URI ServiceNow

Information Technology

Service Management

(ITSM)

Governance Framework

URI ServiceNow Support Team

Table of Contents

1. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Item	Details
Document Title	ServiceNow ITSM Governance Framework
Organization	University of Rhode Island – Information Technology Services
Version	2.0
Date Published	[DATE]
Last Updated	[DATE]
Document Owner	Director of ITSM Administration
Review Cycle	Annually (next review: [DATE])
Approval Authority	Executive Governance Board, CIO

1.1 Version History

Version	Date	Author	Changes
1.0	October 2023	ServiceNow Implementation Team	Initial governance framework
2.0	March 2026	ServiceNow Support Team	Comprehensive revision with expanded sections, roles matrix, and additional policies

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document establishes the governance framework for ServiceNow ITSM (IT Service Management) at the University of Rhode Island. The framework defines decision-making authority, responsibilities, processes, and oversight mechanisms to ensure the effective, secure, and strategic deployment of ServiceNow services across the university community.

Key Objectives:

- Align ServiceNow investments with university and Information Technology Services (ITS) strategic goals.
- Ensure transparent decision-making and resource allocation.
- Maintain technical excellence and system security.
- Facilitate effective communication across IT and business stakeholders.
- Support adoption and drive value realization.

3. Overview

3.1 What is ServiceNow Governance?

Governance is the framework for how decisions regarding implementation, new services, and modifications to services are made. This includes:

- Overall strategic direction and planning
- Development of the ServiceNow Portfolio
- Staffing and resource commitment
- Technical platform decisions
- Operational policies and standards
- Budget allocation and prioritization

3.2 Governance Objectives

The ServiceNow governance structure at URI is designed to:

1. **Provide Strategic Direction** – Ensure ServiceNow investments align with university mission and goals
2. **Enable Effective Decision-Making** – Create clear authority structures and decision processes
3. **Optimize Resource Utilization** – Prioritize requests and allocate resources efficiently
4. **Maintain Quality & Security** – Enforce standards and protect data and system integrity
5. **Support Continuous Improvement** – Monitor performance and adapt processes as needed
6. **Foster Collaboration** – Engage stakeholders across IT and business areas
7. **Ensure Scalability** – Plan for growth and new service offerings

3.3 Scope

This governance framework applies to:

- All ServiceNow ITSM implementations at URI
- All development, configuration, and customization activities
- All users, developers, and support personnel
- All processes managed through ServiceNow
- Both current and future ServiceNow services and modules

---

4. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OVERVIEW

4.1 Two-Board Model

The ServiceNow governance structure consists of two complementary boards:

Executive Governance Board (Strategy & Resources)

- Focus: Strategic direction, budget, resource allocation, business alignment
- Cadence: Semi-Annual (ad-hoc as needed)
- Scope: Portfolio-level decisions

Platform Governance Board (Technical & Operations)

- Focus: Technical architecture, standards, implementation sequencing, operational excellence
- Cadence: Bi-weekly
- Scope: Platform-level decisions

5. EXECUTIVE GOVERNANCE BOARD

5.1 Charter & Authority

Charter Document: See Appendix C – Executive Governance Board Charter (Draft)

The Executive Governance Board serves as the strategic decision-making body for ServiceNow ITSM at URI. It has authority to:

- Establish ServiceNow strategic vision and objectives
- Approve portfolio-level initiatives and roadmap
- Allocate budget and resources
- Resolve strategic conflicts and escalations
- Monitor benefits realization and ROI
- Interface with university leadership

5.2 Membership & Composition

Permanent Members:

- Chief Information Officer (Chair)
- ITS Associate CIO
- Director of Service Administration
- All members of the Platform Governance Board

Member Selection Criteria:

- Represents strategic interests of their area
- Authority to commit resources
- Understanding of ServiceNow capabilities
- Commitment to balanced scorecard approach
- Stakeholders currently implementing or planning to implement within 6-12 months

5.3 Responsibilities & Decisions

Strategic Questions:

- What services from ServiceNow does URI need?
- How can ServiceNow meet the strategy and vision of university leadership?
- What actions can the Executive Board take to ensure implementation of strategy?

Key Responsibilities:

1. **Define Vision & Strategy**
    - Establish short and long-term ServiceNow vision
    - Align with university strategic plan
    - Communicate vision to the university, ITS and other departments
2. **Strategic Prioritization**
    - Evaluate requests against strategic criteria
    - Set annual portfolio priorities
    - Balance competing demands
3. **Budget & Resource Allocation**
    - Allocate annual budgets
    - Approve staffing levels
    - Fund strategic initiatives
4. **Governance & Oversight**
    - Resolve escalations
    - Monitor program performance
    - Ensure compliance with policies
5. **Stakeholder Engagement**
    - Advocate for ServiceNow adoption
    - Communicate decisions and rationale
    - Build organizational support
6. **Benefits Realization**
    - Define success metrics
    - Monitor value delivery
    - Adjust strategy as needed

5.4 Meeting Cadence & Procedures

Frequency: Semi-Annual and ad-hoc if needed

Meetings May Also Occur:

- Ad-hoc for escalations
- Email-based decisions between regular meetings
- Emergency sessions for urgent matters

Meeting Duration: 60-90 minutes

Meeting Agenda Items (Standard):

- Strategic updates and alignment
- Portfolio status and performance
- Budget and resource discussions
- Risk and escalation review
- Benefits realization update
- Platform Board coordination items

Preparation & Documentation:

- Agenda shared at least 1 day prior
- Background materials distributed at least 1 day prior
- Minutes recorded and published to Board, shared more widely as needed
- Action items tracked and reported
- Decisions documented with rationale

Quorum: Majority of permanent members present

---

6. PLATFORM GOVERNANCE BOARD

6.1 Charter & Authority

Charter Document: See Appendix D – Platform Governance Board Charter (Draft)

The Platform Governance Board serves as the technical decision-making and design authority for ServiceNow ITSM at URI. It has authority to:

- Establish technical standards and policies
- Approve technical designs and configurations
- Prioritize development requests
- Set implementation sequencing and roadmap
- Approve developer access and roles
- Enforce platform quality and upgradeability

6.2 Membership & Composition

Permanent Core Members:

- All members of the ServiceNow Support Team:
    - Director of Service Administration (Chair)
    - Support Team Manager/Lead
    - All Administrators
    - Platform Architect(s)

Member Selection Criteria:

- Subject matter expertise in assigned area
- Responsibility for ServiceNow Operations, implementations and communicating capabilities for ServiceNow
- Technical decision-making authority
- Commitment to monthly participation
- Knowledge of operational platforms, both front and back-end
- Knowledge of stakeholder and customer use cases within ServiceNow

6.3 Responsibilities & Decisions

Technical Questions:

- What do we need to deliver for services?
- What modules do we implement to support strategy and needs?
- How are we securing and strengthening our environments?
- What technical requirements need to be delivered to maintain services?

Key Responsibilities:

1. **Technical Design Authority**
    - Review and approve technical designs
    - Ensure alignment with standards
    - Prevent conflicting implementations
    - Maintain architectural integrity
2. **Standards & Policies Development**
    - Create and maintain technical standards
    - Develop naming conventions
    - Establish security requirements
    - Define data governance rules
    - Document best practices
3. **Request Prioritization**
    - Triage incoming requests
    - Evaluate scope and complexity
    - Prioritize against strategic direction
    - Assess resource impact
4. **Roadmap & Sequencing**
    - Define implementation sequence
    - Plan release cycles
    - Coordinate dependencies
    - Manage upgrade schedule
5. **Quality & Performance**
    - Monitor system performance
    - Address technical issues

- Manage technical debt
- Ensure upgradeability

6. **Collaboration with Executive Board**

    - Provide technical perspective on strategic decisions
    - Present platform capabilities
    - Identify technical constraints
    - Recommend strategic adjustments

6.4 Meeting Cadence & Procedures

Frequency: Bi-weekly

Meeting Duration: 45-90 minutes

Meeting Agenda Items (Standard):

- Platform status and health
- In-progress projects and risks
- Request review and prioritization
- Standards and policies updates
- Release planning and upgrades
- Technical debt assessment
- Performance metrics review
- Executive Board coordination items

Preparation & Documentation:

- Agenda published 1 business days prior
- Status reports available in Project Tracking Site
- Notes recorded and published to team, available as required
- Decisions documented with technical rationale
- Action items tracked with owners
- Escalations identified for Executive Board

Quorum: Majority of standing members present

7. INFORMATION FLOW & COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

7.1 Executive Board to Platform Board

Information Shared:

- Strategic direction and vision statements
- Portfolio prioritization decisions
- Budget allocation guidance
- University development plans requiring ServiceNow
- Policy changes from senior leadership
- External strategic drivers

Communication Method:

- Meeting minutes from Executive Board
- Strategic summary documents
- Email notifications of significant decisions
- Quarterly formal briefings

Timing: Within 5 business days of Executive Board decision

Responsibility: Executive Board Chair (with support from CIO)

7.2 Platform Board to Executive Board

Information Shared:

- Platform capabilities and constraints
- Technical feasibility assessments
- Implementation roadmap and timelines
- Risk assessments and mitigation plans
- Performance metrics and dashboards
- Recommendations on strategic requests

Communication Method:

- Meeting minutes from Platform Board
- Technical summary documents
- Performance dashboards
- Quarterly formal briefings

Timing: As needed; formal reports quarterly

Responsibility: Platform Board Chair (with CIO representative)

7.3 Both Boards to Organization

Information Shared:

- Meeting minutes and decisions
- Strategic direction and roadmap
- Request status and prioritization
- Performance metrics
- Policy updates
- Training and communication

Communication Method:

- Published meeting minutes
- ServiceNow community portal
- Email updates
- Town halls and webinars
- Intranet/shared drives

Frequency: Quarterly minimum; monthly for updates

Responsibility: Executive Board Chair and Platform Board Chair

---

8. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles guide all ServiceNow governance decisions and actions:

8.1 Strategic Alignment

- All ServiceNow investments align with university strategic plan
- Portfolio prioritization reflects institutional priorities
- Services enable university mission accomplishment

8.2 Business-Driven Approach

- Business needs drive technical decisions
- Solutions solve real problems for real users
- Value delivery measured in business outcomes

8.3 Maximize Delivered Functionality

- Remain as close to "out-of-the-box" functionality as possible
- Minimize custom development and technical debt
- Leverage platform capabilities before customization
- Prioritize configuration over code

8.4 Transparency & Collaboration

- All governance decisions are transparent and documented
- Regular communication with stakeholders
- Collaborative approach to problem-solving
- Open dialogue about constraints and trade-offs

8.5 Quality & Excellence

- High standards for security, performance, and usability
- Continuous improvement mindset
- Testing and validation rigorously applied
- Technical debt actively managed

8.6 Scalability & Sustainability

- Plan for growth and future capabilities
- Support long-term maintenance and evolution

- Invest in skills and knowledge
- Document decisions and rationale

8.7 Security & Compliance

- Security integrated into all processes
- Data privacy and protection paramount
- Compliance with university policies and regulations
- Regular security assessments
- Review and apply monthly Security patches
    - ServiceNow automatically applies all critical security updates

8.8 Resource Optimization

- Efficient use of limited resources
- Prioritize high-impact initiatives
- Shared services where appropriate
- Avoid duplication and fragmentation

8.9 Continuous Learning

- Invest in staff development and training
- Share knowledge across teams
- Learn from industry best practices
- Adapt and improve processes regularly

---

9. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

9.1 Application Ownership Model

9.1.1 Overview

At URI, the App Owner model in ServiceNow is a governance and accountability framework that assigns specific individuals or roles—known as Application Owners—to oversee individual ServiceNow applications or modules (such as Incident Management, Change Management, or Asset Management). This model enables teams and individuals to use ServiceNow as a platform to carry out their operational work, while being supported by a dedicated platform team that ensures the overall stability and integrity of the system.

9.1.2 For details, see ServiceNow Knowledge Base Article KB0010410

9.2 Data Management and Retention in ServiceNow Policy

9.2.1 Overview

This Data Management Plan (DMP) outlines how data is collected, categorized, retained, and disposed of within the ServiceNow platform, ensuring integrity, security, and regulatory compliance across the University of Rhode Island ITS Department.

9.2.2 For details, see ServiceNow Knowledge Base Article KB0010493

9.3 Assignment Group Naming Convention and Design Guidance

9.3.1 Overview

In ServiceNow, an assignment group is a collection of users responsible for handling and resolving tickets (incidents, requests, changes) within a specific application or service area. When tickets are created, they are routed to an assignment group rather than individual users, ensuring work is distributed among qualified team members. Assignment groups shall follow a standardized naming convention using the format “Service Area – Role/Level” (ex. eCampus - Financial Systems Support) to ensure consistency and clarity across the organization. This standardized approach ensures efficient ticket routing, clear accountability, compliance with ITIL best practices, and support for organizational scalability.

9.3.2 Guidance

Naming Convention:

Use the format [Service Area]-[Role/Level] (e.g., eCampus – Financial Systems Support) for consistency and clarity.

Design Structure:

- Organize groups primarily by service area
- Keep group size between 3-8 members
- Limit hierarchy to maximum 3 levels
- Establish clear escalation paths (Level1 → Level2 → Manager)

Best Practices:

- Assign a dedicated group owner for each group
- Document group purpose, applications covered, and membership criteria
- Implement assignment rules to automate ticket routing by application keywords and categories
- Conduct quarterly reviews of group membership and effectiveness
- Enable audit logging to track all group modifications
- Remove inactive users regularly

9.4 Development Standards & Best Practices

9.4.1 Development Philosophy

The overriding principle is to remain as close as possible to ServiceNow delivered functionality without custom development.

Hierarchy of Solutions:

1. **Use Delivered Functionality** – Leverage out-of-the-box ServiceNow features
2. **Configure & Customize** – Use configuration tools (not code) when possible
3. **Extend with Platform Tools** – Use ServiceNow development platform capabilities
4. **Custom Development** – Only when above options insufficient (Last Resort)

9.4.2 Naming Conventions

To be defined by SNT and Platform Governance Board

Naming conventions cover:

- Variable and field naming
- Form and table naming
- Workflow naming
- Integration naming
- Custom table naming

9.4.3 Code Standards

To be defined by SNT and Platform Governance Board

Standards cover:

- Code formatting and commenting
- Error handling
- Logging standards
- Performance requirements
- Security practices
- Reusability and modularity

9.4.4 Documentation Requirements

All development must include:

- Design documentation
- Functional specifications
- Technical architecture
- Test cases and results
- Deployment instructions
- Support/operational procedures
- Known limitations and issues

9.5 ServiceNow Environments – Description & Usage

9.5.1 Environment Overview

URI maintains four (4) separate ServiceNow environments supporting different lifecycle stages:

Environment	ServiceNow Name	Developer Access	Admin Access	Purpose
Sandbox	Dev	Open to IT-All	SNT, CIO	Experimentation, proof of concept, learning; no migration to other environments
Development	Dev2	SNT, CIO, Approved Citizens	SNT, CIO	Approved project development with unit and integrated testing
Quality Assurance	Test	SNT, CIO	SNT, CIO	Final QA testing with production-like environment; end-user approval
Production	Prod	No development	SNT, CIO	Live environment; migration only from QA

9.5.2 Sandbox Environment (Dev)

Purpose: Learning, experimentation, and proof of concept

Characteristics:

- Open developer access to all IT staff
- Administrative access restricted to SNT and CIO
- All work is educational and experimental
- Not connected to production data or systems
- No migration of work to other environments
- All changes considered "throw-away"

Usage Guidelines:

- Try new ServiceNow features and modules

- Develop proof of concepts
- Training and skill development
- Experimentation with configurations
- Testing ideas before formal project proposals

Refresh Schedule: As needed; typically quarterly

Data Policy: No sensitive data; test data only

9.5.3 Development Environment (Dev2)

Purpose: Approved project development with testing

Characteristics:

- Developer access limited to SNT
- Administrative access restricted to SNT and CIO
- Only approved projects implemented
- Access provisioned by SNT based on project needs
- Unit and integrated testing responsibility of developer
- Approval required before migration to QA

Usage Guidelines:

- Development of approved service implementations
- Unit testing of features
- Integrated testing with related systems
- Customizations and extensions meeting requirements
- Documentation and design work

Refresh Schedule: Quarterly with production updates; may be reset between major projects

Data Policy: Test/sanitized data; no production data

9.5.4 Quality Assurance Environment (Test)

Purpose: Final testing and end-user approval

Characteristics:

- Mirrors production environment as closely as possible
- Developer access limited to SNT
- Administrative access restricted to SNT and CIO
- No development work (configuration only by SNT)
- Migrations handled exclusively by SNT
- Testing includes unit, integrated, and user acceptance testing
- Requestor/end users perform final approval

Usage Guidelines:

- End-user acceptance testing (UAT)
- Final validation of requirements
- Performance testing
- Security validation
- Training and documentation validation

Migration Process:

- SNT migrates approved update sets from Dev2
- Developers do not have direct access to QA
- Testing performed by SNT and requestor
- Issues tracked and resolved
- Approval documented before production migration

Refresh Schedule: Synchronized with production; updated with each production deployment

Data Policy: Production-like data; may contain recent production data sanitized per policies

9.5.5 Production Environment (Prod)

Purpose: Live service delivery

Characteristics:

- No development work permitted
- Migration only from QA
- Administrative access restricted to SNT and CIO

- Accessed by all URI community members
- Monitored for performance and security
- Change management controls enforced
- Regular backup and disaster recovery procedures

Usage Guidelines:

- Live service consumption by end users
- Production support and maintenance
- Real data and transactions
- SLA-based response times
- Monitored and secured

Access Policy:

- No direct development
- No sandbox/test work
- Production support only
- Administrative functions for SNT/CIO only
- End-user access by role and entitlements

---

10. DEVELOPMENT PROCESS & LIFECYCLE

10.1 Development Proposals

10.1.1 Project Proposal Requirements

All development projects must be proposed and documented before beginning work. This ensures that requirements are clear, scope is defined, and governance processes are followed.

10.1.2 Proposal Components

Using the template in **Appendix B**, proposals must address:

1. Service Strategy

- Project title and objectives
- Expected outcomes and benefits
- Key stakeholders
- Service scope definition

2. Service Design

- Process flows and diagrams
- Forms and pages involved
- Service level agreements (SLAs)
- Key performance indicators (KPIs)

3. Service Transition (Implementation)

- Implementation approach
- Testing strategy
- Training plan
- Rollout schedule

4. Service Operations

- Operational procedures
- Support model

- Staffing requirements
- Documentation

5. Continual Service Improvement

- Improvement process
- Performance monitoring
- Review schedule
- Feedback mechanisms

10.1.3 Approval Process

Step 1: Requestor Approval

- Requestor or business owner reviews proposal
- Signs and dates proposal indicating approval
- Any conditions or constraints noted

Step 2: ServiceNow Support Team (SNT) Review

- SNT evaluates feasibility and scope
- Requests clarification or changes if needed
- Validates against standards and capacity

Step 3: Platform Board Review

- Proposal presented to Platform Governance Board
- Technical review and questions addressed
- Approval or recommendations provided

Step 4: Executive Board Review (if needed)

- Escalated if conflicts with strategic direction
- Requires resource allocation decisions
- Strategic approval obtained

Step 5: Project Assignment

- Director of Service Administration assigns developer/project lead

- SNT schedules work into development roadmap
- Resource allocation confirmed

10.2 Project Scope & Requirements Definition

10.2.1 Scope Documentation

Each project must clearly document:

Scope Inclusions:

- Specific processes or services included
- Geographic or organizational scope
- Modules or features to be implemented
- Integrations required
- Data migrations included

Scope Exclusions:

- What is NOT included
- Future enhancements not in this phase
- Out-of-band customizations or integrations
- External system modifications

Constraints:

- Resource limitations
- Timeline constraints
- Budget limitations
- Technical constraints
- Regulatory or policy constraints

10.2.2 Requirements Definition

Requirements must be:

- **Clear** – Unambiguously stated and understood
- **Complete** – All necessary requirements included
- **Traceable** – Linked to business needs
- **Verifiable** – Testable and confirmable

- **Feasible** – Achievable with available resources

Types of Requirements:

- Functional (what system must do)
- Non-functional (performance, security, usability)
- Technical (system integration, data, architecture)
- Operational (support, training, documentation)
- Compliance (regulatory, policy, security)

10.2.3 Key Process Gates & Checkpoints

Gate 1: Proposal Approval

- Requestor signs off on proposal
- Platform Board reviews and approves
- Executive Board approval if needed
- Developer assigned

Gate 2: Design Review

- Technical design documented
- SNT/Mentor reviews design

Appendix A.

ServiceNow Mission, Vision, Guiding Principles

Mission Statement

To deliver responsive, secure, transparent, and user-centered IT service management that enables our community to focus on teaching, learning, and research.

The ServiceNow Information Technology Service Management (ITSM) platform exists to streamline how IT serves its community across the University by creating a single, accessible channel for requesting, tracking, and resolving IT services. By standardizing processes and increasing visibility, we reduce friction and empower faster resolution of technology needs across the institution.

Vision Statement

Seamless. Intuitive. Empowerment.

We envision a future where every member of the University community can easily access IT services, understand the status of their requests, and experience responsive, high-quality support—all while giving ITS teams the tools to work more efficiently and collaboratively.

Guiding Principles

Lead with Listening

- Gather feedback at every phase and demonstrate how input shapes improvements
- Make decisions based on community needs, not just technical capabilities

Communicate Clearly

- Explain *why* ServiceNow matters and *how* it benefits users
- Provide plain-language guidance, training, and documentation
- Set realistic expectations about timelines and what the platform *can* and *cannot* do
- Keep the community informed about progress, changes, and available resources

Design for People

- Prioritize user experience for those with varying technical skills and accessibility needs
- Create intuitive workflows that minimize training burden
- Build in accessibility standards and test with diverse user groups
- Make the platform feel like a partner, not an obstacle

Collaborate and Integrate

- Work across ITS teams (service desk, applications, security) to align processes
- Connect ServiceNow with existing systems to reduce duplicate data entry
- Foster partnerships with other departments to understand their workflows
- Build incrementally and celebrate wins along the way

Maintain Integrity and Excellence

- Ensure data quality and security in all service requests and tracking
- Follow best practices while adapting them to the University's unique culture
- Hold ourselves accountable to response time commitments and service quality
- Continuously improve based on metrics, feedback, and emerging needs

Embrace Innovation Responsibly

- Use ServiceNow's capabilities to create smarter, faster service delivery
- Pilot new features thoughtfully before full rollout
- Balance innovation with stability and reliability
- Stay curious about how other institutions use ITSM tools and apply lessons learned