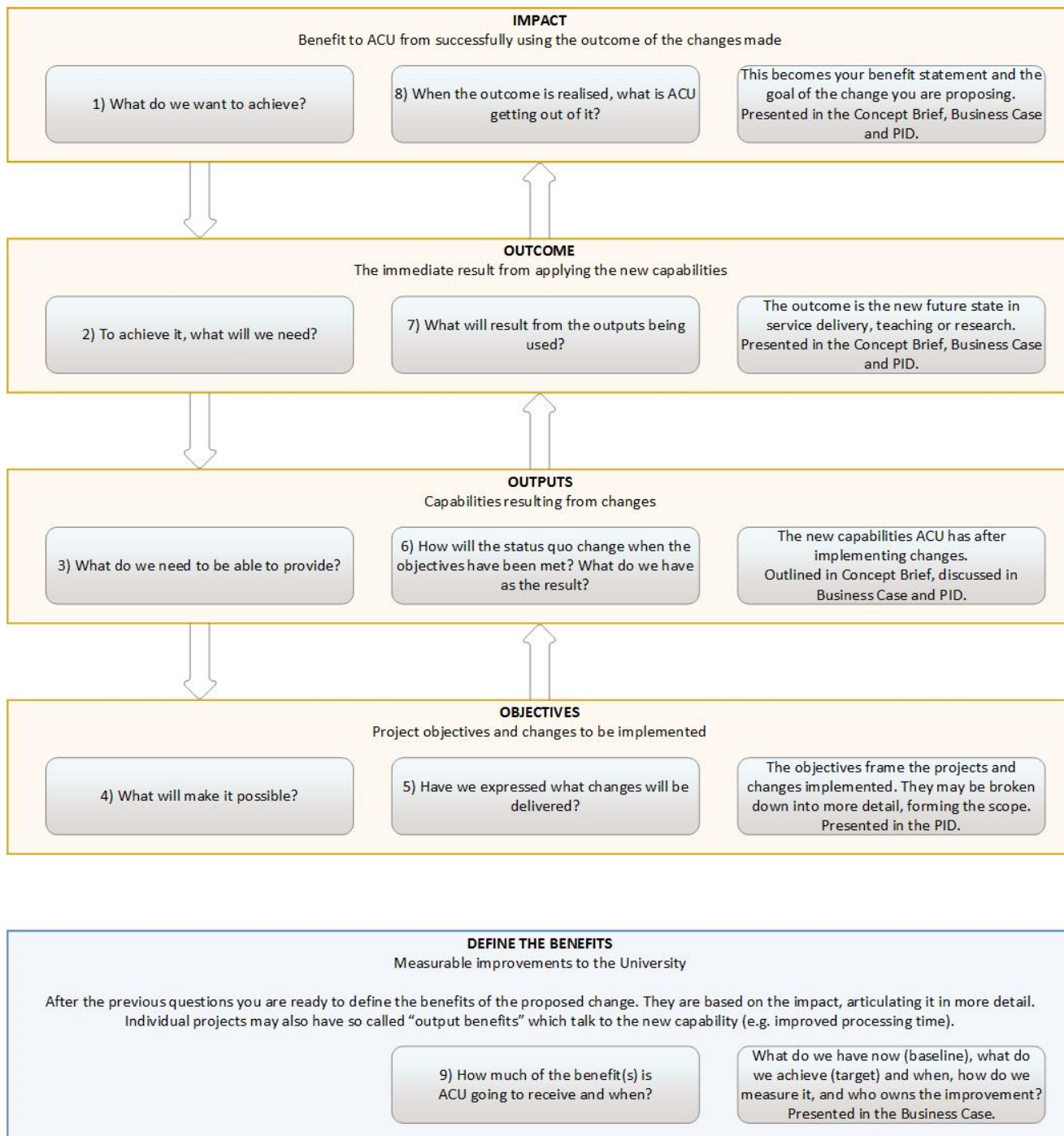


4. Key questions when defining benefits

Key questions to ask first.
Proceed from top to bottom.

Validating questions.
Come back from bottom up

Response presented in...



5. Quality Criteria for Benefits Management

Each benefit needs to satisfy the following key characteristics:

- Provable – The outputs are proven to be needed to achieve the outcome. You have nothing extra and every output is required for the benefits.
- Direct – The outputs contribute to the outcome directly without any intermediate steps or outputs.
- Sufficient – The combination of outputs is enough to create the outcome. You have everything that's needed and nothing external is required before the benefits are realised (they should all be included in your project).

The following quality criteria^v can be used when planning for and implementing the business change.

i. Benefits Management overall

- A) Is the outcome aligned with the organization's strategic goals?
- B) Does project or program governance take into account benefits management, including tracking of them?
- C) Are project selection and/or funding decisions based on the impact to expected benefits?
- D) Have the Executive Sponsor and Benefits Owner(s) been consulted and confirmed?
- E) Have the expected benefits been clearly communicated to key stakeholders involved with delivery?
- F) Does the project or program team understand how project outputs contribute to the outcome?
- G) Are the benefit owners responsible and evaluated for achieving benefit targets?

ii. Project Business Case

- H) Are the benefits – financial and non-financial – explicitly defined in the Project Business Case?
- I) Does the Project Business Case outline when benefits are forecasted to be delivered?
- J) Is the project or program still relevant based on what benefits can be realised against unexpected events or changes to the Benefits Realisation Plan or Project Business Case?

iii. Benefits Realisation Plan

- K) Does the Benefits Realisation Plan describe how the benefits will be measured?
- L) Have key stakeholders signed off on the Benefits Realisation Plan?
- M) Is progress of the project(s) or business change regularly reviewed against the Benefits Realisation Plan?
- N) Are benefits frequently reviewed and adjusted to reflect the most current information regarding changing business conditions (i.e. benefits are optimised)?
- O) Is effective change control in place to close potential gaps between expected benefits and actual benefits?
- P) Is there a way to discover new benefit opportunities?

iv. Project Benefits Register

- Q) Are all project or program benefits documented in the Project Benefits Register?

The following quality criteria can be used following the implementation.

- R) Have the benefits been reviewed and adjusted to changing business conditions (i.e. optimised)?
- S) Have the project outputs been transitioned to and approved by the Executive Sponsor?
- T) Have project or program outcomes been handed over to Executive Sponsor?
- U) Are realised benefits being measured and verified against the portfolio's business plans or goals?
- V) Are actual benefits being delivered within the timeframe of the Benefits Realisation Plan?
- W) Were lessons learned captured and communicated, and any follow-on activities assigned?
- X) Have unanticipated benefits been realised and captured for the future?

6. Tools and templates

Project Benefits Management uses the following tools and templates to identify, plan for, track and report on benefits.

Tools for projects

i. Benefit Map

Benefit Map is a one-page document that depicts the connection between project outcome, outputs and objectives, and the strategic goals or priorities. ACU uses an 'O3' model for the map and a template is available from the PPO.

ii. Project Business Case

Project Business Case is the foundational document required for **medium and large** projects, developed by the Executive Sponsor and approved in the Initiate Phase. It defines the business opportunity or need, the benefits of making the respective business changes, the approach to be taken to implement the changes, associated risks, and the resources needed.

A key element in decisions related to funding the business changes (i.e. funding projects) needs to be the outcome produced. This is expressed as benefits.

Should the benefits materially change, be removed or new ones added after the approval, the Project Business Case will be amended and re-submitted for approval, respectively.

iii. Benefits Realisation Plan

A document describing how the realisation of the benefits will be progressed and tracked until they are achieved. This document is developed by the Benefits Owner in the Plan Phase.

The focus of the plan is on how the intended benefits will be measured and realised. It describes the approach to be used for measuring, sourcing the required data, resourced needed, and reporting until the benefits have been achieved.

iv. Benefits Realisation Plan

The Benefits Realisation Plan is a list of the intended benefits, their baseline, targeted and current values, and information developed during the benefits management process. It also lists the actions required to realise the benefits.

This is the central document for benefits in a project and owned by the Benefits Owner. The plan is started in the Initiate Phase and continually updated until the intended benefits have been achieved.

v. Portfolio Benefits Register

The Portfolio Benefits Register is the master list of all active benefits (benefits being realised) and copies the data from the individual Project Benefits Registers. This register is owned by the PPO and data used to assist Benefits Owners in tracking their benefits and for the Portfolio Benefits Report.

vi. Project Status Report

Information on the status of benefits realisation can be added in Project Status Reports (PSR) as milestones to be completed, or adding a section under the decisions and guidance requested. The Project Managers will get input for this from the Benefit Owner.

Currently the PSR template in the PPM System lacks the capability of directly reporting on benefits, but future system upgrades are likely to introduce this.

Tools used at the project portfolio level

vii. Portfolio Benefits Report

Portfolio Benefits Report is a quarterly report summarising the currently active benefits and their status. The report is produced by the PPO to the COO and Corporate Services' executive and attached to the Portfolio Projects Summary.

viii. Portfolio and Project Management System (PPM system)

The PPM systems used in ACU will in the future incorporate a project benefits register functionality for listing and tracking the benefits in the project portfolio. The data will be used for reporting and will replace other registers and reports as they are built into the PPM system and configured for use at ACU.

7. Glossary

The following terminology is used in relation to the Benefits Management Framework.

Term	Definition
Benefit	A measurable improvement resulting from an output or an outcome.
Benefits management	Benefits Management is the practice of defining, measuring and confirming that the desired impact is created and sustained. It focuses on securing and sustaining the benefits, and then further improving the benefits achieved. The associated framework provides guidance, roles and templates for ACU.
Benefit Map	Outlines the benefits at a high level by mapping them visually. It uses the O3 Model and shows the outcome and associated benefit, and the objectives (changes) and outputs required to achieve the outcome. The Benefit Map should be the first artefact developed when thinking of a future business change and a potential project.
Benefit Owner	A senior role who is responsible for achieving the benefits. They oversee the planning and work done to realise the benefits and ensure the tracking is done, as planned. The Benefit Owner typically attends the project governance group. In simple projects, the Executive Sponsor assumes the Benefit Owner role.
Executive Sponsor	A senior role who is accountable for the success of an outcome (business change) and the resulting benefits.
Benefits realisation	Benefits realisation ensures that benefits are derived from the outputs and outcome.
Benefits Realisation Plan	A workbook which is started while developing the Project Business Case, and finalised and approved during the project's Plan phase. It describes how each benefit will be developed, measured and reported, and the associated timelines.
Benefits Register	The central register for benefits in a project, containing the intended benefits, baselines, targeted and current values, and associated information. Maintained by the PPO. The data is used for collated reporting on benefits.
Business Case	See 'Project Business Case'.
Business Change	A change that concerns processes, work practices and related systems, knowledge, skills and behaviours. Business change considers how an individual's and team's work changes and focuses on ensuring students, staff and partners successfully adopt the new process, practices or systems. This typically involves communication, training and reinforcement.
Business change manager, Business change specialist	A specialist role who is responsible for planning and implementing business change activities. Their focus is in ensuring the project outputs are adopted and used by students, staff or partners the desired way.
Project Owner	A role who is responsible for the delivery of the overall business change when it is delivered through projects. They are also accountable for the success of the project delivery and the ultimate decision-maker in a project.
O3 model	A benefits management model available through Seven Consulting. The key elements are: Objectives – Outputs – Outcomes. Each project has an objective and produces outputs. The outputs will enable an outcome which is measured and expressed as a benefit.
Outcome	The long-lasting, sustained result from a business change or related changes. This is the goal of any change that is initiated, the future state to reach. Projects typically have a primary outcome (the most significant outcome) and all outputs contribute to it. Selected outputs together can also enable secondary outcomes but they are usually excluded from benefits realisation.
Output	Output is a deliverable produced by a project. They can be changes to or new processes, services, products or systems. The purpose of a project is the delivery of specific outputs which contribute to the outcome.
Portfolio priorities	Prioritised improvements targeted for the year at the portfolio level.

Framework

Project Benefits Management Framework



Term	Definition
PPO	Portfolio Project Office, a team responsible for the ACU Project Management Model. They also run the project portfolio management practice for Corporate Services. PPO is placed in the Office of the Deputy Chief Operating Officer.
Project Assessment	A questionnaire which helps to characterise the change and identify potential high risks and key focus points. The assessment can be used for both prioritising projects and understanding which areas in the area may require increased attention or resourcing. The questionnaire is available as part of the ACU Project Management Model .
Project Business Case	A foundational document required for medium and large projects. It defines the business need or opportunity, the benefits of making the respective business changes, the approach to be taken to implement the changes and associated risks, and the resources needed.
Project Manager	A role who is responsible for the program or project planning and delivery. They plan, organise and guide the work, control and monitor the project execution.
Proposal for Business Change	A document outlining a proposed business change. This is intended as the first document describing why and what is proposed to be changed and the intended goals (later developed into benefits). Prior to writing a proposal, the Executive Sponsor is expected to develop a Benefit Map and do a Project Assessment. The proposal is submitted by the Executive Sponsor to the relevant member of the VC's Executive Board (VCEB) for their support. Alternatively, it can be written by a candidate Benefit Owner or Project Owner and supported by the Executive Sponsor, if there are a member of the VCEB.
Value, Value management	Value usually describes the desired effect from the total project portfolio. Value management covers the totality of the project portfolio (collection of all projects or a large selection of them) and focuses on whether the portfolio results in the desired effect (e.g. implementation of the ACU Strategic Plan, or fulfilment of the Directorate priorities). It also focuses on alignment of all projects to support the organisational objectives and balancing the composite risk within the portfolio.
VC Annual Priorities	Vice-Chancellor's annual priority statement. This typically lists specific improvements targeted for the year in specific areas or across ACU and is available via OPSM > Strategy site on SharePoint.

8. Acknowledgements and Credits

Material or inspiration for this Guideline has been taken from the following sources, most which are publicly available. The material will also provide additional reading to staff interested in more information on benefits management.

- 1) Benefits Realisation Management Framework (Third edition, 2018).
State of New South Wales (Department of Finance, Services and Innovation).
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<https://www.finance.nsw.gov.au/publication-and-resources/benefits-realisation-management-framework>
- 2) Managing Benefits from Projects and Programmes: Guide for Practitioners (October 2017).
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<https://treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/state-sector-leadership/investment-management/plan-investment-choices/benefits-guidance>
- 3) Benefits Management at the University of Auckland. University Strategic Programme Office Guidelines. The University of Auckland (University Strategic Programme Office, USPO), New Zealand.
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<https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about-us/about-the-university/our-ranking-and-reputation/planning-and-information-office.html>
- 4) The Real Benefits Workbook (2016)
Rob Thomsett. Published by Seven Consulting.
- 5) PMBOK® Guide – Sixth Edition (2017)
© Project Management Institute, Inc., Pennsylvania, United States.
Selected definitions provided in the Guide are referred to in this document.
<https://www.pmi.org/pmbok-guide-standards/foundational/pmbok>
- 6) Investment management standard 2017 (IMS)
The standard includes the Investment Logic Map (ILM)
State of Victoria (Department of Treasury and Finance)
<https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/infrastructure-investment/investment-management-standard>
- 7) Body of Knowledge: Benefits Management.
Association for Project Management (APM)
<https://www.apm.org.uk/body-of-knowledge/delivery/scope-management/benefits-management/>
- 8) Project Management Methodology: Benefits Realisation
University of Tasmania
<http://www.utas.edu.au/project-management-methodology/useful-resources/expected-benefits>
- 9) Benefits Realisation and Value Management Using Project Management 2.0/3.0
Dr Harold Kerzner, PhD. Webinar (1h 28 min).
<https://www.axelos.com/webinars/realize-the-value-of-your-projects>
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Project Management Institute. PMI® Thought Leadership Series.
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ⁱ As defined in Prince2, Management of Successful Programs (MSP) and Portfolio, Programme and Project Offices (P3O).

ⁱⁱ Adapted from PMBOK Guide, and The Strategic Impact of Projects: Identify benefits to drive business results (PMI).

ⁱⁱⁱ Benefits are categorised to financial (increase revenue, reduce cost, repurpose, secure) and experience (student, staff, reputation) ones.

^{iv} Adopted from Benefits Realisation Management Framework. State of New South Wales (Department of Finance, Services and Innovation).

^v Adapted from PMI (2016). Benefits realization management framework.