

Charter for the IT Investment Review Sub-Committee (IRSC)

Revised: December 10, 2021

Purpose

The IT Investment Review Sub-Committee (IRSC) was established as a result of the implementation of the Investment Review and Prioritization Framework process. This process will be used across the University to centralize intake requests for new projects, ensure the efficient allocation of Mason resources, and prioritize new investments, projects, and/or initiatives. This central, durable, and scalable framework will be used to manage the evolution of Mason's IT service portfolio, building on the ITGG/PPMO experiences and lessons learned, and will help establish a consistent definition of Mason technology initiatives and methodology for reviewing those technology initiatives in order to explicitly state/balance priorities, commit financial and human resources, and effectively plan and implement these initiatives.

The IRSC holds a critical role within this process, acting as the main governing body responsible for overseeing all facets of the process and making strategic decisions when evaluating proposed projects, investments, and/or initiatives. The IRSC shall determine the appropriate resource allocation and investment strategies for the University's proposed projects, investments, and initiatives, and make recommendations for prioritization for the Ways & Means Committee. The IRSC shall assess current organizational investments' quality to ensure that ITS' limited resources for technology are being used effectively and efficiently. In addition, the IRSC shall perform reviews of new investment requests and assess. The IRSC will then consider relevant project information to rank the project requests in a priority order to be presented to and approved by the Ways & Means Committee, thereby guiding ITS in which business cases will be prioritized. The IRSC will be informed of ITS projects that are mandated by state or federal requirements or those that are needed for infrastructure maintenance or upgrades. These types of projects will not be considered in the IRSC's prioritization but will be recognized when deciding on the use of ITS resources.

The IRSC will provide the Ways & Means Committee with a cross-university perspective on projects that should be prioritized so that they may make informed, non-biased decisions when determining funding for the year. The IRSC will work under the Ways & Means committee and collaboratively with other University teams and leadership to ensure investment requests are thoroughly assessed, are consistent with strategic direction, and are not duplicative of any existing resources or capabilities.

Membership

To ensure the IRSC is representative of all interests of the University, the Committee shall have cross-representation from the following areas: Academic, Research, Business, and Technology.

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Committee membership will require an initial commitment of three (3) years from the individuals appointed to represent their respective area of the University. Turnover should be staggered amongst members to maintain the fluidity of IRSC functions and ease the transitions of new members.

The IRSC shall be composed of no more than 7 individuals from the following representative areas of the University:

Representative Area	Appointer	# of Appointees	Role
Faculty Senate	Chair of the Faculty Senate	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Represent the interests of the faculty
Provost	Provost	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appointees shall be selected from 2 different interest areas such as academic unit, academic administration, and student/university life
Vice President of Research Office	Vice President of Research and the Provost	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Represent the interests of research
Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance	Senior Vice President	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Represent the interests of business and administration
Information Technology Services	Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Represent the interests of information technology and the overall enterprise architecture

In addition, **one (1)** current member of the IRSC shall be designated to serve as the **Chair** of the Committee. The responsibilities of the Chair of the IRSC are laid out in the next section.

Appointed individuals shall be knowledgeable and able to demonstrate administrative awareness of their area of the University. Though the IRSC, members are selected from certain university areas, but all members should ultimately aim to represent the University as a whole. To avoid any conflict of interest and maintain impartiality, appointed IRSC individuals may not concurrently hold positions on the Ways & Means Committee or any executive leadership positions.

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Roles and Responsibilities of the IRSC Members

In addition to the objectives described in the Purpose, the IRSC shall serve as the main governing body within the Investment Review and Prioritization Framework process, under the Ways & Means Committee. As stated in the Purpose, the IRSC shall evaluate proposed IT projects and investments by assessing costs, interoperability with existing technology, impact to institutional operations, and overall university goals and needs. The IRSC shall prioritize projects in accordance with organizational strategy by taking into consideration a project's impact, effort, and levels of risk regarding estimated time frames and budgets. The IRSC shall partner with other university teams and leaders to ensure investment requests are thoroughly assessed. Appointments to the Committee shall be taken seriously and regarded with utmost importance.

IRSC members are expected to:

- Become involved with decision-making around the selection and decision-making as it relates to IT projects
- Make decisions and recommendations based on the needs of the University in its entirety
- See other perspectives and understand the needs of other units
- Advocate for the committee's work to their respective area of representation and the University
- Attend all meetings and complete all tasks in a timely manner
- Have the authority to commit their unit's resources, as appropriate

Responsibilities of individual IRSC members include:

- Attending scheduled IRSC meetings and actively participating in discussions
 - If unable to attend a required meeting following initial commitment, that individual is responsible for coordinating with the appointer from their area to determine a course of action and/or designate a replacement
 - Members are responsible for communicating any scheduling conflicts to the rest of the Committee and PPMO team as soon as possible
- Reviewing submitted business cases and packets compiled by the PPMO team in a timely manner
- Setting forth requests to the PPMO for additional information for submitted projects as needed prior to meetings and/or survey completion
- Completing individual prioritization surveys by the identified deadlines
- Developing a final project prioritization recommendation with other IRSC members to be considered and approved by the Ways & Means Committee

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- Ensuring that communications between, to, and from the IRSC are meaningful, accurate, and ongoing
 - The IRSC should be able to communicate their decisions to executives, leaders, and other stakeholders and project teams clearly and openly
- Ensuring the progress of prioritized investments, initiatives, and projects
 - The IRSC shall, when needed, help to resolve issues that impede project progress
- Assessing the effectiveness of the Investment Review and Prioritization Framework process on a continuous basis and making any recommendations for a future prioritization structure
- Promoting transparency of IRSC initiatives by communicating the work of the Committee and the Investment Review and Prioritization Framework process to Mason community members
- Serving with the best interests of the whole University in mind

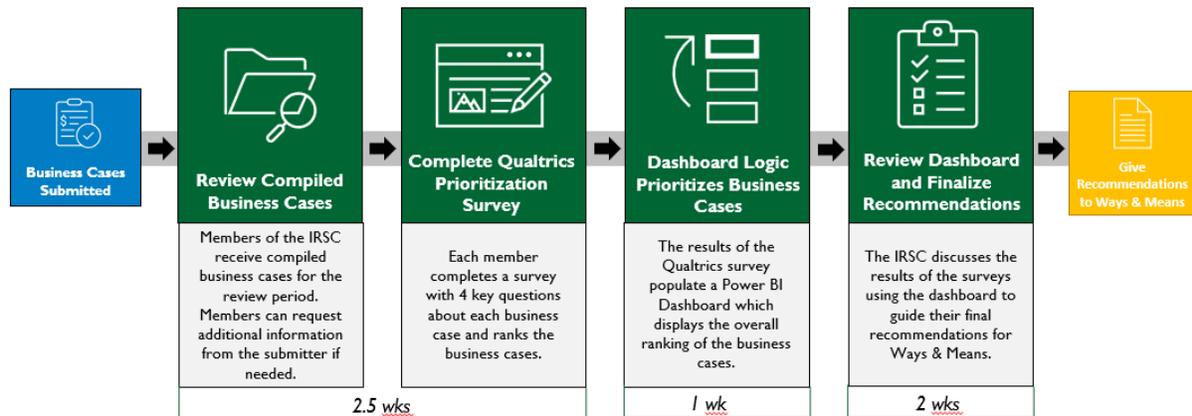


Figure 1 – Breakdown of the Prioritization Process

The **Chair** of the IRSC shall be responsible for coordinating with the PPMO team regarding any needs, questions, concerns, or scheduling conflicts of the committee. This designated member shall also be responsible for communicating regularly with the Ways & Means Committee by providing updates as needed and presenting the final IRSC prioritization recommendations. The designated member shall work in conjunction with the PPMO to address any questions or needs of the Ways & Means Committee regarding the Investment Review and Prioritization Framework process.

IRSC Meeting Cadence and Types of Discussions

The Investment Review and Prioritization Framework process consists of two cycles within an academic year. There are three critical meetings that all IRSC members are required to attend within each cycle, along with one status meeting, one recap meeting, and one flex meeting in

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each cycle. Additional meetings may be called at the discretion of the Committee members. IRSC meetings should be meaningful and engaging, and all appointed committee members are required to actively participate.

1. Kick-Off Meeting

In the first IRSC meeting of each review and prioritization phase, members shall be presented with an overview of all projects submitted for the current cycle. The PPMO team shall send individual IRSC members all meeting materials at least five (5) days in advance of the first scheduled committee meeting. Meeting materials include submitted business cases and review packets, additional background information, and supplementary pre-work.

Standard IRSC meeting agendas for the Review Cycle Kick-Off meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of submitted business cases and packets prepared by the PPMO team<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Requestors/project representatives may be in attendance to provide the overview of the submitted business case and answer any questions• Review of roles and responsibilities of IRSC members (in the event of newly appointed members)• Discussion and confirmation of member availabilities and the second meeting date.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Any known conflicts (PTO, holidays, etc.) should be presented to avoid impacts to the timeline• Review of the status of previously prioritized projects and confirmation of member availabilities and the second meeting date.

2. Review / Presentation Meeting

In the second meeting of each review cycle, IRSC members will gather to review the submitted business cases and discuss any need for additional background on certain requests/business cases. In addition, requestors may be invited to provide a presentation on their submitted business case and answer any questions that IRSC members may have.

3. Recommendation Finalization Meeting

In the third meeting of each cycle, IRSC members shall review the final prioritization order of the projects as set by the PPMO team based on the prioritization surveys submitted by each individual IRSC member. Prioritization surveys shall be submitted by the individual IRSC members to the PPMO team by noon five (5) days prior to the meeting so that results may be consolidated and prepared for this meeting.

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Standard IRSC meeting agendas for the Recommendation Finalization meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the final prioritized list of projects submitted in the current cycle and discuss of any necessary changes to the order prior to Ways & Means submission • Examination of the existing prioritized list of projects and discussion of where new projects from the current cycle will fall in the overall prioritized list • Discussion of any priority disagreements amongst IRSC members • Consideration of the re-ordering of projects based on the strategic goals and university needs • Review of the list of projects that may not yet be ready for prioritization and need to be returned to the submitter for additional information • Discussion of any projects that may need to be deferred to a later cycle

4. Recap (Post-Ways & Means Meeting)

In these meetings, the final prioritized list that was sent to the Ways and Means for approval will be reviewed as well as any feedback from the Ways and Means. Up to the discretion of the IRSC, this meeting may also be substituted by written report.

In addition, the PPMO team shall present an update on the status of requests that were recently prioritized, as well as statuses of requests and projects that were prioritized in a previous cycle. The project portfolio should be examined as a whole.

5. Flexible Agenda

These off-cycle meetings will serve as a flex meeting – should the IRSC or PPMO have a specific agenda or topic for discussion, then this meeting time will serve as a placeholder.

6. Holidays / Breaks

During off-cycle holiday months (i.e. December), the IRSC may choose to not hold a meeting should there be no topics for discussion. In addition, breaks may be given in the off-cycle months leading up to the start of the academic year (i.e. August).



Figure 2: Planned Annual Cycle – based upon budget cycle timeline

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Other Supporting Groups

While the IRSC will serve as the main governance group responsible within the Investment Review and Prioritization Framework process, other Mason governing groups/individuals will inform and assist the IRSC throughout the process. IRSC members may consult with members of these groups when needed, however these groups shall not be formal IRSC meeting participants and should only share their institutional knowledge with committee members as necessary.

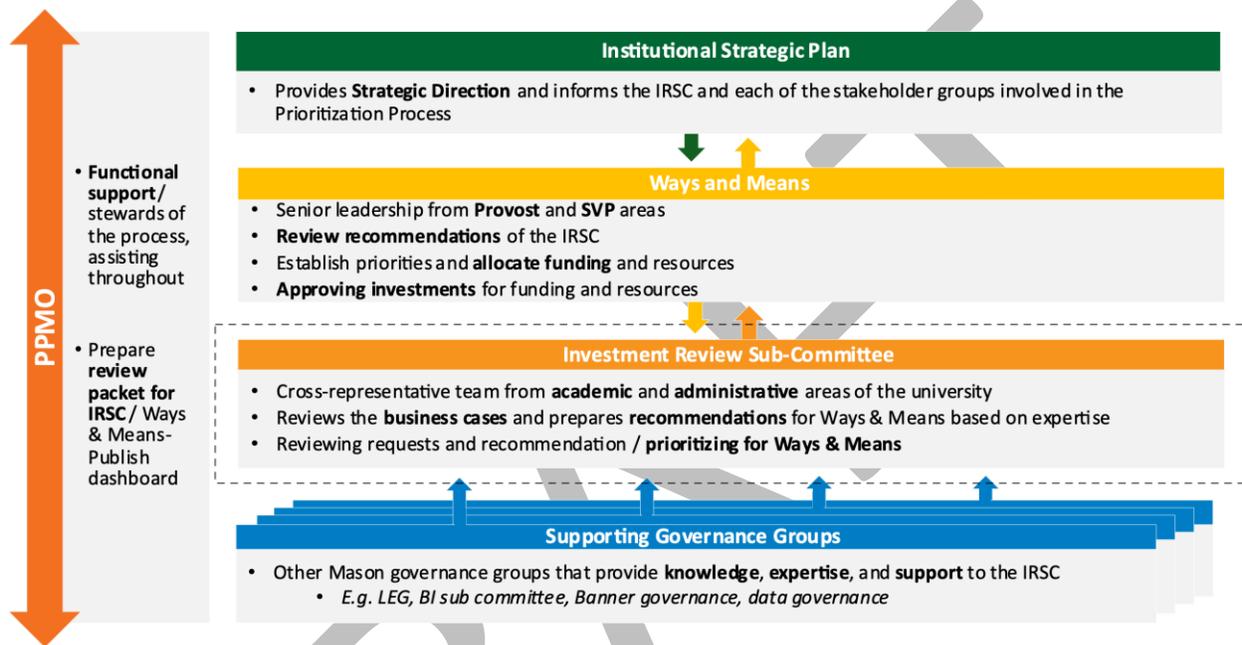


Figure 3 – Governance Structure

Institutional Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan provides the foundational direction and informs the organization through the establishment of university-wide goals, including long-term strategic plan and annual goals (e.g., 6-year plan under development, annual President’s goals). While created by and for executive leadership, it guides their work through the Ways & Means committee. IRSC members, and other stakeholder groups involved in the process as needed leverage these details and ensure that projects selected for prioritization are consistent with the University’s strategic plan and goals.

Ways & Means Committee

The responsibilities of the Ways & Means committee within the Investment Review and Prioritization Framework process are to review the recommendations of the IRSC, establish priorities, and allocate and approve funding and resources. The Ways & Means committee members shall ensure that projects recommended by the IRSC for prioritization are consistent

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with the University's strategic plan and goals. The Ways & Means committee, consisting of senior leadership from Provost and Senior Vice President areas, shall oversee and provide guidance to the IRSC when needed.

Portfolio and Project Management Office

The Portfolio and Project Management Office (PPMO) team shall act as stewards of the Investment Review and Prioritization Framework process. Responsibilities include providing functional and logistical support, assisting throughout each stage of the process, aggregating business cases and requestor-submitted documents, and publishing reporting dashboards. Most importantly, the PPMO team shall be responsible for the preparation of the project request review packet, inclusive of the business case, to be submitted to the IRSC and/or the Ways and Means committee for consideration and prioritization. The PPMO team shall work directly with the requestor to provide guidance and assistance in completing the business case. The PPMO team shall verify that submitted projects are consistent with the University's strategic plan and are described with enough detail for the IRSC to understand the project's goals, timelines, resource needs and constraints, and deliverables.

Other responsibilities include:

- Preparing IRSC meeting materials prior to the meeting and participating in discussions related to the requests as needed
- Scheduling IRSC meetings and accommodating the needs of the IRSC and Ways & Means committee
- Providing additional background on business cases and supporting the discussions related to specific requests under review
 - Should additional information from the submitter be needed, the PPMO team is responsible for gathering this for the IRSC
- Compiling prioritization surveys submitted by each individual IRSC member and determining the final prioritization order for projects submitted in the current cycle for IRSC review
- Maintaining the ITS Project Portfolio, current project inventory, and technical tools (dashboards, etc.) used within the prioritization process
- Ensuring data and records of projects are up to date
- Providing additional information on current projects, planned projects in the queue, and bandwidth of teams to work on new projects as prioritized by the IRSC
- Preparing briefings for the relevant IRSC member to present to the Ways & Means committee

Other Supporting Governance Groups

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These groups shall not have a stake or formal vote in the Investment Review and Prioritization Framework process, and shall only serve to provide knowledge, expertise, guidance, and/or support to the IRSC as needed. Examples of supporting governance bodies include: Banner Governance, Data Governance, Research Computing, Academic Technology Advisory Council, Faculty Senate Technology Committee, and others.

Critical Success Factors

The following factors must remain in place so that the IRSC may perform its duties and be successful:

- Adequate empowerment and oversight by Executive Leadership
- Well-established processes and procedures
- Members' ability to prioritize the full interests of Mason rather the interests of their own department/area
- Constant and open communication between the governance groups and members involved
- Diverse representation from various interests of the University
- Commitment of IRSC members to attend meetings and follow through promptly with any action items assigned
- Commitment from all governing groups involved in the process to uphold and perform their assigned roles and responsibilities
- Well-thought out and complete business cases submitted by requestors
- Thoughtful and discreet consideration by IRSC members when prioritizing projects

Revision History

Version	Date	Approval	Notes
1.0	12/10/2021		Initial Draft