Critical Functions

What is a Critical Function?
A critical function is a service or a collection of services normally performed by a department or unit that must continue at a sufficient level without interruption or restart within given timeframes (within the first 30 days) after a disruption to the service.

If a given critical function isn't available at a sufficient level within the resumption timeframe, the campus community risks direct and immediate adverse effect(s) in terms of: loss of life, personal injury, loss of property, and/or the University's ability to maintain direction, control of, or accountability for instruction, research or service essential to its mission.

A function is critical if it:
- Preserves life, prevents injury, or protects property.
- Provides indispensable support for provision of other critical functions.
- Is required by law or regulatory authority.
- It must be continued under all circumstances (Cannot suffer a significant interruption).
- Directs or controls instruction or research (Be thoughtful about determining if a function is directing or controlling these services).
- It provides vital support to another department, unit, or organization.

Four Principles of Critical Functions
- All university functions are necessary: ***some* are critical**.
- A critical function is a unit activity or service, not a unit name, not an object.
- A critical function is comprised of several—perhaps many—processes and almost never is comprised of a single process.
- A critical function is a high-value activity, or an activity set that is normally performed by your unit and must be available at a sufficient level within 30 days or less if a negative event affects the campus.

Tips for Determining Critical Functions/Services
Determining critical functions can be a challenge. Over inclusion can result in a burdensome, costly plan, while under inclusion may render a plan ineffective.

When determining a unit's critical functions: Identify them in terms of function and services, *not processes.*
Examples of functions:
1. Provide undergraduate instruction
2. Pay employees
3. Provide parking for vehicles
4. Convey outgoing mail
5. Ensure restroom access
6. Provide meals for residents of university housing

Processes are the steps needed to accomplish a function. For example, "food buying", "food storage", "cooking", "serving", and "clean-up" are processes, *but the function they accomplish is* "providing meals for residents of university housing."

- ✓ Consider a function as critical if it has a direct and immediate effect on the campus community in terms of loss of life, personal injury, loss of property.
- ✓ Consider a function as critical if it has a direct and immediate effect on the University's ability to maintain direction and control of instruction, research, and/or mission-critical services at sufficient levels if not continued or restarted in the shortest amount of time possible and within no more than 30 days.

- ✓ As a rule of thumb, consider a function "critical" if it is essential for teaching or research. More specifically, a critical function is likely one that must be re-started during the first 30 days post-disaster to enable instruction or research to re-start or continue.

- ✓ Consider indirect relationships. Many functions have only an indirect relationship to instruction or research. Nevertheless, these functions may be critical if their cessation would have a significant negative impact on the campus's ability to carry out instruction or research.

- ✓ Set the bar high when determining what is critical. For example, visualize department team members performing a function while working in a large tent with a few computers on extension cords, and question whether they really need to be doing this function.

Determining recovery priorities for the University

Categorize each critical function along a continuum from Critical to Deferrable.

Levels of Criticality following disaster or an emergency:

Critical
Must be continued at normal or increased service load. Cannot pause. Necessary to life, health, security.
Examples: Maintain campus emergency web presence, police services, conduct hazardous waste materials response, etc.
Duration: Less than 4 hours and up to 8 hours.

Priority
Must be continued if possible, perhaps in reduced mode. Pausing completely will have grave consequences.
Examples: Provide back-up facilities for housing, functioning of data networks, deliver instruction, at risk research, maintain campus phone system, administer campus email system, conduct purchasing of campus goods or supplies, etc.
Duration: Less than 24 hours and up to 72 hours.

Important
May pause if forced to do so but stopping for a week may cause major disruption. Must resume in 30 days or sooner.
Examples: Research, payroll, course scheduling/room assignments, student advising, etc.
Duration: 4 to 7 days as a target but less than 30 days maximum.

Deferrable: May pause; resume when conditions permit.
Examples: Routine building maintenance, training, marketing, delivery of conferences or special events.
Duration: Greater than 30 days.