

7.1.2 Analysing the Current System

Syllabus 2026 - 2028

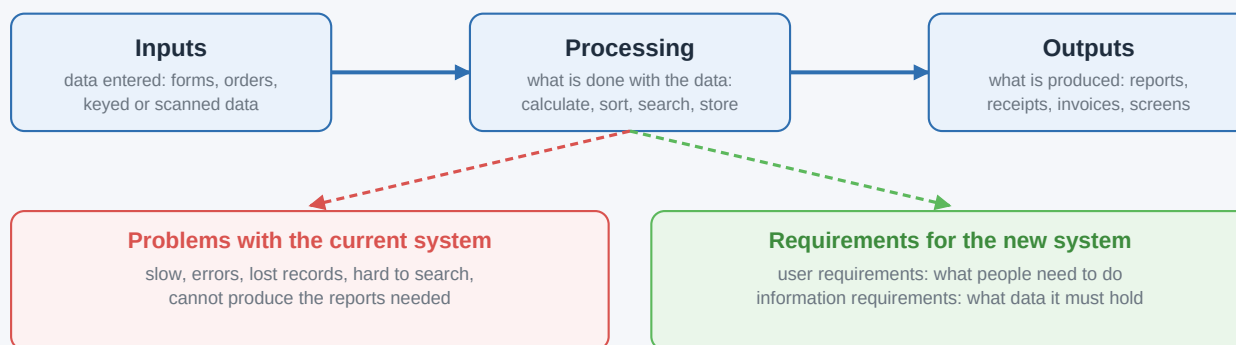
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Recording and analysing information about the current system
- Identifying the inputs, outputs and processing of the current system
- Identifying the problems with the current system
- Identifying the user and information requirements for the new system

Record and analyse

After research, the analyst **records** the information (interview notes, completed questionnaires, copies of forms, observation notes, diagrams) and **analyses** it to understand what the current system does and where it fails. The findings are used to decide what the new system must do.

Figure 18: What the analyst records about the current system



What must be identified

Item	Meaning	Examples (school library)
Inputs	The data that goes into the system, and how it is entered.	Book details, borrower details, loan and return dates, written on cards and forms
Processing	What is done with the data.	Checking if a book is available, working out the due date, calculating fines, searching for a book
Outputs	The information the system produces.	Overdue letters, lists of books on loan, reports on popular books
Storage	Where and how the data is kept.	Card index and paper registers in a cabinet
Problems with the current system	What does not work well or is missing.	Slow to search, cards lost or damaged, errors in dates, cannot produce reports easily, only one person can use the records at a time
User requirements	What the users need the new system to do and how they want to use it.	Search for a book in seconds, easy for learners to use, several staff using it at once
Information requirements	The data and information the new system must store and produce.	Store details for 5 000 books, produce overdue lists each week, keep records for five years

Why analysis matters

- It shows **exactly what the new system must do**, so it is built to fit the users' needs

- It finds **problems** that the new system must solve, so the same mistakes are not repeated
- The results form a **requirements specification**, which the designers use in the next stage
- Mistakes found later are costly to fix, so time spent on analysis saves money

EXAM TIP

Keep **user** requirements and **information** requirements apart. User requirements describe what **people** need to do with the system. Information requirements describe the **data** to be stored and the output to be produced.

Key terms

Term	Meaning
Current system	The system in use before the new one is introduced.
Input	Data entered into a system.
Process	What is done to data to turn it into information.
Output	Information produced by a system.
User requirements	What the users need the new system to do.
Information requirements	The data and information the new system must hold and produce.
Requirements specification	A document listing what the new system must do.
Problem	Something in the current system that does not work well.

Practice questions

Answer each question in full sentences. Command words used: State (give a short answer), Describe (say what it is like), Explain (give reasons), Analyse (break it down and examine it), Suggest (apply your knowledge to a situation), Compare and contrast (similarities and differences), Evaluate (weigh up and reach a judgement).

No.	Question	Marks
1	State two things an analyst must identify about the current system.	[2]
2	Describe the difference between user requirements and information requirements.	[3]
3	Explain why the problems with the current system must be identified.	[2]
4	Analyse the inputs, outputs and processing of a paper-based tuck shop system.	[4]
5	Evaluate the importance of the analysis stage before a new system is built.	[5]

Total: 16 marks