

Operational Guideline

Systemic Issue

1.0 Context

The phrase 'systemic issue' is generally used to highlight the significance linked to the prevalence of risks, audit findings, control weaknesses or similar deficiencies and irregularities. This Guideline defines 'systemic issue' and is designed to facilitate better identification, consistent assessment and reporting on issues at The University of Queensland (UQ) that are genuinely systemic and therefore would require management's prompt attention and action.

2.0 Definition

An issue must meet **ALL** the following conditions to be defined as a systemic issue:

- (1) It is an issue (i.e. a problem or an event that has negative consequences) which has occurred or is inevitable; **and**
- (2) It is a materialised risk or an issue that will result in further risk exposure/s; **and**
- (3) It is a confirmed (verified) irregularity, deficiency or vulnerability, not just speculation or hearsay; **and**
- (4) If left unmanaged, it will continue to exist (and is expected to deteriorate); **and**
- (5) It is demonstrably prevalent across UQ, an organisational area or function, depending on the context (see Categorisation section below).

3.0 Categorisation

- (1) Systemic issues will be categorised based on the risk categories as defined in Appendix B of the Enterprise Risk Management Framework (ERMF).
- (2) A systemic issue may be further categorised as follows depending on the facts:
 - (a) **UQ Systemic Issue** - the issue is prevalent across UQ or is present across a significant number of areas of UQ.
 - (b) **(Org Area) Systemic Issue** - the issue is prevalent across the organisational area or is present across a significant number of areas/sections of the organisational area.
 - (c) **(Function) Systemic Issue** - the issue is prevalent across the function or is present across a significant number of areas/sections of the function.
- (3) Systemic issues will be categorised by the party formally raising the issue in conjunction with the party accountable for managing or remedying the systemic issue.
 - (a) The accountable party is responsible for the timely resolution of the systemic issue and providing updates in the form of management reports regarding the completion of any required actions, or their progress.
 - (b) The party that raises the issue is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the adequate remedying of the systemic issue by the accountable party.

4.0 Supplementary Notes

- (1) Some issues may be significant but not systemic.
- (2) A systemic issue is distinct from the loss or consequence associated with that issue.
- (3) A systemic issue may be a single type of irregularity, deficiency, vulnerability or a combination of these with similar causes and consequences.
- (4) The significance of a systemic issue is to be measured based on the risk associated with that issue – as per the UQ Risk Matrix (Appendix D of the ERMF). The risk level is determined via the combination of:
 - (a) **Likelihood** score, representing the systemic issue’s prevalence; and
 - (b) **Consequence** score, representing the systemic issue’s severity including consideration of potential and realistic (reasonably expected) deterioration.
- (5) The protocols for escalating and reporting of systemic issues, and the urgency with which systemic issues are to be addressed including the amount of resources committed to remediation, will depend on the associated risk level assessed as per the UQ Risk Matrix and the Risk Action Table (Appendix D of the ERMF).

5.0 Meta Data for Document Management

Web Links	
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