



**MSP[®] Frequently Asked
Questions (FAQs)**
Public



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1 MSP® 5th edition

1.1 WHAT IS MSP AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO BE CERTIFIED IN MSP 5TH EDITION?

Organizations must constantly improve their ability to change so that they can respond to market challenges and stay competitive. MSP (Managing Successful Programmes) is a globally recognized framework for best practice programme management, used by organizations to lead investments in change.

This framework focuses on creating outcomes of benefit for organizations while mitigating risks and actively engaging stakeholders. It helps to align projects and programmes to organizational strategy and provides governance.

It consists of a set of principles, themes, and processes that provide a clear roadmap for the programme lifecycle and ensure successful organizational outcomes.

The MSP 5th edition emphasizes more flexibility, adaptability, and responsiveness by adopting an incremental approach to the programme lifecycle and thus enabling organizational agility.

With MSP 5th edition, organizations and professionals can:

- enable organizational agility by adopting an incremental approach to the programme lifecycle
- respond positively to the challenges when managing programmes and larger, more strategic, or multiple projects
- align the delivery of programmes and projects to organizational strategy
- focus on the delivery of outcomes and benefits while understanding and mitigating risks
- gain stakeholder buy-in by actively engaging and managing internal and external stakeholders.

1.2 WHY HAS AXELOS DEVELOPED MSP 5TH EDITION?

The 5th edition responds to several changes that have occurred in the world of programme and project management.

The digital revolution, the speed of change, the rise of agile ways of working, alongside the increased volatility and uncertainty of all markets, mean that programme management must evolve to meet demands.

AXELOS decided to go back to basics and challenge every aspect of MSP to validate its contribution to the guidance and inclusion in the update of MSP.

MSP 5th edition has been updated to contribute to how organizations invest in response to their changing circumstances and to empower them to realize tangible outcomes and benefits from their investment in programmes.

1.3 WHEN WILL MSP 5TH EDITION BE LAUNCHED?

The MSP 5th edition is launching on 26 October 2020.

1.4 WHAT ARE THE MSP 5TH EDITION CERTIFICATION LEVELS?

There are two certification levels within MSP 5th edition:

- Foundation: For individuals interested in learning how to manage multiple projects and programmes successfully.
- Practitioner: For project, programme, and business change managers who want to build on their knowledge of MSP to practically apply the MSP framework to real-life scenarios, providing the skills to lead and manage a programme.

1.5 IS MSP 5TH EDITION TRAINING MANDATORY FOR CANDIDATES, OR IS SELF-STUDY POSSIBLE?

AXELOS does not mandate training to sit the MSP 5th edition exam, candidates are able to self-study to obtain their certification.

However, candidates are encouraged to attend an accredited training course to have a better learning experience.

1.6 WHAT IS THE MSP 5TH EDITION CORE GUIDANCE PUBLICATION AND HOW IS IT PURCHASED?

The book title for MSP 5th edition is *Managing Successful Programmes*, covering both the MSP 5th edition Foundation and Practitioner levels.

The core guidance can be purchased from our official publishing partner, TSO, in any of the following formats:

- physical hard copy
- PDF digital copy
- eBook (available on platforms, including Apple Store, Google Play, and Kindle)
- subscription (available as a single-user licence or multi-user, multi-site license for 12 months).

Please [visit TSO](#) for more information.

1.7 ARE THERE SAMPLE PAPERS AVAILABLE FOR MSP 5TH EDITION?

Yes, one sample paper for MSP Foundation level and one for MSP Practitioner level can be downloaded via the AXELOS website, [here](#).

A further sample paper for each designation level will be available through the ATOs as part of the training course.

1.8 WHAT ARE THE PRE-REQUISITES FOR TAKING AN MSP 5TH EDITION FOUNDATION OR PRACTITIONER EXAM?

There are no pre-requisites for taking MSP 5th edition Foundation exam.

To take the MSP 5th edition Practitioner exam, candidates are required to have MSP 5th edition Foundation certificate.

1.9 ARE THE MSP 5TH EDITION FOUNDATION OR PRACTITIONER EXAMS OPEN BOOK?

MSP 5th edition Foundation exam: No, the Foundation level exam is closed book.

MSP 5th edition Practitioner exam: Yes, the Practitioner level exam is open book. The *Managing Successful Programmes* publication is permitted, however no materials other than this publication and the examination materials may be used.

1.10 WHAT IS THE EXPIRY DATE FOR THE CERTIFICATIONS?

MSP 5th edition Foundation certificate: This certificate has no expiry date

MSP 5th edition Practitioner certificate: The MSP 5th edition Practitioner certificates are valid for 3 years. To remain accredited, Practitioners can re-sit the exam, or log CPD points through our online subscription, My MSP.

2 Transitioning from MSP 4th edition to MSP 5th edition

2.1 HOW DOES MSP 4TH EDITION MAP AGAINST MSP 5TH EDITION?

The essence of what a programme is remains the same as it was with MSP 4th edition: it is temporary, it is focused on outcomes of benefit, and it is concerned with leading multiple projects and other work.

The core concepts (principles, themes, and processes) also still form the overall structure of the guidance. However, these have been revised with the following principles in mind:

- To ensure that MSP remains adaptable and flexible and can be used in a wide range of organizations and environments. There are many varied drivers for change, and MSP's approach to programme management should ensure that the organization's investment in change is wisely managed.
- To provide guidance for a wide range of investments that benefit from programme management, recognizing that the word 'programme' has many different meanings to organizations, and language other than 'programmes' may be used by those organizations.
- To emphasize the incremental nature of a programme and show how MSP enables a cyclical progression towards the desired future state. Organizations are complex, the external context is emergent, and the delivery of benefits and the creation of value cannot usually be achieved through a series of linear steps.
- To enable programme teams to recognize the many ways that outputs and changes can be delivered, including iterative (Agile), linear, and hybrid approaches.

2.1.1 The broad overview of revised key elements is:

A high-level view of the topics and areas that were revised are:

- Vision: An updated approach to the structure of a vision statement.
- Benefits: A reinforced vision of a key MSP principle through the whole guidance.
- Risks: A wider discussion on risks and their mitigation across the programme.
- Organization structure and roles: The well-established roles within MSP were reviewed and updated, and new roles are introduced and discussed.

- Business case: One of the key challenges is to obtain funding for a programme. In the updated core guidance, this topic is discussed and provides a new approach to its development.
- Blueprint: A key component of MSP has evolved into the Target Operating Model, and MSP 5th edition has a deeper explanation of its use and benefits.
- Stakeholder engagement and communications planning: Key components in the new ways of working, addressing the main challenges of today's programme management.

For more details, please continue to refer to AXELOS communication channels.

2.2 WHY IS THERE NO MSP ADVANCED PRACTITIONER DESIGNATION ANYMORE?

The Advanced Practitioner designation is specific to MSP 4th edition, and it complemented the Practitioner level by determining whether a candidate can lead and manage a programme.

With the updated syllabus and exam structure, MSP 5th edition Practitioner level is more robust, as it builds on the knowledge of MSP 5th edition Foundation, in order to practically apply the MSP 5th edition framework to real life scenarios, providing the skills to lead and manage a programme. Therefore, the Advanced Practitioner level has not been added to MSP 5th edition.

2.3 WHEN WILL MSP 4TH EDITION BE SUNSETTED*?

AXELOS recognizes that it may be a gradual project for organizations to transition to MSP 5th edition and for candidates to gain certifications. We would like to reassure all candidates and our training partners that AXELOS will provide sufficient notice of the sunsetting of MSP 4th edition.

With the core concepts retained, MSP 5th edition is an upgrade of MSP 4th edition to meet the needs of organizations in today's environment. MSP 4th edition remains relevant, providing professionals with the fundamental skills needed.

Please do continue to refer to AXELOS communication channels for more information and announcements. More information will be released in 2021.

2.4 HOW DOES MSP 5TH EDITION INTEGRATE AGILE PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT?

MSP 5th edition features the multimodal delivery mode, which allows multiple ways of working, based on what is most suitable for you when delivering the work and on the work itself. A single programme or project may combine different approaches to its component work, with projects using iterative (agile), linear, or hybrid lifecycles or continual improvement activities.

*'Sunsetting' a course means that AXELOS will cease to conduct periodic exam question performance reviews, publication reviews, exam question quality assurance and subsequent maintenance.

3 MSP 5th edition content

3.1 HOW IS THE MSP 5TH EDITION CONTENT STRUCTURED?

MSP 5th edition consists of a set of principles, themes, and processes that provide a clear roadmap for the programme lifecycle and ensure successful organizational outcomes.

3.2 WHAT ARE NEW FEATURES IN MSP 5TH EDITION?

MSP 5th edition emphasizes more flexibility, adaptability, and responsiveness by adopting an incremental approach to the programme lifecycle and thus enabling organizational agility.

3.3 WHAT IS SUPPLEMENTARY CONTENT?

The supplementary content is designed to enhance and provide extended coverage of areas within the core content of MSP 5th edition. Supplementary content is produced in a variety of media, including whitepapers, videos, discussion papers, and infographics.

This content will be made publicly available on the [AXELOS Content Hub](#) and via My MSP.

See section 4 for more details on My MSP.

4 My MSP

4.1 WHAT IS MY MSP?

My MSP is an online subscription service by AXELOS that gives MSP practitioners a wide range of content designed to help them achieve exam success, excel in their professional roles, and advance their careers.

The My MSP subscription is intended to support a candidate beyond their certification and provides a range of benefits such as:

- a CPD toolset to earn a digital badge aligned to your MSP certificate
- the latest programme management publications, reports, and white papers to keep you on top of industry trends
- MSP exam resources to prepare you for success, and toolkits to apply what you have learnt
- exclusive white papers, best practice reports, and other online publications
- access to an exclusive community forum with like-minded professionals and peers.

You can find further information on My MSP via the AXELOS website, [here](#).

4.2 WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR MY MSP?

Any professional is eligible for My MSP.

4.3 HOW CAN I SUBSCRIBE TO MY MSP?

You can subscribe via the AXELOS website, [here](#).

Routes to My MSP:

- Candidates receive a complimentary annual subscription to My MSP with every MSP exam.
- Professionals can buy a one-year subscription to My MSP for £50 + VAT.

4.4 WHAT OTHER RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE IN MY MSP?

Candidates who subscribe to My MSP will also receive a monthly newsletter, so they never miss out on the latest premium content.

