



Business Continuity Policy

[GEN014]

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Business Continuity

[GEN014]

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Acronyms

BC	Business Continuity
BCI	Business Continuity Institute
BCMS	Business Continuity Management System
BCP	Business Continuity Plan
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
COO	Chief Operating Officer
DOA	Delegation of Authority
DVC	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
ED	Executive Director
GPG	Good Practice Guidelines
HOD	Head of Department
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
PASS	Professional, Administrative Support & Service
RMEC	Risk Management Executive Committee
RMO	Risk Management Office
UARC	University Audit & Risk Committee
VC	Vice-Chancellor

Definitions and Explanations

For purposes of consistency, the following business continuity definitions apply within the University. These definitions are aligned to the *Good Practice Guidelines ISO 22301:2019* standard.

Term	Definition
Business Continuity Plan	Documented information that guides an organisation to respond to a disruption and resume, recover and restore the delivery of products and services consistent with its business continuity objectives.
Continual Improvement	Recurring activity to enhance performance.
Corrective Action	Action to eliminate the cause(s) of a non-conformity and to prevent recurrence.
Disruption	Incident whether anticipated or unanticipated, that causes an unplanned, negative deviation from the expected delivery of products and services according to an organisation's objectives.
Effectiveness	Extent to which planned activities are realised and planned results achieved.
Impact	Outcome of a disruption affecting objectives.
Incident	Event that can be, or could lead to, a disruption, loss, emergency, or crisis.
Interested Party (Stakeholder)	Person or organisation that can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision or activity.
Management System	Set of interrelated or interacting elements of an organisation to establish policies and objectives and processes to achieve those objectives.
Objective	Result to be achieved.
Organisation	Person or group of people that has its own functions with responsibilities, authorities, and relationships to achieve its objectives.
Performance	Measurable result.
Policy	Intentions and direction of an organisation, as formally expressed by its Top Management.

Term	Definition
Process	Set of interrelated or interacting activities which transforms inputs into outputs.
Requirement	Need or expectation that is stated, generally implied or obligatory.
Resources	All assets (including plant and equipment), people, skills, technology, premises, supplies and information (whether electronic or not) that an organisation has to have available to use, when needed, in order to operate and meet its objective.

1. Introduction

1.1 Definition of Business Continuity

The capability of an organisation to continue the delivery of products and services within acceptable time frames at predefined capacity during a disruption.

1.2 Context

The University faces a multitude of threats that put at risk the health and safety of its staff, students, service providers, its brand and reputation, and the continuity of its services.

Examples of such threats include, but are not limited to:

- student protests,
- industrial action/strikes,
- extreme weather events/fire,
- supply chain disruptions,
- cyber and information technology breaches,
- power disruptions and telecom outages.

To effectively deal with the magnitude of the threats that it is facing, the University has elected to implement a Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) to manage these potential risks. The purpose of the BCMS is to ensure that the University has the capabilities to respond and recover its time critical services within acceptable time frames at predefined capacity during a disruption.

This policy serves as a statement of intent and authority regarding the management of the BCMS within the University and is supported by a comprehensive business continuity framework.

2. Applicable Requirements

The University is aligning the BCMS with the international BCMS standard, *ISO 22301:2019 – BCMS Requirements*, as well as the *Business Continuity Institute (BCI) Good Practice Guide (GPG) 2018 – A guide to global good practice in business continuity*.

The University shall determine relevant interested parties and their requirements to the BCMS. The needs, expectations and/or requirements of the interested parties will be available as documented information.

Similarly, all applicable legal, regulatory, and other requirements shall also be considered when the BCMS is implemented at the University. The regulatory requirements relevant to the BCMS will also be available as documented information.

3. Scope

The scope of this Policy includes all faculties and departments within the University i.e., the core academic functions (teaching and learning, and research), and the PASS functions.

The focus for this Policy is limited to operational disruptions that affect the continuity of operations, and excludes the following:

- Liquidation and economic crises. These types of threats may require a response from other management disciplines in the domains of finance, or economics, amongst others.
- Interested parties, primarily owing to the fact that the University has no jurisdiction nor authority over them. Their needs are, however, considered for business continuity purposes.



Although this Policy excludes interested parties, it is required that management shall carefully consider their needs and be deliberate about meeting them when developing the BCMS for the University.

The University will establish a working relationship and comply with government regulations and initiatives as required. However, the disaster management activities affecting society and communities are out of scope for this Policy. The responsibility for disaster management rests with the government and public services.

4. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to assist University Management to establish a BCMS consistently across all faculties and departments within the University (i.e., the core academic functions (teaching, learning and research), and operational activities which will enable the institution to:

- pro-actively identify threats and manage issues that have the potential to lead to a disruption to the operation of the University;
- reduce the risk to business continuity by implementing effective measures to prevent and mitigate threats identified;
- respond to operational disruptions affecting its critical operational enablers such as the workforce, workplace, business systems and services providers;
- recover critical products and services at predetermined acceptable levels following a disruption to its operations; and
- emerge stronger from operational disruptions by applying lessons learned, preventative measures, and enhancements noted/observed from exercises and actual operational disruptions.

5. Link to the Strategic Vision

Organisational resilience refers to the ability of an organisation to absorb and adapt in a changing environment which enables it to deliver its objectives and to survive and prosper.

This Policy supports the integrated enterprise-wide risk management approach which aims to pro-actively identify various categories of risk at the earliest opportunity in order to implement the most appropriate solution to manage the risks efficiently and effectively.

Implementing a BCMS contributes to the University's organisational resilience capabilities, which means that the University will be able to withstand operational disruptions and continue to operate and fulfil its strategic 2030 vision of "Unleashing human potential to create a fair and just society".

This makes BCMS a key component, which supports and enables the University to deliver on its mandate during a disruption.

6. Objectives

In support of the purpose, the objectives of the BCMS Policy are to:

- embed a holistic and integrated approach to organisational resilience;
- uphold the interests of interested parties;
- enable University management communication, decision-making, activity and prioritisation, in the advent of an operational disruption;
- enable continuity of operations in the event of a disruption so as to ensure that key activities are resumed within agreed and pre-established timeframes;
- minimise the impact of operational disruptions, specifically environmental, health and safety, financial and reputational impacts;
- raise awareness and requirements of the BCMS through embedding activities and other means of knowledge sharing; and
- outline key roles and responsibilities that will enable the successful implementation of the BCMS.

7. Policy Statement

In the event of a disruption the University undertakes to safeguard as far as practically possible the interest of all staff, students, and key stakeholders.

The University is committed to identifying threats that can impact its interested parties and to implement effective controls to minimize disruptions to its operations.

The University commits to comply with all the applicable laws and regulations and shall implement programs and procedures in alignment with leading industry practices and standards related to the domain of business continuity.

The University shall seek opportunities beyond regulatory compliance requirements to safeguard the welfare of interested parties and shall establish and meet business continuity industry best practices where appropriate.

The University shall periodically measure its progress regarding the above commitment and shall continually seek opportunities to improve its performance and report it to its employees, customers, and key stakeholders.

8. University Management commitment

To achieve the objectives of this Policy, University Management is committed and obligated to embedding and integrating the BCMS into its day-to-day operations by carrying out the following:

- Establishing a BCMS Policy in line with the objectives, obligations, and strategic direction of the University;
- Leading the implementation of an integrated approach to resilience, i.e., implement, embed, and continuously enhance the BCMS system;
- Leading and providing adequate resources required to successfully implement, embed, and continuously enhance the BCMS system;
- Communicating to the University the importance of fulfilling BCMS Policy and objectives;
- Actively engaging in exercising and testing of its BCMS;
- Embedding and integrating the BCMS into day-to-day activities and management decision-making processes; and
- Approve (management review) all outputs of the BCMS including the resources required to implement the BCMS.

9. Communication

The University shall enforce the control of and limit the distribution of all BCMS documentation by:

- classifying all BCMS documentation as appropriate;
- securing access to and editing electronic copies of BCMS documentation;
- maintaining distribution records of physical copies; and
- undertaking to alert relevant interested parties to important changes and publishing updates.

Communicating the BCMS Policy:

- Internally to all members at all levels within the organisation, via the UCT intranet and/or any other means deemed appropriate; and
- Externally to relevant interested parties, as appropriate.

10. Continual Improvement

The University shall identify and evaluate risks to its assets and operations, maintain prevention procedures, protect and mitigate the effects of unforeseen losses by having in place business continuity and recovery processes.

The University shall establish and maintain a programme through which non-conformities are identified, corrective actions are determined and continual improvement of the BCMS is established.

The effectiveness of the BCMS shall be continually improved across all faculties or departments within scope by undertaking BC activities, which include:

- Annually enhancing and aligning the capability to industry leading practices;
- Reviewing relevant metrics on an annual basis to assess whether it is appropriate to change them, based on collected historical data and feedback from relevant sources; and
- Conducting regular/annual internal and external audits, self-assessment, and performance appraisal activities.

11. Key Roles and Responsibilities

The mandate of the RMO is to provide guidance, training and support to the business regarding the implementation activities of the BCMS. This means that the RMO will assist all faculties and departments within the University (i.e., the core academic and operational functions) with activities aimed at preparing them to respond effectively to a disruption.

11.1 The Council

The Council's responsibilities include determining the vision, mission, strategies, goals, objectives and policies for the sustainable development of the University. The Council has the responsibility of maintaining and ensuring that the University is

financially, socially, and environmentally sustainable.

The Council is ultimately accountable for all decisions taken at the University, including the submission of the required reports and documents to the Minister of Higher Education and Training. In line with the Higher Education Act, the scope of the duties of risk management within the University are clearly defined.

The Council is responsible for ensuring there is an effective BCMS Policy to ensure that the BCMS system is embedded at all levels of the University and covering the University's core mandate of research, teaching and learning, community engagement and social responsiveness, and related management, administration and operating functions and systems in support of the core mandate.

The Council sets the tone and influences the culture of resilience at the highest level.

11.2 The University Audit & Risk Committee

The UARC plays an important oversight relation to management's business continuity plan and strategy and make recommendations to council about the plans presented by Management.

The UARC will also review audit reports on any findings by internal audit and ask for a remedial plan where such plans are deemed to have any shortcomings.

11.3 The Vice-Chancellor

The VC provides leadership and direction to the Executive and Senior Management Team in the management of the operations of the University.

The VC is accountable for ensuring that:

- adequate resources are allocated for successful implementation and management of the BCMS;
- the BCMS is communicated to all employees and relevant stakeholders and Third Parties; and
- the BCMS strategy is incorporated into the culture of the University.

The Vice-Chancellor:

- leads the development and review of the University's BCMS, and
- delegates the responsibility of managing the BCMS system to the RMO.

11.4 Risk Management Executive Committee

The VC is supported by the University Executive and Senior Management Team in fulfilling their mandate. As part of their responsibilities, the Vice-Chancellor is the Chairperson of the RMEC.

The primary function of the RMEC is to ensure that a sound risk management and internal control system is maintained at the University in line with strategic goals/plan of the University.

Thus, RMEC must:

- review the BCMS strategy, policies, and provide assurance that there is an overall effective strategy and structure for BCMS across the University;
- recommend the BCMS policy to UARC for adoption by the Council;
- be responsible for external developments relating to the practice of corporate accountability and the reporting of specifically associated risk, including emerging and prospective impacts; and
- assist UARC in the discharge of its duties relating to corporate accountability and the associated risk in terms of management, assurance, and reporting.

11.5 Risk Management Office

The mandate of the RMO is to provide guidance training and support to the business with regard to the implementation activities of the BCMS. This means that the RMO will assist all faculty or PASS departments within the University (i.e., the core academic and operational functions), with activities aimed at preparing them to respond effectively to a disruption.

11.6 DVCs, Registrar, COO, CFO, Deans, EDs, Directors and HODs

Each faculty or PASS department, and where necessary, divisions, must appoint a BCMS manager from existing employees to implement, embed and continuously enhance the BCMS system within the area of responsibility.

It is the responsibility of each faculty or PASS department to ensure a successful response to a disruption without placing heavy reliance on the RMO. This means that each faculty or PASS department must ensure that adequate resources are in place to enable an effective response to a disruption.

11.6 BCMS Manager

The appointed BCMS manager must implement, embed and continuously enhance the BCMS system within their area of responsibility.

The BCMS Manager can be referred to as the BCMS Champions for the specific faculty or PASS department. The BCMS Champions will seek guidance and support from the Risk Management Office and implement the BCMS in line with the approved BCMS Policy. The BCMS Champions will ensure that as far as possible the faculties or PASS departments remain ready to respond to a disruption.

12. Related Policies, Guidelines & Forms

This includes but is not limited to:

- Delegated Authority Limits [\[GEN002\]](#)
- Risk Management [\[GEN007\]](#)
- Health and Safety Policy
- BCP Strategy
- BCMS Framework

13. References

Good Practice Guidelines (GPG) 2018

ISO 22301:2019

ISO 22316:2017

14. Contact

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