

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES  
OUACHITA TECHNICAL COLLEGE**

**SUBJECT AREA: Information Technology**  
**POLICY/PROCEDURE: IT Support Requests**  
**DATE: 28 November 2006**  
**REVISION(S):**

**NUMBER: 6.08**

**Purpose**

In order to ensure that your requests are handled as efficiently and effectively as possible, the OTC Information Technology Department outlines in this policy its technical support process, request submission mechanisms, definitions for determining the priority of a request with respect to the severity of its actual or potential impact, and target service levels for acknowledgement, assessment, and resolution/mitigation of requests.

**OTC's Technical Support Process**

When a support request is submitted it enters the incoming request queue of OTC's Helpdesk Management and Support System for review and prioritization. All support requests are given a unique ticket number which the IT department and the reporter use in referencing, tracking, and managing the request.

The IT department business hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. excluding College holidays. Technical support is available for evening classes until 8:00 p.m. when classes are in session. For purposes of determining response time with regard to target service levels, requests received outside of business days are treated as if they were received the next business day. Although you may receive a response from an IT staff member outside of defined business days and hours, this has no bearing on our meeting target service levels.

During business hours, the IT Director is on call as the Duty Officer. The Duty Officer is responsible for reviewing support requests, categorizing requests, determining their severity, and assigning tickets to the most appropriate functional person/team.

The category in which a request falls determines the mechanism used for determining severity and the service levels to be targeted. As such, OTC has defined the following support categories:

- **Desktop & Infrastructure Requests:** Desktop and infrastructure support encompasses issues having to do with client workstations, desktop application software, network file storage, application servers, enterprise backups, remote access solutions, information technology procurement functions, business processes dependent upon information technology, and IP telephony.
- **Web Design & Online Communication Requests.**

The priority of a support request is based upon its severity and impact to an individual, a functional unit, or the organization. Priority levels help to determine which requests require more immediate attention and assist in providing the best possible service as quickly as possible.

For each level of severity within a request category, Ouachita Technical College Information Technology (OTCIT) has identified target service levels for the acknowledgement, assessment, and resolution/mitigation of requests.

- Acknowledgement is defined as the communication by support personnel receiving assignment of a support issue to the reporter of the issue that they have begun the process of assessing the support request.
- Assessment consists of researching and understanding the scope of an issue, determining the issues potential or actual impact, and determining how best to mitigate or resolve the issue. Upon completion of assessment, determinations are communicated to the client.
- Wherever possible, OTCIT attempts to correct the problem so as to bring about a resolution. However, it is recognized that not all problems can be corrected fully and partial solutions which moderate or alleviate a condition may sometimes provide more timely relief until such time as a more comprehensive solution can be implemented.

Target service levels are affected by prior commitments, volume of requests within a given period, availability of staff and materiel resources, the severity of requests received in parallel, coordination of external entities, and scheduling difficulties.

All support requests are maintained within a dynamic priority queue and are serviced in order of the priority assigned to them. This means that at any given moment, a higher priority request may displace a lower priority request. Reasonable attempts are made to achieve target service levels and communicate changes of schedule or circumstance to clients awaiting service.

As with any troubleshooting process, accurate and timely resolution depends on accurate and timely information. When submitting a support request:

- Provide a detailed problem description. Attach a screen shot of any error message to request if applicable.
- Communicate the nature and severity of an issue so it is clearly understood by those reviewing and assessing the request.
- Observe appropriate request submission interfaces for the submission of support requests.

The above considerations assist us in assessing, prioritizing, and routing requests to the most appropriate team members so as to service your requests and provide solutions expeditiously.

If you feel that a support request's priority needs to be escalated, contact the staff member to which the support request has been assigned.

Support requests are typically closed when the reporter confirms a resolution has been achieved or if there is no response to our attempts to contact the reporter of the support request. We may also close support requests if we cannot resolve an issue in the immediate or distant future.

### **Request Submission Interfaces**

#### **Web**

OTC's helpdesk management and support system offers the most direct means of filing a support request. Because of its directness, this is the preferred interface for the submission of requests. Additionally, outside of normal business hours, this is the best mechanism for alerting the IT staff to critical or other issues.

If you have not requested a user name and password for the helpdesk software, you are encouraged to do so by directing your browser to <http://helpdesk.otcweb.edu>. By logging in you can submit detailed requests and assist us in our assessment by specifying the request's severity and category.

In specifying the severity of a request via this interface, OTCIT requests that you carefully observe the definitions of severity for the category of request.

#### **Email**

By sending an email to [ithelp@otcweb.edu](mailto:ithelp@otcweb.edu), your support request will be filed within the helpdesk management system. This method will be slower than the URL listed above and due to the volume of mail received may not be acted upon promptly. This email interface provides less detail than submitting a request directly via the helpdesk.

#### **Phone**

If you do not have access to a web browser or email client (either your own or a colleague's), you may phone the IT department helpdesk to report a technical support issue by dialing 501.337.5000 extension 1185.

### **Desktop & Infrastructure Support**

The OTC IT Department is charged with maintaining a highly-available, secure, stable, and cost effective computing environment in support of and in achievement of the mission and strategies of the College. Due to the scope of the domain encompassed by desktop and infrastructure issues, support for these issues is cross-functional and requires the close cooperation of the department's team members.

The OTC IT Department is committed to providing timely and comprehensive solutions to desktop and infrastructure issues in a manner proportional to business need and potential or actual business impact.

The following defines how the IT Department prioritizes and responds to desktop and infrastructure support requests.

### **Severity Levels**

**Critical** – This is the highest level of severity and should only be assigned to issues that require immediate attention because they threaten business critical processes, involve major outages, or pose major safety and security issues.

A critical issue is one which satisfies any of the following **criteria**:

- Undermines business critical processes essential to the mission of the College.
- Prevents the effective use of any major service.
- Seriously affects a substantial number of computer users.
- Poses a major threat to information security.
- Might severely impact the reputation of the organization.
- In the judgment of IT staff members, this level of severity is warranted.

### Examples

- Hardware failure disrupting activities of essential system or time-sensitive and business critical activities.
- Information security vulnerability posing risk to access, integrity, or confidentiality of organization.

### Service Level Targets

Within or outside of normal business hours:

- The problem should be acknowledged immediately. Appropriate support personnel should be contacted immediately. IT management and senior management of the College (if applicable) should be notified immediately.
- The problem should be assessed within one hour of being reported. All affected parties, IT management and the senior management of the College should be notified of the assessment and the expected time of resolution.
- Critical problems should be resolved or mitigated within two hours.

All necessary resources will be re-allocated to resolve the issue. This may, in turn, affect the IT department's ability to meet other defined service level targets. In such cases, reasonable attempts will be made to manage expectations and communicate new expected times of resolution.

**Major** – Major issues are those that pose a serious impact to business processes if not addressed quickly.

A major issue is one which satisfies any of the following criteria:

- Prevents the effective use of any service and affects a substantial number of computer users.
- Disrupts the activities of a substantial number of computer users and no work around exists.
- Poses a minor threat to information security.
- Possibly impact the reputation of the organization.
- Creates very serious implications for an individual user.
- In the judgment of IT staff members, this level of severity is warranted.

Examples

- System unavailable to a percentage of the organization's users.
- Failure disrupting activities of a functional area.
- Inability of user to access essential piece of information.

Service Level Targets

Within or outside of normal business hours:

- The problem should be acknowledged immediately. Appropriate support personnel should be contacted immediately.
- The problem should be assessed within two hours of being reported. All affected parties should be notified of the assessment and the anticipated time of resolution.
- The problem should be resolved or mitigated within four hours.

All necessary resources will be re-allocated to resolve the issue. This may, in turn, affect the IT department's ability to meet other defined service level targets. In such cases, reasonable attempts will be made to manage expectations and communicate new expected times of resolution.

**Normal** – This represents the 'typical' problem, and should be the most frequently assigned level of severity.

An issue which satisfies any of the following criteria:

- Prevents the use of any fully supported service or application by an individual.
- Disrupts the activities of a substantial number of computer users, but a work around exists.
- Inconveniences the activities of a substantial number of computer users.
- Might imply a minor threat to information security.

Examples

- Monitor/LCD screen is dead
- Computer won't boot.
- Software installation when software is critical to job responsibilities.
- File system quota exceeded.
- Shared network printer is down.

During normal business hours

- The problem should be acknowledged within four hours.
- The problem should be assessed within one business day of being reported. The effected parties should be notified of the assessment and the expected time of resolution.
- The problem should be resolved or mitigated within one to two business days.

**Minor** – An issue creating minor business impact as it does not threaten or impact productivity.

An issue which satisfies any of the following criteria:

- Causes inconvenience to an individual.
- Any problem in a “limited support” category.

Examples

- CD-Drive non-functional
- Mouse is jumpy on the screen
- Questions regarding application features.
- Installation of most peripheral devices.

Service Level Targets

- The problem should be acknowledged within one business day.
- The problem should be assessed within one to two business days. The effected parties should be notified of the assessment, and the expected time of resolution.
- The problem should be resolved within three to five business days.

**Enhancement** – Enhancements are those issues that have little or to no business impact and do not materially affect productivity.

All issues that do not fall into the above levels of severity.

Examples

- Installations of software peripheral to business functions.
- Cosmetic enhancements (e.g. desktop setting, browser settings, and favorites).

**Classroom/Lab Software Support**

Installation of new software on classroom or lab computers must follow these additional criteria:

- Sufficient notice that the software is needed to allow appropriate testing. (The week prior to planned use is not enough time to be fully tested).
- Correct number of licenses must be obtained before installation can begin.

AUTHENTICATION (Signature):

COPP

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President

28 November, 2006  
(Date)

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