Management of Service Agreements

1.1. The Service Level Agreement
A Service Level Agreement (SLA) is a document that defines the negotiated and mutually agreed upon services that the Technology Systems Division will provide to a Mason organization or department in order to ensure that these services meet business needs.

Key elements of an SLA include:
• Service Levels, such as response time, availability and support parameters
• Identifying responsible parties and processes for requesting service and getting help
• Setting reportable metrics in order to measure the performance and health of the service.

1.2. Who Needs an SLA?
When clarification of the services provided by an IT service provider is needed, the customer and the service provider (a specific IT support team or teams) should create an SLA.

Below are some instances that might require an SLA:
• a charge is needed for an ongoing service
• a customer would like a commitment from service provider to provide a new specific service
• a service is out-of-the ordinary and not covered by any existing agreements.

1.3. SLA/OLA Agreement Development Process
The seven-step process is meant to be a guide for the Service-providing team to aid in the creation of an Operational Level Agreement (OLA) or Service Level Agreement (SLA).

Parties involved in this process might include:
• A Service Provider or Project Manager as author of the OLA/SLA and leader of the team
• A subset of the service team as service providers of the service
• Service Owner/Manager* as the responsible ITU Manager of the service
• Senior Managers as reviewers, gap analysts and acceptors of the OLA and SLA
• Divisional Liaisons as reviewers, gap analysts and acceptors of the OLA and SLA
• Knowledgeable/friendly end users to complete the OLA/SLA review for expected boundaries and customer/customer facing information.
*Service Owner/Manager*: the business partner or individual responsible for signing off on and accepting delivery of a service. The Service Sponsor has the authority to accept service levels, costs, and risks associated with a service.

**Step 1) Create the team**

1. Identify the Service Owner/Manager for the service if one does not exist.
2. Create a small working team, which ideally is a subset of the Service Team.

**Step 2) Analyze the state of the service using the Service Definition Checklist**

1. Follow-up: Conduct a Gap Analysis - A gap analysis will identify some larger or broad-spectrum gaps in the service:
   - Conflicting or uncoordinated service delivery model
   - Conflicting service features and functions

   If these service gaps occur, get clarity and/or direction from the Service Owner/Manager. Do not proceed with the OLA/SLA process until the service is clearly defined.

2. Other Common Gaps:
   - Unknown customer requirements

   If customers were not part of the creation process, document in the service definition checklist that the OLA and SLA represent an “as-is” state. Proceed with the OLA/SLA process knowing this OLA and SLA are baselines for a service that will need more attention once service definition and delivery are better understood.
   - Significant (hardware, software, application) deficits exist or improvements are desired.

   If this is found, capture the potential service changes. This represents work that the service team will work on at a different time. Proceed with the OLA/SLA process.

**Step 3) Resolve Showstoppers**

Are all showstoppers resolved? If so, proceed. If not, cycle back through the service Owner/Manager, Sponsor and Senior Managers as needed and address each showstopper.

**Step 4) Continue with service definition by filling out the OLA/SLA (Links) for the service**

For an existing service, typically, completing the OLA is the best place to start. The OLA includes documenting:

- Technical description
- Service dependencies
- Service providers of the service
- The assumptions of the customer/user of the service
- Roles and responsibilities of the service providers
- Incident types and ticket handling process
- Service requests and ticket handling process
• Change management process
• Service delivery exceptions.

When completing each section of the OLA, ensure that procedures exist to support the service definition, roles, and responsibilities. Document gaps in procedures in the service definition checklist (link). In most cases, procedures for handing off work and/or how situations with a service are escalated must exist before the OLA can be considered complete.

Complete the SLA noting differences or deviations from the TSD standard guidelines. Although all sections of the SLA should be reviewed, the team should pay particular attention to the definition of service levels and metrics in the service section. Although the team may research a variety of metrics, only the most significant should be used. The team can flesh out the metrics selected by using the metrics worksheet (link).

**Step 5) Review the completeness of the OLA/SLA**

- For the SLA, include several knowledgeable end users of the service to provide feedback about the content of the SLA. The purpose of the SLA and service catalog definition review is to ensure that the documents are customer facing and address service level requirements in the documentation.
- For the OLA, this review would include directors and managers involved in the service to review the OLA and other supporting documents in the internal IT use to ensure all involved in the service are aligned to the service definition.

Alter the documents as appropriate based on feedback from these meetings. Plan an additional meeting, if necessary, or proceed to the next step.

**Step 6) Complete the approval process**

- For the SLA, get Unit Head approval
- For the OLA, get Senior Managers approval.

**Step 7) Update information and sources of information after each review**

Once the review cycle concludes:
- Update the service definition** page to replace the existing service, if appropriate
- Link the OLA to the ITU Support Center Catalog
- Update the Service Metrics page with updated metric(s) for this service.

**Service Definition:** The IT Service Catalog is a list of IT services provided to campus customers that is published on the web as part of the IT Service web site. Each "service page" within the catalog includes a description of the service, how to get the service, how to get service support, costs (if applicable), and other information regarding the use and capabilities of the service.
1.4. Service Level Agreement (SLA) Template
This form is a template of the general areas of an SLA.

(Create a link for the SLA document)

1.4.1. SLA/OLA Metrics
Teams creating SLA/OLA metrics can use this template to review and document metrics criteria.

1.4.2. Operational Level Agreements
An Operational Level Agreement (OLA) is an agreement with a department internal to the service provider detailing the provision of a certain element of a service.

- The purpose of an OLA is to ensure that the proper elements and commitments are in place to provide consistent service support and delivery by the Service Provider(s).
- The goal of an OLA is to obtain mutual agreement for service provision between ITU units or departments.
- The objective of an OLA is to:
  - Provide clear reference to service ownership, accountability, roles and/or responsibilities.
  - Match perceptions of expected service provision with actual service support & delivery.
- Key elements of an OLA include:
  - Expectations and performance targets for each element in the support chain for a service
  - Clear descriptions of the service ownership, accountability, roles and other responsibilities
  - Key interaction elements between ITU organizations or groups.

1.4.3. Operational Level Agreement (OLA) Template
This form is a template of the general areas of an OLA

(Create a link for the OLA document)

1.4.4. Current SLAs

1.4.5. Current OLAs