

# FHS IT Services: Differentiated Project Services

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Version: 1.1- Last Reviewed: January 2024

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Faculty of Health Sciences has assessed its IT service needs and developed its service offerings and delivery models to ensure effectiveness, avoid duplication and gaps, and take advantage of synergies with IT groups across McMaster. Based on this assessment, models for FHS IT core service offerings were developed and implemented.

During this implementation, many examples arose which required IT systems and support but did not fit within FHS core services. Some examples include:

- Application/review systems
- Administration & finance support systems
- High profile, public-facing special projects
- Department-specific technologies
- Special online/hybrid events & support
- Online learning systems for specialty programs
- Project-specific technologies supporting our mission of research excellence across the FHS

These require services and support outside of core FHS offerings to be successful. Examples of these services and support activities include consultation, system design, scope development, project management support, testing, and other technical or professional services.

This document details Differentiated Project Services (DPS) provided to the FHS via the Computer Services Unit (CSU). The service offering is a cost-recovery service with all costs for use being the responsibility of the service user. It outlines operational procedures, accountabilities, support models, and other key details of the service.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES & BENEFITS

- To provide technical consultation and guidance to ensure FHS needs are being matched with the best technologies or core service offerings as appropriate to avoid unnecessary costs, risk, and expense.
- To meet the needs of groups whose goals cannot be achieved using only FHS core service offerings.
- To ensure that FHS users are meeting data security requirements and other McMaster policy requirements in their use of technology.
- To ensure that groups that may be developing technology with external groups still have a service to connect them with McMaster policies, requirements, and restrictions to prevent wasted resources and limit risk.

## SERVICE DETAILS

### **What are these services?**

Differentiated project services fill the role often associated with a project management office (PMO), managing individual specialized projects, in accordance with project management best practices. DPS offers a set of



technical and professional services to compliment FHS core services and bridges gaps between core offerings and FHS research, administrative, or academic technology needs. Some examples of these services include:

- Software scope development
- Developer recommendations
- Technology evaluations
- Environmental scans
- Project management
- Quality assurance & testing
- Billing & invoicing support
- Specialized technical assistance as required to meet the specific needs of FHS faculty & staff

DPS also provides technical guidance and consultation services to ensure that all technologies, whether developed internally or externally, are compliant with FHS and McMaster policies and infrastructure.

#### **What are the key locations associated with these services?**

DPS solutions that include a hosting element are hosted within the FHS datacentres or other McMaster Infrastructure as appropriate. External hosting outside McMaster is always a final resort, and only considered if there are no other option available.

DPS are administered and managed within the FHS Computer Services Unit (CSU) within the CSU systems development & special projects service stream.

#### **Who owns the services & their products?**

Any products of DPS including documentation, software, or data are owned by the individual project sponsor in their McMaster role, unless an alternate ownership agreement is entered into. CSU may be a data custodian and/or host but does not own any data or products unless an alternate ownership agreement is entered into. If a project sponsor chooses to partner with other service providers outside of CSU, the products and data remain theirs to use; however, CSU cannot warrant any product, process or data produced by other parties. The individual project sponsor will still be subject to all relevant McMaster University policies and procedures.

## **SERVICE SCOPE**

#### **Who are the intended users of the services?**

DPS is intended for McMaster faculty and staff for McMaster FHS purposes, or in special projects where key stakeholders and/or the project hold a significant relationship to the Faculty of Health Sciences. External groups/users or McMaster faculty or staff operating outside their capacity with McMaster are beyond the scope of this service offering as project sponsors. As some hosted systems may be public facing, many users external to McMaster and public users are affected by the service offering.

#### **What kind / how many projects will the services support?**

The mandate of CSU is to support core technologies within the FHS. As such, CSU can only manage a limited number of specialized projects outside of its core services at any time. All differentiated projects should support the mission of the Faculty, and only be considered when no core service offering to meet the project



needs is available. In cases where the project's eligibility is in question, the FHS Director of IT, CSU management, or the FHS-ITC will provide recommendations regarding eligibility.

## SERVICE PROCESSES & PROCEDURES

### **How do users access these services?**

Clients may approach CSU via a help ticket in the [MyCSU portal](#), or by contacting the DPS service representative via the CSU website. Requests are logged in the CSU tracking system and channelled to appropriate resources. Requests will be assessed to determine if they can be met by existing core service offerings. Clients will be directed to core services or brought into DPS process accordingly.

### **How are the services tracked?**

All requests and work efforts are tracked in the CSU PMIS or appropriate MS O365 technologies. These systems will handle issue allocation, communications, work tracking, and reporting. Any billable elements will be invoiced via the CSU PMIS.

### **How are services terminated?**

For each project, a practical life span will be determined as part of the project scope, as well as a decommission or continuation plan according to need. Before end of life the project will be re-opened or decommissioned accordingly.

In cases of early decommission, a client requests termination and an ad hoc plan will be created for the individual project.

In all cases, any data hosted by CSU will be archived based on the client's needs (e.g., burned to DVD, provided for download, etc.) and delivered to the client. Alternately, the client may elect to export their own data according to a mutually agreed-upon schedule. Finally, any entries in the PMIS will be updated to reflect the change of status, and any data will be taken offline and deleted.

### **Who approves access to and continued use of these services?**

The FHS-ITC, the FHS Director of IT, CSU management, project sponsors, and other project stakeholders, may be part of a specific project's approval process. CSU will determine the relevant parties during initial consultations and document them in the project scope.

## SERVICE AGREEMENTS & ACCOUNTABILITIES

### **What are the supported hours of the services?**

These services will be available during regular working hours. Overtime or irregular hours may be required from time to time. In these cases, CSU will follow standard procedures for approval or cost recovery of time.

### **How is proactive support provided?**

Where hosted solutions require server patches/updates, they will be performed by CSU staff in regularly scheduled updates. Individual projects will have a maintenance and support plan created as part of the project scope.

### **How is reactive support provided?**

Client requests will be submitted as an online service request ticket. CSU will investigate incidents, assess impact, and provide service according to the associated service definition. Where possible, CSU's support will be scheduled in coordination with key stakeholders to minimize downtime of resources and maintain business continuity. Once completed, the client is responsible for testing and approving the work completed.

### **How are client communications handled?**

Projects of sufficient size will have formal communication plans created as part of their project scope. For smaller projects, communications will be between individual CSU staff and the relevant stakeholders via mutually agreed upon methods such as email, or MS Teams.

### **How are issues prioritized and responded to?**

All CSU hosting services operate under CSU service level agreements (SLAs), with response times determined according to impact and severity. CSU will determine responses for other issues on a case-by-case basis based on severity and availability of relevant staff resources.

### **What are the client accountabilities associated with the services?**

- Providing an accurate representation of needs, data types, and other requirements
- Providing an accurate representation of the size and type of data to be hosted to classify and store it appropriately
- Requesting maintenance or version upgrades outside of those mandated by CSU processes
- Requesting changes, customizations, service cancellations, etc.
- Securing research ethics board (REB) approval where applicable
- Responding to project relevant communications and approvals when requested
- Managing data appropriately and adhering to the [McMaster IT policy framework and acceptable usage policy](#)
- Making payments directly to CSU for all costs associated with use of the service

### **What are the CSU accountabilities associated with the services?**

- Providing all services and deliverables as defined in the mutually agreed upon scope for any project
- Maintaining detailed records and project documentation
- Providing clear and responsive communications

## **SERVICE COSTS & PAYMENTS**

### **Are there costs associated with the services?**

There will be no cost for project management services from CSU; however, if CSU staff provide any development or support hours, there may be costs associated with those hours. Any costs will be the responsibility of the client, though CSU may assist with billing support if possible. Costs will always be made clear to the client.

Hosting services will be provided at no cost whenever they can be accommodated by a core hosting service offering. In cases where core service hosting is not an option, costs will be determined on a project-by-project basis.



**How are payments for the services to be made?**

Payments to CSU for any cost recovery items must be from a McMaster account via a valid McMaster Chartfield. A valid client Chartfield will be required as part of the scope where any cost recovery elements are anticipated. Any special arrangements outside of this will be at the discretion of the FHS Director of IT.