# IT Help Desk Call Priorities

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IT Help Desk Call Priorities

Introduction

This document outlines response time targets users can expect in relation to IT and telecommunication incidents that are logged through the IT Help Desk. A response time clock commences when a call is logged on our Help Desk support system. At this point the details of the incident are entered into the system.

To satisfy these requirements, there are a number of dependencies that need to be fulfilled in order to progress with handling the incident. The dependencies outline the minimum amount of information required before we can commence the response time clock. These are outlined on page 11.

In certain circumstances a response will exceed the target timescale, as outlined in the 'Exceptions' section on page 11.

There are several criteria that IT Help Desk staff will apply when deciding the priority of IT Help Desk calls. The assigned priority will affect the target response and resolution times within which the IT Help Desk aims to resolve calls. If a call cannot be immediately resolved, callers will be informed of the priority assigned to the call during their initial contact. There are five different priorities for incidents: 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Most calls are likely to be assigned at priority 3.

Outline Summary of Response and Resolution SLA Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Response*</th>
<th>Resolution*</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priority 1</td>
<td>1 Hour</td>
<td>5 Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority 2</td>
<td>1 Working day</td>
<td>3 Working days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority 3</td>
<td>2 Working days</td>
<td>7 Working days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority 4</td>
<td>5 Working days</td>
<td>25 Working days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority 5</td>
<td>20 Working days to agree scope/levels of assistance.</td>
<td>Requests/Project work. No stated fix time and will be best endeavours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the majority of cases we will respond and resolve your query or incident before the times stated above.

*Response and Resolution times are both measured from when the call is logged into our Help Desk Support System and a unique reference number has been generated. Please refer to the Notes on Page 11 which outline exceptions and dependencies in relation to the call priorities.
**Priority One**

This is the highest priority available, and should only be assigned for very serious incidents relating to part of the core infrastructure or services.

**Description**

An incident that satisfies any of the following criteria:

- Prevents the effective use of any major service
- Seriously affects a substantial number of computer users, telephone or lecture attendees for Video Conferencing telematic lectures (e.g. 50 users)
- Implies a serious breach of security
- Has serious implications for the reputation of the University
- Has immediate and potentially serious Health and Safety implications
- In the opinion of the IT Help Desk Supervisor/Manager, is serious and requires immediate attention
- Occurs during a busy/critical period e.g. exam time/new intake/term time

**Response Target**

To respond to 100% of incidents within 1 working hour

**Resolution Target**

To resolve 100% of incidents within 5 working hours.

We shall be continually monitoring our performance to ensure we are meeting these targets.

**Updates**

The Incident Manager will co-ordinate updates to key department stakeholders (to include relevant members of SMT, School Managers/Head of Schools PAs), providing hourly updates.

Updates will be placed on the ‘Hot Issue Status’ page when the latest developments are reported to the IT Help Desk. This can be found at: [http://helpDesk.ex.ac.uk/its/issues/issues.php](http://helpDesk.ex.ac.uk/its/issues/issues.php)

Users will be asked to check the Status page for the latest information. The Incident Manager will keep key users updated (e.g. Senior Managers, School Managers/Head of Schools PA’s).

**Escalation**

All priority 1 calls will be immediately escalated to 3rd line support, and the relevant Academic Services Team Leader/Manager and Assistant Director will be informed. The Incident Manager will liaise with Business Continuity personnel/Estate Patrol to evoke relevant procedures where applicable, keeping the Director of Academic Services informed. In discussion with the SMT and Director of Academic Services, it will be decided if the Executive Suite needs to be informed. All of the involved parties mentioned above will be notified on resolution of the incident.
Examples

- AV / Video Conferencing failure for lecture to large student group (over 50 users)
- External website failure
- Major University system failure e.g. Aptos/SiTS/Concept/Millennium
- Mail server failure
- Complete or partial loss of campus network connectivity/multiple remote users unable to connect
- Core phone system outage
- Fire in building
Priority Two

This represents a serious incident, and should be assigned relatively infrequently.

Description

An incident that satisfies any of the following criteria:

- Prevents the effective use of any service and affects a substantial number of computer users, telephone or lecture attendees for Video Conferencing telematic lectures in any school or department
- Causes inconvenience to a substantial number of computer users in the University
- Implies a minor breach of security
- Has possible implications for the reputation of the University
- Has very serious implications for an individual user
- Has Moderate Health and Safety implications
- In the opinion of the IT Help Desk Supervisor/Manager, warrants this priority

Response Target

To respond to 100% of incidents within 8 working hours

Resolution Target

To resolve 100% of incidents within 3 working days.

We shall be continually monitoring our performance to ensure we are meeting these targets.

Updates

Updates will be placed on the ‘Hot Issue Status’ page when the latest developments are reported to the IT Help Desk. This can be found at: [http://Help.Desk.ex.ac.uk/its/issues/issues.php](http://Help.Desk.ex.ac.uk/its/issues/issues.php) in conjunction with the Help Desk, the Incident Manager will co-ordinate notifications to key users (e.g. Senior Managers, School Managers/Head of Schools PAs).

Reminders

Four-hourly reminders will be sent to the person/or team handling the call to ensure that there is a response to the call. Automated reminders will be sent using our Help Desk software.

Escalation

The agreed escalation contact (relevant support Team Leader/Manager in Academic Services) will be informed when the eight working hour SLA target is reached to ensure the incident is treated as a priority. Notification will be automated using our Help Desk software.

Examples
- Server down that prevents users from being able to operate as normal/ inhibits their usual business process(es)
- Degradation of internet connectivity affecting a substantial amount of users (e.g. 50 users)
- Printer not working that affects many users without alternative printer available
- A staff member unable to send or receive vital work-related email
- Partial campus network unavailable in a building
- Client software/hardware failure with no alternative equipment available for use
- A key PC that is down and is used for teaching (such as a presenter’s PC affecting a substantial number of attendees (e.g. 50 users)
Priority Three

This represents the ‘typical’ incident, and should be the most frequently assigned priority.

Description

An incident that satisfies any of the following criteria:

- Prevents the use of any fully supported service by an individual
- Causes inconvenience to a small number of computer users, telephone or lecture attendees for Video Conferencing telematic lectures in a school or department
- Has possible implications for the reputation of the University
- Affects an individual user, who does not know how to proceed in a fully supported application
- Has minor Health and Safety implications

Response Target

To respond to 100% of incidents within 2 working days

Resolution Target

To resolve 100% of incidents within 7 working days.

We shall be continually monitoring our performance to ensure we are meeting these targets.

Updates

Users will be able to check the e-support system for any updates to the incident. Users can log into the e-support system at [http://Help Desk.ex.ac.uk/sw/esupport/login.php](http://Help Desk.ex.ac.uk/sw/esupport/login.php). Users are sent an email containing the call reference number and a web link to the e-support system which includes the call reference number.

Reminders

An automated reminder will be sent to the person handling the call at 8 working hours from receipt of the call to ensure that there is a response to the call.

Escalation

The relevant escalation contact (Team Supervisor/Manager supporting the service in Academic Services) will be informed after the target response time of 2 working days is reached to ensure the incident is treated as a priority. Notification will be automated using our Help Desk software.

Examples

- A user who is unable to configure ResNet correctly
- User out of file space
- Single telephone fault
- Single user cannot print
- User has forgotten password
Priority Four

This represents a minor incident.

Description

An incident that satisfies any of the following criteria:

- Causes inconvenience to an individual
- A "limited support" category, for example an external SLA for non-essential equipment

Response Target

To respond to 100% of incidents within 5 working days

Resolution Target

To resolve 100% of incidents within 25 working days.

We shall be continually monitoring our performance to ensure we are meeting these targets.

Updates

Users will be able to check the e-support system for any updates to the incident. Users are sent an email containing a web link to the e-support system.

Reminders

An automated reminder will be sent to the person handling the call at the 5 day target.

Escalation

If the call has been outstanding for 20 working days the agreed escalation contact (Team Leader/Manager- supporting the service in Academic Services) will be informed to ensure the incident is treated as a priority. Notification will be automated using our Help Desk software.

Examples

- A user who wants to format a Word document in a particular way, for purely aesthetic reasons
- A user having problems with a setting that is inconvenient but does not stop them working
- Problem with a single PC in a cluster
Priority Five

This represents a request that would benefit the user, but does not actually stop them from working. Alternatively it may be a service request which may involve a change to their IT service provision. This category may require the project team’s input as well as support teams to manage these requests.

Description

A request that satisfies any of the following criteria:-

- Requires software development or enhancement
- Upgrading existing hardware specification
- Providing access to new or additional IT services
- Involves the project and technical teams, e.g. request for new website functionality
- A requested timeframe for this request is implicit from the user

Target

For 100% of all such cases, the user will be informed within 20 working days whether Academic Services will be able to give assistance. A time will then be negotiated between the user and the person handling the call.

Updates

Users will be able to check the e-support system for any updates to the incident. Users are sent via email a web link to the e-support portal which includes the call reference number.

Reminders

An automated reminder will be sent to the person handling the call at 10 days.

Escalation

If the call has been outstanding for 15 working days, the agreed escalation contact (Team Leader/Manager- Supporting the service in Academic Services) will be informed. Notification will be automated using our Help Desk software. It will be decided whether we can assist further or will need to close the call. The user will be informed of the outcome.
Notes

Response Time

Response time commences from when a call is logged on our Help Desk system and a call reference number is allocated to the incident. At this point the call has been accepted by the IT Help Desk.

The response time frames apply to the standard University working hours only: Monday – Friday, 09:00-17:00. For example, if a Priority 3, (2 working days) call is received on Tuesday at 16:00, the target response time stated would be Thursday at 16:00.

Resolution Times

Resolution time commences from when a call is logged on our Help Desk system and a call reference number is allocated to the incident. At this point the call has been accepted by the IT Help Desk.

We aim to resolve all incidents on a permanent basis, however sometimes it is necessary to find an initial solution in order to maintain a service with a longer term solution following. For example if there was a faulty printer, an initial solution might be to borrow a printer that was not in use, the permanent solution would be to repair or replace. Resolution target times are therefore based on initial solution.

Where the solution is not permanent, analysts will update the call as resolved but not closed with a status of “on hold”, until the permanent fix is in place. For example, if a part for a printer was ordered, the call would not be closed until the part was installed and the printer was working.

Dependencies

All IT users are expected to act responsibly in their use of their PC, using adequate virus protection and to back up any important data files.

The following minimum level of information is required from the user before the response time clock can be started:

- Name
- Telephone number / (alternative phone number if there is a phone issue)
- Email (alternative email address if there is an email issue, if possible)
- Address/location
- For staff, the Service name or School will be requested
- Error message (if one appears)
- Problem description
- Relevant hardware/Operating System and software in use (if applicable)
- If PC related, serial and asset number
- If printer related, serial number/model number

If the above information relevant to the type of incident is not provided, the call may be placed on hold, and the response time clock will be suspended.

Exceptions

At their discretion, the IT Help Desk Supervisor/Manager or relevant management personnel may amend the priority of call that is logged.
Often calls can be responded to quicker than the target times but there will be occasions when targets will be missed. In particular:

- Where a particular Academic Service is supported by a single member of staff who is absent
- During holiday times where staff holidays affect the ability of Academic Services to respond to calls
- During very busy times of the year (such as the first few weeks of the Autumn term) when the sheer number of calls can cause delays
- Contact and response times may depend on the availability of the network, email, e-Support and telephone system
- Where a response requires information/support from external vendors
- If a major system fails, and a full recovery is evoked, restoration of service will depend on the length of time needed to restore data (which could be up to 12 hours).

Wherever possible, IT Help Desk staff will inform users if it is likely that the call cannot be dealt within the target times and the reason for this.

If it is necessary to ask the user for more information in order to answer the call, it will be marked as "on hold" and the response time clock will be suspended until the user makes contact again.

When assigning priorities to calls we will have regard to any existing internal/external Service Level Agreements between Academic Services and various Schools/Professional Services and external suppliers.

Support, and therefore response times will only apply to University supported software and hardware. On occasion the IT Help Desk will log calls for unsupported services and pass these to relevant personnel. These will be marked as ‘Unsupported’ and there is no associated response or resolution times for this category.