Managing Successful Programmes
5th edition

Study Guide

Introduction

Welcome to this MSP study guide.

This pre-reading guide is designed to help you to become familiar with the material used in the course. Although your trainer will act as a mentor to you during the course, the onus is on you to prepare as thoroughly as you can. Preparation will give you the best chance of experiencing a rewarding and enjoyable course and, ultimately, success in the examinations!

About the MSP Examinations

It is important that we emphasise at this stage that this course will be intense. In addition to the pre-course preparation there will be evening work each day to help you reach the standards required to pass the examinations. Good examination pass rates are achieved through hard work and good preparation.

There are two qualifications, as follows:

Foundation
Closed book
1-hour examination
60 multiple choice questions
1 mark per question
The pass mark is 36/60 (60%)
A pass at Foundation level must have been achieved in order to take the Practitioner level examination.

Practitioner
Open book (the MSP Guide)
You can use page tabs and highlight or make notes in the book itself but no other inserts, attachments or other materials are permitted in the examination
2.5 hour examination
70 question items
1 mark per question item
The pass mark is 42/70 (60%)

Pre-Course Reading Guide

The following reading guide will provide you with a good grounding in the areas of programme management covered in the course. This will be valuable preparation for the more detailed learning you will encounter in during the course.

All of the MSP guide is examinable, with the exception of Appendix A and the four fictional scenarios that are used throughout to illustrate realistic application of the framework.

As you read the MSP guide, please use the questions and guidelines that are set out below to help you to structure your thoughts and ideas. You may like to tick off each section as you go through.

Chapter 1 - Introduction		✓
We suggest that you begin by reading chapter 1, as it introduces the ideas behind programme management and MSP. The following questions pick up on some of the topics within the chapter.		
1.1 Purpose of the guide	What are some of the challenges and changes that you/your organization has faced?	
	What are the three lenses that make up the integrated framework of MSP? 1 2 3	
1.2 What is a programme?	What are your thoughts about the MSP definition of a programme? What different words might you have expected to see in the definition?	
	Which of the four aspects of the definition do you recognize in how your organization deals with programmes. Which are less obvious?	
	How, for you, are programmes different to projects? Are there any aspects that you think are the same?	
1.3 Why use programme management?	What are the four reasons for using programme management given in this section? 1 2 3 4 You will see that the four fictional scenarios used throughout the guide are aligned to these four reasons. You might like to look at the introduction to these scenarios which are just before chapter 1. We are careful in MSP to call these reasons and not types of programme because they are not distinct or mutually exclusive. Real programmes may combined multiple reasons.	

1.4 Overcoming common challenges	This section presents a list of challenges which you might like to compare with your own experience. They are particularly important to consider when comparing programme management with project management.	
1.7 How to use the guide	This section gives a suggested reading approach for the rest of the MSP guide, which you can follow if you have the time available before the course. In this study guide we will suggest a 'light' schedule of reading (but of course feel free to read more if you can). Figure 1.3 is an important diagram as it shows all three of the lenses that make up the framework. It is all of MSP in one diagram. Take some time to review the figure, then move on to understand a little more about principles, themes and processes.	

Chapter 2 - Principles	✓
Note that MSP "…provides a principles-based framework…". The definition shows the underlying importance of principles in the MSP approach to programme management	

Explaining principles	What are the three characteristics of a principle? 1 2 3	
The seven MSP principles	For each of the seven principles, suggest an example of each one in practice. • Lead with purpose • Collaborate across boundaries • Deal with ambiguity	

	• Align with priorities	
	• Deploy diverse skills	
	• Realize measurable benefits	
	• Bring pace and value	

Chapter 3 – Introduction to MSP Themes		✓
Each one of the seven MSP themes is an essential part of programme governance and is used throughout the programme lifecycle. Read through chapter 3, then answer these questions.		
Programme governance	From memory, explain programme governance, and how it fits with corporate governance.	
The Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle	What does MSP recommend regarding the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle?	
Programme strategy	From memory, how many of the different approaches can you recall?	
Programme plans	From memory, how many of the different plans can you recall?	

MSP Themes	From memory, how many of the different themes can you recall?	

Chapter 11 – Introduction to MSP Processes ✓

The seven MSP processes form the programme lifecycle, as explained in section 11.1.
Note the points made about the incremental nature of much of that lifecycle.
The lifecycle diagram (figure 1.3 and used throughout the process chapters) is particularly useful in understanding this.

Things to note	- The first and seventh process are linear - The other five are repeated as required for each tranche throughout the programme - Each process chapter that follows this has the same layout: - Purpose of process - Inputs, activities and outputs - Mapping of roles to activities - Summary of how each theme applies in that process	

Other chapters ✓

Having now had an overview of each of the three lenses of the MSP framework, you may like to take a look at some of the specific themes and process chapters.

Notice throughout that the integrated nature of MSP is demonstrated by various tables, such as:

- The relationship between each theme and the principles
- Documents that support each theme
- The focus of the key roles in each theme
- Responsibilities for each activity within each process
- Application of the themes within each process

We suggest that you just look at the main headings of any individual theme or process chapter to get an initial feel for the content involved. However, at this stage, do not get lost in the detail!

Note any thoughts or queries that you have as you look though them.

Knowledge Quiz

You might like to attempt these 10 questions to test your knowledge of MSP so far. Try the questions without using the MSP guide. At the end of the questions you will find the answers together with a reference to the section in MSP that explains the answer.

1. Which one of these is NOT an MSP principle?
a) Align with priorities
b) Bring pace and value
c) Focus on products
d) Lead with purpose

2. The programme strategy is made up of a number of different sections. These are referred to as which one of the following?
a) Approaches
b) Techniques
c) Components
d) Activities

3. Which one of these is an MSP theme?
a) Plans
b) Controls
c) Quality
d) Design

4. Which one of these is NOT part of the definition of a programme?
a) Lead multiple interrelated projects and other work
b) Permanent structure
c) One or more organizations
d) Progressively achieve outcomes of benefit

5. Which two processes are used just once in a programme?
a) Identify the programme, Embed the outcomes
b) Identify the programme, Close the programme
c) Design the outcomes, Deliver the capabilities
d) Deliver the capabilities, Close the programme

6. Which is NOT a reason given in MSP for investment in a programme?
a) Transformation
b) Organizational realignment
c) Innovation and growth
d) Effective delivery

7. Which principle is concerned with the need to continually adapt to new information and emergent change?
a) Deploy diverse skills
b) Deal with ambiguity
c) Align with priorities
d) Collaborate across boundaries

8. Which is one of the MSP processes?
a) Manage the programme
b) Mitigate the risks
c) Embed the outcomes
d) Evaluate delivery

9. Which of these is NOT a characteristic of a principle?
a) Empowering
b) Universal
c) Self-validating
d) Optional

10. MSP specifies the need for some plans. Which one of these is required in MSP?
a) Quality plan
b) Benefits realization plan
c) Stage plan
d) Projects plan

Answers and references

Question	Answer	Reference
1	c	Chapter 2
2	a	Section 3.4
3	d	Section 3.6
4	b	Section 1.2
5	b	Section 11.2
6	a	Section 1.3
7	c	Section 2.4
8	c	Section 11.2
9	d	Chapter 2
10	b	Section 3.5

We hope that you have enjoyed your reading so far and are ready to come along determined to explore how MSP can help you in your management of programmes.