TERMS OF REFERENCE

Project Governance Groups

BACKGROUND

As part of good project governance, each active project should have sufficient oversight to ensure the delivery meets the expectations of the University and is executed well. It also oversees that the intended benefits can be realised. This also supports the Project Manager and team in their work by providing direction and approvals, where applicable.

PURPOSE of This Document

This document introduces the governance expectations for different projects. Primarily these are based on project categories (simple, medium, complex projects).

Variations are allowed based on the specific needs of each project. The guiding line is to enable well-informed and focused decision-making where roles and accountabilities are clear.

Governance Expectations

Every active project in ACU Corporate Services will need to have a governing body. This can be project-specific or provided through program-level governance. The composition of the governing body is subject to the project category, which takes into account the complexity and risk level of the project. The category is based on a project assessment and confirmed together by the Executive Sponsor and the Portfolio Project Office (PPO).

Project-specific governance levels

Each three levels of project categories have their own governance levels, respectively. The more complex the project is, the wider group is set to provide direction to it. This provides robust and comprehensive guidance to the project and ensures representation from key stakeholders are an integral part of the decision-making.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Simple projects** | **Medium projects** | **Complex projects** |
| Project Lead | Project Coordinator / SME Project Manager | Project Manager | Senior Project Manager |
| Governing body | Executive Sponsor | Project Board (3 members) | Steering Committee (up to 7 members) |
| Complexity level | Low | Medium or high | High |
| Initial risk level | Low | Moderate | All levels (but often high) |
| Executive Sponsor’s typical position at ACU (financial delegation level) | Management (level 5) or senior management (level 4), e.g. National / State Manager or Associate Director. | Senior management (level 4) or executive (level 3), e.g. Associate Director or Director. | Executive (level 3) or senior executive (level 2), e.g. Director, COO, DVC or Provost. |
| Quorum | (not required) | 2 or more members | 4 or more members |
| Meeting frequency | Fortnightly or as required | Monthly | Monthly |

Program-level governance

In case a project belongs to a program, the Program Board may provide governance to its constituent projects, unless it is seen preferable to also have project-specific governance in place (this would typically apply to complex projects).

DUration of the project governance

The Executive Sponsor is active in the project from the development of a project proposal (idea / concept) and stays involved throughout until the business change has been embedded and outcome benefit realised.

Project Boards and Steering Committees are set up by the Executive Sponsor when the Project Business Case has been approved and the project commences in its Planning phase. They hold their final meeting when the Post-Implementation Review (PIR) report is approved. Any meetings after that are on exception only.

Roles and REsponsibilities

Executive Sponsor

The Executive Sponsor is accountable for the project success and owns the project outputs and value.  
They typically define the benefits sought and owns the realisation of them in services and operations.

The Executive Sponsor’s key tasks in relation to project are:

* Champion the project to the stakeholders and in the University.
* Develop and submit a Proposal for Business Change.
* Develop or guide the development of a Project Business Case.
* Direct the project from Pre-initiation to Closure.
  + Approve the PID (focus on project objectives, scope & quality, assumptions, risks, time & cost, communications).
  + Receive regular status reports.
  + Take action on risks or issues outside the PM’s control, and any other items escalated by the PM.
  + Approve the test or quality assurance results.
  + Approve the Post-Implementation Review (PIR) report. Action or delegate any resulting activities to improve future project or service delivery.
* In simple projects, direct the Project Lead during the project planning and execution stages.
* In medium and complex projects, chair the Project Board or Steering Committee.
* Monitor the project delivery against the planned benefits realisation. Confirm benefits can be realised at the right time. After the delivery of the project outputs, continue monitoring and adjust the use of the project outputs, as necessary, to maximise the value of the benefits.
* Represent the project to audiences outside of the project.

Project Board

A Project Board is used to oversee and direct projects with medium to high complexity and moderate risk levels. These projects typically require more consultation and comprehensiveness in their decision-making than what the Executive Sponsor would typically provide alone.

A Project Board is composed of three key members and potential supporting roles:

* The Executive Sponsor (chair).
* Executive or manager representing the groups who will use the project outputs (“Senior User”).
* Executive or manager representing the groups who develop the project outputs (“Senior Supplier”).
* Benefit Owner(s) in an advisory role.
* Project Lead as a presenter.

The Senior User and Senior Supplier advice and assist the Executive Sponsor in decision-making. However, the ultimate decision is made by the Executive Sponsor.

The Project Board may call other stakeholders or external specialists to advise the Board, as needed. The Senior User and Senior Supplier can be supported by various reference groups, e.g. a User Reference Group and Technical Reference Group, respectively, as needed.

The Project Board’s key focus is to:

* Direct the project from Pre-initiation to Closure.
  + Approve the PID (focus on project objectives, scope & quality, assumptions, risks, time & cost, communications).
    - The Senior User and Senior Supplier endorse the PID for the Executive Sponsor’s approval.
  + Receive regular status reports.
  + Take or delegate action on risks or issues outside the PM’s control, and any other items escalated to the Board.
  + Approve the test or quality assurance results.
  + Approve the Post-Implementation Review (PIR) report. Action or delegate any resulting activities to improve future project or service delivery.
* Monitor project delivery against the planned benefits. Confirm benefits can be realised at the right time.

The Senior User represents the long-term use of the project outputs and therefore focuses on:

* Ensuring the business and functional requirements are defined adequately and are met by the project.
* The quality, usability and timeliness of the project deliverables.
* Business impact and transition from the project to operations. Ensure business change management is set up and executed successfully, including any process, documentation and skill changes required.

The Senior Supplier represents the parties who develop and deploy the project deliverables and focuses on:

* The feasibility of the business requirements, and availability of functional or technical requirements.
* Availability and quality of the supply teams and materials.
* Any potential delivery risks which may impact the time, cost or quality of the delivery.
* Quality assurance performed on the project deliverables, including documentation produced for the users.

Steering Committee

A Steering Committee is used with the most complex and risky projects. Often these projects require significant funding and time to deliver. Having a larger committee to oversee and direct the project provides robustness and caters for the key stakeholders’ views, ensuring they are an integral part of the decision-making in the project.

A Steering Committee is composed of up to seven members:

* Project Board (3 members, see above), and
* One to four other members who represent key stakeholders (including suppliers / contractors).
* Benefit Owner(s) in an advisory role.
* Project Lead as a presenter.

The Steering Committee members advice and assist the Executive Sponsor in decision-making. However, the ultimate decision is made by the Executive Sponsor.

The Steering Committee may call other stakeholders or external specialists to advise the Committee, as needed.

The specific focus areas or key tasks for the Executive Sponsor, Senior User and Senior Suppler are presented in preceding sections. The other members of the Committee provide advice and monitor the quality, as applicable, related to the areas they represent, and convey information back to their respective areas.

Standing agenda items in meetings

The following agenda items are included in the meetings held by the governing body for a project.

1. Open the meeting, confirm the quorum.
2. Confirm the minutes of the previous meeting, review of action items.
3. Current status of the project delivery, future forecast for the project.
   1. Delivery of outputs, schedule, financial position, risks & issues, upcoming milestones and estimates.
4. Current status of enabling the benefits realisation.
   1. Progress of the output benefits, enabling the outcome benefit(s) to be realised.
5. Business readiness (business change management).
6. Other business.

CHANGES TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference can be changed to improve the group’s work, e.g. in regular meeting frequency, membership, or any other aspect. All changes are approved by the respective governing body for the project and noted at the Program Board of the program the project belongs to.

For example, a medium project aligned to the Staff Futures Program wants to expand its governance by adding two external stakeholders as permanent members of the Project Board (effectively making it a Steering Committee). This is approved by the Project Board, and the Staff Futures Program Board notes that the project has a broader than usual governance group overseeing it.