



MSP[®] 2011 Practitioner Candidate Guidance

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The objectives of the examination are to enable candidates to demonstrate an understanding of MSP and an ability to apply the guidance to a given set of circumstances described in a scenario. The MSP syllabus defines the learning outcomes being tested at Practitioner level. The Practitioner examination uses objective test questions that require candidates 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 examination paper and the different types of question asked. There are also some suggestions on how to approach answering the various types of question.

2 STRUCTURE OF THE PAPER

The examination paper consists of three booklets.

- 2.1 The Scenario Booklet will contain one scenario providing a description of an organization, the business rationale for a programme and the programme structure. The Scenario Booklet may also provide additional information for one or more of the eight questions. Where this additional information is to be used, this is clearly stated in bold within the question. **Additional information is only to be used for the question to which it relates.**
- 2.2 The combination of the scenario, each question and any additional information for that question will provide the context within which the question is to be answered. This context may relate to MSP roles (Sponsoring Group, Programme Manager, Business Change Manager (BCM), etc.) and also programme timescale (e.g. middle of tranche, start or end of the programme).
- 2.3 The Practitioner Question Booklet will contain **eight** questions. Each of the eight questions is worth 10 marks. This gives a total of 80 marks. The pass mark is 40 (50%). Each of the eight questions may be sub-divided into parts. Each of the part-questions will identify the portion of the 10 marks allocated to it and will consist of individual question-lines, each worth 1 mark.
- 2.4 The Re-registration exam will follow the same general format as the Practitioner exam but the Question Booklet will contain **three** questions, giving a total of 30 marks. The pass mark is 15 (50%).
- 2.5 Candidates are expected to answer all questions.
- 2.6 The Answer Booklet will contain the answer sheets on which the candidate's answers must be given. There will only be **one answer** to each question-line unless it is clearly stated otherwise within the question.
- 2.7 There may be question-lines where candidates are required to select one answer, but where the candidate might consider that more than one answer could be valid. Owing to the flexible nature of MSP this is inevitable on some topics, and for this reason some questions say 'Which of the following is **MOST...**'. The candidate is required to select one answer which best fits with the given scenario and MSP guidelines and principles. If the candidate selects more than one answer, the response line will be void and no mark awarded for that question line.

3 MSP SYLLABUS AREAS ADDRESSED

- 3.1 Most questions will cover just one of the 11 areas of the MSP Practitioner syllabus (see table below). It is likely that there will be more than one question on major areas of the syllabus in an examination, such as the transformational flow.

Syllabus Area Acronym	Syllabus Area
PT	Overview, principles and governance themes overview
OP	Organization and programme office
VS	Vision
LS	Leadership and stakeholder engagement
BM	Benefits management
BL	Blueprint design and delivery
PL	Planning and control
BC	The business case
RM	Risk and issue management
QA	Quality and assurance management
TF	Transformational flow (FA – FF)

- 3.2 However, all the areas of the syllabus are examinable and some questions might include aspects of related syllabus areas even if they are not strictly about that area itself. For example, a question on quality and assurance management within a programme may include reference to, and questions about, roles and responsibilities even though it is not formally testing the candidate's understanding of the organization theme in the guide.
- 3.3 In order to ensure a suitable balance of questions, a question may occasionally address more than one syllabus area. This is most likely where the lack of depth of a syllabus area makes it more difficult to construct a balanced question on the single area. Where **syllabus areas** are combined in this way, this will be clearly shown at the top of each **question**. Each **question header** for each **part-question** will identify which **syllabus area** is being examined.

4 TYPES OF QUESTION

There are a number of different test types used within the paper.

The test types are:

- **Classic Multiple Choice Question** - 'choose one from a list of three or four possible answers'. The example given below requires candidates to select the correct response from a list of four options.

Note that the question should be answered 'in the context of the Scenario', but there should not be a requirement for the candidate to reference specific lines within the scenario to answer the question.

In the context of the Scenario, answer the following question.	
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).

In the example provided below, candidates are required to refer to some additional information, provided in the Scenario Booklet in order to select the correct response from the list of four options. Once again, the question should be answered 'in the context of the Scenario', and there should not be a requirement for the candidate to reference specific lines within the scenario to answer the question.

In the context of the Scenario and using the additional information provided for this question in the Scenario Booklet, answer the following question.	
1	The Chief Financial Officer has been identified as a member of the Sponsoring Group. Is this an appropriate application of MSP for the programme? A No, because the members of the Sponsoring Group should have programme management experience. B No, because the Sponsoring Group should demonstrate the values implied by the transformational change. C Yes, because approval of funding for the programme needs senior level commitment within the Sponsoring Group. D Yes, because the SRO is likely to be a peer member of the Sponsoring Group,

Where a candidate is required to refer back to specific details provided in the scenario this will be clearly stated in the question as: '**Using the Scenario**'. Examples of the kind of information that a candidate may need to reference specifically from the scenario include:

- the scope or dependencies of a project
 - the capability being delivered by a tranche or the objectives
 - the benefits sought by the programme
 - the boundary of the programme.
- **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 style that requires more than one answer**. Both responses must be correct to gain a mark. If more or fewer than two responses are given, then the answer will be void.

In the context of the scenario, answer the following question about communications relating to the programme.

Remember to limit your answers to the number of selections requested in each question.

1	<p>Which 2 messages are MOST likely to be communicated to shareholders?</p> <p>A Impact of the programme of pre-tax profit of Buyitall.</p> <p>B Effect of the programme on Buyitall's property assets.</p> <p>C Amendments to job descriptions for Northtown staff following the establishment of the new training centres.</p> <p>D Details of contractual discussions about outsourcing some of the training courses.</p> <p>E Updates to the training prospectus for Buyitall staff.</p>
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- **Matching** - involves linking items in one list to items in a second list. There is **only one correct response** to each question, but options in the second list can be used once, more than once or not at all.

In the context of the Scenario, answer the following question.

Column 1 contains 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.	
5	General processes to follow for managing any legal difficulties that may arise during the execution of Project 2 (Outsource Specialized Training).	

- **Assertion/Reason** - each item consists of two statements, an assertion and a reason that are linked by the word 'because'. Firstly, candidates must determine whether the 'assertion' statement is true or false and then, independently of the assertion, whether the 'reason' statement is true or false.

If either or both statements are false, the answer can be selected from options C, D or E. However, if both statements are true, a third step is required.

To determine between options A or B, candidates must determine whether or not the reason is a correct explanation for the assertion.

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.

Each line in the table below consists 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	The Monitoring and Control Strategy should specify who must authorize the contracts to acquire each training centre.	BECAUSE	The Monitoring and Control Strategy should set out when audits and health checks should take place.
2	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.
3	The specifications and design of the IT network for the training centres should form part of the Programme Plan.	BECAUSE	The Programme Plan should include specifications for critical project outputs.
4	The Resource Management Strategy should identify how Projects 7 and 8 delivering the regional training centres will use external resources in the delivery of the training centres.	BECAUSE	The Resource Management Strategy should include the timing of activities to monitor resource usage by projects will take place.
5	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 line 1 above, both the assertion is true and the reason statement is false, therefore the answer is C. In question line 2 both the assertion and the reason statements are true and the fact that the early tranches may be designed as pilots or proof of concept explains why 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. Therefore, the answer is A.

In question-line 5 both the assertion and the reason statements are true but the reason statement does not provide an explanation for the assertion. The assertion is describing project tolerances relating to the timing of the opening of training centres, whereas the reason is about the scope or boundary of the programme, not when it is needed. Therefore, the answer is B.

5 **LEARNING LEVELS**

Part-questions will vary in their level of difficulty depending on the learning objective of the test. The learning levels are:

1. Knowledge
2. Comprehension
3. Application
4. Evaluation.

1. Knowledge	2. Comprehension	3. Application	4. Evaluation
Able to recall Guide facts, including terms, concepts, principles, themes, processes, and responsibilities.	Understands the principles, processes, governance themes, the programme's environment and roles and can explain how these are applied on/are involved with a programme.	Demonstrates application of the method to a scenario through: (i) appropriate use of governance themes; (ii) creation of programme documents; (iii) appropriate tailoring of the processes and governance themes.	Ability to evaluate the use of MSP through appraisal of completed documents and programme events for a given scenario.

Within a question, the part-questions will be assembled in order of ascending difficulty level.

The focus of the examination is on the application and evaluation learning objectives.

6 TIME MANAGEMENT & REFERENCE MATERIAL

The full Practitioner examination is 2.5 hours in duration. The Practitioner re-registration examination is 1 ¼ hours in duration. Candidates must manage their time in order to complete all questions.

As a general guide, candidates may wish to spend the first 15 minutes reading the scenario 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 about 15 minutes for additional reading required for some questions. This suggested timing is for guidance only.

Reference to the candidate's own annotated MSP guide is permitted during the examination.

No additional support material is permitted. This includes 'post-it notes' (other than tabulation of the sections of the guide) and additional information sheets whether affixed in the guide or not. Candidates are, however, permitted to make hand-written annotations within any blank space in the guide and refer to this during the course of the examination.

Candidates should be aware of the time constraint upon them. Whilst the guide is there for support, the time pressure of the examination means that candidates should be circumspect in its use. The questions **have not been** designed on the basis that candidates are required or even expected to use the guide to answer questions.

The Scenario Booklet provides a programme scenario and additional information for a number of questions. Where additional information and/or the Scenario is/are required to answer a question, the question will make this clear. If only one of these is required the question will also make this clear.

Where a question should be answered 'in the context of the Scenario' but without needing to reference specific details from the scenario, this will be clearly stated in the question as well.

Where additional information is provided, it should be taken as factually correct unless the phrase '(may contain errors)' is used. Where this phrase is used, candidates will typically be required to analyse whether there are any errors and, if so, which statements contain them.

If there is no reference to additional information or the Scenario within a question, then the question should be answered using only the information contained within the question. In this case, the Scenario provides the background and context to the overall programme but not the facts required to answer the question.

7 EDITORIAL NOTES

7.1 General Presentation

Throughout the Scenario Booklet and Question Booklet, title case has been used for all references to MSP programme information documents, roles and a small number of glossary terms.

7.2 Matching and number of answers required

Wherever the phrase 'Each selection from Column 2 can be used once, more than once or not at all' is used only one answer is required.

7.3 Use of Should, Could, Must, Would and Will

If we take as an example the statement, **'The Chief Financial Officer should/could/would (or will)/must perform the SRO role on the programme'**.

'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 programme situation because it is consistent with the principles and practices recommended in MSP.

Given the scenario information provided, the Chief Financial Officer may be the most appropriate candidate for the SRO role. Use of 'should' requires the candidate to evaluate this.

'Could' - is used to express a possibility but not a necessity given the programme circumstances - it is used very little as, in most cases any statement, for example, a certain person could perform a programme role is possibly true, even though it might not be sensible.

'Somebody would/will do something' expresses the idea of something definite or factual happening in the future or conditional future. In a programme situation we cannot evaluate whether somebody will or will not do something when using MSP. It may be recommended that they do but it does not mean they will.

'Would'/will' is therefore not used in scenario-specific true/false statements, e.g. the Chief Financial Officer will perform the SRO role, 'would/will' is not used because we cannot verify whether the Chief Financial Officer will perform the SRO role. If we could, it would simply be a reading test to check whether the statement appeared in the scenario.

'Must' is used when talking about something that is 'necessary' or 'has' to occur i.e. something that is mandatory. Consequently **'Must'** is also inappropriate because there will be nothing about the Chief Financial Officer and his responsibilities or the requirements of MSP which would mandate that he 'must' fulfil this role.

However, 'will' and 'is' are used to express something definite or some indisputable facts, e.g. to describe generic facts about MSP products processes, components and techniques - such as 'The Projects Dossier is part of the Programme Plan.'

7.3 Use of 'true statements'

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

In the context of the Scenario, answer the following question.

Each question provides a list of **true statements** about the programme, but only **2** statements are appropriate entries for that heading of the Blueprint.

Remember to limit your answers to the number of selections requested in each section.

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..
D	5% of training is carried out through outsourcing arrangements.

In the example above, there is no need in option A to check the scenario to see if training will be provided through a variety of methods including distance learning or, for option B, whether the revised working practices will be developed by a team of expert consultants. This is because it is known from the question header that the statements are true. Statements C to D are similarly true. The assessment required by the question, is whether, according to the MSP guidance, the statements should be included in the **final future state** section of the Blueprint under Processes.

8 USING THE ANSWER BOOKLET

The Answer Booklet will be read electronically and the results generated by computer. It is therefore essential that candidates follow the instructions given and mark their answers accordingly. Failure to do so may lead to delay and, in some cases, answers being void.

All answers are given by the candidate filling in 'ovals' that relate to their chosen response, e.g.

	A	B	C	D
1	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The oval must be filled 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 will not be marked.

If a candidate wishes to change their answer during the exam, the incorrect answer should be erased completely and the correct answer indicated. If more than one answer is given by the candidate, and the question line only requires one answer, the question line will score zero.

9. RE-REGISTRATION EXAM

The Re-registration exam will follow the same format as the Practitioner exam but the Question Booklet will contain three questions, giving a total of 30 marks, to be answered within one hour and fifteen minutes. The pass mark is 15.

Each question will test one of the syllabus areas. A maximum of one process area will be tested in each paper. All other guidance is applicable to both the MSP Practitioner and Re-registration examinations.