

# SFA Modernization Program Plan

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## SAMPLE METHOD1™ BASED CHECKLISTS

### BUSINESS CASE CHECKLIST

1. Was an initial baseline business case developed and approved at the start of this project?
2. If the need for developing a business case has been waived or curtailed, has this been adequately documented, then communicated to and confirmed by The Department and Trading Partners?
3. Have the system's business objectives and drivers been developed and approved by The Department of Education?
4. Have the key business case components (objectives and benefits) been communicated to all project team members?
5. Have the business case guidelines been developed?
  - a) Are they actively used to evaluate alternative design and development approaches?
  - b) Are they an active part of the issue analysis process?
  - c) Are they an active part of the change request analysis and prioritization process?
6. Has user management been responsible for identifying and confirming all tangible and intangible benefits?
  - a) Have they identified and confirmed the extent of the benefits?
  - b) Have they identified and confirmed the time frames in which the benefits will be achieved?
7. Have intangible benefits of the proposed system been identified, documented and quantified to the extent possible?
8. Have all one-time benefits been identified and quantified?
9. Have estimates for the continuing cost of operating the proposed system over a three-to five-year period been prepared?
10. Have estimates of the total, one-time development and roll-out costs been prepared?
11. Have all assumptions associated with the business case and economic models been documented and confirmed by The Department of Education? Do they include assumptions regarding:
  - a) Scope?
  - b) Current activity levels?
  - c) Growth and projected activity levels?
  - d) Documented constraints or interdependencies?
  - e) Estimated system life expectancy (pay-back rate)?
12. Does the system represent a real value to the business?

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13. Is senior management confident that the benefits of the new system cannot otherwise be achieved by merely re-designing the business process (without implementing system changes)?
14. Has a formal process been established for controlling and communicating all business case changes?
15. Are business rules revised on a regular basis?
16. Has an overall summary of implementation economics been prepared?
17. Have estimates been tested for reasonableness against previous experience?
18. Is project management confident that the benefits of the new system cannot be achieved by the current system if methods are improved and there is better planning, scheduling and control of personnel?
19. Are the estimated personnel resources required to analyze system performance included in the cost/benefit analysis?
20. Has all documentation been prepared in accordance with systems development practices standards?

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## PROJECT MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

1. Do project personnel have adequate participation in the project to know its true status firsthand?
  - a) Is a qualified person sufficiently involved in each critical area?
  - b) Are communication lines working?
2. Do the current activities of the project team support the objectives stated in the business case and in the project arrangement letter?
3. Is the Quality Review process being followed?
  - a) Are reviews held on a regular basis?
  - b) Is the frequency of the reviews appropriate to the risk and complexity of the project?
  - c) Are the results of the review documented in a timely manner?
  - d) Have all action points been addressed?
4. Do project supervisors prepare Quality Review checklists on a timely basis, i.e., when all tasks in a segment are considered to be completed?
5. Do project supervisors explain to the project team members the purpose and nature of each task and how it should be documented?
6. Do project supervisors closely monitor the initial steps of each task to be sure that the project members understand what is expected?
7. Do project supervisors check the progress of the project team members frequently and review the work objects and documentation as it is prepared?
8. Do project supervisors review the final results of each task when the project team members report that the task is complete?
9. Do project supervisors ensure that the necessary additions and corrections are made to the documentation's on a timely basis?
10. Do project supervisors and management regularly monitor the status of the project by reviewing:
  - a) Budget variances?
  - b) Resource variances?
  - c) Schedule variances?
  - d) Work package (deliverable) variances?
  - e) Cost variances?
11. Are all variances investigated and explained, and is corrective action being taken before target dates are missed?
12. Is corrective action being taken before target dates are missed?

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13. Is there written documentation of the results of progress meetings, and are individuals identified as being responsible for following up on points?

### COMMUNICATING WITH MANAGEMENT

14. Are periodic written status reports prepared and discussed with management?
15. In addition to reporting status, does project management meet with senior management regularly to discuss:
- a) Project issues requiring management's attention?
  - b) Proposed scope changes?
  - c) Significant changes to the business case?
16. Have anticipated project cost increases or decreases been reviewed with the appropriate management personnel?
17. Is there an effective change control process in place? Are all changes to the project's scope:
- a) Identified and logged as change requests?
  - b) Analyzed to determine their full impact before being reviewed?
  - c) Prioritized and schedule by the appropriate management personnel?
  - d) Approved before being implemented?
18. Are all project issues:
- a) Tracked in the project repository?
  - b) Analyzed in light of their impact on the project's business objectives and business case?
  - c) Resolved in a timely manner?
  - d) Promptly communicated to all affected parties?
19. Is the user involvement in the project sufficient in terms of:
- a) Appropriate number and experience level of user participants?
  - b) Timely review and sign-off of project deliverables and issues?
  - c) Quality and timeliness of user tasks and work packages (deliverables)?
20. Are user management personnel sufficiently involved in the project?
21. Are the users' expectations about the system being appropriately managed?

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## REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

1. Have the business process re-engineering plans for this functional area been reviewed?
  - a) Future organization
  - b) Future work flow
2. Does the project team understand:
  - a) How the present system actually works?
  - b) How it was intended to work?
  - c) Why it works?
  - d) What problems exist within the present system?
  - e) Who the key personnel are and their functions?
3. Have all strong and weak points of the present system been identified?
4. Has enough information about the present system been obtained in the following areas?
  - a) Current procedural and informational flows?
  - b) Copies of existing reports, screens, and window formats?
  - c) Volumes of transactions by appropriate time period and location?
  - d) Number of staff involved and location of workstations?
  - e) Estimates of current costs (operating and maintenance)?
  - f) Control objectives and control points?
  - g) Backlogs of work and the reason for the backlogs?
  - h) Basic cycles and seasonality of work?
  - i) Deviations from standard procedures and the reasons for them – “Work-arounds”?
  - j) What business events are processed and within what time-frame?
5. Have current automated systems been reviewed to obtain the following information?
  - a) Design of current data records and elements?
  - b) Automated processing rules that will continue to be valid in the new system?
6. Are the requirements for the new system understood by the project team?
7. Are they agreed upon by users and management?
8. Do the requirements of the new system and the changes from the current system they represent support the business case for the development project?
9. Have all stakeholders (users, management, and Trading Partners) expressed their requirements?
10. Have the requirements been checked for reasonableness and is there evidence that the new system is feasible?
11. Have the key factors that will ensure the success of the new system and provide management with key performance measurements been identified?
12. Have projections of future volumes been prepared?
13. Have the minimum and optimum performance requirements been defined, including:
  - a) Volumes of transactions (peak and average) to be processed by time period and location?
  - b) Number of staff required at each location?

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- c) Turnaround or response time?
  - d) Maximum downtime allowable?
  - e) Contingency backup procedures?
  - f) Time periods during which the system must be available?
  - g) Number of workstations and locations?
14. Have all security and control requirements been identified?
15. Have the organization's internal and external auditors been involved in the design sufficiently early so that their recommendations can be included?
16. Is the prototyping environment appropriate?

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## DESIGN CHECKLIST

1. Have all entity types been mapped to the structures supported by the data management software?
2. Have other data structures not considered in the data model (for example, summary data, historical data) been designed?
3. Has the database design been reviewed by:
  - a) IS group?
  - b) Application developers?
  - c) Users?
  - d) Outside experts?
4. Has the processing that will be performed and how it will be performed been closely defined for each work unit?
5. Are common functions performed in common modules?
6. Have typical causes of long response and run times been avoided? For example:
  - a) Lengthy database searches?
  - b) Single-threaded (serially reusable) resources?
7. Have all interfaces with other systems been designed, including:
  - a) Manual interfaces?
  - b) Shared databases?
  - c) Shared files?
  - d) Shared processing?
  - e) Messages
  - f) Shared hardware resources?
  - g) Shared communications network?
8. Does the design identify controls to ensure that messages sent by one system are received and processed by the other system?
9. Does the design of the system include processes for recovering data that is lost during:
  - a) Batch processing?
  - b) On-line processing?
  - c) Asynchronous processing?
10. Do the data recovery methods adequately consider the problem of duplicate and potentially different output?
11. Have adequate fallback procedures been provided for the critical business functions to be automatic?
12. Does the design identify the need for complete data back-up and recovery procedures including:
  - a) Retention of old generations of backup files and databases and their associated transaction files?
  - b) Provision for off-site storage of the backup files and databases referenced in (a) above?
  - c) Recycling of the oldest back-up copies?
  - d) Integration of the system into the organization's contingency plan?

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13. For on-line systems that update master files, create transaction files or switch messages, does the controls design provide for sufficient system and data recovery procedures to:
  - a) Reconstruct databases and transaction files that may be destroyed during on-line processing?
  - b) Detect the occurrence and effect of partially completed transactions?
  - c) Remove the effect of partially completed transactions following a system failure or individual transaction failures?
  - d) Inform users and operators of where they should resume operation after a system failure?
14. Has the system been designed according to the organization's standards?
15. Have the functional and technical specifications been updated and reviewed with user management?
16. Have the scope and objectives of the system remained the same?
17. If the answer to the question above is "no", have the changed project scope and objectives been communicated to and agreed upon by senior management and the Department of Education?
18. Have detailed formats been prepared for all windows, screens, reports (including audit trail and control reports), forms, etc?
19. Have detailed specifications and formats been prepared for all files, data bases and records?
20. If a central dictionary to control all data elements has been established, does it specify for each element:
  - a) Its attributes?
  - b) Its purpose or use?
  - c) Where it is used (files, records, programs, reports, screens, etc.)?
  - d) The meaning of all code values?
21. Have detailed specifications of all work units been prepared and documented in accordance with system development practices standards?
22. Have all unit and system interfaces been checked in detail from both sides of the interface?
23. Have structured walk-throughs for all work units been performed and have all open points been resolved and approved by the project manager?
24. Have operating schedules, run times, response times and equipment requirements been updated to reflect systems modifications and volume changes?
25. Has the business case been updated to reflect all the system design changes made during detailed design?
26. Have all changes been identified for the following:
  - a) Installation costs?
  - b) Continuing costs?
  - c) Intangible considerations?
27. Have all significant variances to the business case been communicated to and reviewed with senior management and The Department of Education?
28. Has a common test data base been established?

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29. Have the structure and content of the test data base been communicated to all analysts and programmers?
30. Has all documentation been prepared in accordance with systems development practices standards and has it been organized in a neat and orderly fashion?

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### TESTING CHECKLIST

1. Was all the planned testing fully completed?
2. Were user and computer operations personnel fully involved in the testing?
3. Were all errors or discrepancies noted on System Investigation Reports (SIRs) and were all SIRs corrected at the conclusion of the project.
4. Can the users and computer operations personnel operate the system successfully after product test?
5. Were the test results thoroughly reviewed and accepted by project, user and operations management prior to implementation?
6. Were all corrections tested to ensure that previously tested functions still operate properly – Systems Acceptance Testing?
7. Has the test models been maintained so that it is adequate for future maintenance?
8. Has a final estimate of performance and resource requirements been prepared?
9. Did any testing with other Trading Partners occur as a result of this project? If so,
  - a) Where all Trading Partners involved?
  - b) Where expected results shared across Trading Partners?
10. What could be done to improve testing related activities for future projects?

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### **TRAINING DESIGN CHECKLIST**

1. Are the scope and objectives of the training project clearly defined?
2. Have the parameters for all the projects that interface with this one been defined, at least in general terms?
3. Does the project include the segments specified for the Training Design phase?
4. Has the project management received appropriate authorization and approval The Department of Education regarding the project objectives?
5. Has the scope and depth of work required in each work program area been communicated clearly to the project team?
6. Have the required quantity, seniority, and experience levels of user participation been obtained?
7. Have standards been adopted that define the approach to take during Training Design?
8. Have all steps in the course development procedure been considered in developing the work program?
9. Have all users affected by this project been identified for training purposes?