

Project Business Case

[Insert Project Name]

# <Project Name> Business Case

***Purpose of Project Business Case***

*The purpose of the project business case is to clearly outline the business benefits and strategic alignment of the proposed project, in order to justify the expenditures (budget and people/time) and seek approval to proceed. A successful project business case should address a specific business need, assess all alternatives to lead towards a strong recommendation, describe what success would be and how it would be measured, anticipate concerns and questions from senior leadership and those who are asked to provide resources, and persuade the decision maker to take the recommended action. The project business case is part of the Project Management Office’s* [*project intake process*](https://uwaterloo.ca/ist-project-management-office/project-intake)*.*

*A project business case is required as part of the project intake process when a project is medium or large in size, with moderate or substantial complexity, according to the* [*project complexity chart*](https://uwaterloo.ca/vpaf-project-management-office/methodologies/project-sizing-and-complexity)*. Projects of this nature may include risks that need to be monitored and mitigated, a resource commitment (expenses and people time) of at least $250,000, a significant change in processes or how resources are used, a solution that requires collaboration and commitment across various business units/departments, and/or justification for a chosen solution over various alternatives.*

***Project Business Case Participants and Approvers***

*Input into the project business case may come from many different stakeholders including, but not limited to senior leadership, subject matter experts within business unit(s), a potential Sponsor or Project Manager for the project, and other stakeholders (such as staff, students, faculty).*

*The author is typically someone who is acting within a* [*business analyst*](https://uwaterloo.ca/vpaf-project-management-office/methodologies/roles-and-responsibilities/business-analyst) *role for the completion of the business case.*

*The approver of the project business case should be the* [*customer(s)*](https://uwaterloo.ca/vpaf-project-management-office/methodologies/roles-and-responsibilities/customer)*.*

***Instructions***

1. *Conduct appropriate analysis to determine the problem or opportunity this business case addresses, and an assessment of the possible alternatives. Tools and techniques that can be used may include interviews, SWOT analysis, root cause analysis, gap analysis, and decision matrixes. Sources of information for the business case may include existing departmental documentation that pre-dates the submission of the project intake request.*
2. *Create the project business case with input from applicable participants (stakeholders) by filling out the sections in the template. The green italic text contains instructions for filling out the template and can be removed for the final version of the document.*
3. *Obtain appropriate approvals for business case to indicate completeness of document and agreement by participants for content.*
4. *Scan the signed business case and upload to the* [*PMO's intake website*](https://uwaterloo.atlassian.net/servicedesk/customer/portal/27/group/100/create/515)*, along with the project intake form.*

***Next Steps***

*Once the project business case and project intake form have been submitted, the project requestor will be contacted to schedule an intake meeting with relevant stakeholders. The participants of the intake meeting, along with relevant IT governance bodies will determine if the proposed project can be undertaken by the PMO and provide the final approval on the proposed project.*

*Once approval is obtained for the project to be managed by the PMO,* *the* [*project charter*](https://uwaterloo.ca/vpaf-project-management-office/methodologies/project-management/initiation/project-charter) *can be drafted.*

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# Executive Summary

*The Executive Summary provides an overview of the business need and the proposed project to address that need. This section should provide an overview/summary of the details included in the rest of the document. An executive summary should provide a brief description of the business need, the anticipated outcomes, the recommendation, and cost.*

[Insert Executive Summary]

# Purpose

*Briefly describe the purpose of this document, including the anticipated audience and approver(s).*

[Insert Purpose]

# Methodology

*Describe the methodology used to do the research, root/cause analysis, etc. This section illustrates that the participants have done their due diligence before approaching leadership for approval to proceed.*

[Insert Methodology]

# Assumptions

*Describe any assumptions that are specific to the business case. If possible, describe any assessments done to validate these assumptions and/or any impacts of inaccurate assumption(s).*

[Insert Assumptions]

# Business Need

## Problem/Opportunity Description

*This section describes the business problem/opportunity that this project would address, which may be process, technology, or product/service oriented. No discussion related to a solution should be included within the problem/opportunity statement.*

*This should also briefly describe the current state and circumstances/business drivers leading to this business case.*

[Insert Problem/Opportunity Description]

## Impact of Problem/Opportunity

*This section describes who the problem/opportunity affects (the stakeholders), and what the impacts to those stakeholders are. This could be documented as a chart listing stakeholders in one column, and impact in the second column.*

[Insert Impact of Problem/Opportunity]

## Benefits

*This section lists potential benefits of a successful solution in addressing this business need (problem/opportunity).*

[Insert Impact of Problem/Opportunity]

# Alternatives Analysis

*A summary of alternatives considered should be included in this section (one of which is always the status quo or doing nothing). The reasons for not selecting the alternatives should also be included at a high level. This can often be done with a chart listing Alternatives and reasons for not selecting the alternative, or pros/cons.*

*Supporting documentation or diagrams can be included or referred to within an Appendix.*

[Insert Alternatives Analysis]

# Recommendation

## Project Description

*Describe what the project will consist of with a general description of how it will be executed and the purpose of it.*

[Insert Project Description]

## Goals and Objectives

*Describe how the business need is supported by the project and how the project will address it by outlining the project’s goals and objectives. This can be done with a chart listing Business Goal/Objective and Description.*

[Insert Goals and Objectives]

## Project Objectives

*Describe the measures that could be used to gauge the project’s performance and outcomes as they relate to key resources, processes or services. This can be done with a chart listing key Resource/Process/Service and Performance Measure. These measures should outline how it will be determined that the project has successfully met the business needs.*

[Insert Project Objectives]

## Organizational Impact

*This section describes how the proposed project will modify or affect the organizational processes, resources, tools, hardware and/or software.*

[Insert Organizational Impact]

## Constraints

*Describe any constraints for the proposed project and/or this project business case.*

[Insert Project Assumptions and Constraints]

# Cost Benefit Analysis

*The purpose of this section is to clearly show the costs of the project and compare them with the benefits to determine if the project is worth pursuing. This is often the most important section of a business case. Quantify the financial benefits of the project as much as possible. This is usually done in the form of a cost benefit analysis chart, although it is sometimes illustrated differently such as a payback period chart.*

*The costs must reflect “full costs” for the hardware, software, training, marketing, communications, contracts/procurements, resource time, consulting, etc. These costs should be broken down by each deliverable included in the business case. The costs should reflect the total cost of ownership.*

[Insert Cost Benefit Analysis]

# Strategic Alignment

*This section explains how the proposed project aligns with the priorities and strategies of the Office of the Vice-President Administration and Finance. The PMO helps align projects to these priorities and strategic objectives. Please email* vpaf-pmo@lists.uwaterloo.ca *for assistance.*

 [Insert Strategic Alignment]

# Key Issues and Risks

*Describe known issues and risks that have the potential to affect the outcome of the recommended project and describe how these risks have been measured/quantified and any mitigations that are or can be put into place.*

[Insert Key Issues and Risks]

# Acknowledgements

*Describe the roles of the participants involved in providing content for or contributing to the development of the business case. This can be captured in a chart listing Role, Description (what the role did towards the development of the business case) and Name/Title.*

[Insert Project Partners]

# Approvals

Approval by the people listed below indicates an understanding of the purpose and content of this document and an agreement of the business need and proposed project outlined. This approval indicates an acknowledgement to proceed to the next step of the PMO’s project intake process.

Approved By: print name, title here]

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Approved By: print name, title here]

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# Revision History

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Change Made By | Date Change Made | Details of Change | Change Reviewed/ Approved by | Date change reviewed/ approved |
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