

Liverpool Hope University

Simplified Integrated Project Governance Framework V1.2

This guide sets out a practical, transparent, and proportionate framework for governing **major** projects at Liverpool Hope University. It combines the established Project Management Framework with the Transparent Capital Investment Process. The aim is to ensure projects are aligned with strategy, governed effectively, and delivered in a way that maximises value while minimising risk.

1. Purpose

The framework provides a structured but flexible approach to project delivery. It ensures that all projects, regardless of size, follow a consistent pathway from proposal through to closure.

Key objectives are:

- Align projects with University strategic aims and sustainability outcomes.
- Support transparent decision-making and prioritisation of investment.
- Provide clarity of roles and responsibilities.
- Ensure proportionality, avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy for smaller projects.
- Enable continuous improvement through lessons learned.

2. Governance Structure

Effective governance relies on using existing groups to avoid duplication, while strengthening accountability and transparency. Responsibilities are as follows:

- Council / Audit Committee: Final approval of high-value projects; oversight of risks and assurance of compliance.
- University Executive Board (UEB): Strategic approval, prioritisation of major projects, and monitoring of delivery.
- University Project Governance Group (UPGG): Central hub for project appraisal, prioritisation, financial validation, ongoing monitoring and ratification of project cancellations and postponements
- Estates Planning Group (EPG): Due diligence and oversight for Estates-related proposals.
- Digital Innovation & Development Group (DIDG): Specialist oversight for IT and digital projects, (mirroring the EPG).
- Academic Committee: Involvement where academic delivery is directly affected by a project.

This structure mirrors the Transparent Capital Process by routing proposals through the most relevant expert group before escalation to UPGG and UEB. UPGG reports in to the relevant Council committees.

3. Project Lifecycle

All projects follow a six-stage lifecycle, with clear gate approvals at each stage, clearly defined objectives, deliverables and exit criteria. This ensures only viable, well-defined projects move forward. The level of documentation and governance scales with project size.

3.1 Propose Stage

The purpose of this stage is to establish the business rationale and strategic fit. The Project Proposal should outline:

- The problem or opportunity to be addressed.
- Alignment to strategic pillars.
- Indicative costs, resources, and benefits.
- Initial risk/assumption analysis.
- Identification of key stakeholders.

Approval is required from UPGG to proceed. For capital projects, proposals must also be reviewed by EPG or DIDG. It is essential that where a project requires IT support, an initial discussion takes place at the propose stage.

3.2 Define Stage

This stage defines the project objectives, scope, and deliverables in detail. The Project Definition document includes:

- Purpose, objectives, and success criteria.
- Scope and deliverables.
- High-level solution design.
- Governance and team structure.
- Detailed risks, assumptions, issues, and dependencies (RAID)

Risks: Potential events that could negatively or positively impact the project's outcome.

Assumptions: Factors perceived to be true without proof, which can affect project planning.

Issues: Actual problems or challenges that have already occurred and require resolution.

Dependencies: Tasks or activities that rely on the completion of other tasks or external factors.

- Estimated costs and benefits.

The Project Definition is the definitive reference point. Any later changes must go through change control.

3.3 Mobilise Stage

The purpose of this stage, is to secure resources, funding, and supplier arrangements. The Business Case is finalised at this stage, providing quantified costs, benefits, and KPIs. Resourcing agreements must be confirmed, including allocation of internal staff time. Procurement planning and vendor selection, if required, are completed. Approval is required from the Sponsor, stakeholders, and UPGG, with escalation to UEB and Council as needed.

3.4 Plan Stage

This stage produces the baseline Project Plan. Components include:

- Detailed schedule with milestones.

- Resource plan.
- Communications plan.
- Quality management approach.
- Benefits management plan.
- RAID log update.
- Supplier management plan (if applicable).

The Project Plan and updated Business Case are reviewed and approved by UPGG before execution begins.

3.5 Deliver Stage

The project deliverables are developed, tested, and deployed. The Project Manager ensures continuous monitoring and RAG reporting. Change requests are raised where deviations occur. Operational sign-off is obtained from stakeholders before formal UPGG approval of deliverables.

3.6 Close Stage

This final stage covers administrative closure, performance review, and lessons learned. Outputs include:

- Closure Report comparing planned vs. actual costs, schedule, benefits.
- Confirmation of budget closure and release of resources.
- Lessons learned log.
- Agreement on benefits tracking for up to 12 months post-project.

Closure is signed off by the Sponsor and UPGG, with Council informed for major projects.

4. Core Processes

4.1 Project Prioritisation & Approval

All projects requiring capital funding must use standard templates and be submitted through EPG or DIDG. Projects are assessed against criteria including strategic fit, compliance, technical readiness, and value for money. UPGG consolidates recommendations, prioritises projects, and escalates to UEB for approval.

4.2 Finance & Capital Controls

Financial controls are aligned to the Transparent Capital Process:

- Budgets set during Mobilise stage.
- Overspends require UPGG approval (within a designated tolerance level of 10%)
- On closure, budgets are formally closed and unspent funds returned to the relevant account.
- No virement to other budget codes is permitted.

4.3 Procurement & Contracting

Procurement must be engaged early for projects requiring external suppliers. Key requirements are:

- Clear statement of work and deliverables, including duration of the arrangement
- Contracts with milestones, quality measures, and penalties for failure.

- Supplier/vendor management plans included in the Project Plan.
- Formal contract closure as part of project closure.

The extent to which a full Procurement Process is applied will be determined by the nature of the services sought and status of prospective suppliers / vendors. The final selection decision must involve the Project Sponsor. Setup of new suppliers / vendors should be completed at the Plan Stage.

4.4 Reporting & Change Control

Standard monthly RAG reporting is required, covering:

- Overall project status (Red/Amber/Green).
- Progress against schedule.
- Costs vs. budget.
- Risks, issues, dependencies.
- Benefits realisation progress.

Change control applies to any significant variation in scope, cost, schedule, or benefits. Change requests must be approved by the Sponsor and UPGG.

4.5 Closure & Benefits Realisation

At closure, the Project Manager produces a Closure Report summarising performance and lessons learned. Benefits realisation is tracked after project completion, with reporting responsibilities agreed at closure. This ensures accountability for delivering long-term value.

5. Scaling by Project Size

5.1 Financial thresholds (baseline)

Projects are initially categorised by financial value as follows:

- **Major Projects**
Greater than £50k (Estates £500K)
- **Medium Projects**
£10k – £50k (Estates £100K - £499K)
- **Small Projects**
Less than £10k (Estates up to £100K)

These thresholds define the minimum level of governance and assurance required.

5.2 Risk & Strategic Impact assessment

All projects are assessed using a standard Risk & Strategic Impact Scorecard, which considers factors such as:

- Strategic alignment
- Operational criticality
- Service disruption risk
- Change and organisational complexity

- Technology, data, or cyber risk
- Breadth of stakeholder impact
- Resource impact

By using the Risk and Strategic Impact scorecard template a transparent and consistent method for identifying projects that require enhanced governance can be calculated, regardless of cost.

5.3 Determining final project classification

The final project classification is determined by combining financial value with the Risk & Strategic Impact score, in accordance with the following principles:

- Financial value sets the minimum project category
- Risk and strategic impact may escalate a project to a higher category
- Projects cannot be downgraded below the minimum category set by cost

This ensures that:

- Low-cost but high-risk or strategically significant projects receive appropriate oversight
- Routine or low-risk activities are not over-burdened with unnecessary governance

5.4 Governance requirements by project size

- **Major Projects**
High risk and/or high strategic impact, or financial value >£50k (Estates > £500K)
Require full lifecycle governance, a Business Case, and approval by UEB and Council (as appropriate).
- **Medium Projects**
Moderate risk or strategic impact, or financial value £10–50k (Estates £100K - £499K)
Require a Business Case, UEB approval, and ongoing status reporting including risks and budget.
- **Small Project**
Low risk, low strategic impact, and financial value <£10k (Estates <£100K)
Require a simple proposal approved by the relevant line manager, with light-touch reporting indicating progress, budget and issues.

The University Project Governance Board (UPGB) retains the authority to confirm or escalate project classification where required, with rationale recorded to ensure transparency and auditability.

6. Key Principles

The framework is guided by five key principles:

1. Transparency – Decisions and capital allocations are fully auditable.
2. Proportionality – Governance scaled to size and risk.
3. Integration – Alignment with finance, procurement, IT/Estates planning.
4. Accountability – Sponsors accountable for outcomes; UPGG provides oversight.
5. Continuous Improvement – Lessons learned captured and applied to future projects.

7. Governance in Practice

The framework operates in practice through the following mechanisms:

- UPGG monitors progress and reports quarterly to UEB and Council.
- DIDG mirrors EPG to ensure equal rigour for digital/IT and estates investments.
- Project Leadership Teams manage operational governance, including Sponsor, demand stakeholders (who will realise benefits), and supply stakeholders (who provide services).
- Monthly reporting cycles ensure timely identification of risks.
- Prioritisation processes ensure finite capital resources are allocated fairly and transparently.

8. References & Appendices

This framework draws from:

- Liverpool Hope University Project Management Framework (2024).
- Implementing a Transparent Capital Investment Process (2025).

Finance Regulations and Procurement Policy

Appendices to include links to:

- Templates (Proposals, Business Cases, Change Requests, Closure Report).
- RAG status reporting examples.
- RAID log template (Risks, Assumptions, Issues and Dependencies)
- Prioritisation matrix.
- Governance flow diagrams.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Clear roles and responsibilities are critical for effective project governance. This framework defines the following key roles:

Sponsor

The Sponsor is ultimately accountable for project success. They:

- Own the business case and ensure strategic alignment.
- Secure funding and resources.
- Provide direction and resolve escalated issues.
- Approve key stage gates, deliverables, and change requests.
- Ensure benefits are realised after project closure.

Project Manager

The Project Manager is responsible for day-to-day delivery. They:

- Develop the business case, project plans, schedules, and RAID logs.
- Monitor progress and provide RAG reports.
- Manage risks, issues, communications and dependencies.
- Coordinate project team activities.
- Ensure delivery on time, within budget, and to scope.
- Produce the Closure Report and lessons learned log.

Workstream Manager

Workstream Managers lead sub-components of the project. They:

- Deliver assigned workstreams on time and to quality.
- Report progress and risks to the Project Manager.
- Support integration across workstreams.

Demand Stakeholders

These are individuals or groups who will use the project's outputs and realise its benefits. They:

- Are involved in defining the requirements and Project Definition.
- Confirm operational acceptance of deliverables.
- Take responsibility for realising benefits after deployment.

Supply Stakeholders

These provide resources or services to the project. They:

- Contribute to project planning and delivery.
- Provide specialist expertise or supplier/vendor services.
- Are accountable for completing workstreams within budget and timescales.

UPGG (University Project Governance Group)

The UPGG provides oversight and governance. It:

- Reviews proposals, definitions, and business cases.
- Ensures prioritisation across the portfolio.
- Validates budgets and financial controls (through the Director of Finance who is a member of UPGG) - Approval, budget set up, variance approval, budget and project closure
- Approves change requests and monitors progress.
- Reports quarterly to UEB and Council.

UEB and Council

UEB and Council provide institutional oversight. They:

- Approve major and high-value projects.
- Monitor delivery across the project portfolio.
- Ensure projects align with strategic and financial plans.
- Provide assurance and scrutiny of outcomes.

10. RASCI Matrix

A clear and agreed definition of project roles and responsibilities is essential for project success. Project failures are frequently due to a failure to define and agree roles and responsibilities at an early stage in the project.

A RASCI Matrix is a useful aid to defining project roles and responsibilities and bringing essential clarity to project responsibilities and accountabilities. The RASCI is applied to the main project tasks and uses the following definitions:

- **R (Responsible)** - The individual who performs the task. There may be multiple people involved in completing a task but generally there is one individual with overall responsibility for the task.

The Project Manager is responsible for delivering the project on time, within budget and to agreed specification and the Work-stream Manager is responsible for delivering the Work-stream on time, within budget and to agreed specification.

- **A (Accountable)** - The individual who is ultimately answerable for the correct and thorough completion of the task. The Sponsor is accountable for the successful completion of the project and subsequent value realisation while the Supply Stakeholder is accountable for the completion of project Work-streams on time, within budget and to specification.
- **S (Support)** - The individual(s) who provides an essential support to the individual Responsible for completing the task (which may involve responsibility for completion of substantial sub-tasks) and/or must approve the task outputs.
- **C (Consulted): The individual whose input or expertise is sought before decisions are made or actions are taken on a task**
- **I (Inform)** - The individual(s) who have an obligation to inform on the progress of a task and in particular of task risks and issues. The following RACI matrix clarifies responsibilities across the project lifecycle stages:

Stage	Sponsor	Project Manager	Workstream Manager	Demand Stakeholders	Supply Stakeholders	UPGG	UEB/Council
Propose	A	R	S	C	C	I	I
Define	A	R	S	C	C	I	I
Mobilise	A	R	S	C	C	A	I
Plan	A	R	S	C	C	A	I
Deliver	A	R	R	C	C	A	I
Close	A	R	S	C	C	A	I

11. Governance Flow

Governance and approval flow for IT and Estates projects:

1. Project Proposal submitted via Estates Planning Group (EPG) or Digital Innovation & Development Group (DIDG).
2. Initial review by EPG/DIDG for due diligence and strategic fit.
3. University Project Governance Group (UPGG) reviews for prioritisation and financial validation.
4. University Executive Board (UEB) provides strategic approval.
5. Council/Audit Committee grants final approval for high-value projects.
6. Project delivery monitored by UPGG, with quarterly reporting to UEB and Council.
7. Closure reports signed off by Sponsor, UPGG, and escalated to UEB/Council.

Change Log

Change	By whom	Reason	Date
Edits to text	L.Lightfoot	General improvements to the document	19/9/25
Modification to the RASCI section	M.Hall	Missing C (Consult) from the definitions	21/9/25

Version change from V0.1 to V1.1	M.Hall	Change from informal to formal draft ready for consultation,	21/9/25
Version change from V1.2	M.Hall	Addition of a revised section 5 outlining project rating following discussion at UPGB	13/2/26