

Procedure III.3008.D.a, Business Continuity Program Lifecycle

Associated Policy

Policy III.3008.D, Business Continuity

Purpose

The College will maintain an overarching Business Continuity Plan (BCP) that serves as an annex to the Emergency Management Plan, defining governance, activation criteria, communication strategies, alternate work arrangements, and recovery priorities for the institution. The institutional BCP will be reviewed at least annually and updated as needed to reflect organizational changes, lessons learned from incidents and exercises, and evolving risk.

Each division, campus, and department that performs essential functions or supports critical services must develop and maintain a continuity plan using College-approved templates and guidance. Plans must, at a minimum, identify essential functions, recovery time objectives, key personnel and alternates, critical systems and dependencies, manual workarounds, and alternate locations or methods for delivering services.

The Business Continuity program will include a recurring Business Impact Analysis (BIA) and supporting risk assessment to determine the operational, financial, and compliance impacts of disruptions to essential functions, including critical information resources. Results of the BIA will guide continuity strategies, resource prioritization, and recovery objectives across the College.

The College will conduct periodic testing, training, and exercises (TT&E) of business continuity capabilities, either as standalone activities or in conjunction with emergency management and information technology (IT) disaster recovery exercises. Findings from TT&E will be used to update continuity plans and improve organizational readiness.

Business continuity planning will be integrated with the Emergency Management Plan and Incident Management Team structure under Policy III.3008.C, with IT disaster recovery and information security continuity requirements described in cybersecurity risk management procedures, and with Fire and Life Safety / Fire Marshal activities where facility disruptions affect continuity of operations.

This procedure establishes the processes for conducting business impact analyses and risk assessments, developing and maintaining departmental continuity plans, activating and deactivating continuity operations, and conducting testing, training, and exercises to ensure the College can continue or rapidly restore essential functions following a disruptive incident.

Procedures

I. Business Impact Analysis and Risk Assessment

1. The Director of Emergency Management (or designee) will coordinate a college-wide Business Impact Analysis (BIA) at intervals defined in the BCP to identify essential functions, critical processes, dependencies, and required recovery timeframes.
2. Each division, campus, and department designated by its vice chancellor or campus leader will complete BIA worksheets using college-approved templates or systems.
3. A risk assessment will be conducted in conjunction with the BIA to identify threats, vulnerabilities, and potential impacts that could disrupt essential functions.
4. The Business Continuity Coordinator will consolidate results, validate findings with leadership, and identify institution-level recovery priorities and resource needs.
5. BIA and risk assessment results will be reviewed with the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) or its designee and updated at least every three years, or following significant organizational changes, or after major incidents.

II. Development and Maintenance of Departmental Continuity Plans

1. Vice chancellors, campus leaders, and department heads identified in the BCP will ensure that departmental continuity plans are developed, approved, and maintained for their essential functions.
2. Departmental continuity plans will be developed using college-approved templates or designated continuity planning solutions and will, at a minimum, identify:
 - o Essential functions and services
 - o Recovery time objectives
 - o Key personnel and alternates
 - o Critical systems, suppliers, and dependencies
 - o Manual workarounds
 - o Alternate locations or service delivery methods
3. Completed departmental continuity plans will be submitted to the Business Continuity Coordinator for review, alignment with institutional priorities, and inclusion in the College's continuity planning repository.
4. Departmental continuity plans will be reviewed at least annually and updated when significant changes occur to organization, staffing, facilities, technology, or regulatory requirements.
5. Department leaders will ensure staff with continuity roles are aware of the plan, know where it is stored, and understand their responsibilities during a disruptive incident.

III. Activation and Deactivation of Continuity Plans

1. The Chancellor, or designee, may activate the institutional BCP when a disruptive incident significantly affects the College's ability to perform essential functions, either in conjunction with or separate from activation of the Emergency Management Plan.
2. Upon activation:

- The Director of Emergency Management will notify vice chancellors, campus leaders, and department heads of the scope and objectives of continuity operations.
 - Department leaders will activate relevant portions of their departmental continuity plans and implement alternate operating strategies as directed.
 - The Incident Management Team and Business Continuity Coordinator will coordinate resource prioritization, conflict resolution, and situational awareness.
3. The Chancellor or designee will declare the end of continuity operations when essential functions have been restored to an acceptable level, following consultation with affected leaders.
 4. Departments will transition from continuity operations back to normal or new steady-state operations and document lessons learned.

IV. Testing, Training, and Exercises (TT&E)

1. The Business Continuity Coordinator will develop an annual TT&E plan covering institutional and departmental continuity capabilities.
2. Department leaders with continuity responsibilities will participate in scheduled exercises, which may include tabletop exercises, walkthroughs, and functional tests.
3. Exercises and activations will test:
 - Staff roles and responsibilities
 - Access to plans and tools
 - Communication processes
 - Recovery strategies
4. After-action reviews will be conducted following exercises or actual activations to identify strengths, gaps, and corrective actions.
5. Corrective actions will be documented, assigned, tracked to completion, and incorporated into updated continuity plans.
6. Basic business continuity awareness will be incorporated into new employee or leadership training, in coordination with the Office of Emergency Management.

Definitions

All-hazards emergency operations plan: A comprehensive plan that addresses mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery for a wide range of natural, technological, and human-caused incidents that may affect the College, as required by Texas Education Code § 37.108.

Business Continuity (BC): The capability of the College to continue delivering essential academic, student support, and administrative services at acceptable predefined levels following a disruption.

Business Continuity Plan (BCP): The institution-level plan that describes how the College will sustain or recover its most critical functions and services during and after a disruption, and that serves as an annex to the Emergency Management Plan.

Departmental continuity plan: A documented plan maintained by a division, campus, or department that identifies its essential functions, recovery priorities, key personnel, dependencies, and strategies to continue or restore operations during and after a disruption.

Business Impact Analysis (BIA): A structured process used to identify essential functions, estimate the operational, financial, and compliance impacts of their disruption, and determine recovery time and recovery point objectives that guide continuity strategies.

Continuity of operations: The ability of the College to continue performing essential functions without unacceptable interruption, including the use of alternate locations, remote work, manual workarounds, and other strategies.

Critical/essential functions: The activities, processes, or services that must be performed or restored within defined timeframes to support the College’s mission, legal and regulatory obligations, safety of the community, and protection of significant assets.

Disruptive incident: Any unplanned event—such as severe weather, utility failure, technology outage, facility loss, cyber incident, or public health emergency—that significantly interferes with normal College operations.

Emergency Management Plan (EMP): The College’s all-hazards plan, adopted under Policy III.3008.C, that provides the framework for mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery activities during emergency incidents.

Incident Management Team (IMT): The team described in the Emergency Management Plan that has command and control authority for the College’s response and recovery actions during an emergency incident, including decisions related to suspension or alteration of operations.

Recovery: Activities and capabilities necessary to restore the learning environment and College operations to an acceptable state following an incident, including temporary workarounds and long-term restoration of normal operations.

Recovery Time Objective (RTO): The targeted duration of time within which a process, function, or service must be restored after a disruption to avoid unacceptable consequences.

Recovery Point Objective (RPO): The maximum acceptable amount of data loss, measured in time, that can be tolerated for a given system or process as a result of a disruption.

Testing, training, and exercises (TT&E): Planned activities conducted to validate the effectiveness of continuity plans, train personnel in their continuity roles, and identify improvements to the Business Continuity program.

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Associated Policy	Policy III.3008.D, Business Continuity
Primary Owner of Policy Associated with the Procedure	Vice Chancellor for Fiscal Affairs
Secondary Owner of Policy Associated with the Procedure	Director of Emergency Management
