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# Facilities Design Standard – Variance Request and Decision Process

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## Summary

The [Facilities Design Standard](#) (FDS) is a collaboration between UW Facilities (UWF) and various campus Process Partners, and it is intended for use by UWF staff, design, construction, and maintenance professionals to facilitate the design, construction, and maintenance of University facilities and assets. These standards represent proven solutions that are based on life cycle cost analysis and provide functional facilities and systems that satisfy the University's requirements for efficient operation and maintenance. The FDS is managed by Engineering Services and is revised regularly as new information becomes available.

These design standards and standard specifications are to be adhered to and incorporated into all project and maintenance contracts, for all types of contract delivery methods unless expressly agreed to by parties directly responsible for their operation and/or maintenance, or as approved by the FDS Variance Review Committee. Any deviations to these standards shall be arrived at and documented via the process described herein.

## Background

### Intent of the Variance Request and Decision Process

Requests for variances should be made judiciously and, to the greatest extent possible, resolved by the project team and Process Partners. Requests to the FDS Variance Review committee should be seen as the last resort to resolution, not the first step.

### Date of FDS to Apply to a Project

The FDS is revised twice annually, and consequently a given project could see several revisions over the course of its schedule. The FDS in effect as of the date the design or design/build contract is initially executed is the version that applies to the project for the duration of its schedule. Project teams should save a copy of that version for reference. When changes to the FDS after contract execution would have no or negligible impact on the project cost or schedule, the project team should endeavor to incorporate them, but is not obligated to.

### First Cost vs. Lifecycle Cost

The FDS is based on substantial experience with the operation and maintenance of UW facilities and many accumulated lessons learned. They are also based on a 'total cost of ownership' approach, sometimes referred to as the lifecycle cost. These costs include the initial installation cost, the direct cost of future repairs and the efficiency cost of maintenance staff operating in the built space. This approach can lead to certain systems or products having a higher first cost than other available options, some of which may be commonly used in the private sector or in situations different from the UW's long-term ownership and operation of its campuses.

Many capital projects face budget pressures due to unexpected construction cost escalation, supply chain issues, and the like. While it is always tempting to look to substitute less expensive first-cost products and systems to meet the budget, this is more costly to the UW in the long run and should generally be avoided. When a project team can propose solutions which address both first cost and lifecycle cost issues, these solutions may be proposed for review and acceptance on either a project basis or for inclusion into the FDS.

## Project Delivery Method

Capital projects are delivered by a variety of methods, in accordance with public works statutes in Washington. Projects which are delivered by more collaborative contracts which bring design and construction professionals together early in the project are more likely to result in proposals which are at variance with the FDS. The UW encourages exploration of ideas which better optimize the first costs and lifecycle costs of our facilities regardless of project type or budget. That said, project managers should carefully consider how much effort should be put into options which may not be accepted and should seek guidance as soon as possible from appropriate Process Partners.

## Systems or Products Not in the FDS

The FDS is silent on many systems and products that are part of our Facilities. This review process may also be used in these situations where project teams and Process Partners may be unable to resolve differences in whether or not to use a given system or product where there is no FDS requirement.

## Resolution process

### The FDS Variance Review Committee

The FDS Variance Review Committee consists of the following UWF leaders:

- The AVP of Operations
- The AVP of Asset Management
- The Executive Director of Campus Utilities and Operations

The committee will engage other stakeholders as appropriate given the nature of the variance request. The VP of Facilities will be called on to make a decision only if the committee members are not able to do so.

The committee will have a monthly meeting or as needed to review any pending requests and may consider scheduling additional meetings if needed due to volume or urgency of requests.

### Submitting A Variance Request For A Decision

The PDG Project Manager, supported as needed by the PDG project Director, should submit an FDS Variance Request on the *FDS Variance Request Form* found at the end of this document. The form should be submitted via email to each committee member and is intended to be used as a 'one-pager' with supporting materials attached as needed. It should be *submitted a minimum of one week prior* to the Review Committee's scheduled meeting.

## **Decision Process**

### **Decision meeting**

The FDS Variance Review Committee will review submitted materials in advance of the scheduled meetings and come prepared to reach a decision. Members should request clarifications or additional information from the project team in advance of the meeting whenever possible. The PDG PM, Director, and appropriate UWF stakeholders will be invited to the meeting to answer questions and may be tasked with providing additional information.

### **Appeal of Decision**

The FDS Variance Review Committee will consult with the VP of Facilities to ensure alignment on decisions, and consequently the decisions of the Committee are final.

## **FDS VARIANCE REQUEST FORM**

**PROJECT NAME:**

**PDG PROJECT NUMBER:**

**PDG PROJECT MANAGER (the requester of the variance):** \_\_\_\_\_

**PDG DIRECTOR:**

**INTERESTED CAMPUS PARTNERS (FMC, Engineering Services, EH+S, etc.):**

**ISSUE/ FDS ITEM A VARIANCE IS BEING REQUESTED FROM:**

**SUMMARY OF THE CASE FOR THE VARIANCE (~150 words, not including diagrams, charts, etc.):**

**SUMMARY OF THE CASE AGAINST THE VARIANCE (~150 words, not including diagrams, charts, etc.):**

**LIFE CYCLE COST IMPLICATIONS:**

**SUMMARY OF THE DECISION:**

**WILL VARIANCE BE PROJECT-SPECIFIC OR WILL A CHANGE BE MADE TO THE FDS TO ALLOW IT ON ALL PROJECTS? Select one: \_\_\_\_\_Project-Specific \_\_\_\_\_Permanent**