

SOP Template: Initial Assessment and Prioritization Criteria

This SOP details the **initial assessment and prioritization criteria** for evaluating tasks, projects, or incidents to ensure efficient resource allocation and timely response. It covers the identification of key factors, risk assessment methods, urgency and impact evaluation, and the systematic ranking process to prioritize actions based on their importance and potential consequences.

1. Purpose

To establish a standardized approach for the initial assessment and prioritization of tasks, projects, or incidents, enabling objective decision-making, effective resource allocation, and prompt response.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all staff involved in evaluating, triaging, or managing new or existing tasks, projects, or incidents within the organization.

3. Key Assessment Factors

- **Urgency:** Required response time or deadline
- **Impact:** Effect on the organization, customers, or stakeholders
- **Complexity:** Level of difficulty, resources needed
- **Exposure:** Number of systems, people, or processes affected
- **Compliance/Regulatory:** Legal or contractual obligations involved
- **Reputation:** Potential risk to organizational image

4. Risk Assessment Method

1. Gather relevant details about the task/project/incident (who, what, when, where, how).
2. Consult subject matter experts as needed for technical analysis.
3. Document related dependencies, affected parties, and business processes.
4. Score **likelihood** (possibility of occurrence) and **severity** (potential consequences).
5. Use a **risk matrix** to combine scores and categorize as Low, Medium, High, or Critical.

Likelihood	Severity			
	Minor	Moderate	Major	Critical
Rare	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
Possible	Low	Medium	High	High
Likely	Medium	High	High	Critical
Certain	High	High	Critical	Critical

5. Urgency and Impact Evaluation

1. Assign scores to:
 - **Urgency:** (e.g., 1 = Low, 2 = Moderate, 3 = High, 4 = Immediate)
 - **Impact:** (e.g., 1 = Limited, 2 = Moderate, 3 = Significant, 4 = Severe)
2. Total the scores to help inform prioritization.
3. Consider mitigating factors or external influences.

Example Table:

Criteria	Score	Notes
Urgency	3	Response required within 24 hours
Impact	4	Multiple departments/customers affected
Total	7	

6. Systematic Ranking & Prioritization Process

1. Aggregate urgency, impact, and risk scores.
2. Classify each task/project/incident as Critical, High, Medium, or Low priority.
3. Maintain a centralized log or ticketing system for transparency.
4. Review and adjust priorities as new information becomes available.
5. Communicate prioritization outcomes to stakeholders.

Priority Level	Description	Example Response Timeframe
Critical	Immediate threat or severe consequences.	<1 hour
High	Major business impact, requires prompt action.	1-24 hours
Medium	Moderate impact, can be scheduled or planned.	24-72 hours
Low	Minor or limited impact, routine handling.	3+ days

7. Documentation and Review

- Log all decisions, scores, and rationale in the tracking system.
- Schedule regular reviews to ensure criteria and processes remain effective and relevant.
- Gather feedback for process improvement.

8. Roles & Responsibilities

- **Assessor:** Completes initial assessment and scoring.
- **Supervisor/Manager:** Reviews prioritization and ensures correct resource allocation.
- **Stakeholders:** Provide input and receive updates on prioritization decisions.

9. References & Related Documents

- Incident Management Policy
- Risk Management Framework
- Resource Allocation Guidelines