

Critical Functions Guide

To begin identifying your department's **critical functions**, consider the following questions:

- What activities are normally performed by your department or unit?
- In summary, what does your unit do?
- What action words accurately describe the purpose for your department?
- Your department performs various operations. What is provided to the campus as a result?
- What service(s) does your department provide?

What is a Critical Function?

In the context of business continuity planning, a critical function may be defined as a collection of activities normally performed by your unit that **must** resume during the first 30 days, or sooner, following a disruption in service.

A *critical function*:

- enables the University to provide vital services, maintain the safety and well-being of the campus community, ensure continuity of administration, and/or protect the University's assets
- enables teaching or research to continue

A Critical Function is Not a Process

Processes are the steps needed to accomplish a function. For example, the critical function "provide meals for residents of university housing" is accomplished through the processes of "food buying, food storage, cooking, serving, and cleanup." We focus on major functions because processes are too specific and detailed for our level of planning. Identify the function, not the process.

A Critical Function is Not the Name of an Entire Department

A department is the organization of resources needed to accomplish a function. For example, the function "provide hazardous materials clean up and disposal" is performed by the Environmental Health & Safety Department. This is only one function of the department, and this function has been identified as critical. Because the focus is on continuing a specific function of the department, "Environmental Health and Safety" cannot be listed as the critical function.

A Critical Function is Not an Object

Functions are the activities performed by a department or unit. For example, "protective equipment" is not an activity; it is an object. When listing critical functions, identify the action (verb) associated with the object. In this example, the action is "provide" and the critical function is "providing protective equipment".

Levels of Criticality

Critical 1: Must be continued at normal or increased service load; cannot pause; necessary to life, health, security (Examples: hazardous materials cleanup, police services)

Critical 2: Must be continued if at all possible, perhaps at reduced capacity; pausing completely will have grave consequences (Examples: purchasing, functioning of data networks, at-risk research)

Critical 3: May pause if forced to do so, but must resume in 30 days or sooner (Examples: classroom instruction, research, payroll, student advising)

Deferrable: May pause; resume when conditions permit (Examples: solicit new grant opportunities, routine building maintenance, training, marketing)