MSP® 2011 PRACTITIONER EXAM CANDIDATE GUIDANCE

1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1   The objectives of the examination are to enable you to demonstrate your understanding of MSP and how to apply the method/MSP in an appropriate way in a given set of circumstances as described in a scenario. The Practitioner examination uses objective test questions, which require you to choose a response to a question from a set of choices for which the correct answer is pre-determined.

1.2   The following paragraphs explain the format of the question papers, and the different types of question asked. Some suggestions on how to approach answering the various types of question are also included.

1.3   The MSP Registered Practitioner qualification is valid for 5 years. Practitioners should be re-registered within 3-5 years of their original certification in order to demonstrate their commitment to professional development. Details of the Practitioner Re-Registration examination can be found at section 10.

2.   STRUCTURE OF THE PAPER

The examination paper consists of three booklets.

2.1   The Scenario Booklet contains a scenario typically providing a description of the background, organization, benefits/objectives, stakeholders, projects, risks, issues and current status. The Scenario Booklet also includes additional information for one or more of the eight questions. Where additional information is to be used for a question, this is clearly stated in bold within the question header. **Additional information is only to be used for the question to which it relates**.

2.2   The Question Booklet contains eight questions, each covering a different syllabus area or combination of syllabus areas. The syllabus areas covered are identified at the beginning of each question. Each of the eight questions contains 10 question-lines, each of which attracts 1 mark, giving a total of 80 marks. The pass mark is 40 (50%). Each of the eight questions will be sub-divided into parts. Each of these 'part-questions' will identify the portion of the 10 marks allocated to it.

2.3   The Answer Booklet contains the answer sheets on which the answers must be given. **Unless it is clearly stated otherwise**, there is only **one answer** to each question-line. If more than one answer is given in the answer booklet, the response line will be void.

2.4   For certain subject areas, where more than one answer could be valid, questions are asked using the format 'Which of the following is MOST ….'. For these questions you are required to select the answer that is the best fit, given the scenario and the MSP guidance. If you select more than one answer, the response line will be void and no mark is awarded for the question-line.

3.   MSP SYLLABUS AREAS ADDRESSED

3.1   The MSP Syllabus contains 11 defined syllabus areas covering the three main parts of the MSP Guide: introduction and programme management principles, the governance themes and the transformational flow.

3.2 Within the Practitioner Examination, there will be six questions on the governance themes including overview, principles and governance themes overview, and two questions on the transformational flow.

Syllabus Area
Overview, principles and governance themes overview (PT)
Organization and programme office (OP)
Vision (VS)
Leadership and stakeholder engagement (LS)
Benefits management (BM)
Blueprint design and delivery (BL)
Planning and control (PL)
The business case (BC)
Risk and issue management (RM)
Quality and assurance management (QA)
Transformational flow (FA – FF), Identifying a Programme (FA), Defining a Programme (FB), Managing the Tranches (FC), Delivering the Capability (FD), Realizing the Benefits (FE) and Closing a Programme (FF).

3.3 The question header for each part-question identifies which syllabus area(s) is/are being examined.

3.4 The full MSP syllabus is available from the APM Group or from an Accredited Training Organization.

4. TYPES OF QUESTION

There are four different test types used within the paper.

4.1 **Classic Multiple Choice Questions** – 'choose one from a list of three or four options'.

Answer the following questions.	
1	Which role is responsible for aligning the costs of developing the training facilities with the objective of cost effective decentralization?
	A SRO.
	B Programme Manager.
	C BCM.
	D Project Manager for Project 5 (New Working Practices).

4.2 **Multiple Response** – 'choose two correct options from a list of five options'. This question follows exactly the same format as the 'Classic style', but more than one answer is required. It is the **only question type that requires more than one response to gain a mark**. Both responses must be correct to gain a mark. If more or fewer than two responses are given, then the answer will be void.

	Answer the following questions about communications relating to the programme. Remember to select 2 answers to each question.
1	Which **2** messages are **MOST** likely to be communicated to the shareholders?
	A Impact of the programme on the pre-tax profit of Buyitall.
	B Effect of the programme on Buyitall's property assets.
	C Amendments to job descriptions for Northtown staff following the establishment of the new training centres.
	D Details of contractual discussions about outsourcing some of the training courses.
	E Updates to the training prospectus for Buyitall staff.

4.3 **Matching – '**link items in one list to items in a second list'. There is **only one correct response** to each question, but options from the second list may be used once, more than once or not at all.

Answer the following question.

Column 1 is a list of **true statements** about the programme. For each statement in Column 1, select from Column 2 the document where that information should be recorded.

Each selection from Column 2 can be used once, more than once or not at all.

	Column 1	Column 2
1	Guidance on the criteria to be used for review of the new training prospectus.	A Blueprint
		B Information Management Strategy
2	The capacity of, and facilities to be offered by, each new training centre.	C Programme Issue Register
		D Quality and Assurance Strategy
3	A proposed change to the training prospectus being prepared by Project 3 (Training Design), identified during the preparation of the new working practices in Project 5 (New Working Practices).	E Risk Management Strategy
		F Programme Risk Register
		G Projects Dossier
4	How the revised training prospectus will contribute to delivering market-leading customer service.	

4.4 **Assertion/Reason –** 'evaluate two statements (an assertion and a reason), to determine if either, both or neither is true and, if both are true, whether the reason explains why the assertion is true'.

If either statement is false, select the answer from options C, D or E. If both statements are true, a third step is required. You must then determine whether or not the reason is a correct explanation for the assertion. If the reason explains why the assertion is true, the answer is A. If it does not, the answer is B.

There is **only one correct response** to each question-line but options can be used once, more than once or not at all.

Using the Scenario, answer the following question.

Lines 1 to 2 in the table below consist of an assertion statement and a reason statement. For each line identify the appropriate option, from options A to E, that applies. Each option can be used once, more than once or not at all.

Option	Assertion	Reason	
A	True	True	AND the reason explains the assertion
B	True	True	BUT the reason does not explain the assertion
C	True	False	
D	False	True	
E	False	False	

	Assertion		**Reason**
1	It would be appropriate for a new project to be planned, for delivery in an early tranche of the programme, to confirm if retail staff will use the distance learning methods effectively.	BECAUSE	Early tranches may be designed as pilots or proof of concept.
2	The Project Manager for Project 7 (Lease or Buy Four Centres) should be given clear guidelines as to when the first four new training centres must be delivered.	BECAUSE	The boundary of the programme will set out the programme scope.

For example, in question 1 and 2 of the example provided above, both the assertion statement and the reason statement is true but the answer to question 1 is an A and question 2 a B.

In question 1 the reason statement provides an explanation for the assertion because, from the scenario information, it will be clear that it would be appropriate to set up a project to test the assumptions. Early tranches may be designed as pilots or proof of concept so it would make sense to commission a new project in an early tranche to test out the validity of the Programme Business Case. Therefore, the answer is A.

In question 2 the reason statement is true, however, the assertion is describing project tolerances relating to the timing of the delivery of centres, whereas the reason is about the scope or boundary of the programme, not when it is needed. Therefore, the answer is B.

5. USING THE SCENARIO AND THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

5.1 Where you need to refer back to details provided in the Scenario Booklet in order to answer a question, this is clearly stated in the question header.

5.2 If the question header says '**Using the Scenario …**' you will need to refer to the scenario.

Examples of the kind of information you may need to reference from a scenario include:

- the scope or dependencies of projects within the programme
- the capability being delivered by a tranche
- the benefits sought by the programme
- the boundary of the programme**.**

5.2 If the question header says '**Using the additional information provided for this question in the *Scenario Booklet'***, you need to refer to additional information provided in the Scenario Booklet for the question. The additional information is provided for use with that question only.

5.3 Some questions may need you to reference both the scenario and additional information. In this case the question header will say '**Using the Scenario and the additional information provided for this question in the *Scenario Booklet'.***

5.4 Where there is no '**Using the Scenario ….**' statement, the scenario provides the context for the question only. There is **no need** to reference specific lines within the scenario in order to answer the question.

6. REFERENCE MATERIAL

You may reference your own MSP manual/guide during the examination. If you have made hand-written annotations within any blank space in your manual/guide, your manual/guide can still be used. However **no additional support material** is permitted; this includes post it notes (except where used for tabulation of the sections of the manual) and stapled sheets.

7. TIME MANAGEMENT

7.1 The full Practitioner examination is 150 minutes in duration. You must manage your time in order to complete all questions. As a general guide, you may wish to spend the first 15 minutes reading the scenario (excluding the additional information) and getting familiar with the layout of the paper. If 15 minutes is then allocated for each of the eight questions, this will allow 15 minutes tolerance for any additional reading required for some questions. This suggested timing is for **guidance only**. It is expected that some questions will take longer to answer than others due to the style of question and the question's difficulty.

7.2 You should be aware of the time constraint when using your manual/guide. The time pressure of the examination means that you should use the guide/manual with caution. You are **not expected** to use the manual to answer questions. The manual is there for support, as it would be in real life. Constantly referencing the manual is likely to be counter-productive and cause timing issues.

8. EDITORIAL NOTES

8.1 **General Presentation**

Throughout the Scenario Booklet and Question Booklet, title case has been used for all references to MSP themes, processes, programme information and proper nouns.

8.2 Uses of Should and Must.[1]

Should and must when used in a question stem have a precise meaning.

If we take as an example the statement, 'New staff members employed to run the café at Northfield Town Hall should be categorized as users/beneficiaries'

'Should' - is used to express 'obligation' something that is good or important or recommended. It is less strong than must and is used to test **whether something should be done in a scenario situation** because it is consistent with the principles and practices recommended in MSP.

Given the scenario information provided, the new staff may or may not be users/beneficiaries. The use of 'should' in the question requires you to evaluate this based on the scenario.

'**Must**' is used when talking about something that is 'necessary' or 'has' to occur, i.e. something that is mandatory. In the above example if **'must'** was used the statement would be false because there will be nothing that mandates that the staff must be categorized as users/beneficiaries'

8.3 Use of 'true statements'

When the expression **'true statements'** is used in a question, **no evaluation of whether the statements are consistent with what is stated in the scenario or additional information is required.**

Answer the following questions.

Each question includes only **true statements** about the programme, but only **2** statements are appropriate entries to be recorded under that heading of the Blueprint.

Remember to select 2 answers to each question.

1	Which 2 statements should be included in the **final future state** section of the Blueprint under **Processes**?
A	Training is provided through a variety of methods including distance learning.
B	The revised working practices for centralized bookings will be developed by a team of expert consultants
C	Staff will consider non-residential courses to be general practice and will have embraced the new ways of delivering training.
D	The Business Change Team will review the expected increase in the proportion of staff members benefiting from training after completion of Tranche 3.
E	5% of training is carried out through outsourcing.

In the above example there is no need to check the scenario to validate the statements. This is because it is known from the question header that the statements are true. The assessment

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[1] *Definitions are derived from Michael Swan's 'Practical English Usage'*

required by the question, is whether, according to the recommended MSP content of a Blueprint, the **Processes** heading is the correct place for recording these statements.

9.   USING THE ANSWER BOOKLET

9.1   The Answer Booklets are read electronically and the results generated by computer. It is therefore essential that you follow the instructions given and mark your answers accordingly. Failure to do so may lead to delay and, in some cases, answers being void.

9.2   Record your candidate number in the footer at the bottom of the page and also in the 6 boxes at the top right. Fill in the associated ovals next to the 6 boxes as shown in the example below for candidate 023514.

Candidate Number

9.2   Select your answers by filling in the ovals that relate to your chosen response, e.g.

9.3   Fill the oval in **IN PENCIL**, **NOT PEN**. If a pen is used, the answers will not be marked.

Acceptable ways to complete the answer sheets are either:

● completely filling in the oval or ⬭ drawing a line through the centre of the oval, ensuring that between 80-100% is filled.

Any other method, including ticks or crosses, is not acceptable and may not be marked.

9.4   If you wish to change your answer during the exam, completely erase your original answer and mark your new answer. If you give more answers than required, the question will score zero.

10.   RE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION

The Re-registration examination will follow the same format as the Practitioner examination but the Question Booklet will contain **three** questions, giving a total of **30** marks, to be

answered within 75 minutes. The pass mark is 15 (50%). Each question will test one of the syllabus areas. A maximum of one question will be on the transformational flow.