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Advanced Practitioner Re-Registration Dissertation Guidance

INTRODUCTION

The objective of the Advanced Practitioner re-registration dissertation is to provide the examiner with information that allows them to assess the candidate's level of understanding of MSP.

In discussing how MSP was adapted and applied within the chosen programme, candidates need to explain how MSP was, or should have been, tailored or scaled to suit the programme and the organization. They need to make assessments of how effective the programme management was and the impact that MSP could or did have. All such assessments and any recommendations made must be justified by reference to appropriate MSP guidance.

If the candidate worked on the chosen programme before the MSP 2011 Edition was published (30 Aug 2011), explanations about MSP can be attributed to the MSP 2007 Edition. After 31 December 2011 candidates must explain the use of MSP using the MSP 2011 Edition. If by this date MSP 2011 had not been adopted by the candidate's organization, the dissertation must state how the current MSP guidance may or may not have been better suited to the nature of change being managed.

MSP SYLLABUS AREAS ADDRESSED

The candidate is required to choose an option from the list of topics provided and then write a dissertation on the chosen option. The options described are broad in nature and are designed to enable the candidate to demonstrate their knowledge and experience of the MSP topic throughout the management of a programme. In doing so the dissertation will need to cross-relate different elements of MSP beyond that simply implied by the topic to demonstrate an understanding of how the different elements of MSP inter-relate.

The dissertation should show how MSP guidance was used within the programme to deliver effective management in the chosen area. If the programme was not run under the MSP regime, then the candidate should explain how the management in the chosen area was undertaken and how it could have been improved by the use of MSP guidance.

STRUCTURE OF THE ASSESSMENT

The dissertation should be between 2,000 and 4,000 words. Anything substantially outside this range is unlikely to be appropriate.

The dissertation should, if possible, cover work of which the candidate has direct experience from working in a programme environment within the last five years. The candidate does not need to have been the programme manager in order to write about the programme with which they were involved.

If a candidate has not worked within a programme during the last five years then they may write about the MSPCare scenario programme (written for the Advanced Practitioner examination) as if it were one with which they had been closely involved.

In doing so they will need to make assumptions about how the MSPCare programme progressed. These assumptions should be documented within the context section of the scenario. Any such assumptions will be accepted by the examiner as "facts" for the purpose of the dissertation.

TIME MANAGEMENT & REFERENCE MATERIAL

Preparation of the dissertation is not supervised or time limited and the MSP Guide and any other relevant reference material may be used during its preparation.

Since it is an unsupervised examination, unlimited in time, just quoting text verbatim from the MSP Guide will not gain many marks.

LANGUAGE AND STYLE

Candidates are **not** being examined in their good use of grammar and spelling. Candidates need to ensure however that the material presented is understandable and coherent.

Candidates need to ensure that points are not made in such an abbreviated form that they or their context are not supported by material presented to the examiner. Some candidates over-use bullet points, presenting material in such an abbreviated form that either the point being made is not understood by the examiner or is too brief or lacking in the detail required to demonstrate that the candidate actually understands MSP.

Abbreviations can be used but they should be written in full on first use in the answer with the abbreviation given in brackets following it, e.g. Sponsoring Group (SG).

Answers may be hand-written or typed. Answers may include diagrams to illustrate points, but a maximum of one page will be marked in addition to the word count.

ASSESSMENT

Having chosen from **one** of the four options given in the examination paper the dissertation should be written about the programme from that focus whilst linking to other themes and parts of MSP.

The purpose of the dissertation is to provide the examiner with information that allows them to assess the candidate's level of understanding of MSP, its use and practical tailoring to suit different environments, types and sizes of programme.

A maximum of 75 marks are available and a pass mark of 38 marks is required for re-accreditation. For those who wish to be registered trainers, examiners or consultants a higher mark of 50 marks (66%) is required.

As an examiner can only award marks for what is written, candidates should ensure that they give full and complete justifications for the recommendations they make. Sometimes this may mean stating obvious facts in order to illustrate a point.

The dissertation must cover the four areas (as explained) below. The split of marks between each area is shown. Each candidate must achieve the minimum marks shown in each area as well as the minimum overall mark of 38 marks to pass overall.

Area	Information Required	Assessment Criteria	Marks Available	Minimum Marks Required
Context	<p>A brief description of the context of the programme.</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the sector (public or private); the size of the programme both in general terms and in relation to the organization; the organization's experience of running major programmes of work of this nature. The organizations experience of the use of MSP (if any) Candidates role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the programme been described in a clear and concise way Is there an appropriate summary of the organization, the type, size and nature of the programme and the programme management experience of the organization Description of candidates role 	10	3
The establishment of suitable arrangements given the programme context.	<p>A description of how the examination option, chosen by the candidate, was established within the programme.</p> <p>This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> its tailoring, resourcing, budget, process basis, monitoring and control but is dependent on the option selected for the dissertation. An assessment of the effectiveness of the work and the way in which it was established. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant correlation between how this programme was established and MSP guidance An assessment of the areas of strength and weakness of the establishment of the chosen option in this programme. 	20	8

The use of MSP	<p>Either, if MSP was used within the programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An appreciation of the use of MSP in support of the chosen area. • How MSP was implemented, where its strengths lay and how it dealt with the relevant issues that arose during the programme's life-span. <p>~~~~~</p> <p>OR, if MSP was NOT used within the programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An appreciation of how MSP would have assisted the programme's running in the chosen area had it been implemented. • What relevant issues the programme faced during its life-span and how these would have been addressed and managed by the effective use of MSP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An assessment of the effective use of MSP in the specific environment of this programme. • What worked well and what was less successful and why. • How MSP was used to manage the chosen area and how issues that arose were dealt with effectively by the use of MSP. • Why did MSP make a difference? ~~~~~ • An assessment of how the candidate would have implemented MSP in support of this programme. • An assessment of how the effective use of MSP in the specific environment of this programme would have been beneficial if it had been used. • What would have been managed differently or caused less of a problem. • Why would the use of MSP have made a difference? 	35	20
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Interaction with the wider organization	Brief summary of how the use of MSP in this area affected other areas within the same programme, other programmes and/or the wider organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-relationship with other areas of the same programme, other programmes and the wider organization and how this impact was felt, • How the use of MSP (either actual use or theoretical use) affected the impact. • Brief summary and conclusion to include any lessons learned about the use of MSP for the option chosen. 	10	4
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CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD DISSERTATION

In summary, a good dissertation will:

- be structured using the assessment structure as a guide
- be focused on and set in the context of the chosen subject
- contain an appropriate mix of MSP theory, references, examples and justifications derived from business experience
- avoid duplication
- give clear statements that demonstrate a practical understanding of MSP
- have sufficient detail to warrant the number of marks available
- provide sufficient explanations and justifications
- demonstrate an understanding of the importance of and interactions between relevant elements of MSP
- offer opinions and proposals accompanied by justifications.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A POOR DISSERTATION

In summary, a poor dissertation will:

- fail to address the topic selected
- introduce irrelevant topics
- include incorrect statements about MSP
- be too narrowly focused
- be too general and not related to MSP
- have insufficient detail for the marks available
- give too much detail when making a point
- contain insufficient information to explain or justify the points made
- make statements without justifications
- list information that can be found readily in the MSP Guide without applying it to the programme or providing justifications for the items in the list.

Please remember:

- the examiner can only mark your paper if your writing is legible
- what is not written, cannot be marked.