



Business continuity management policy

Version: 1.0 | Version effective: 12/10/2018

Audience

Department-wide

Purpose

This policy outlines the Department of Education's (the department's) business continuity management arrangements to help minimise the impact of disruptive events, safeguard areas of lowest risk appetite, support the effective return to normal operations, and enhance capability and organisational resilience.

Policy statement

Business continuity management is a holistic approach for managing risks related to disruptive events to ensure the department can continue to deliver critical services that cannot be managed within our normal capabilities. The department's first priority is the immediate and ongoing safety of students, staff and stakeholders in our facilities.

The department has three types of management action that work together to assist in preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from the impacts of events that disrupt our business, as outlined in the department's [Business Continuity Management Framework](#) — incident management, disruptive event management, and disaster and emergency management.

Principles

The principles for business continuity management are aligned to the department's [Business Continuity Management Framework](#).

Principle	What this means for the department
Takes an all hazards approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business continuity management response strategies focus on the outcome of the disruption rather than the cause. • Alternative operating arrangements are developed to address loss or reduced access to the following operating resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ buildings or infrastructure

Principle	What this means for the department
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ information and communications technology ○ staff ○ all or any combination of the above.
Is scalable and adaptable to change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Can be used to manage any event regardless of the severity, size or complexity. ● Ensures appropriate capabilities are available and prepared. ● Provides line-of-sight and integration of plans, supporting agility in response.
Promotes local decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides a structure to guide planning, response and recovery actions. ● Supports staff 'on the ground' to make informed decisions. ● Enables decisions to be made at the right level to address emerging needs.
Fosters collaboration and productive relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clear roles and responsibilities. ● Structured escalation and communication pathways. ● Provides line-of-sight to functions and strategies, encouraging conversation in the planning, response and recovery stages.
Supports a culture of continuous improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scheduled review and testing program to build awareness and capability. ● Documented functions and strategies allows for clear and effective de-briefing post-event. ● Consistency in approach supports shared learnings.

Requirements

Incident management

This is the management of incidents within business-as-usual capabilities, using existing structures, resources and processes to manage a situation and return to normal operations. This type of management action follows standard reporting and escalation pathways.

If an incident increases in severity, size or complexity, one or both of the following management actions may be required.

Disruptive event management

Disruptive event management ensures the department can continue to deliver critical business functions if an event causes a serious disruption that is beyond our business-as-usual capabilities. The department is committed to ensuring the continuity of service in the following areas:

- direct service delivery

- managing areas of lowest risk appetite, as outlined in the department's [Enterprise risk management policy](#)
- our contribution to the short-term financial viability of staff and stakeholders.

Business continuity plans are developed for all critical business functions to support effective disruptive event management.

Critical business functions

Functions that must continue in order to manage the effects of a disruptive event on the continuity of service are called critical business functions. Critical business functions are identified by conducting a business impact assessment (BIA), which uses a risk appetite-based approach. If the loss of a business function for more than five business days exceeds the department's risk tolerance in the department's areas of lowest risk appetite, service delivery and short-term financial viability to staff and stakeholders, the function is deemed 'critical' and requires a business continuity plan (BCP).

All departmental business areas must complete a BIA to identify any critical business functions. Branches, divisions and regions must review their business impact assessments annually, and following any significant changes to the operational environment such as:

- changes to the risk profile
- machinery-of-government changes
- implementation of new services and/or functions
- significant changes to the external environment
- significant changes to business process or system.

Business areas should complete this exercise between July–August each year to enable approved BCPs to be in place prior to the start of storm season, when the majority of more significant disruptive events occur.

The [Developing a business continuity plan procedure](#) outlines the process for completing a business impact assessment.

Business continuity plans

BCPs document how critical business functions prepare for, respond to and recover from a disruptive event that cannot be managed within normal capabilities. The department has four types of BCP, that take into account the breadth and complexity of the department's operations, at a branch, divisional and regional level. Each BCP has an identified 'owner' and a 'lead', who is an appropriately senior officer with the ability to manage the critical business function(s) continuity requirements.

BCP type	Requirement	Owner	Lead
Operational	Operational BCPs must be developed for every critical business function identified in a Business Impact Assessment.	Deputy Director-General (DDG)	Director/ Executive Director

	More than one critical business function can be included in a single Operational BCP, if they are linked and it is appropriate to do so.		
Coordination	Branches or divisions with multiple Operational BCPs should develop a Coordination BCP to provide line-of-sight and help prioritise their response actions during a disruptive event.	Regional Director	Executive Director/Assistant Director-General (ADG)
Regional	Every region must develop a Regional BCP to support the regional office's continued operation during a disruptive event, and to coordinate preparation, response and recovery actions for individual schools impacted by a disruptive event.	Regional Director	Director Regional Services/Assistant Regional Director
Executive	Strategy and Performance Branch develops the Executive BCP by consolidating Coordination and Regional BCPs priority areas to provide line-of-sight and help prioritise actions across affected areas of the department.	Director-General	Central office DDG/ADG

The [Developing a business continuity plan procedure](#) outlines the process that should be followed when preparing the above BCPs.

BCP activation

The department adopts a scalable approach to BCP activation, depending on the complexity and severity of an event.

A BCP lead is authorised by the BCP owner to activate their BCP when the impacts of a business disruption are unable to be managed within business-as-usual capabilities and the disruption is likely to exceed the maximum acceptable outage period.

BCP activation can also be directed through a number of avenues:

- Operational BCPs being activated by the Coordination BCP lead
- under disaster and emergency management arrangements, at the local, regional, departmental or state level (during which time BCP leads must follow the direction of the relevant response controller)
- on advice from a key operational resource area (ICT, HR, infrastructure)
- on advice from an interdependent function leads.

Further information about the activation process under business continuity arrangements can be found in the [Implementing a business continuity plan procedure](#).

Disaster and emergency management

Disaster and emergency management involves specialist capabilities to safeguard people and assets, minimise business disruption and return the department as quickly as possible to normal service delivery. Our departmental [disaster and emergency management arrangements](#) outline how we prepare for, respond to and recover from disaster and emergency situations, including weather, geological, biological or human events that pose risks to life, property or the environment.

Emergency response plans are developed to support effective disaster and emergency management.

Emergency response plans

Emergency response plans (ERPs) provide details on how schools, regions and the department prepare for and responds to disaster or emergency situations. The department's disaster and emergency response framework identifies three types of ERP:

- School
- Regional
- Executive.

An additional level, the State level, also exists and this is the interface into the Queensland Disaster Management Committee.

Each ERP has an identified 'owner' (usually set at the DDG/RD level) and 'response controller', who is an appropriately senior officer with the ability to manage the emergency response requirements:

- School ERP – Principal
- Regional ERP – Regional Director

- Executive ERP – central office DDG/ADG.

ERPs work in tandem with BCPs during a disaster and emergency event. ERPs set out the necessary disaster response and recovery efforts, while BCPs ensure continuity of critical services that must remain in operation to at least a minimum level.

More information about ERPs can be found on the department's [disaster and emergency management](#) webpage.

Activating emergency response plans

When disaster and emergency arrangements are activated, the response controller leads the activation, management and deactivation of the ERP. There are response controllers for all three levels of ERP (executive, region, school).

During a disaster and emergency event BCP leads must follow the direction of the relevant response controller. Operational BCP requirements are to be embedded into ERPs to facilitate greater integration of effort when plans are activated in tandem and allow response controllers to have clear line-of-sight of critical services.

Further information about the ERP activation process is available on the department's [disaster and emergency management](#) webpage.

Resource recovery support

A key component of business continuity management is the identification of the key operational resources—ICT, HR, infrastructure—needed to respond to and recover from a disruptive event. While some critical business functions may have control over certain aspects of these resource areas, there are often occasions where support is needed from the departmental owner of the resource area.

The three divisions responsible for overseeing the department's ICT, HR and infrastructure are responsible for ensuring they have in place the necessary systems and processes to support the activation of any BCP or ERP, including outside of a disaster or emergency event. This includes having defined triage and escalation processes to support an activated BCP or ERP, and establishing clear contact points for BCP leads and ERP response controllers to be able to access support as quickly as possible.

Maintaining and improving plans

BCP and ERP owners are responsible for ensuring annual reviews are conducted to ensure plans continue to be current, fit-for-purpose and take advantage of opportunities for improvement. This includes business continuity testing and reviewing plans when there are significant changes to business processes and systems.

The Strategy and Performance Branch is responsible for overseeing divisional and regional testing programs and reminding plan owners of their obligations. All plans must undergo a minimum testing program of a:

- level 1 or level 2 test every 12 months; and
- level 3 test every three years, unless the plan has been activated during this period, which is equivalent to a level 4 test.

Plans should be tested, updated and approved by the end of October to ensure currency and suitability prior to storm season. In addition, the Infrastructure Services Branch conducts annual disaster and emergency

management scenarios to test ERPs. More information can be found on the department's [disaster and emergency management](#) webpage.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Business continuity management	A holistic approach to managing risks related to disruptive events.
Business continuity plan	A documented collection of strategies and actions for use in a disruptive event to enable a critical business function to continue to deliver its services to an acceptable minimum level and transition to normal operations and performance levels.
Business impact assessment	A risk-based assessment used to identify the department's critical business functions.
Coordination BCP	Coordination BCPs are overarching plans developed for each branch/division. A Coordination BCP ensures more effective prioritisation and coordination of the continuity response should multiple operational BCPs be activated. It also helps reduce duplication of communication, expediting recovery of operating resources.
Critical business function	A business function, or part thereof, identified as essential for the continuation of critical services (direct service delivery, managing areas of lowest risk appetite and contribution to the short-term financial viability of staff and stakeholders).
Executive BCP	The Executive BCP provides an overarching view of all departmental BCPs. It provides a platform for senior executive management to make strategic judgements, prioritise resources and support more effective communication to areas coordinating and operationalising BCPs.
Executive ERP	The overarching ERP for the department.
Maximum acceptable outage	The maximum period of time the department can tolerate a disruption to a critical business function.
Operational BCP	Operational BCPs are used to ensure individual critical business functions are able to continue to operate, at least to a minimum level of capability and performance, following a disruptive event and transition back to normal operations and performance levels.
Regional BCP	Regional BCPs are used by each region. Regional BCPs contain a combination of operational and coordination BCP requirements. Regions cater for school BCP requirements through the Regional BCP.
Regional ERP	The ERP for an individual region.

Term	Definition
School ERP	The ERP for an individual school.

Legislation

- [Financial Accountability Act 2009 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Disaster Management Act 2003 \(Qld\)](#)

Delegations/Authorisations

- Nil

Policies and procedures in this group

- [Developing a business continuity plan procedure](#)
- [Implementing a business continuity plan procedure](#)

Supporting information for this policy

- [Business Continuity Management Framework](#)
- [Business continuity supporting resources](#)

Other resources

- [Enterprise Risk Management Framework](#)
- [Enterprise risk management policy](#)
- AS ISO 22301:2017 Business continuity management systems – Requirements
- AS/NZS 5050:2010 Business continuity – Managing disruption-related risk
- [Disaster and emergency management procedure](#)
- [Business continuity management](#) (DoE employees only)
- [Disaster and emergency management](#)

Contact

Business Capability and Quality Improvement

Phone: (07) 3028 8263

Email: GSPmailbox@qed.qld.gov.au

Emergency and School Security Unit

Phone: (07) 3034 6011, (07) 3034 6012

Email: qld-deteemru@id.ngcomms.net

Review date

12/10/2023

Superseded versions

Previous seven years shown. Minor version updates not included.

Nil

Creative Commons licence

Attribution CC BY

Refer to the [Creative Commons Australia](https://creativecommons.org/) site for further information