

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

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1. Why Business Continuity Planning (BCP)?

Any prolonged disruption of our teaching and research poses a dual threat. First, there is the obvious damage to the education of our students and the research of our faculty. Second, there is a more subtle, long-term threat: a reduction in the quality of our university due to migration of our faculty and students to other institutions. Hence, a speedy rebound from any major disaster is of paramount importance.

The campus has adopted a very specific **continuity goal: to continue teaching, research, and public service through any crisis-event; or if that is not possible, to resume our teaching, research, and service functions within 30 days of any interruption.** This does not mean that every building will be open, every class will be taught, and research will be humming along as before. It DOES mean that core classes must be taught, that a substantial number of research

projects must be back underway, and that students, faculty and the citizens of California see recovery happening quickly and competently.

2. What is a Critical Function?

Business functions or information that could not be interrupted or unavailable anywhere from a few hours to one month or less without significantly jeopardizing the mission of the agency, and the health, welfare, or safety of the University.

3. What are some guidelines for identifying mission critical functions?

- Support primary mission statement
- Support other agencies' mission critical function
- Must be recovered quickly
- Have a high dollar value
- Have a high business impact
- Have political ramifications or implications
- Have legal requirements or liabilities

4. The instruction says to identify our critical functions, not processes. What's the difference?

Processes are the steps needed to accomplish a function. For example, the *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.

5. What is an Executive BIA?

Business Impact Analysis - A tool for helping you understand the effect of an interruption on the viability and operations of its critical business functions.

6. Who should do business continuity planning?

All colleges, schools, departments, ORUs, and other units that conduct teaching, research, or public service should have a business continuity plan. Other units that provide essential support or infrastructure to these units should also do continuity planning. These two definitions encompass virtually every unit of the campus.

7. What is the difference between Business Continuity Planning and Disaster Recovery?

Business Continuity Planning focuses on the restoration of business functions. Disaster Recovery focuses on the restoration of infrastructure that supports business functions.

8. What does a BCP do for our department?

- It addresses actions to be taken before, during and after a disruption of business functions.
- It spells out in detail the what, who, how and when of a recovery plan.
- It reduces liability and disruption to normal business operations while assisting with the decision making process.
- It assists with a broad range of events from natural disasters to loss of staff.

9. Should we appoint a departmental business continuity coordinator?

Yes, typically a staff member who has access to your senior management. The role is part project manager, part group facilitator. It is a temporary, part-time assignment for the duration of the planning project, but the coordinator often continues informally as the departmental expert and contact person for business continuity issues.

10. Who should be in the planning group?

Upper and middle managers: assistant deans, assistant directors, HR managers, IT managers, key functional managers, and building coordinators. These are people who have access to the boss and who understand how the organization operates. Keep the group size manageable. If your unit is an academic department or ORU, faculty input is essential. Try to enlist at least a couple of faculty members into your group.

11. How does the planning group operate?

The group will typically meet and discuss, with little or no “homework.” The coordinator will operate *The UC Ready Tool*, often right at the meetings using a projector. Alternatively, the coordinator can provide the group with the printed plan (which includes all entries-to-date) for discussion. On occasion, the coordinator or someone else may interview a key manager or do a bit of research but even the coordinator’s role should not require a heavy time commitment. UCI’s approach to business continuity planning asks for your thoughtful consideration of issues, not for detailed research or leg-work.

12. Should we do a plan for an entire college or school, or a plan for each unit within it?

This is a crucial decision. The campus Business Continuity Planner will assist you in making the decision, so give the Planner a call at Environmental Health & Safety at 949-824-6200.

-- For academic units, planning generally happens best at the level of the academic department or the ORU (organized research unit). There are exceptions depending on the extent of integration and centralization of functions in the school/college.

-- For support units, the answer depends on the structure of the unit (which functions are centralized and which are decentralized) and the number of critical functions the unit performs.

13. How long does it take to create a business continuity plan?

Think of this as roughly a four-month project. Our experience is that longer time frames do not produce better plans. Most of the four months will be “white space” waiting for meetings to happen and people to come to agreement on priorities and action items. The number of actual staff hours required is surprisingly small, because *The UC Ready Tool* uses a “fill in the blanks” process. Virtually no time is spent figuring out what to do — simply fill in the blanks and your plan is done.

14. How detailed and complete does our plan need to be?

Your business continuity plan can never be “complete” because you can’t know what disaster you’re planning for. *The UC Ready Tool* will prompt you for the appropriate level of detail, and most of those details will be things that your group easily knows or can figure out. Successful recovery from disaster will hinge largely on the ingenuity and energy of the folks on the spot. Your job in planning for business continuity is to help them with some information and some possible strategies. If you find yourself puzzling whether an answer is thorough enough, declare victory and move on!

15. How can we craft a plan to handle unknown circumstances?

The methodology that we employ for business continuity planning mostly avoids discussion of particular causal events that could interrupt our mission. All such causal events (earthquake, fire, pandemic, human sabotage) will affect our functioning in similar ways: they will temporarily prevent us from using some of the resources to which we have become accustomed. These resources include

- space (our classrooms, labs, and offices)

- infrastructure (power, water, sewer, networks, phones)
- people (our staff)
- equipment (libraries, computers, etc.)
- funds (our income stream).

Our planning focuses on:

- identifying the resources that are critical
- safeguarding critical resources against loss (*backup of systems and data, bracing of equipment, safe storage of research items*)
- actions that will lessen the impact of losses (*pre-arrangements with sister campuses for mutual aid*)
- replacing resources quickly (*contracts with vendors*)
- performing critical functions without some of those resources (*teaching via distance learning technology*)
- providing our people with the information they will need, post-disaster, to get the campus back in action.

16. What assumptions can we make about what the campus will do for us after a disaster?

Here are some reasonable assumptions:

- **Access to buildings.** If campus officials have reason to suspect that a building is hazardous to enter, they will immediately close the building and call in trained inspectors. In the worst case (a major earthquake with many buildings damaged), the inspection process alone could take weeks with hazmat cleanup and repairs taking much longer. You may be unable to enter your building for an extended period of time.
- **Locating temporary space.** This will be a huge challenge for the campus, so any arrangements you have made ahead of time will serve you well. For example, make an agreement with another department in a separate building or with colleagues in another institution. Anything you can do within your own unit will be to your benefit, such as sharing labs and offices that remain accessible.
- **Computing infrastructure.** Restoration of our many centrally supported IT applications will be of the highest priority after any disruption. This includes email, internet, payroll, and many other applications, as well as the physical campus data network. Much money and effort continues to be spent on hardening our IT systems to minimize damage and aid quick recovery. Definite predictions, of course, are not possible. Within your unit, you should be taking steps to backup data and make plans for recovering your own servers and applications.

- **Communication protocol.** General communications with students, faculty, staff, and the public will be handled by the Office of Public Affairs and will be tightly managed so that messages are consistent. As your unit resumes functioning, communications of an operational nature will be your responsibility.
- **Contacting your staff.** This will be a departmental responsibility. Each school or department should keep its own emergency contact lists.
- **Care of staff.** Many staff issues arise during disaster recovery: pay, temporary leave, temporary alterations of assignment, safety, benefits, layoffs, work-at-home, stress, and family issues. You should assume that Human Resources (HR) will be available with guidance and mechanisms to assist departments in these complex areas. Conversely, departments should seek guidance from HR when uncertain how to act in these matters—both before a disaster and after it.
- **Temporary staffing.** Mechanisms will be available (operated by HR) for hiring temporary staff and for redeploying existing staff. Available staff who are less critical to your operation may be redeployed elsewhere.

Course scheduling and classroom assignment. In emergency conditions, courses will be mounted according to a priority established by department chairs in collaboration with the Office of the Registrar. Departmentally controlled classrooms may revert to the Chancellor's control.

17. What help and money can we expect from the state and federal governments?

Outside assistance for disaster recovery will be forthcoming from both state and federal governments, but it is impossible to say before any disaster exactly what form it will take. It is important to know that the federal government never ADVANCES funds to institutions like ours for disaster recovery. Reimbursement is the path, and it is always a long one. UC Irvine will be reimbursed for repairs and reconstruction costs, but it will take years of negotiating with the state and federal governments. Many real losses may not be reimbursed. So the more capable we are, individually and collectively, of taking care of ourselves, the better off we will be.

18. What have we learned?

- Business Continuity Planning is a business issue
- It is not a question if disaster will strike...but when!
- Most organizations are not prepared for a major disruption.
- The world is a different place now.
- Advanced planning reduces the impact of a disruption.