

# MSP Foundation Candidate Syllabus

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# 1 Introduction

The MSP Foundation qualification is intended for:

- Programme managers and aspiring programme managers
- Project managers/senior project managers
- Business change managers
- Other key staff involved in the design, development and delivery of projects, including project board members (e.g. executive), project assurance, and project support
- Operational line managers/staff (e.g. process owners) operating within a programme environment
- Other key staff involved in the design, development and delivery of programmes, including: programme board members (e.g. senior responsible owner), programme assurance, and programme management office personnel
- Portfolio management staff
- Specialist programme staff.

The MSP Foundation Examination is intended to assess whether the candidate can demonstrate sufficient recall and understanding of the MSP programme management framework (as described in the syllabus below) to be awarded the MSP Foundation qualification.

The MSP Foundation qualification is a prerequisite for the MSP Practitioner Examination, which assesses the ability to apply understanding of the MSP programme management framework in context.

There is no prerequisite for the MSP Foundation qualification.

## 2 Exam Overview

Material allowed	None	This is a 'closed book' examination. No materials, other than the examination materials provided, are permitted.
Exam duration	60 minutes	Candidates taking the exam in a language that is not their native or working language may be awarded 25% extra time, i.e. 75 minutes in total.
Number of marks	60 marks	There are 60 questions, each worth 1 mark. There is no negative marking.
Pass mark	36/60	60% or higher - a raw score of 36 marks or above
Level of thinking	Bloom's levels 1 & 2	"Bloom's level" describes the type of thinking needed to answer the question. For Bloom's level 1 questions, candidates need to recall information about the MSP framework. For Bloom's 2 questions, candidates need to show understanding of these concepts.
Question types	Standard Classic, Missing Word & List	The questions are all 'multiple choice'. For the 'Standard Classic' questions, candidates have a question and four answer options. For the 'Missing Word' questions, there is a sentence with a word missing and candidates must select the missing word from four options. For the 'List' questions, there is a list of four statements and candidates must select the two correct statements.

Please see the sample paper for an example of the exam format and content.

### Example 'Standard Classic' question:

What is the purpose of the XXX theme?

- a) To do Q
- b) To do P
- c) To do R
- d) To do S

### Example 'List' question:

Which TWO statements about XXX are CORRECT?

1. It does Q
  2. It does P
  3. It does R
  4. It does S
- a) 1 and 2
  - b) 2 and 3
  - c) 3 and 4
  - d) 1 and 4

NOTE: Two of the list items are correct.  
List style questions are never negative.

### Example 'Missing Word' question:

Identify the missing word in the following sentence.

There are [ ? ] levels of delegated authority that define the associated 'lines of defence'.

- a) two
- b) three
- c) four
- d) five

### Example 'Negative Standard Classic' question:

Which role should NOT be shared with the role of Senior Responsible Owner?

- a) Role Q
- b) Role P
- c) Role R
- d) Role S

NOTE: Negative questions are only used as an exception where part of the learning outcome is to know that something is not done or should not occur.

### 3 MSP Foundation Syllabus

The table below gives a summary of the concepts that are tested in the exam, and the main parts of the manual in which these are described (in parentheses) The book references refer to the section, but not the subsections within it, unless stated.

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria	Bloom's Level	No. Marks
1. Understand key concepts relating to programmes and MSP	1.1 Recall the definition of: a) A programme (1.2, glossary) b) The 3 lenses of MSP: principles, themes, and the processes across the programme lifecycle (2, 3, 11, glossary) c) Enterprise agility (1.2.3, glossary)	BL1	2
	1.2 Describe: a) The characteristics of a programme (1.2.1-4) b) The common reasons why programme management is used (1.3) c) The common challenges that MSP is designed to address (1.4) d) The programme environment (1.5, fig 1.2)	BL2	3
2. Understand how the MSP principles underpin the MSP framework	2.1 Explain the MSP principles: a) Lead with purpose (2.1) b) Collaborate across boundaries (2.2) c) Deal with ambiguity (2.3) d) Align with priorities (2.4) e) Deploy diverse skills (2.5) f) Realize measurable benefits (2.6) g) Bring pace and value (2.7)	BL2	7
3. Understand the MSP themes and how they are applied throughout the programme	3.1 Explain: a) The purpose of the programme strategy (3.4) b) The purpose of programme governance (3.1) c) The purpose of programme plans (3.5) d) The Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle and its applicability to risks and issues (3.3, fig 3.2)	BL2	3
	<b>3.2 Organization theme (chapter 4)</b>		
	3.2.1 Explain the purpose of the 'organization' theme (4.1)	BL2	1
	3.2.2 Describe the key relationships between the 'organization' theme and the principles (tab 4.1)	BL2	
	3.2.3 Explain the purpose of the key documents required to support the 'organization' theme: a) Programme strategy: governance approach (including organization structure) (4.3, 4.5, 4.6, tab 4.3) b) Programme strategy: stakeholder engagement approach (4.11, tab 4.3) c) Stakeholder engagement and communications plan (4.12, tab 4.3)	BL2	1
	3.2.4 Define key concepts related to the 'organization' theme: a) Stakeholder (4.10, glossary) b) Stakeholder engagement (4.10, glossary) c) Programme risk appetite (4.4, glossary)	BL1	1
	3.2.5 Describe the purpose and responsibilities of the following roles: a) Sponsoring group (sponsoring group member) (4.5.1, tab 4.4) b) Programme board (4.5.2) c) Programme office (programme office lead) (4.5.3, tab 4.4) d) Senior responsible owner (SRO) (4.6.1, tab 4.4) e) Programme manager (4.6.2, tab 4.4) f) Business change manager (BCM) (4.6.3, tab 4.4)	BL2	2

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Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria	Bloom's Level	No. Marks
3. Understand the MSP themes and how they are applied throughout the programme (continued)	<b>3.3 Design theme (chapter 5)</b>		
	3.3.1 Explain the purpose of the 'design' theme (5.1)	BL2	1
	3.3.2 Describe the key relationships between the 'design' theme and the principles (tab 5.1)	BL2	
	3.3.3 Explain the purpose of the key documents required to support the 'design' theme: a) Programme strategy: design approach (5.3, tab 5.4) b) Vision statement (5.4, tab 5.4) c) Benefits map (5.5.2, tab 5.4) d) Benefit profile (5.5.4, tab 5.4) e) Risk register (5.6, tab 5.4) f) Target operating model (5.7, 5.7.1, fig 5.8, tab 5.4)	BL2	1
	3.3.4 Define key concepts related to the 'design' theme: a) Benefit (5.5, glossary) b) Dis-benefit (5.5, glossary) c) Vision (5.4, glossary) d) Programme risk (5.6, glossary)	BL1	1
	3.3.5 Describe: a) The types of benefits (5.5.1) b) The path to benefits (5.5.2, fig 5.2) c) The types of programme risk (5.6.1) d) Risk prioritization (5.6.2) e) The need to document current state, future state and gap analysis (5.7.2)	BL2	1
	<b>3.4 Justification theme (chapter 6)</b>		
	3.4.1 Explain the purpose of the 'justification' theme (6.1)	BL2	1
	3.4.2 Describe the key relationships between the 'justification' theme and the principles (tab 6.1)	BL2	
	3.4.3 Explain the purpose of the key documents required to support the 'justification' theme: a) Programme mandate (6.3, tab 6.3) b) Programme strategy: funding approach (6.4, tab 6.3) c) Programme brief (6.5, tab 6.3) d) Business case (6.6, tab 6.3) e) Financial plan (6.7, tab 6.3)	BL2	1
	3.4.4 Define key concepts related to the 'justification' theme: a) Budgets (6.7.1, glossary) b) Cash flow (6.7.2, glossary) c) Financial contingency (6.6.3, glossary)	BL1	1
	3.4.5 Describe: a) The justification for a programme including financial and non-financial appraisal methods (6.6.1, 6.6.1.1, 6.6.1.2) b) The key considerations when validating a business case (6.6.4)	BL2	2
	<b>3.5 Structure theme (chapter 7)</b>		
	3.5.1 Explain the purpose of the 'structure' theme (7.1)	BL2	1
	3.5.2 Describe the key relationships between the 'structure' theme and the principles (tab 7.1)	BL2	

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Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria	Bloom's Level	No. Marks	
3. Understand the MSP themes and how they are applied throughout the programme (continued)	3.5.3 Explain the purpose and characteristics of the key documents required to support the 'structure' theme: a) Programme strategy: delivery approach (7.3, tab 7.3) b) Delivery plan; including the factors to be considered when planning programme delivery (7.5, tab 7.3) c) Benefits realization plan (7.8, tab 7.3) d) Programme strategy: resourcing approach (7.9, tab 7.3)	BL2	1	
	3.5.4 Define key concepts related to the 'structure' theme: a) Pace (7.4, glossary) b) Organizational capacity (7.4.1, glossary) c) Organizational ability (7.4.1, glossary) d) Multimodal delivery (7.6, glossary) e) Tranche (7.5, glossary) f) Landing point (7.5, glossary) g) Incremental progression (7.5, glossary) h) Dependency (7.7, glossary) i) Iterative project lifecycle (7.6, glossary) j) Linear project lifecycle (7.6, glossary) k) Hybrid project lifecycle (7.6, glossary) l) Continual improvement (7.6, glossary)	BL1	1	
	3.5.5 Describe: a) The need to identify and manage dependencies, including the types of dependencies (7.7) b) The use of the appropriate modes of delivery (7.6)	BL2	1	
	<b>3.6 Knowledge theme (chapter 8)</b>			
	3.6.1 Explain the purpose of the 'knowledge' theme (8.1)	BL2	1	
	3.6.2 Describe the key relationships between the 'knowledge' theme and the principles (tab 8.1)	BL2		
	3.6.3 Explain the purpose of the key documents required to support the 'knowledge' theme: a) Programme strategy: knowledge & learning approach (8.3, tab 8.2) b) Programme strategy: information approach (8.6, tab 8.2)	BL2	1	
	3.6.4 Define key concepts related to the 'knowledge' theme: a) Knowledge (8.1, glossary) b) Community of practice (8.4, glossary) c) Lessons learned (8.5, glossary) d) Retrospective (8.5, glossary)	BL1	1	
	3.6.5 Describe: a) The use of knowledge management and lessons learned in effective programme management (8.4, 8.5) b) The use of information management, including three pillars of information security, in effective programme management (8.7)	BL2	1	
	<b>3.7 Assurance theme (chapter 9)</b>			
	3.7.1 Explain the purpose of the 'assurance' theme (9.1)	BL2	1	
	3.7.2 Describe the key relationships between the 'assurance' theme and the principles (tab 9.1)	BL2		
	3.7.3 Explain the purpose of the key documents required to support the 'assurance' theme: a) Programme strategy: assurance approach (9.3, tab 9.4) b) Assurance plan (9.5, tab 9.4)	BL2	1	
3.7.4 Define key concepts related to the 'assurance' theme: a) Assurance (9.1, glossary) b) Three lines of defence (9.4, glossary)	BL1	1		

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Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria	Bloom's Level	No. Marks
3. Understand the MSP themes and how they are applied throughout the programme (continued)	3.7.5 Describe: a) The nature of assurance activities, including the drivers for assurance (9.5.1, tab 9.2) b) How to plan successful assurance activities, including the success factors for assurance (9.5.3, tab 9.3) c) The need for assurance at multiple levels, including the three lines of defence (9.4, 9.4.1, 9.4.2, 9.4.3)	BL2	1
	<b>3.8 Decisions theme (chapter 10)</b>		
	3.8.1 Explain the purpose of the 'decisions' theme (10.1)	BL2	1
	3.8.2 Describe the key relationships between the 'decisions' theme and the principles (tab 10.1)	BL2	
	3.8.3 Explain the purpose of the key documents required to support the 'decisions' theme: a) Programme strategy: decision-making approach (10.3, tab 10.3) b) Programme strategy: issue resolution approach (10.4, tab 10.3) c) Programme strategy: risk response approach (10.5, tab 10.3) d) Decision register (10.3, tab 10.3) e) Issue register (10.4, tab 10.3)	BL2	1
	3.8.4 Define key concepts related to the 'decisions' theme: a) Decision point (10.3, glossary) b) Risk owner (10.5, glossary) c) Issue (10.4, glossary) d) Issue owner (10.4, glossary)	BL1	1
	3.8.5 Describe: a) The importance of data gathering and reporting (10.6, 10.6.1, 10.6.2) b) The role of options analysis to support decisions (10.7) c) The generic responses to threats and opportunities (10.5.1, tab 10.2)	BL2	2
4. Understand the MSP processes and how they are carried out throughout the programme	4.1 Explain the purposes of the processes within the MSP lifecycle: a) Identify the programme (12.1) b) Design the outcomes (13.1) c) Plan progressive delivery (14.1) d) Deliver the capabilities (15.1) e) Embed the outcomes (16.1) f) Evaluate new information (17.1) g) Close the programme (18.1)	BL2	7
	4.2 Explain the objectives of the MSP processes (a-g above) (12.2, 13.2, 14.2, 15.2, 16.2, 17.2, 18.2)	BL2	4
	4.3 Explain the context of the MSP processes (a-g above) (12.3, 13.3, 14.3, 15.3, 16.3, 17.3, 18.3 (excluding tab 12.1, tab 13.1, tab 14.1, tab 15.1, tab 16.1, tab 17.1, tab 18.1))	BL2	3