

5. Architecture Project Review Process

Process for enterprise projects





Architecture Project Reviews

What is the Purpose of the Review?

The ITAG Review is a review of project architecture during the design and development phases of an application system to help ensure a successful project implementation. This review also ensures that the proposed system fits into the existing MIT environment as well as the future architectural vision. There are multiple benefits of these reviews:

Project Success

- Architecture is reviewed by a group of senior architects across the institute
- Assistance in leveraging the existing architecture
- Proactively identify risks to the project
- Provide Institute-wide context to project team

Maintain the integrity of MIT's IT environment and expand the user community's access to MIT resources

- Does the project present risk to the IT environment (e.g., infrastructure, other applications, users, state and federal regulations, or institute policy)?
- Allows ITAG to proactively recognize when modifications to the architecture are required
- Allows the project team to provide input to the extension of the MIT architecture
- Does the project leverage the existing common services where applicable?
 - Provides cost effectiveness across the institute, or
 - Provides integration benefit (e.g., single sign-on)

How can ITAG assist you?

- Facilitate access to data from system of record
- Identify opportunities for leveraging institutional resources

What is the Review Process?

1. Project announcement forwarded to <itag.mit.edu> at project initiation
2. Project Review Board determines whether a review is necessary (if no, send email waiver)
3. Project Review Board assigns an ITAG Project Review Coach
4. ITAG Review Coach works with project to gather information and recommend a review timeframe
5. Project submits review material (at least one week prior to review)
6. ITAG performs review (normally 30 – 60 minutes in length)
7. ITAG Review Coach distributes review summary and recommendations (no later than 1 week after the review)
8. Project needs to re-engage ITAG Review Coach if any of the following occur:
 - Proposed architecture changes
 - Issues resolving the action items

What projects need to be reviewed by ITAG?

Applications that are community or enterprise wide (e.g., non departmental applications)
 Applications that are likely to expand beyond the initial departmental scope
 All IS&T projects (reviews could be a subset ITAG, although everybody would be welcome)
 All projects in an ITAG member's area
 Applications that utilizes sensitive data
 Applications that create and store user IDs and passwords

What projects do not need to be reviewed?

Departmental applications (e.g., Totally self contained with a DLC)

- No intention or likelihood of expansion outside the department

 Projects within a DLC whose data does not affect an Institute data entity.

- No intention or likelihood of data exchange

When is the Review?

Project has articulated the business goals
 Project has a conceptual idea of hardware and software requirements
 Hardware and Software decisions have not have been finalized
 Designs have not been finalized (drafts should/may be completed)
 Budgets have not been finalized
 Reviews should also be conducted BEFORE a contract is signed

What preparation should be done by the project team?

During the review, please be prepared to answer questions such as:
 What impacts does your project have on the community or other systems?

- What users are impacted by your project?
- What other systems will your project affect?
 - Data feeds

 What IT services are required?
 What security concerns exist?

- Will the system be handling sensitive data now, or in the future?
- Is a separate security review required?

Required Materials

Scope

Timeline

Context Diagram

- Major functions and connections to other systems
- Layered diagram showing major functions and connections to functions of the infrastructure (e.g., Roles, Single Sign-on, etc.)

Conceptual Data Model

- Major entities, their definition, and relations and cardinalities

ITAG architectural questionnaire located at <http://istwiki.mit.edu/istwiki/ItagReviewQuestions>

