

**Project Overview Statement—Activity Definition**

**Purpose:** The Project Overview Statement (POS) is a short document that establishes the purpose of the project, and explains what business value it hopes to provide to the organization. The objective of this activity is to secure management approval and to provide the Project Manager with the authority to apply organizational resources to project activities. The POS becomes a source of reference for the project team.

**Participants:** The Project Manager prepares this document. The intended audience is management, stakeholders, sponsor and the project team.

**Inputs:** Approved Project Request form[1]

**Process:**

1. State the Problem or opportunity that the project addresses.
2. Establish the Project Goal. The goal gives purpose and direction to the project.
3. Clearly state the project objectives that are concise, verifiable, feasible, and measurable.
4. List the criteria that will be considered while measuring the success of a project.
5. Determine the effort that will be required for the project. This estimate should be a more fine-tuned estimate compared to the one made in the Project Request Form.
6. Estimate the total cost of the project i.e. effort, operating expenses, and any capital costs like licensing costs.
7. Determine the Class of the project.
8. List any assumptions made, and any known constraints or obstacles imposed by the environment or management. Identify any project risks that might be present.
9. Attach documentation, if necessary to support any of the above.
10. This document needs to be approved by the relevant stakeholders.
11. Maintain versions and details of what changes are made in what version.

**Outputs:**

Project Overview Statement

**Project Overview Statement—Guidelines**

1. Project Name and Date
2. Revision History and versions: Date, what changes were made and who made the amendments. Version is incremented for each significant change or edit. The signed off version becomes v1.0. Changes after this acceptance are incremented.
3. Project Sponsor/Customer
4. Project Manager
5. Problem/Opportunity: State the problem that the project will resolve.
5. Goal: What does the project hope to accomplish?
6. Objectives: A concrete statement describing what the project is trying to achieve. The objective should be written at a low level, so that it can be evaluated at the conclusion of a project to see whether it was achieved or not. A well-worded objective will be specific, measurable, attainable/achievable, realistic and time-bound. e.g. there should be no more than 2 queries in a day regarding the use of function X after the project is executed.
1. Success Criteria: Success criteria should be identified. To the extent possible, these factors should be quantifiable and measurable. These success criteria should be determined based upon the following considerations:
  - a. Metrics and User Surveys,
  - b. Financial Savings,
  - c. Operational/Readiness Improvements, etc.e.g. all web pages should download on a 64kbps line within 2 seconds.  
OR there should be an increase in savings by 0.10 dollar per transaction.
2. Effort: Estimate the time that team members will spend on the project.
3. Total Costs: An estimate of the effort that will be required to execute the project is required. Costs are divided into three types:
  - a. Capital Items are costs associated with the procurement of assets such as hardware and software.
  - b. Expense Items are costs associated with operating expenses, material, travel, training, supplies, books, copying, printing, etc.
  - c. Effort are costs associated with the total time team members work on a project based on an hourly rate for each skill set or the actual salary of the team members.
10. Class of Project: The Project Classification matrix needs to be used in order to determine the class of the project. When using the Classification matrix, the work effort; not the entire cost needs to be taken into account.
11. Assumptions: Project assumptions are circumstances and events that need to occur for the project to be successful but are outside the total control of the project team. Assumptions are made to fill knowledge gaps; they may later prove to be incorrect and can have a significant impact on the project. List only those assumptions that have a reasonable chance of occurring. If an assumption is invalidated at a later date, then the activities and estimates in the project plan should be adjusted accordingly.

Risks: Project risks are circumstances or events that exist outside of the control of the project team and will have an adverse impact on the project if they occur. (In other words, whereas an issue is a current problem that must be dealt with, a risk is a potential future problem that has not yet occurred.) All projects contain some risks. It

may not be possible to eliminate risks entirely but they can be anticipated and managed, thereby reducing the probability that they will occur. Risks that have a high probability of occurring and have a high negative impact should be listed.

**Obstacles/Constraints**

List any known constraints imposed by the environment or by management. Typical constraints may include fixed budget, limited resources, imposed interim and/or end dates, predetermined software systems and packages, and other predetermined solutions.

12. **Supporting Documents:** Include in this section copies of pertinent documents such as:
  - Business Case or Plan
  - University guidelines or policies applicable to this project
13. **Approval:** Use this section for approval signatures from project stakeholders.