RANCHO SANTIAGO
Community College District

Information Technology Services

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

HELPDESK TICKETING WORKFLOW

REVISION: 1.1

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1. Introduction

Providing the best ITS support to RSCCD users requires operational standardization for handling user requests. The Helpdesk performs several tasks throughout the lifecycle of a ticket. A standard Helpdesk workflow increases efficiency, removes redundancy and eliminates rework.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to ensure consistency of Helpdesk ticket processing across all ITS areas, from ticket creation to closure.

3. Scope

This procedure applies to all Helpdesk tickets regardless of entry point.

4. Definitions

   a.   Helpdesk ticket: A request created in the ticketing system used by ITS to track work.
   b.   Contact Name: The end user's name.
   c.   Building/Room: The location where the user is having the issue or where the request needs to be fulfilled.
   d.   Ticket escalation: The process by which an issue or request is reassigned to a different technician, who has the responsibility to resolve the issue.
   e.   Client: The requestor/initiator of a ticket. This could be the end user.

5. Responsibility

All members of ITS who assign and process tickets are responsible for following this procedure. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Helpdesk Specialists
- Executive Secretary
- Network Specialists
- Technical Specialists
- Applications Specialists
- Business Systems Analysts
- ITS Department Directors
- Assistant Vice Chancellor of ITS

ITS Department Directors and the Assistant Vice Chancellor of ITS are responsible for the following:

- Designating tickets that are projects and managing workloads.
- Disseminating and enforcing the use of this procedure.
- Approving any future changes to this procedure.

6. Procedure

1. Ticket Creation

a. The Helpdesk should be the central point of contact for all ITS related issues, requests, questions, problems and projects.

  i. Having clients communicating directly with ITS technicians to get resolution is discouraged, unless there is an existing ticket already open.

    1. When required, technicians shall use the following wording in writing to redirect requestors to use the Helpdesk system:
    "Thank you for your message. Please forward your request to the ITS Helpdesk at helpdesk@rsccd.edu, so that we can better serve you. Doing this will ensure that there is a ticket number associated with your request that we can properly track and that there are resources available to address your needs. Having a ticket number associated with your request is the best way to get timely resolution.
    Thank you"

b. No work should be performed without a ticket created.

  i. Work may be initiated in the event of a production down (aka Urgent) emergency without a ticket, but a ticket should be created by the technician before the end of the workday.

  ii. An Urgent ticket would meet one or more of the following criteria:

    1. Situations that would prevent an instructor from facilitating instruction in a classroom, lab, lecture, or presentation setting. Examples would include instructor computer not functioning, or being unable to use an instructor computer or being unable to login; projector or media equipment not functioning; network connectivity issues; hardware or software issues.
    2. Requests generated by HR that require a higher level of confidentiality.
    3. Security Events (e.g., phishing emails, information security issues)
    4. System outages (e.g., network, application, internet access)

c. The entry points for user contact that lead to ticket creation are the following:

  i. The ticketing system's web user interface
  ii. Phone calls to the Helpdesk
  iii. Voicemails on the Helpdesk line
  iv. Emails to the Helpdesk

d. The following is the **minimum information** that needs to be entered when creating a new ticket:

  i. Contact Name
  ii. Contact Phone
  iii. Email address
  iv. Campus/Building/Room
  v. Description of issue or request

vi. Either the WebAdvisor ID or Colleague ID (This is only a required field if the ticket requires changes to be done to an account, such as access requests, security or permissions changes)

e. The following individuals are responsible to obtain information in point 1.d.:

   i. Tickets opened by clients through the ticketing system's web user interface:
   1. The end user/client. The information in point 1.d. is required in the system. The system will not allow a client to create a ticket without providing this data.

   ii. Tickets opened through all other sources (Phone calls to the Helpdesk, Emails to the Helpdesk, Voice mails on the Helpdesk line, walk-ups):
   1. As the central point of contact, Helpdesk staff members are responsible to capture the minimum information required before opening a ticket.
   2. For Voice mails on the Helpdesk line, Helpdesk staff members should also transcribe the description of the issue or request into text within the ticket.
   3. If ITS resources, other than Helpdesk staff members, are creating tickets for end users/clients due to walk-ups or situations in which the Helpdesk is not contacted first, those ITS resources will be responsible for completing the required information before opening a ticket.
   4. If a ticket is created by any ITS staff members by sending an email to the Helpdesk email address, the email must include all the information required in point 1.d..
   5. Whoever is opening the ticket needs to ensure that the client is properly selected within the ticketing system, particularly in situations where ITS staff are opening tickets on behalf of somebody else.
      a. The client should always be the person who has the issue or request, not the ITS member opening a ticket on their behalf.

f. Handling deviations if all information required in point 1.d. is not obtained:

   i. No ticket should be opened or assigned without all the minimum information in point 1.d.. recorded within it. However, if deviations occur, the following steps should be taken:
   1. Tickets opened by clients through the ticketing system's web user interface:
      a. These tickets should always have the minimum information required in them. The system will not allow a client to create a ticket without providing this data.
      b. Any deviations should be escalated to the appropriate ITS Manager, as they would imply a Helpdesk system configuration issue.
   2. Tickets opened through all other sources (Phone calls to the Helpdesk, Emails to the Helpdesk, Voice mails on the Helpdesk line, walk-ups):

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a. If ITS members are assigned tickets that are missing any of the minimum information in point 1.d., they shall send the ticket back to the ITS staff member that assigned the ticket to gather the minimum information required before re-assigning the ticket.

b. If ITS resources, other than Helpdesk staff members are creating tickets for end users/clients, they will be responsible for completing the information in point 1.d.

g. Individuals responsible for completing request type, status and priority fields during initial ticket creation:

   i. Tickets opened by clients through the ticketing system's web user interface:

      1. The client fills out the initial request type.

      2. Helpdesk staff members are responsible to refine/correct the request type if deemed incorrect and complete the status and priority fields.

   ii. Tickets opened through all other sources (Phone calls to the Helpdesk, Emails to the Helpdesk, Voice mails on the Helpdesk line, walk-ups):

      1. Helpdesk staff members shall set the initial request type, status and priority.

      2. If ITS resources, other than Helpdesk staff members are creating tickets for end users/clients, they are responsible for completing the request type, status and priority fields.

h. If the information obtained in point 1.d. was incorrect, or the ticket requires another team member to work on it in addition to the original technician, ticket updates and re-assignments shall be done by the currently assigned technician.

      1. If the information in point 1.d. is unknown, or if the assigned technician is not certain who the ticket should be assigned to, the ticket should be forwarded back to the Helpdesk staff members for assistance.

i. Only one Helpdesk ticket should be created per unique issue.

   i. If multiple tickets are created for the same issue for the same client, only the original ticket should be referenced; any duplicate tickets should be merged into the original ticket by the assigned technician of the original ticket.

   ii. If multiple tickets are created for the same issue by different clients, this could be indicative of a system-wide problem. In this case, any duplicate tickets should be merged into an original ticket by Helpdesk staff members and assigned to a technician. A general email announcement should be sent out by Helpdesk staff members to inform people ITS is working towards resolution of the problem. Once service has been restored, the assigned technician must inform Helpdesk staff members. Helpdesk staff members should then send another announcement confirming resolution.

iii. If a ticket contains two or more unique issues, a new ticket should be created for each unique issue, at the discretion of the assigned technician of the original ticket.

iv. If a ticket was recently marked as resolved, and then reopened by the end user/client, the assigned technician should continue to work on it until it is resolved to the client's satisfaction.

1. If the end user/client re-opened a resolved ticket to request additional work for another unique issue, the assigned technician should request that the client create a new ticket.

2. Initial Ticket Assignment

a. How to recognize who to assign a ticket to:
   i. All ITS teams have support matrices that have been made available to Helpdesk staff members for ticket assignment guidance.
   ii. The Applications team has a defined auto assignment process within the ticketing system based on the request type chosen. This team also has a support matrix that has been made available to Helpdesk staff members for guidance.
   iii. All other issues should be assigned based on location, request type and role matrices.

b. In general, ticket loads should be properly balanced, so that no single technician is overloaded with tickets.
   i. Using round robin assignments, where skillsets allow it, is encouraged.

3. Ticket Reassignment

a. Handling incorrect initial ticket assignments/reassignments:
   i. Whoever has the ticket assigned should attempt to reassign it to the appropriate technician.
      1. If it is uncertain who the ticket should go to, the corresponding ITS manager should be consulted for guidance.
      2. If the ITS manager is unavailable, the ticket should be re-assigned back to a Helpdesk staff member for reassignment.

b. A minimum number of notes are required to be added to the ticket, before reassignment:
   i. Steps taken towards resolution, if any.
   ii. Any additional information gathered.
   iii. Any contact attempts made by the assigned technician (e.g., via email, phone call, in-person conversation) should be noted, if applicable.
   iv. If ticket was assigned incorrectly, an internal note detailing the fact that the ticket was not assigned to the right resource. This note shall not be visible to clients.

v. If a ticket is being reassigned as part of a request that has multiple components, provide enough detail on remaining work and request the technician to reassign the ticket, as needed, once their portion is complete.

c. Minimum steps required before reassigning a ticket:
 i. Complete the notes in step 3.b. above.
 ii. ITS staff members should reassign the ticket to the appropriate technician if they know who it is. Otherwise, they should send the ticket back to a Helpdesk staff member to reassign the issue.

4. Ticket Escalation

a. Process for escalating a ticket to a different team or team member:
 i. Before a ticket can be escalated, the following needs to occur:
  1. Detailed notes on the steps taken towards resolution must be added to the ticket.
  2. A reason why the escalation is required needs to be provided as part of the ticket notes.
  3. Any additional information gathered that can be useful for the technician to whom the issue is being escalated to.
  4. If the technician knows who to escalate to, assign the ticket accordingly.
  5. If the technician does not know who to escalate to, the corresponding ITS manager should be consulted for guidance.
   a. If the ITS manager is unavailable, the ticket should be re-assigned back to a Helpdesk staff member for reassignment.
  6. Escalating technicians should make themselves available to discuss or troubleshoot with the technician that the issue is escalated to, as required, for speedy resolution.

5. Ticket Follow-Up

a. The assigned technician must contact the end user/client making the request, to fully understand, clarify, or corroborate the nature of the request or incident.

b. Communicating with end users/clients and colleagues frequently, timely and professionally is extremely important. During the lifecycle of an open ticket, the assigned technician should keep any affected end users/clients (i.e., the ticket creator or requestor) appraised on the status of the ticket.
 i. After a ticket has been worked on, the assigned technician must always include updates to the ticket.
  1. Updates should go to the client who opened the ticket, and any other end users and/or technicians affected by the ticket.
  2. Updates may include:

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a. Detailed steps being taken towards the resolution of the issue, contact attempts made, and/or an expectation of when the issue will be resolved.

b. If the assigned technician tries standard methods to resolve an issue and they are unsuccessful, the technician must enter additional notes to clarify the new method that resolves the issue. These notes would serve as a reference if another technician is faced with the same issue in the future.

3. All updates or contact attempts made to end users/clients should be included in the ticket itself.

a. Any relevant communication made via other forms of communication other than the ticket system (e.g., email, phone conversations, in-person talks) should be forwarded to or recorded in the ticket.

c. Tickets must not be opened for more than 2 business weeks without an update.

i. Tickets that reach this status should be followed up on by the assigned technician as soon as possible.

ii. If the ticket has already been resolved by the assigned technician but is still marked as open, refer to the "Ticket Resolution" procedure in point 6.a.

iii. If the ticket is pending a response from a client, refer to the "Unresponsive client procedure" in point 6.b.

iv. If the ticket is pending a response from the assigned technician, and/or the ticket has been flagged as pending or on hold, then the assigned technician should provide an update on the current status of the ticket, as per point 5 in this section.

6. Ticket Status

a. New: This is the default status for all tickets.

b. Assigned to Tech: This status should be used whenever a technician has been assigned a ticket and is actively working on it.

c. Pending: This status should be used if ITS is waiting for end user/client feedback only.

d. On hold: This status should be used if ITS is waiting for feedback from a third party, equipment, internal responses from another ITS team or anything other than an end user's/client's feedback.

e. Resolved: See section 7.

f. Closed: This status is automatically driven from the "Resolved" status and should not be manually selected by technicians.

g. Reopened: This status is automatically driven from the "Resolved" status and should not be manually selected by technicians.

7. Ticket Closure

    a. Ticket Resolution procedure.

        i. When technicians complete the required work, they should change the ticket status to "Resolved."

        ii. The "Resolved" status provides the client 24 business hours to respond confirming the issue is resolved. If no response is received within that time, the ticket will automatically change its status to "Closed."

        iii. Detailed steps taken to resolve the issue must be added as ticket notes before a ticket can be marked as "Resolved."

        iv. If applicable, the assigned technician should include specific notes on what was done to *test* the resolution, prior to marking the ticket as "Resolved."

    b. Unresponsive end user/client procedure.

        i. If an end user/client is unresponsive, preventing a ticket from moving forward, assigned technicians should:

            1. Send a note to the end user/client via the ticket, requesting the feedback/information required to move forward.

            2. If there is no answer after **5 business days**, provide the following note to the end user/client via the ticket:

                "We have not heard from you regarding this ticket. ITS is unable to move forward until we receive your feedback. Please respond at your earliest convenience."

            3. If there is no answer after **5 additional business days**, provide the following note to the client:

                "We have been unable to reach you. We understand you may not be available to work on this ticket at this time. We are marking this ticket as resolved. If you still need assistance, you can reply to this ticket within 3 business days, so that it is automatically re-opened. If you need further assistance after this timeframe, please open a new ticket"

                Note: The ticketing systems allows sending the standard responses above through the click of a button. Technicians should use this method to complete the notification requirements in this section for ease of use and consistency. Refer to ['Web Help Desk - Unresponsive Client Reply Bulk Actions'](#) document for instructions on this process.

                The technician must set the ticket status to "resolved."

            4. The "resolved" status provides the client **24 business hours** to respond confirming the issue is resolved. If no response is received within that time, the ticket auto closes.
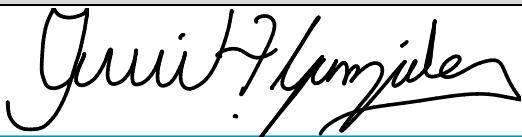
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1.2	Jesse Gonzalez	Updated as per approved comments from SOP review on 9/13/19
1.3	B. Dane Clacken	Updated document with link to the Web Help Desk – Unresponsive Client Reply Bulk Actions document

Approvals

This document has been approved by:

Title	Signature and Date
Assistant Vice Chancellor of ITS District Office	Jesse Gonzalez (Dec 4, 2019)
Director Academic and End User Support Services Santa Ana College	Michael Hoang (Dec 9, 2019)
Director Academic and End User Support Services Santiago Canyon College	Jesse Gonzalez
Director Technology Infrastructure and Support Services District Office	B. Dane Clacken (Dec 8, 2019)
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