



Continuous Improvement Program Review Guide: Business Functions Defined

During the first year of the division's program review cycle, each department will conduct a thorough evaluation of its business functions. Business functions refer to the organization's operations and how they are executed.

Use this definitions guide to assist in the review process for each component of your business function review:

- Mission, Vision, and Values
- Compliance
- Internal Policies and Guidelines
- Organizational Structure
- Financial Resources
- Promotional
- Workload & Compensation

MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

MISSION

Mission statements are foundational and set the objective of an organization. They answer the question *"For what purpose does the organization exist?"* and provide the overarching intent with which all operations should align. The mission statement becomes the center of the organization's brand and should sustain over time as its guiding force. Once implemented, student affairs departments' mission statements should stand the test of time and only periodically require minor changes.

Considerations:

- Is your mission statement appropriate for the institution's students and other constituents?
- Does it refer to student learning and/or development?
- Is it concise and memorable?
- Does it express the purpose that drives your department forward?
- Does it provide a sense of identity to your department?
- Is it present tense?
- Does it align with those of applicable professional standards or funding institutions?

VISION

Vision statements are strategic and set a plan for future success. They answer the question, *"Where is the organization headed?"* Vision statements provide guidance in organizational decision-making. Although intended to be somewhat long-term, due to the statement's focus on goal setting, vision statements change over time along with the organization's environment and accomplishments.

Considerations:

- Does your vision statement look at least five years in the future?
- Does it provide direction for your department?
- Does it set a bold yet measurable and attainable goal?
- Is it easily communicate as a slogan?
- Is it future tense?

VALUES

Values are the infallible principles by which the organization functions. They answer the question, “*How will the organization operate?*” The results produce a shared set of values that provide a common culture throughout all levels of the organization. It is recommended that values be paired with a descriptive statement. Starting these statements with verbs allows them to serve as actionable principles.

Considerations:

- Does your department have between three and seven core values?
- Do they align with your mission and vision statements?
- Do they provide the baseline for a shared departmental culture?
- Do they provide the “how” for departmental actions?
- Do your accompanying statements promote action?

COMPLIANCE

Programs and services must comply with laws, policies, and regulations as applicable to their program. This may include state and federal laws, grant requirements, institutional requirements, etc.

Considerations:

- In addition to CSUSM policies, to which external regulations must your organization comply?
- Is everyone on your staff familiar with these regulations?
- Are these regulations referenced and available as appropriate for stakeholders?
- How do you stay apprised of changes to laws and regulations that affect your department?
- Do you have access to legal counsel?
- Do you have adequate liability coverage?

INTERNAL POLICIES & GUIDELINES

Internal policies, procedures, and guidelines are unique to each organization and provide consistency for the operations to which they pertain. They should be well defined, aligned with the organization’s mission and culture, and available to stakeholders as appropriate.

POLICIES: Policies are guiding principles used to govern processes and operations, set standards, or make statements about the philosophy of an organization. Additionally, they provide internal controls and reduce the risk of improper actions on the part of employees.

PROCEDURES: Procedures are series of consistent, descriptive steps to be followed when engaging with a particular process or condition. They are supplemental to policies and provide additional documentation for how the policy is carried out. Not all policies require written procedures.

GUIDELINES: Guidelines are documents that advise how a process should be completed but are less formal than procedures. Guidelines offer best practices but can be flexible based upon situational circumstances.

Considerations:

- Do you need to update or eliminate existing policy or procedure documents?
- Are there guidelines you should formalize?
- Are your documents clear and consistent with one another?
- Is everyone on your staff familiar with these documents?
- Do your stakeholders have access to documents that pertain to them?

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Organizational structures define roles and drive interactions among staff. They are a formal representation of leadership and should be consistent enough to provide organizational stability. Revisions to the structure, when necessary, should be in response to changes to the scope or environment of the organization. Any change to an organization's structure will create a change in its communication and culture. Base these decisions on research and departmental needs. Staff job descriptions, workloads and portfolios should be up to date and aligned with organizational structure.

Considerations:

- Is your department's structure reflective of your mission?
- Are task assignments and portfolios in alignment with your structure?
- Can your organizational chart remain intact as staff come and go?
- Are your formal and informal structures in alignment?
- Are your job descriptions reflective of the work being performed?
- Are staff roles well understood throughout all levels of the organization?
- Are compensation and classifications equitable in comparison to similar departments?

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Obtaining adequate funding and managing it appropriately are essential to the accomplishments of a department's mission and goals. Funding often comes from various sources, which may place stipulations on how funds are used. Budgets serve as a planning tool to prioritize and guide the use of financial resources. All student affairs departments must be good stewards of their funds and use accounting procedures that align with CSUSM policy.

Considerations:

- Are your financial reports clear and up-to-date?
- Do you publish financial information as required?
- Do you have a policy in place for procurement?
- Are you maximizing your fundraising opportunities?
- What are the unmet needs of your department?
- Does your use of funds align with your mission?

PROMOTIONAL

The “voice” of each department will be reflective of its mission and brand but should also be reflective of CSUSM. All public-facing content should be timely, clear, consistent, and professional.

Considerations:

- Who are your various audiences?
- What forms of marketing are most appropriate for which services?
- Are your marketing efforts consistent with your brand?
- Is your public-facing content up-to-date and accurate?
- How can you strengthen your brand?
- What content should be publically available that currently is not or is difficult to locate?

WORKLOAD & COMPENSATION

The number of employees should be adequate to accomplish the department’s mission and goals. The work of each employee should be in line with current job descriptions and classifications and pay should be equitable among staff.

Considerations:

- Have you conducted a salary equity review recently?
- When were job descriptions and classifications last reviewed?
- Are there elements of employees’ portfolios that are more in line with another staff member’s duties or specialties?
- Do you have employees whose responsibilities have increased and need to transfer elements of their portfolios to another staff member?
- Is there potential for your department to create a new position?