

# Unit 6: Project Management – the Strategic Perspective

**Level: 7**

**Unit type: Optional**

**Guided learning hours: 45**

**Credit value: 20**

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## Unit introduction

Strategy is often defined in organisational terms as putting an organisation in a specific position through improving its competitive advantage. One approach that organisations adopt to achieve and/or increase their competitive advantage is through the use of strategic projects.

These projects can be contextualised, for example, in manufacturing, financial services and research and development. However, whatever the context, all projects must be aligned to the organisation's strategic aims and objectives.

Through the establishment of appropriate governance structures, ensuring sufficient resources are in place, and through effective leadership, planning and control, project managers are able to implement and deliver a project's aims and objectives.

In this unit, learners will explore the key theories, concepts and models that underpin effective project management from a strategic perspective. This exploration will support consideration of the key strategic requirements of governance, leadership, planning and control before using this knowledge to critically analyse a contemporary project.

The project can be one that the learner is carrying out, or one that the tutor has made available for analysis. Assessment for this unit can be carried out alongside learning.

## Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

To pass this unit, the learner needs to meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

Learning outcomes		Assessment criteria	
A	Understand current theories, concepts and models that apply to the field of project management	A.1	Critically evaluate the contexts in which contemporary projects operate
		A.2	Critically review contemporary project management theories, concepts and models
		A.3	Critically discuss the importance of managing projects within a project management framework
B	Understand project governance and management	B.1	Analyse appropriate project structures, hierarchies, roles and responsibilities
		B.2	Critically review project management processes and protocols
		B.3	Evaluate techniques to manage stakeholder interest, influence and engagement
C	Understand project leadership and management	C.1	Critically assess approaches to providing visionary leadership to project teams
		C.2	Critically review the tools and techniques project leaders could use to develop and establish individual and team objectives
		C.3	Critically analyse current insights into the management of conflict within project teams
		C.4	Analyse techniques a project manager could use to communicate and negotiate with stakeholders
D	Understand project planning and control	D.1	Discuss the role of a consolidated management plan for a project
		D.2	Evaluate methods for managing project costs and budgets
		D.3	Critically review why and how to manage project costs and budgets
		D.4	Critically evaluate responses to risks and issues to minimise threats and maximise opportunities
E	Be able to review the implementation of a project	E.1	Review the governance and management of a project
		E.2	Critically assess the extent to which project management and leadership effectively supported the implementation of a project
		E.3	Critically review the financial and risk management of a project
		E.4	Develop justified recommendations for how the governance, management and implementation of a project could be improved

## Unit content

### Learning outcome A: Understand current theories, concepts and models that apply to the field of project management

- *The contexts in which contemporary projects operate:* external environment (PESTLE), internal environment (SWOT), types of project including manufacturing (e.g. new product development), health (e.g. new hospital), infrastructure (e.g. upgrading a rail network), transportation (e.g. building an oil tanker), and services (e.g. introducing new software systems).
- *Contemporary project management theories, concepts and models:* projects as a process, the project life cycles (linear and hybrid), project management as a concept and as a process, project scope, time, resources, quality, project risk, agile, lean, scrum, Kanban, waterfall.
- *Project management framework:* processes, tasks, tools, key components for planning, managing and governing, basic elements including initiation, planning, execution, control and closure.

### Learning outcome B: Understand project governance and management

- *Project management processes and protocols:* reliable and valid information; managing and recording project deviations and risks; compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, configuration management systems, change control processes, impact of change, trend analysis.
- *Managing stakeholder interest, influence and engagement:* project stakeholders (e.g. client, project management office), stakeholder analysis techniques (e.g. power/influence matrix, salience model, RACE model).

### Learning outcome C: Understand project leadership and management

- *Approaches to providing visionary leadership:* ethics, collaboration, inspiration, diversity, empowerment, high performance teams, trust, confidence.
- *Establishing individual and team objectives:* SMART objectives, skills/gap analysis, individual support, team support, performance management, feedback, responding to concerns, the development cycle, motivation.
- *Current insights into the management of conflict:* emotional intelligence, impartiality, objectivity, situational and contextual awareness; resolution strategies, equality and inclusivity.
- *Communicate and negotiate with stakeholders:* strategic communication, communication management plan, internal negotiation, external negotiation.

### Learning outcome D: Understand project planning and control

- *Consolidated management plan:* components of a plan (to include scope, schedule, resource requirements, budgets, anticipated risks, opportunities and threats, quality requirements), balancing components with the project's requirements, monitoring the plan, adjusting the plan, input from a range of sources.

- *Manage project costs and budgets:* cost tracking tools, cashflow and cashflow forecasting, establishing cost trends, financial performance monitoring, cost analysis and cost adjustments; budget allocations and reviews.
- *Responses to risks and issues:* quantitative and qualitative analysis of risks and issues, recording risks and issues, responding to risks and issues, reviewing how risks and issues were resolved.

### **Learning outcome E: Be able to review the implementation of a project**

- *Conducting a review:* relationship between theory and practice, use of project governance, effectiveness of leadership, effective and efficient planning, change control measures, realistic aims and objectives, adequate provision of resources.
- *Justifying recommendations:* recommendations must be logically supported, state the recommendations, establish reasons for the recommendations, provide supporting evidence, suggest timeframes if relevant.

## Essential information for assessors

### Essential resources

There are no specialist resources needed for this unit.

### Suggested assessment approach

This section must be read in conjunction with *Section 6: Assessment*.

This unit is assessed internally by the centre and externally verified by Pearson.

The table below shows the suggested approach to assessments.

When preparing the assessment for this unit, the learner should be given an Assignment brief designed by the teacher. Exceptionally the learner will be able to draw on their workplace experience to devise their own project. However this should be done with the guidance of the tutor. This assignment should be set in a specific organisational context, it should draw on learning from the unit, and be designed in a way that enables learners to meet all the assessment criteria.

Learning outcome	Suggested assessment approach
A Understand current theories, concepts and models that apply to the field of project management	A management report of approximately 5000 words to include a reference list. The reference list is not included in the word count.
B Understand project governance and management	
C Understand project leadership and management	
D Understand project planning and control	
E Be able to review the implementation of a project	

## Assessment requirements

### Learning outcome A

This unit begins with a learning outcome that requires learners to engage with seminal and current literature where the focus is the broader contexts and principles of project management. It is expected that learners will engage with research that has a more national bias to gain greater insight into how the concepts, theories, models and frameworks apply to different types of project in different sectors. A learner's ability to critique arguments and premises identified in the literature and research is necessary if they are to fully appreciate the principles of project management.

### Learning outcome B

Building on the knowledge and understanding gained through learning outcome A, learners will explore the key strategic issue of project governance. Through consideration of a number of case studies/examples, learners should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the relationships between governance and management, and how these have a symbiotic relationship with a project's stakeholders. Learners should demonstrate they recognise the influence of stakeholders, based on their relationship with an organisation, on how a project is governed within the context of national and international regulations/legislation. Learners need to demonstrate an ability to be critical.

### Learning outcome C

To support the learner's ability to meet this outcome they could be directed to the knowledge gained from *Unit 1: Strategic Leadership and Management*.

Whilst the underlying principles of strategic leadership and management relate to this learning outcome, learners must contextualise these to project management. Learners must be able to isolate specific aspects of leadership and management as they apply to different aspects and stages of a project. Learners should focus on the 'how' and 'why' of project management so they can demonstrate a deep understanding of the subject. This knowledge will be reinforced through examinations of different projects and how they were governed. Learners need to demonstrate an ability to be critical.

### Learning outcome D

Planning, managing costs and risk and issue management are significant and key aspects of a project that could determine its success or failure. Learners must demonstrate that they appreciate the importance of each of these aspects as well as an appreciation of the symbiotic relationship between them. Exploring a number of projects/case studies will deepen a learner's understanding, which will support their ability to be critical.

### Learning outcome E

This learning outcome draws together all learning that has taken place in the previous learning outcomes by applying learner knowledge and understanding, alongside their ability to critique, to an organisation's implementation of a project.

The project can be real where the learner is embedded in the project or where the learner is an outside observer. However, if this is not possible a case study will need to be provided.