Guidelines for Strategic Planning

Prepared by

Office of Institutional Planning and Development

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Guidelines for Strategic Planning

The Office of Institutional Planning and Development supports the decision-making processes of the university in strategic planning. This is accomplished through data collection, analysis, and reporting; providing training to others in these activities; and functioning as a mechanism for monitoring and tracking the assessment activities associated with the institutional effectiveness process.

1. Purpose of policy

This policy is intended to clarify the core requirements for University planning including development, approval, implementation, monitoring and review of strategic plans.

2. Application of policy

This policy applies to all employees, affiliates, students and members of University decision-making or advisory bodies.

3. Definitions

In this policy, the following definitions apply:

Actual results: Indicates the actual amount of progress which has been made towards achievement of objectives and are directly related to the measurement(s) used.

Assessment measures: These define how the unit plans to measure achievement of its objectives. A combination of quantitative and qualitative measures and professional judgment can be used. Direct measures of progress are best, but indirect measures can be used along with direct measures.

Board: Board of Regents of Qatar University;

Budgetary implications: If the suggested improvement has fiscal implications, the plan may be used as a supporting document for budget requests and special requests from the Institutional Effectiveness Fund. In this case, the impact of this on the budget is considered a budgetary implication.

Gap analysis: A comparison between actual results with targets. If the actual results are below targets; the reason for the gap should be identified and the planned improvement actions should be recommended to close the gap.

Institutional effectiveness fund: Amount of money announced annually by the President to support any initiative by any unit that proves to contribute to achieving the University mission, but for which the unit does not have funds in its current budget.

Key Performance Area (KPA): A major area of strategic focus, known also as strategic goal, and responsibility for an entity (the university or a unit).

Key Performance Indicator (KPI): Defined, measurable indicator that describes processes or results used to indicate whether an objective is met. A key indicator is one that is the most important for the organization to measure and track.

Monitoring: Systematic overview of the implementation of a strategic plan (University/unit plan).

Performance Indicator (PI): Defined, measurable indicator that describes processes or results used to indicate whether an objective is met. A performance indicator comes in second level compared to a key indicator; it is usually helpful to a unit or sub-unit; but may also be supportive indicator at the organization level.

Sub-unit plan: Objectives and actions prepared by a sub-unit that feeds, totally or partially, into a higher unit plan.

Target: Measurable targets (e.g., 10% increase; satisfaction level) the unit works to achieve; they are tied directly to the measurement used.

Unit: Organization entity that includes all colleges, non-academic departments, centers, offices, medical clinic, and specific sections within some departments.

Unit plan: A unit strategic plan that is developed in line with the University's plan.

Unit KPA's: These include the unit's overarching and long-term goals covering the duration of the plan; this is not a short term objective.

Unit objectives: These are the main focus of the unit's effectiveness activity for the year or may be multi-years. They should include the assigned objectives based on the University plan, but may include other objectives pursued by the unit.

University plan: A University-wide strategic plan.

Use of results: The unit will state how the results will be used to improve the quality of the program(s) or activities. If the criteria for success have been met, the department could raise the bar or could declare the objective attained and move on to another objective. Planning for the next year will depend, in part, in what is learned in the current year.

4. Approach to University planning

The process to develop an effective strategic plan involves a partnership among students, faculty, and administrators from across the institution to ensure that critical issues were identified, and that a mutual commitment to the accomplishment of shared goals and priorities is established.

The University adopts a systematic approach to planning based on:

- Development of actions directed towards attainment of the University's mission and realization of the University's key areas of performance and specified objectives;
- Effective risk and resource management strategies;
- Effective accountability processes including reporting on plan outcomes; and
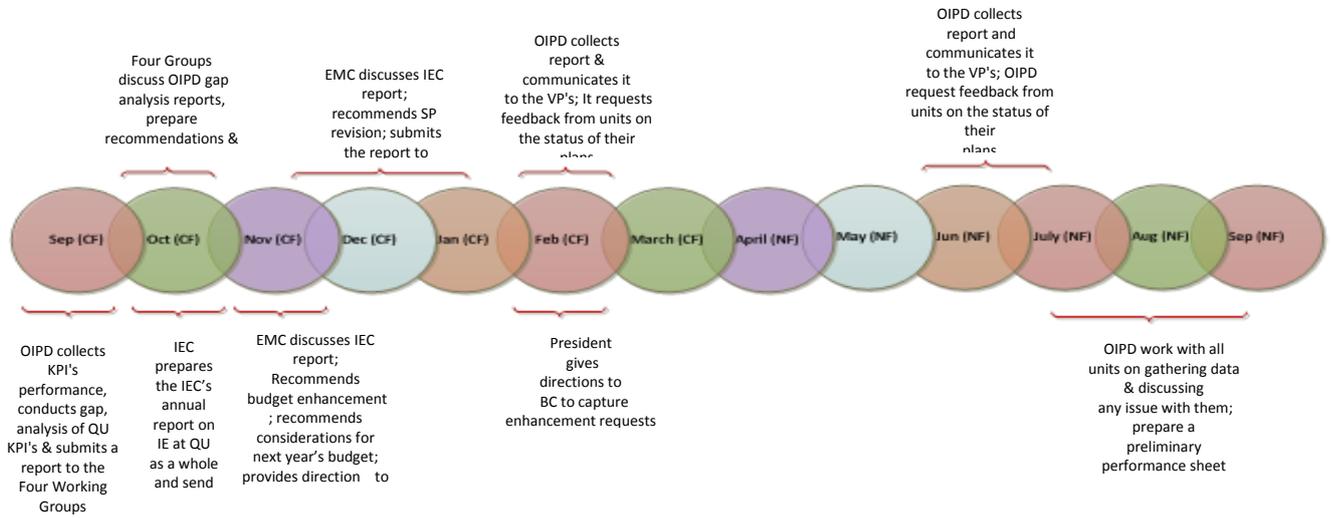- Continuous improvement of planning processes.

The University's planning process will be led by the Vice-President for Institutional Planning and Development with University-wide participation.

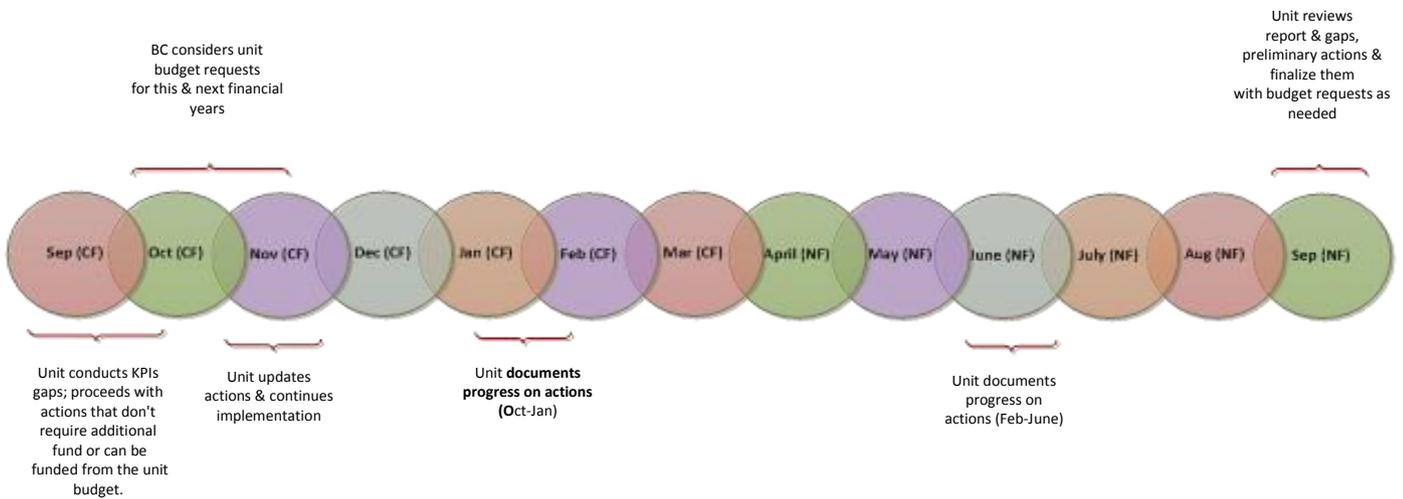## Major components of strategic planning

University Strategic Planning Cycle

Four Groups discuss OIPD gap analysis reports, prepare recommendations &

EMC discusses IEC report; recommends SP revision; submits the report to

OIPD collects report & communicates it to the VP's; It requests feedback from units on the status of their plans

OIPD collects report and communicates it to the VP's; OIPD request feedback from units on the status of their plans

Sep (CF) Oct (CF) Nov (CF) Dec (CF) Jan (CF) Feb (CF) March (CF) April (NF) May (NF) Jun (NF) July (NF) Aug (NF) Sep (NF)

OIPD collects KPI's performance, conducts gap, analysis of QU KPI's & submits a report to the Four Working Groups

IEC prepares the IEC's annual report on IE at QU as a whole and send

EMC discusses IEC report; Recommends budget enhancement ; recommends considerations for next year's budget; provides direction   to

President gives directions to BC to capture enhancement requests

OIPD work with all units on gathering data & discussing any issue with them; prepare a preliminary performance sheet

Approved by the EMC on May, 19 2013

Unit Strategic Planning Cycle

BC considers unit budget requests for this & next financial years

Unit reviews report & gaps, preliminary actions & finalize them with budget requests as needed

Sep (CF) Oct (CF) Nov (CF) Dec (CF) Jan (CF) Feb (CF) Mar (CF) April (NF) May (NF) June (NF) July (NF) Aug (NF) Sep (NF)

Unit conducts KPIs gaps; proceeds with actions that don't require additional fund or can be funded from the unit budget.

Unit updates actions & continues implementation

Unit **documents progress on actions** (**O**ct-Jan)

Unit documents progress on actions (Feb-June)

Approved by the EMC on May, 19 2013

5. Planning framework

The University will have a planning framework comprising of a hierarchy of cascading plans:

- **University strategic plan** (includes key performance areas; objectives; key performance indicators; targets).
- **Units' plans** (key performance areas; objectives; key performance indicators; targets).
- **Action plans** (strategies prepared to help meet objectives; may be for a single period covering part of the duration of the plan or multi-period).

(In case of having a sub-unit plan, it will follow units' plans in order.)

6. Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan:

- will be developed through a consultative process involving key University bodies, relevant external stakeholder bodies (as determined by the Vice-President, IPD, and President) and staff and students through their participation in any of the key University bodies;
- will review the University vision and mission;
- identify key performance areas and objectives for pursuit of the University's mission over a specific period (plan's duration), usually three or five years;
- will identify through those KPA's and objectives the priorities for planning at units;
- will be used to develop the University budget.

1. The strategic plan sets the long-term direction of the University and articulates major University level priorities. The plan and any amendments to it must be approved by the Board, except those minor amendments to correct omissions or inaccuracies; they may be approved by the Vice-President, IPD.
2. The Vice-President, IPD, and President are responsible to the Board for initiating development, implementation, monitoring and review of the strategic plan and are accountable to the Board.
3. Following approval of the strategic plan, the Vice-President, IPD, and President will ensure that the plan is presented for discussion by all key University bodies with a view to informing and guiding subsequent planning and budget decisions.
4. the University's Annual Institutional Effectiveness will include a brief report on performance of the plan based on an annual strategic planning report prepared by the strategic planning team at OIPD will be presented to the Board on an annual basis.

7. Unit plan

Unit plans are developed by the administration of each major unit with appropriate involvement of faculty, staff, students, and community members, in line with the University strategic plan and in coordination with OIPD. Amendments to them must be approved by the relevant Vice President, except minor amendments to correct omissions or inaccuracies may be approved by the unit head.

- **Component of the Strategic Plan:** units strategic plan should include:

1. Mission Statement: 1-3 sentences that outline:
   - Who are you?
   - Who are your customers?
   - What are you doing for your customers?
   - How are you doing that?
   Note: the unit may also include a vision statement. Vision statement describes how the unit will look in the future

Examples:

QU Mission:

"Qatar University is the leading national institution of higher education in Qatar. It provides high quality programs that prepare competent graduates to shape the future of Qatar. The university, with its diverse community, addresses relevant challenges through research and programs that contribute actively to the needs and aspirations of society."

QU Vision:

Qatar University shall be a model national university in the region, recognized for high-quality education and research and for being a leader of economic and social development.

OIPD Mission:
The OIPD shall provide strategic information and analysis that serves Qatar University by utilizing scientific and applied methodologies and tools in research, evaluation and institutional planning; for the purpose of meeting the University's mission and reaching its vision.
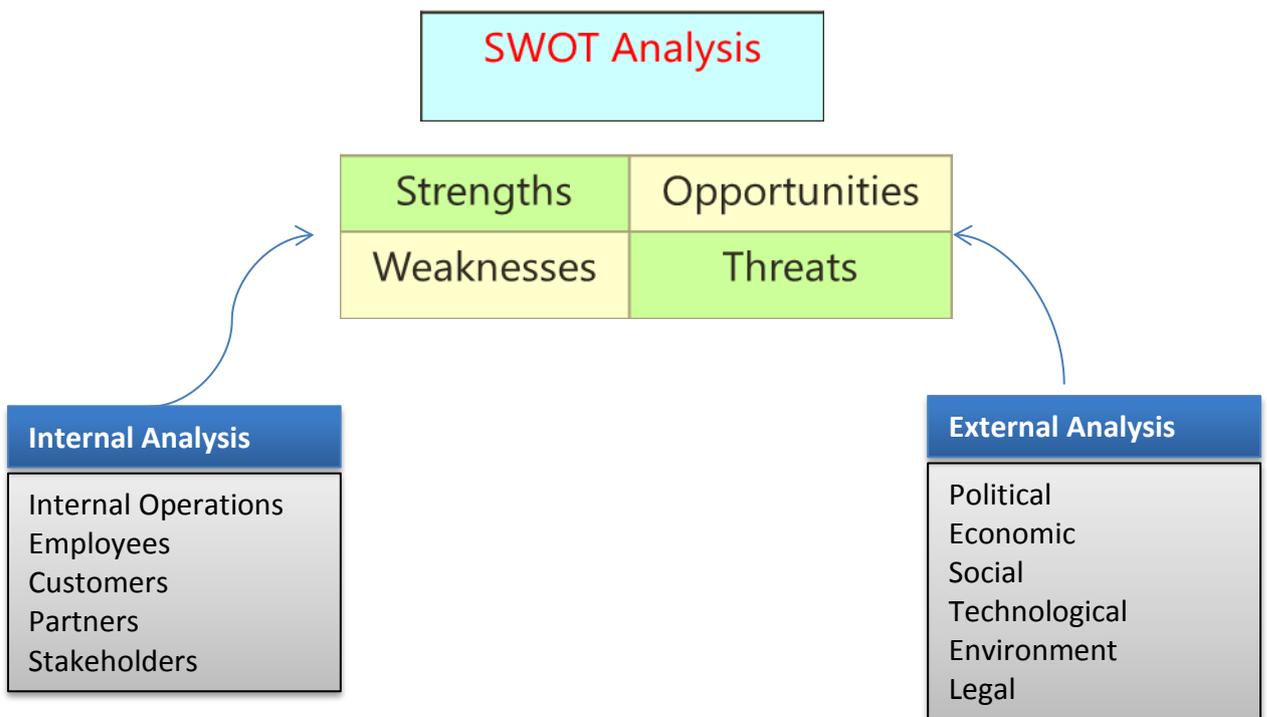
OIPD Vision:
The OIPD is to be the source of effective information

2. Environmental Scan:
   - Internal Analysis: the *strengths* and *weaknesses* internal to the unit; may include: internal operation, customers, stakeholders, etc.

- Strengths: characteristics which contribute to your unit's ability to achieve its mission.
  - What advantages does your unit have? What do you do better than anyone else? What do people in your field see as your strengths?
- Weaknesses: characteristics which limit your unit's ability to achieve its mission.
  - What could you improve? What are people in your field likely as weaknesses?

- External Analysis: the *opportunities* and *threats* presented by the environment external to the unit (here external to unit means both the opportunities and *threats* presented by the university to the unit or other external changes affect the unit). External Analysis may include political, technological, socioeconomic, education changes, demographics or other significant trends considerations.

  - Opportunities: what opportunities might your strengths create? What interesting trends are occurring? Changes in market/filed?
  - Threats: what obstacles does your unit face? What are competitors doing? Is the technology changing? Changes in market/field?

SWOT Analysis	
Strengths	Opportunities
Weaknesses	Threats

Internal Analysis

Internal Operations
Employees
Customers
Partners
Stakeholders

External Analysis

Political
Economic
Social
Technological
Environment
Legal

3. Key Performance Areas (KPAs):
   - No more than three to five
   - Should be big picture items (high level)
   - Related to university priorities and KPAs

   > Example of Student Affairs KPAs:
   > KPA1: Promote Student Learning and Development
   > KPA2: Enhance Customer Services
   > KPA3: Promote Operational Efficiency and Employee Productivity
   > KPA4: Enhance Employees' Skills and Development

4. Objectives:
   - Describe desired outcomes necessary for good performance within the KPA
   - Summary description of planned achievements over a specific period of time, the duration of the plan (3 years)
   - If the units have some operational objective which will be completed within one academic year; then, the type of the objective is: "one year objective".
   - An intermediate step between KPA's (general) and KPI's (specific)
   - Basis for indicators development, and, hence, target setting.
   - Objectives should be linked to QU objectives; however, units may have additional objectives which are not linked to QU objectives.

5. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):
   - KPI's are 'measures' used to quantify the achievement, efficiency, or effectiveness of an objective
   - A manageable plan cannot contain every relevant performance indicator, so planners must select a limited set of 'key' performance indicators.
   - KPI's can be qualitative or quantitative but must be empirically verifiable.
     - Must be valid, relevant, precise, and cost effective to measure
     - Can measure inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes, or impacts
     - Should be measurable (number, percentage, level, or Y/N KPIs)
   - KPI's are at the heart of performance measurement.
   - Each KPI should have a target.

6. Action Plan: Annual tasks for each objective.
   - use the strategies defined in QU strategic plan to guide in preparing the actions of the unit plan;
   - each task in the action plan should be categorized into:
     - New action
     - Ongoing action: Which is a repeated action every year

- Continuous action: in process action that starts in an academic year, but will be completed in the next academic year.
- Based on survey results action: Action that was recommended to improve performance based on one of the satisfaction surveys.
- Based on gap analysis: Action that was recommended to improve performance based on the unit's gap analysis that was performed in the previous academic year plan
- Based on other assessment tools: such as external or internal reviewers, student learning outcomes assessments, or non-academic units review. Note: Action based on non-academic units review is only for the non-academic units who were reviewed in the last two years;

- tasks of action plan should be worded to have a due date that the task will be completed by that date:
- due date for each task should be within the academic year;
- each task should be assigned to an owner from your unit;

   o Example for a good task: Prepare the annual report of "X" unit.
   o Example for an inappropriate task: Enhance the development of staff performance. This is an objective not task.

8. Important notes to consider:

- The plan should be developed by the strategic planning committee of each unit in consultation with unit's employees, and, may include other relevant internal and external stakeholder bodies; however, student representatives would be involved in developing plans in academic units and student affairs; while, all academic units will have representatives in developing plans in the research sector.

- For each unit plan, nominate at least two planning coordinators by the unit head, of which at least one of them will be the primary coordinator, who will be allocated responsibility for uploading the plan in the planning software, report progress, coordinate between the unit and OIPD. However, the unit head is accountable to his/her vice president or to whom he/she reports, for achievement of the plan.

- Following approval of the relevant vice president, ensure that the plan is presented by the responsible officer, for discussion by all key unit employees, published on the unit or sector's website (within a month of approval by the vice-president) with a view to informing and guiding subsequent planning and budget decisions.

- Number the plan items as follows:

KPA 1:	
Objective 1.1:	
KPIs	Targets
1.1.1	1.1.1
1.1.2	1.1.2
Objective 1.2:	
KPIs	Targets
1.2.1	1.2.1
1.2.2	1.2.2

KPA 2:	
Objective 2.1:	
KPIs	Targets
2.1.1	2.1.1
2.1.2	2.1.2

- include at least the objectives (with KPIs and strategies) assigned to the unit from the University plan as communicated by OIPD; and to be used in guiding the unit's budget;

- some KPIs will not be measured each year. For example: if the data source of a KPI is one of the surveys, it is not necessary to measure this KPI each year; it depends on the master calendar of the survey;

- if the KPI is a "number", the actual results and targets should be numbers also;

- units should keep the same proposed targets for QU KPIs.

9. Monitoring and assessing units' plans

Part1: Units' action plans:

All colleges and departments should complete their annual action plans and upload them into SPOL. The roles and responsibilities are as follows:

• **Units' Owner**

- Ensure that the action plan is uploaded into SPOL by the end of September every year.
- Update actions (status, completion date) into the SPOL.

- If needed, revise tasks (task description, owner, due date, status).
- Provide explanations for any tasks which are behind schedule and propose a new due date without changing the original one.
- If any action is stopped, units can change the status of the action and provide justification
- Observe that the performance update should be done in a meeting setting and to be documented.

This should take place twice annually (January and June)

Status updates due from owners	Interim Reports to VPs and owners
January 31	February 10
June 30	July 10

• **Office of Institutional Planning and Development (OIPD)**

- Review status of actions once updated, and prepare a report.
- Send a reminder to owners a month before each review.
- Ensure that tasks behind schedule ("deviations") have explanations, contact the owner for any missing explanations (not a content review).
- Compile report of all deviations & explanations related to actions for each VP.
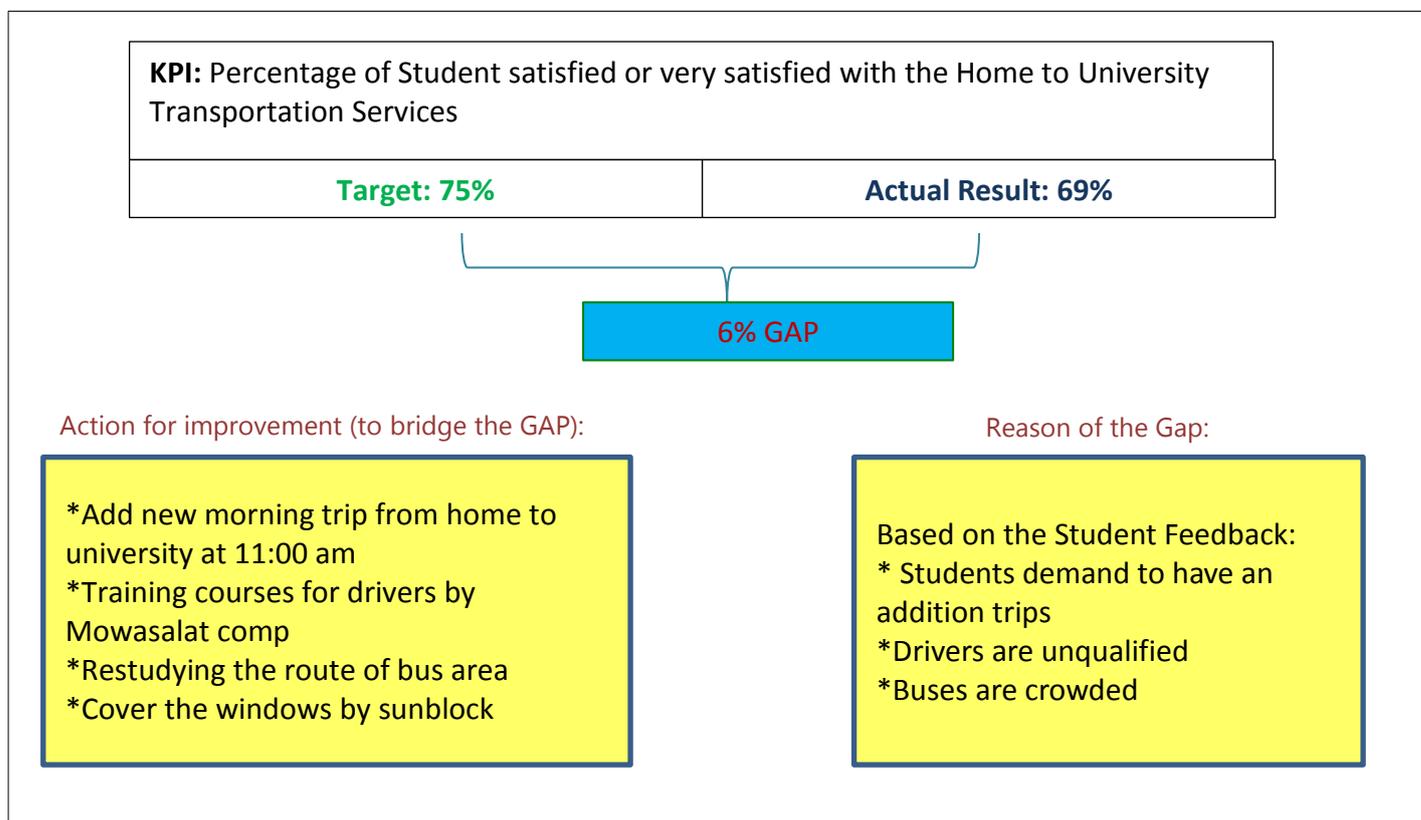
• **VPs**

- Review deviations report to see if action plans are appropriate to address deviations;
- Work with owners to make changes if necessary (optional).
- Inform OIPD of the completion of this task, within a month of receipt of the report.

Part 2: Units' results

• **Owner**

- Upload the targets for each indicator and update them, if needed. This should be completed by October each year.
- Upload actual results starting June every year (before the end of the academic year); results for interim indicators should be updated along the way.
- Perform gap analysis for each result that is below target (by comparing the actual results with the targets) and propose actions for improvement.
- Conduct a retreat or meet once a year to review progress, adjust strategies & develop action plans for the next year by August; actions for the next year can be uploaded into SPOL anytime.
- If the objective is completed by the end of an academic year and will not be carried out to the next academic year, units can change the status into "Completed in (chose which Academic Year)"

Example of gap analysis:

KPI: Percentage of Student satisfied or very satisfied with the Home to University Transportation Services

Target: 75%	Actual Result: 69%

6% GAP

Action for improvement (to bridge the GAP):

*Add new morning trip from home to university at 11:00 am
*Training courses for drivers by Mowasalat comp
*Restudying the route of bus area
*Cover the windows by sunblock

Reason of the Gap:

Based on the Student Feedback:
* Students demand to have an addition trips
*Drivers are unqualified
*Buses are crowded

- **OIPD**

  - Check if actual results and gap analysis are provided (not a content review).
  - Compile a report of the gap analysis for VPs.

- **VPs**

  - Review the gap analysis report & process used for the retreat or progress review.
  - Inform the OIPD that this step is completed (within one month of receiving the report).

10. Review of the Strategic Plan

1. Any changes on QU strategic plan based on a systematic reviews, will be communicated to the University community.
2. In the case of the University strategic plan, the Vice-President, IPD, will ensure that a review of performance against the current plan is undertaken

before conclusion of the plan's lifespan, with a view to identifying strengths and weaknesses in performance and for informing of the development of the next iteration of the plan. For unit plans, the responsible officer will ensure the review of performance is undertaken to inform development of the next iteration of the plan.

11. Records management

1. Effective systems will be in place for record-keeping and records management in relation to plans, their implementation, monitoring reports, review, and any revisions or amendments;
2. A register of University and units' plans at all levels will be maintained that records, at the least, the name of each plan (and subsequent iteration thereof), lifespan dates, latest date of approval, the position/s of the person/s with overall responsibility for development, implementation, monitoring and reporting performance, and review of the plan;
3. Reports will be filed electronically in the Strategic Planning Online (SPOL) software;
4. Assessments reports on each unit strategic plan will be filed on an annual cycle that runs from fall to fall;
5. Reports will be reviewed throughout a unit's chain of command to ensure cohesiveness of planning among related units.

12. Responsibilities

The **Board** is responsible for:

- directing the management and administration throughout the planning cycles;
- approving the University Strategic Plan;
- approving the Institutional Effectiveness Report where the strategic plan annual progress is part of it.

The **President** is responsible for:

- leading all planning initiatives and promoting them in the University community;
- presenting the University strategic plan and annual strategic planning progress report to the BOR for approval;
- deciding the annual amount of money allocated to the Institutional Effectiveness Enhancement Fund and giving directions to the Budget Committee on related matters.

The **OIPD** is responsible for:

- providing the University strategic plan to all units, publishing it and posting on the University web site;
- reviewing each unit's strategic plan to check if they have: mission, objectives, indicators and timeline;
- sending a reminder to owners a month before each review;
- checking that any tasks behind schedule "deviations" have explanations, and contacting the owner for any missing explanations (not a content review);
- checking if actual results and gap analysis are provided (not a content review)
- preparing two interim reports covering unit planning performance and an annual report covering the University planning performance;
- providing planning and technical support to all units;
- maintaining the planning software and making it available to users;
- sending a copy of the annual strategic planning report to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee;
- holding at least one annual meeting for all plan owners updating them on planning results and future directions;
- effective implementation of University policy related to planning as it pertains to the organizational unit or units;
- compliance with all external requirements affecting the operations of planning at the University and unit planning;
- collecting actual data for all QU KPIs and perform gap analysis; and
- preparing a report of the contribution of QU to Qatar National Development Strategy

A Unit Head is responsible for:

- ensuring that a review of performance against the plan is undertaken annually, with a view to identifying strengths and weaknesses in performance and for informing development of the next annual iteration of the plan; and
- reporting in writing annually to the Vice-President on performance towards achievement of his/her unit plan.
- identifying and reviewing progress and performance in achieving operational plan goals and targets within approved budgets;
- identifying any weaknesses in or obstacles to implementation and performance with a view to adjusting the plan or the implementation processes;
- effective implementation of goals and strategies within the strategic plan and top level plans in relation to the purpose and role of the organizational unit or units.
- meeting biannually with the unit employees to update the action plan;
- providing explanations for any tasks which are behind schedule;
- retreating or meeting with unit employees once a year to review progress & adjust strategy & develop the following year action plans;
- performing gap analysis for each result below the target, assessing the current situation and proposing improvement actions;
- providing data to QU Plan according to "data source" assignments;

▪ reporting on the achievement and the planned actions that are in alignment with Qatar National Development Strategy.

The **EMC** is responsible for:

▪ endorsing the University strategic plan;
▪ discussing the annual institutional effectiveness report and giving directions;
▪ submitting recommendations to the president in matters related to strategic planning at the University;
▪ discussing the interim and annual strategic planning reports.

A **Unit Employee/Member of the unit Strategic Planning Committee** is responsible for:

▪ attending the unit strategic plan meeting;
▪ proposing any suggestions to improve the unit performance;
▪ preparing self-objectives that serve the unit plan;
▪ submitting recommendations to the president in matters related to strategic planning at the University.