



Change Management Policy

Introduction

Information technology infrastructure is critical to the effective operation of the University of Northern Colorado. The Information Technology Department strives to continually maintain and improve this vital resource. However, as our infrastructure has grown, it has become more complex. As our interdependencies – between systems, between people, and between people and systems – continue to grow, it is essential that we carefully manage changes to the infrastructure. Even the most well-intentioned change can cause unexpected hardship to technology users if the implications of the change are not mapped out in advance.

Purpose

The purpose of the Change Management Policy is to manage changes in a rational and predictable manner so that staff can plan accordingly. Changes require serious forethought, careful monitoring, and follow-up evaluation to reduce negative impact to the user community and to increase the value of our vital Information Technology infrastructure. The purpose of this policy is not to frustrate change or to question the rationale of changes. Rather, it is to make sure that changes have their intended impact while avoiding unintended consequences.

Scope

This policy covers all changes to hardware, software, or applications in the shared IT infrastructure of UNC. This includes modification, changes, or additions to our network services (LAN/WAN), server hardware and software, and support facilities (such as electricity) for within our IT infrastructure. Any change that might affect the IT infrastructure upon which UNC personnel rely to conduct normal business operations are within the scope of this policy.

Changes to the IT Infrastructure can be necessary for many reasons, ranging from the need to fix a hardware problem to the need to update software. Here is a non-exhaustive list of change sources:

- Periodic maintenance.
- User requests.
- Hardware and/or software upgrades.
- Acquisition of new hardware and/or software.
- Other changes or modifications to the infrastructure.
- Environmental changes (such as changes to the electrical system).
- Operations schedule changes.



IT Administrative Staff

IT Administrative Staff will receive all requests for change. Requests for changes must be made through the change request form. IT Administrative staff will have the following terms of reference.

1. They will meet once a week to review all requests for change with the requestors.
2. Based on detailed information provided by the requesting team member IT Administrative Staff with consultation from technical staff, will be responsible for mapping out the potential impact of the change of various stakeholders.
3. The requesting IT team member will be responsible for communicating with all stakeholders critical information about how a given change will impact their work.
4. They will establish the urgency and potential impact of a proposed change. High impact changes, for example, might require downtime outside of regular maintenance cycles.
5. For changes to critical hardware and software systems, the group will establish testing and approval criteria in advance of making the change to the IT infrastructure.
6. The group will maintain a change log that documents all requests for change, plans and scheduling for the change, and outcomes.

Change Management Process

The change management process will include the following steps. Each of these steps must be completed for every change.

1. **Requestor fills out change management form.** The form includes space for a detailed description of the proposed change, the systems involved, the business units impacted, and the location impacted. The requestor also makes an initial estimation of the urgency and potential risk of the change, how much implementing the change will cost, and how much downtime the change may require.
2. **Administrative Staff reviews and approves the change.** At its regular meeting Administrative Staff will review the Request for Change. The group will evaluate the requestor's proposal in light of their knowledge of UNC technologies, business processes, and interdependencies. They may adjust some of the estimates.
3. **Administrative Staff can send the request back to the requestor for further detail and study, if needed.** Reasons for sending a request back can include the following:
 - Inadequate planning.
 - Inadequate fall back plans (in case change fails).
 - The timing of the change will negatively impact a key business process, such as year-end accounting.
 - Adequate resources are not readily available for the project.
 - Staff is not available to make the change in the time specified.



4. **Administrative Staff assigns responsibility for making the change.** If the request is approved, Administrative Staff will assign responsibility for making the change to qualified personnel. They will establish specifications and testing requirements depending on the nature of the change.
5. **Administrative Staff will communicate with stakeholders.** Administrative Staff will make sure that all stakeholders are aware of the nature and potential impact of the proposed change. For changes requiring downtime outside of regular maintenance cycles the group will also get feedback from stakeholders on appropriate scheduling of downtime.
6. **Administrative Staff will track progress on the proposed changes and have final approval.** Personnel tasked with working on the change will report back to the group regarding progress on planning and testing. When the proposed change has been tested, and appropriate fallback has been planned in case of a problem, the group will approve the change. They will schedule the change – if it requires time outside of regular maintenance cycles – and will communicate with stakeholders.
7. **Administrative Staff will perform a follow-up on all changes.** At their regular change management meetings, Administrative Staff will perform post-mortems on all changes. Successful changes, as well as reasons why a change did not go through as planned, and lessons learned from the experience will be included in the change log.