Change Type – Definitions of Terms

There are four types of change; **standard, minor, significant and major.**

These four named types of change are very common terms in industry, and you will find these same labels as defaults in most Service Management tools, including UniDesk.

Here’s what it looks like in the UniDesk tool:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brief Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Template</td>
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<tr>
<td>Type</td>
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<tr>
<td>Category</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subcategory</td>
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<tr>
<td>External Number</td>
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**Why have different Types?**

Changes tend to be typed based on things like the impact they are likely to have, the effort they are likely to take, or the risk involved. The type of change can provide a useful differentiator between changes for reporting and an aid to classification.

One of the major uses of typing in this way is to determine whether the change needs additional oversight or authorisation, such as being sent to a Change Advisory Board (CAB) for authorisation.

See the [Release Policy](#) and [Go CAB](#) documents for more information.

**Types of Change – Definitions**

Here are the current working definitions. They are impact-focussed, so we will begin with a short definition of ‘Impact’:

**Impact Definition**

Impact is the effect that a change has on our expected *service level* for a service.

For the purposes of assessment, Impact should be thought of as any time we expect a Business Service to drop below the expected service level, as a result of the Change.

**Risk Definition**

A good definition of Risk is “a measure of the exposure to which an organization may be subject”. For assessment purposes, we should think of risk as the probability that the actual impact will be more detrimental than the expected impact, in combination with how adverse that impact could be.

Low risk Changes are Changes in which there is little probability of a worse than expected impact, and low potential for that unanticipated impact to be significant

**Minor Change**

A Minor Change is a low risk change, which is expected to impact at most one Business Service. The anticipated impact should not include periods of Business Service unavailability. Changes which are expected to impact multiple Business Services should not be considered Minor.
Significant Change
A Significant Change is a change which is expected to have an impact on more than one Business Service, or a release which is expected to make any Business Service(s) unavailable or significantly degraded, or any change which would otherwise be minor but has increased risk.

Major Change
A Major Change is a change meeting any of the following criteria:

- Is expected to involve significant IS resources (more than 5 days effort) or
- Requires a lengthy period of planned service impact for one or more IS Business Services (more than 3 hours combined) or
- A change which would otherwise be significant, but which contains anomalous risks; for example, a change which (after all due preparation) either cannot be tested with sufficient confidence, or for which there can be no effective Rollback or mitigation procedure.

Standard Change
Standard Changes are always low risk. They are relatively common and follow a procedure or work instruction. Standard Changes always have a Template in UniDesk.

The general case of a Standard Change is authorised by the Service Owner, and reviewed by the Change Manager. (The template is created at this time.) The Change Manager will review Standard Changes

- to aid and assist in the creation of the template,
- to ensure that the quality of standard changes is acceptable

This may be a temporary requirement, and could be obsoleted as our level of maturity increases.

Following on from this, each instance of a Standard Change is pre-authorized, and can be run on demand from the template.

Standard changes can run in this way indefinitely, but will be suspended and reviewed by the Service Owner and Change Manager if they are suspected of causing an unanticipated impact to a Business Service.

See the Standard Change document for more information

Technical Services
If you read the definitions above, they tend to focus on the impact to the Business Service, or on the number of Business Services likely to be affected. Changes being made to Technical Services will share these same definitions – note that the phrasing is not about what we are changing, but about which services are being affected and/or impacted by it.

Changes to Technical Services where there is expected to be some effect on many Business Services can still be minor, provided that they are low risk, and that there is no anticipated impact on those Business Services – i.e. that their Service Level should not drop below the expected level.