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1. INTRODUCTION

Client service is critical to the success of the Information Technology Services (ITS) organization. ITS is committed to excellent client service and, in a continual effort to achieve this goal, an incident management (IM) process is employed. The IM process is a framework that provides standards of responsiveness to our clients and a consistent methodology for problem resolution.

This manual describes our IM model and overall process, as well as specific IM policies and their associated procedures.
2. ITS INCIDENT MANAGEMENT (IM) PROCESS

2.1 Definition

The ITS Incident Management (IM) process is the process by which incidents reported by ITS clients are effectively and efficiently received, recorded, processed and resolved by the ITS organization. The IM process begins with a client’s first contact with ITS staff and continues through incident resolution and closure. It encompasses standards for client communication throughout the process. ITS uses the service management system “Remedy Help Desk (Remedy)” as a tracking tool for incidents and knowledge-base development.

There are 5 phases of the IM process:

1. **Submission:** In this phase, the client submits requests for service via mechanisms which ITS provides. ITS will collect and process all requests according to established guidelines.

2. **Verification:** In the second phase, a Remedy Case is initiated and a determination made as to whether the request is an ITS issue (if not, the client is redirected).

3. **Definition:** After verifying that the request is within the ITS domain, an ITS staff completes the Definition phase by gathering and documenting all necessary information to start resolving the Case.

4. **Tracking:** The Tracking phase begins when the Case is “saved” (and a “Case #” generated) and continues until the incident is resolved. It includes all aspects of collecting additional data about the incident or request, conducting further research, and producing results and findings. One of the most important parts of this phase is Case Ownership, i.e., that once an incident is reported, there is always an assigned owner/Group and that that owner/Group is actively working on the problem.

5. **Closure:** The final phase comprises appropriate closure and follow-up with the client. The client should be asked to confirm that the incident is resolved to their satisfaction, after which the ITS staff responsible for the Case completes all final documentation.
2.2 Elements of IM

Definitions of some of the elements of the IM process are included in this section.

**Incident:** In the context of the ITS IM process, an *incident* is an inquiry, problem report or any other request for assistance, made by a member of the UNCG client community to one or more ITS staff members.

*Note:* An incident, as defined here, is *not* an “ITS Project” (see [http://it.uncg.edu/pmo/](http://it.uncg.edu/pmo/) for Project Management information). An incident may *trigger* an ITS Project. But once that happens, the incident would be considered resolved, referring to the new project in its resolution, and the PM process would proceed.

**Remedy Help Desk:** As of August 1, 2003, *all* initial requests for ITS services are processed through 6-TECH mechanisms (phone, email, etc.). Remedy Help Desk (Remedy) is the service management system used to record and track these support requests, provide solutions, build a knowledge-base of UNCG solutions, and generate reports of ITS support activity.

**Remedy “Case”:** In the request-tracking database in Remedy, each record containing the information about an incident is referred to as a *Case*. This Case is the vehicle by which an incident is tracked, assigned to the appropriate ITS resource, reported on, etc. Each Case has a sequential number assigned to it by Remedy and Cases are often referred to by their number, as in “Case #121067.” The terms “incident” and “Case” might be used interchangeably at times, but typically “incident” refers to the event (the problem, the request, or the inquiry itself) and “Case” refers to the Remedy database record.

**Client Relationship:** Maintaining strong client relationships goes hand-in-hand with providing solutions for our clients. For incidents where no quick resolution can be found, every opportunity should be taken to understand our clients concerns – not just what the current problem is. In addition, timely and consistent client contact while the incident is being resolved is of paramount importance (see 5.1 **Client Contact Standards**.) At all times, ITS staff members are to conduct themselves in a professional manner, communicate clearly and accurately, and treat our clients respectfully.

**Documentation:** In each step of the process, it is important that clear, accurate and complete documentation is performed. **Documentation** for an incident includes information that is input in Remedy, including all mandatory fields as well as Work Log entries and attachments associated with the Remedy Case for that incident. This information is critical for tracking issues and incidents and for developing a knowledge base of problems and solutions experienced by the ITS community (see complete documentation guidelines in 4.1 **Documentation**).
3. ITS IM STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP’S)

Standard operating procedures (SOP’s) for each of the five phases of our ITS IM process are defined in this section.

FLOW CHART OF THE 5 PHASES OF INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Phase 1 - Incident Submission

Phase 2 - Incident Verification

Phase 3 - Incident Definition

Phase 4 - Incident Tracking

Phase 5 - Incident Closure

- Confirm appropriate resolution with client
- Enter Solution Details
- Resolve Case
- Conduct any follow-up procedures per Group procedures
3.1 Phase 1 - Submission

In this phase, the client submits requests for service via mechanisms which ITS provides. ITS will collect and process all requests according to established guidelines.

3.2 Phase 2 - Verification

In this phase, a Remedy Case is initiated and a determination made as to whether the request is an ITS issue.

Steps:

1. Initiate a Case in Remedy, input required fields.
2. Determine if the request is within the domain of ITS.
3. If so, continue with Definition. If not, redirect client appropriately, and continue with Closure.

3.3 Phase 3 - Definition

After verifying that the request is within the ITS domain, an ITS staff completes the Definition phase by gathering and documenting all necessary information to start resolving the Case. This information is recorded in the Summary and Description fields of the Remedy Case. In addition to the Summary and Description, there are several other fields, some optional and some required, that must be captured in the Case record before the Definition phase is complete.

Details of specific steps can be found in the Remedy Training docs (web link), but an overview of the minimum fields required to create a Case follows.

Summary - A very brief statement summarizing service request.

Description – A full description of the service request.

Category/Type/Item – A set of fields serving as a 3-level categorization of the subject of the request.
**Priority** - The Priority field in Remedy is used to categorize Cases in terms of their criticality, expected response, and required client contact schedule. It is also ultimately used for reporting purposes – queries and reports can be generated using this parameter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remedy Priority Code</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - Urgent</td>
<td>• Critical service interruption impacting multiple buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A mission critical application is not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - High</td>
<td>• Two or more users are unable to perform critical business functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e.g. network problems isolated to a particular room or building,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>primary group-specific application not available)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Instructor station in lab not functioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Medium</td>
<td>• One user is unable to perform critical business functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e.g. workstation hardware or operating system problem).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Lab workstations are an exception to this rule. Instructor station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>problems fall under Priority 2 and individual lab workstations fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>under Priority 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Two or more users are experiencing a problem that does not impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>critical business functions (e.g. printer problems when another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>printer is available, problems with non-critical desktop applications)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - Low</td>
<td>• One user is experiencing a problem that does not impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>critical business functions (e.g. printer problems when another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>printer is available, problems with non-critical desktop applications)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Client inquiries such as “how-to” or application-specific support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• One lab workstation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Routine requests that have an associated pre-determined workflow (e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lab scheduling, project requests, documentation) is not functioning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Login** – NDS login name of the person making the service request

**Requester** – Name of person making the service request

*Note: Entering one of these 2 fields will cause the other to auto-populate.
3.4 Phase 4 - Tracking

The 4th phase, Tracking, begins when the Case is “saved” (and a “Case #” generated) and continues until the incident is resolved. It includes all aspects of collecting additional data about the incident/request, conducting further research, and producing results and findings. A flowchart of Phase 4 of the IM process is included below.

Steps:

1. After the incident is logged in as a Remedy Case and saved, work toward resolution of the request continues.
2. Determination is made whether Case needs to be transferred from Service Desk and/or Service Operations & Support Group. If “no”, then process is continued in Phase 5 – Closure.
3. If a Case does need to be transferred, it is assigned to the appropriate Group, following Assignment procedures (see 4.2 Policy: Help Desk Case and Task Assignment).
4. At the individual Group level, the Case is assigned to individuals, tracked, and processed according to the Group’s own processing procedures. These procedures may vary from Group to Group, as long as they comply with all IM Standards, such as “Case Acceptance Standards”, etc. (for a list of the IM Standards, see 5.0 ITS IM STANDARDS – COMPLIANCE).
5. During the duration of Phase 4, while the Case is being worked toward resolution, it is of the utmost importance that the client is contacted in a timely and regular way, consistent with the IM “Client Contact Standards” (5.1 Client Contact Standards).
6. Upon resolution of the incident, continue with Phase 5 – Closure.
3.5 Phase 5 - Closure

This final phase of the IM process comprises appropriate closure and follow-up with the client. Whenever possible, the client should be asked to confirm that the incident is resolved to their satisfaction, after which, the Case owner completes all final documentation. The steps below are the responsibility of the Case owner.

Steps:

1. Determine that incident has been resolved appropriately.

   Best practices of incident management call for the Case owner to confirm with the client that the incident is resolved to their satisfaction and that no further action is expected from ITS staff. Direct confirmation may be impractical in every case, however, such as email requests for specific information or unambiguous requests such as for email aliases. However, the attempt should be made and there is functionality within the Remedy application to confirm that a client contact has been attempted at Case resolution.

2. Attempt final client contact to confirm resolution – **REQUIRED FIELD**.

3. Add any further information in the Case to complete documentation of trouble-shooting and Case progress.

4. Enter **Solution Details** – **REQUIRED FIELD**.

   The final statement of how the problem was resolved should be entered here. As with all documentation included in the Remedy Case, the Solution Details should adhere to the **Documentation** guidelines.

5. Place Case in “Resolved” Status.

6. Conduct any follow-up procedures in place for your Group.

   - **DO open new Case for additional, un-related issues.** If a Case contains more than one un-related issue, it is appropriate to document the resolution of the issue that has been resolved, open a new Case with the further issues, cross-reference the Case #’s in the original and new Case, and resolve the original Case.
4. ITS IM POLICIES

Procedures and guidelines are detailed below for various components of the IM Process.

4.1 Documentation

All information that is recorded in a Remedy Case, including Description, Work Log entries, and Solution Details, is considered “documentation” for the incident and should follow the guidelines below:

**Concise**  As brief as possible while including all information necessary to describe situation

**Clear**    No ambiguity; no cryptic explanations or nonstandard shorthand or abbreviations; correct spelling and grammar.

**Complete** Include problem description and detailed steps taken as to resolution – will facilitate ability to resolve future similar problems

**Correct**  Accuracy is critical

**Clean**    Language is nonjudgmental and professional – Call information should be able to be read by either the original client or anyone else in the UNCG client community without causing controversy.

Ideally, a person with no prior knowledge of a situation should be able to understand the problem and perform its solution simply by reading the Description and Solution Details. These fields must clearly and quickly convey relevant information in a professional manner. "Professional" means that the writing would not be an issue if it were read in a meeting with the client, the author and/or ITS management. Attention must be paid to spelling, grammar, accuracy and tone.

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**GOALS FOR CASE DOCUMENTATION**

- Documentation should be **concise, clear, complete, correct, clean**.
- Anyone viewing the Case should be able to discern:
  - what the problem is,
  - what the current status is,
  - what is being done to resolve it,
  - who has ownership,
  - and ultimately what the exact resolution was.
4.2 Policy: Help Desk Case and Task Assignment

A combination of Cases and Tasks will be used for Remedy service requests. The following policies are in place for how “Individual” and “Group” assignments for Cases and Tasks will be made.

- Assignment to “Individual”: Staff can assign Case to another member of their Group, but not to a member of another Group. (Each Group can determine procedures for assigning tickets within their Group.)
- Assignment to “Group”: Staff can assign Case to their own Group (according to internal Group procedures), but not to any other Group, unless they are the Submitter (creator) of the Case.*
- If a Case requires work to be done by multiple Groups, the Case will remain assigned to the primary group and Tasks will be assigned from that Case to any other Group working the issue.
- Mis-assigned Cases will be handled via the Request Reassignment function; SOS management will be responsible for approval and execution of the reassignment request for mis-assigned Cases.

Procedures for these policies will vary between SOS groups (Service Desk, Service Operations, and EIM) and non-SOS groups.

4.2.1 Procedures: non-SOS Groups, Assignment while creating Case

Scenario 1 – You create and submit a Case that another member of your Group will handle.

1. Create and save the Case. System will assign the Case to you and your Group.
2. Change Individual assignment to another Group staff and Save. Case will be reassigned to that staff.

Scenario 2 - You create and submit a Case that you believe should be handled by Group “X” (not your Group).

1. Create and save the Case. System will assign the Case to you and your Group.
2. Change Group assignment. Case will be assigned to that Group.

*This is the only time a non-SOS staff can assign a Case to another Group.*

4.2.2 Procedures: non-SOS Groups, Assignment while working Case/Task

Scenario 1 - You have been assigned a Case by your Group manager (or other member of Group, as dictated by internal Group procedures). You complete
some work on the Case and, at some point, determine that another Group (Group “X”) needs to work on it. You remain the Case “assignee” and create a Task for the next Group.

1. Create a Task and assign it to Group “X”. Include the details of the work that you are requesting.
2. Group “X” manager (or other Group staff, as permitted by internal Group procedures) assigns Task to Group individual.
3. Task assignee completes work and closes Task.
4. Complete any other work required to complete the Case, enter the resolution and close the Case.

Scenario 2 (“Misrouted Cases”) - You have been assigned a Case by your Group manager (or other member of Group, as dictated by internal Group procedures). You immediately determine that the Case should have been initially assigned to another Group. The Case will be flagged as “mis-assigned” and directed to TSC for remediation.

1. Select Request Reassignment.
2. Complete prompts to indicate to which Group you believe the Case should have been assigned and why you believe the Case was mis-assigned.
3. SOS management will be notified about the mis-assigned Case, verify the need for reassignment, and assign the Case appropriately. NOTE: Until SOS management assigns Case to someone else, the Case is still assigned to you.

4.2.3 Procedures: SOS Groups, Assignment while creating Case

Scenario 1 – You create and submit a Case that another member of your Group will handle.

1. Create and save the Case. System will assign the Case to you and your Group.
2. Change Individual assignment to other Group staff and Save. Case will be reassigned to that staff.

Scenario 2 – You create and submit a Case that you believe should be handled by non-SOS Group.

1. Create and save the Case. System will assign the Case to you and your Group.
2. Change Group assignment. Case will be assigned to that Group.
   Or
1. As creating Case, choose appropriate Group for assignment and Save.
4.2.4 Procedures: SOS Groups, Assignment while working Case/Task

Scenario 1 – You have been assigned a Case by your Group manager (or other member of Group, as dictated by internal Group procedures). You complete some work on the Case and, at some point, determine that another Group (Group “X”) needs to work on it. You remain the Case “assignee” and create a Task for the next Group.

1. Create a Task and assign it to Group “X”. Include the details of the work that you are requesting.
2. Group "X" manager (or other Group staff, as permitted by internal Group procedures) assigns Task to Group individual.
3. Task assignee completes work and closes Task.
4. Complete any other work required to complete the Case, enter the resolution and close the Case.
5.0 ITS IM STANDARDS - COMPLIANCE

This section defines each set of IM Standards which are currently in effect. Details of determining whether or not the processing of a service request is in compliance with these standards and what monitoring steps are taken in association with these standards are also included.

Compliance to these standards is expected on all ITS service requests.

5.1 Client Contact Standards

Once an incident has been logged into Remedy and reached the Tracking phase of the IM process, if it is not resolved during the initial client contact, the **Client Contact Standards** apply to all open Cases. The required frequency of contact depends on the Priority level of the Case as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - Urgent</td>
<td>SOS updates impacted clients or client point-of-contact every 2 hours until problem is resolved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - High</td>
<td>SOS updates impacted clients or client point-of-contact every 4 hours until the problem is resolved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Medium</td>
<td>Assigned owner/Group updates client with status every 2 days until resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - Low</td>
<td>Assigned owner/Group updates client with status every 3 days until resolution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On **all** Priority Cases, when standard not met, notifications are sent every 30 minutes pending Client Contact work log entry by Assignee or member of Assignee’s Group.

1\(^{st}\) round of notifications to: Assignee and Group Manager Assignee and Group Manager

2\(^{nd}\) (and continuing) round of notifications to: Assignee, Group Mgr, QA group (email list)
5.2 Case Acceptance Standards

Once an incident has been logged into Remedy and reached the Tracking phase of the IM process, if it is not resolved during the initial client contact, the **Case Acceptance Standards** apply to all open Cases.

“Acceptance” is indicated in the Remedy Case by the Assigned To staff (or any member of that staff’s Group) setting the Status to “Work in Progress”. The Case Acceptance Standard looks at the time elapsed from the Case being assigned to a new Group to the time it is set to “Work in Progress.” The elapsed time permitted depends on the Priority level of the Case as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - Urgent</td>
<td>Case is accepted (set to “Work in Progress”) by Assigned to Staff (or Group member) within 15 minutes of assignment. If Case is not accepted within that timeframe, notifications are sent to Group Manager every 15 minutes until it is accepted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - High</td>
<td>Case is accepted (set to “Work in Progress”) by Assigned to Staff (or Group member) within 30 minutes of assignment. If Case is not accepted within that timeframe, notifications are sent to Group Manager every 30 minutes until it is accepted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Medium</td>
<td>Case is accepted (set to “Work in Progress”) by Assigned to Staff (or Group member) within 4 hours of assignment. If Case is not accepted within that timeframe, notifications are sent to Group Manager every 60 minutes until it is accepted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - Low</td>
<td>Case is accepted (set to “Work in Progress”) by Assigned to Staff (or Group member) within 8 hours of assignment. If Case is not accepted within that timeframe, notifications are sent to Group Manager every 60 minutes until it is accepted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3 Case Update Frequency Standards

Once an incident has been logged into Remedy and reached the Tracking phase of the IM process, if it is not resolved during the initial client contact, the **Case Update Frequency Standards** apply to all open Cases.

“**Case Update**” is indicated in the Remedy Case by the addition of a Work Log entry. This entry can be made by either the Assigned To staff or any member of that staff’s Group. The required frequency depends on the Priority level of the Case as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - Urgent</td>
<td>Work log is updated within 60 minutes of Case creation and every 60 minutes thereafter until resolution. If standard not met, notifications are sent every 60 minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - High</td>
<td>Work log is updated within 4 hrs of Case creation and every 4 hours thereafter until resolution. If standard not met, notifications are sent every 4 hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Medium</td>
<td>Work log is updated within 2 days of Case creation and every 2 days thereafter until resolution. If standard not met, notifications are sent once every business day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - Low</td>
<td>Work log is updated within 3 days of Case creation and every 3 days thereafter until resolution. If standard not met, notifications are sent once every business day.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On all Priority Cases, when standard not met, notifications are sent on the schedule specified above, in 2 rounds of notifications:

1\textsuperscript{st} round of notifications to: Assignee and Group Manager
2\textsuperscript{nd} (and continuing) round of notifications to: Assignee, Group Mgr, QA group (email list)