MAJOR PROJECTS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

MPLA HANDBOOK

Transforming the implementation of Government policy through world class delivery of Major Projects

Contents

Introduction

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) has established the MPLA to transform the implementation of Government policy through world-class delivery of major projects by:

- Returning major project leadership capability to Whitehall
- Developing project leaders to become world-class at successfully delivering Major Projects
- Creating a cadre of world-class project leaders, formed into an expert support network
- Elevating the status of project leadership professionalism in Central Government
- Developing Permanent Secretaries' ability to a) develop a corporate environment that supports successful major project delivery, and b) improve the way in which their organisations optimise use of their valuable project leader resource

The MPLA is delivered in partnership between the IPA and Oxford Saïd Business School. To achieve the aims of the MPLA, the 'Academy' deploys teaching and learning approaches that are appropriate for the profile of the people who make up the UK Government Project Leader community. The Saïd Business School has a strong track record of delivering leadership programmes for executives which allows them to take an informed view of what a good Major Project Leader 'looks like', where at its core the role of the Project Leader is seen as being:

- Best conceived as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a large, temporary organisation (as opposed to a project manager engaged on a large project); and
- Focussed on securing transformational outcomes, i.e. ensuring the legacy beyond project close.

To achieve this, Major Project Leaders need to:

- Understand and navigate the broad set of risks inherent in Major Projects;
- Engage stakeholders, justifying their trust and retaining their confidence through inevitable setbacks; and
- Perform over the long term, at a level that can be sustained.

During the MPLA programme participants will have the opportunity to participate in group and individual learning activities to develop and enhance their experience as a Major Project Leader.

All up-to-date information about the MPLA can be accessed via the Participant Portal. Participants will receive their log-in details for the Portal from the Business School after the MPLA induction.

MPLA Competency Framework and Curriculum

The MPLA programme is underpinned by a competency framework and a curriculum. The MPLA Competency Framework describes the qualities/characteristics a Major Project Leader should possess to conduct their project leadership role effectively - it describes what 'good' looks like. The competency framework has been developed with input from those leading the development of the new civil service competency framework and from interviews with a selection of Project Leaders to understand the important skills, knowledge and qualities required of leaders of major projects.

The competency framework has four domains and is briefly described below:

Competency Domain	Description
Leadership of Self	Distinguishing the self-knowledge to allow a leader to know how to maximise their leadership impact on the project.
Leadership of Major Projects	Distinguishing those leadership attributes which are most germane to major projects ('temporary organisations'), compared to the leadership of ongoing operations
Commercial Leadership	The competency to provide commercial leadership and exert effective control over the 'extended delivery team' across organisational boundaries
Technical Leadership	The competency of appropriately applying the principles, disciplines and tools to programme and project management to support the leadership of the project

All participants on the MPLA programme will hold different leadership roles for a variety of major programmes and for this reason the expectation is for participants to develop particular competences that are most relevant to the needs of their organisation, situation and personal career plans.

Appendix 1 contains the full MPLA Competency Framework and participants should familiarise themselves with the content as it will help inform development of their MPLA Development Plan and will also inform them about what knowledge and competence will be assessed in the assessment process.

The MPLA Curriculum (Appendix 2) details the subjects/topics that are addressed in the three modules to cover the four domains of project leadership competency identified in the MPLA competency framework. Briefly the curriculum covers:

Module 1: Breaking Away: from 'managing projects' to 'leading temporary organisations'			
Leadership of Self	**Leadership of Major Projects**	**Commercial Leadership**	**Technical Leadership**
Embracing the challenge of leading Major Projects, questioning existing ideas and approaches and contributing to finding new ways through engaging	*Being the leader of a 'temporary organisation', not manager of a scaled-up project; engaging and leading internal and external stakeholders through vision,*	*Comprehending the historical performance of Major Projects, which is poor and not improving.*	*Examining whether conventional approaches to project management are fit for purpose in a Major Project environment; Understanding organisation design theory and practice;*

with other Major Project leaders and insight from academia.	*negotiation and partnering.*		*Comprehending alternative approaches for Major Project delivery, such as the 'V model'.*

Module 2: Managing Risk: exploring the problem in depth			
Recognising the personal contribution you make to the success and failure of a Major Project.	*Understanding the challenges of operating effectively in a dynamic Major Projects environment and identifying the limits to leaders and leadership.*	*Understanding risk: the problems, causes and cures; Understanding the risks and rewards apportioned between Government and contacting organisations; Understanding and employing different procurement, supplier and contract management mechanisms, and designing and implementing strategic financial control mechanisms.*	*Examining deeply the risks in a Major Project and considering the sources of moral hazard and effect of optimism bias and strategic misrepresentation on outcomes; Developing the ability to assess the effectiveness of alternative methods employed to manage Major Projects.*

Leading Transformation: Building the future: mastering the delivery organisation and realising benefits			
Taking on the mantle of leadership, being responsible for yourself, your team and your Major Project.	*Creating a culture of engagement where everyone takes on and lives up to their responsibilities; Rising to the challenge, "Why would anyone be led by you?"*	*Setting in place structures to manage risk and focus on delivery.*	*Deploying the Major Project organisation to implement, sustain and amend itself through the Project's life cycle.*

Commercial capability

The MPLA programme aims to cover key areas of commercial capability that meet the needs of the majority of participants. However, it is recognised that some participants might desire guidance beyond what is covered in the programme. We therefore wish to identify with those individuals where the MPLA can directly support them or recommend or facilitate access to other resources.

For those who feel they have limited experience then we suggest reviewing the courses available on the Civil Service Learning website. Recommended from the CSL offering are:

- Planning for Commercial Success (half day)
- Demystifying Commercial Contracts (half day)
- Achieving Supplier Engagement (half day)

- Commercial Skills for Leaders course (2 days)

It might also be possible to connect participants with individuals who have significant commercial experience, either for discussion of a specific issue or as part of a longer-term support arrangement. If you feel you would benefit from contact with an expert in a particular area we can explore finding a relevant contact in the Crown Commercial Service at the Cabinet Office or within the MPLA alumni network. Equally, if you are a leader who is particularly strong in any area of commercial delivery and would be willing to support future participants we would be grateful if you would contact us and let us know what type of support you would be able to offer.

We also recommend participants use the opportunity to take part in IPA Reviews, particularly of projects with a strong commercial aspect, to explore and reflect upon their commercial knowledge and experience.

If you wish to access support or feel you are able to offer your services then please contact mpla@ipa.gov.uk
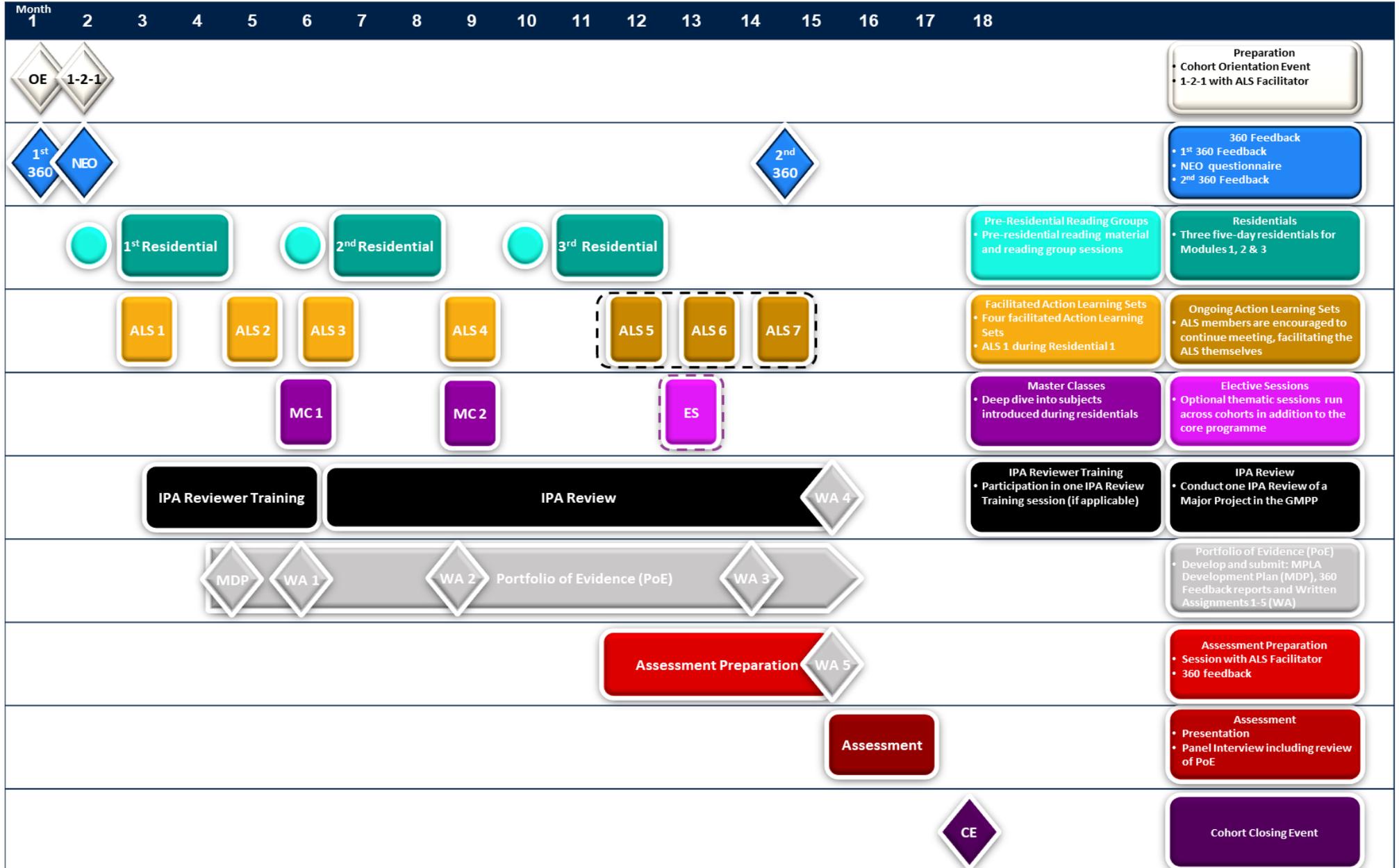
MPLA Programme

The MPLA programme is made up of three modules that are delivered over 30 contact days. The core components of the programme are described below, more detail on each area can be found later in this section:

Core Components	Description
Orientation Event	An induction and introductory session, this will provide an opportunity to inform participants about the MPLA and the commitment they are making to the programme and their development, and marks the official start of the programme. This event will be hosted by the IPA Executive Director and the Academy Director. This session also provides an opportunity to make introductions between participants, ALS Facilitators and faculty members as well as opportunities for networking with other cohorts where possible.
MPLA 360	All MPLA participants will complete the MPLA 360 process twice. This is the 360 feedback tool that has been developed using the MPLA Competency Framework. The MPLA 360 will capture information on how participants are perceived by colleagues who know them in four capability domains of project leadership: Leadership of Self, Leadership of Major Projects, Commercial Leadership and Technical Leadership. MPLA 360 will enable participants to learn more about their strengths and development areas, and their effectiveness in operating in each competency domain. Feedback from the MPLA 360 will be an input into the development of the MPLA Development Plan (MDP).
Pre-residential Reading and Reading Group Sessions	Pre-reading will help participants prepare for the residential weeks and, combined with reading group sessions that will bring the reading to life, will help ensure that participants are well informed and prepared to engage in debate and discussion with peers inside and outside of classroom sessions. Reading lists will be made available via the participant portal in advance of the pre-residential reading group sessions (4-6 weeks). Pre-residential reading group sessions will be held 2-3 weeks in advance of the residential week and are led by the Cohort Manager. These sessions will normally be 1½ hours long and will also have conferencing facilities should participants not be able to attend in person. Past participants have found attending these sessions in person to be very valuable. Attendance of one session before each residential is mandatory.
Residential weeks	Three five-day residential weeks have been developed to combine a stimulating mix of world class research, guest speakers with a broad range of experience, participant contributions and workshops. There will be a number of challenging and fun activities outside the core day that will provide opportunities to enhance project leadership skills, build relationships and reflect on learning. Each residential will commence on a Monday and finish on a Friday.

	Participants can choose to arrive on the Sunday evening before the residential commences and expense their accommodation cost for this night back to their departments. Attendance is mandatory.
Action Learning Sets (ALS)	All participants will be allocated to an ALS and their experienced ALS Facilitator will facilitate four sessions: one during the first residential, a further two in the remainder of module two, and a fourth following the second residential. Participants will be encouraged to continue meeting as an ALS for the remainder of the course. Each session can take 3–4 hours and attendance is mandatory. Participants can learn more about the MPLA action learning approach and wicked issues later in this section.
Master Classes	Following both Residential 1 and 2 there will be a master class. The master class will take a deep dive into one of the key subject areas introduced during the residential week; Module 1 – Organisation Design and Module 2 – Risk Management. If the master classes have associated pre-reading this will be made available after the residential weeks. Attendance at these sessions is mandatory.
IPA Review	All MPLA participants complete an assignment on an IPA Review as part of their Portfolio of Evidence. This will require participants who are not already accredited reviewers to register with the IPA Resourcing team and attend a training session. Each participant is responsible for ensuring they: • Complete a reviewer application form (Including the security clearance section) and submit a CV to the IPA Resource Team to register • Attend an IPA Reviewer Training session • Contribute to the review planning meeting • Complete agreed pre-reading in advance of the review • Participate in or lead interviews during the review • Contribute to the development of the review final report; this includes reporting on evidence-based findings, challenging recommendations and providing examples of exemplary practice • Write and submit the MPLA Written Assignment based on the review, including copies of the feedback sheets provided on your performance as a review team member or leader Details on training sessions and booking on reviews will be provided by the IPA Resourcing Team. Participants are expected to self-manage their registration, training and participation in an IPA Review. Participants are expected to undertake their training and conduct a review within sufficient time to allow completion of their written assignment.

Assessment	All participants will be assessed after the 12 month programme using a standard and consistent process. The MPLA assessment is both summative (it assesses learning from the course) and formative (it guides future development and learning).
	
	MPLA Assessment is made up of three elements:
	
	    1. Portfolio of Evidence (PoE) consisting of:
	        a. MDP
	        b. Five Written Assignments
	        c. Two MPLA 360 reports
	
	        The PoE will enable participants to demonstrate their learning and application from the MPLA
	
	    2. Presentation about the participant's development and progress on the MPLA
	
	    3. Panel Interview drawing together all elements of the assessment process and providing an opportunity for participants to demonstrate their ability to address the challenges of Project Leadership
	
	All participants will receive a copy of the PoE and can download it from the Participant Portal.

Overview of the MPLA Programme

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18

OE **1-2-1**

Preparation
- Cohort Orientation Event
- 1-2-1 with ALS Facilitator

1st 360 **NEO** **2nd 360**

360 Feedback
- 1st 360 Feedback
- NEO questionnaire
- 2nd 360 Feedback

1st Residential **2nd Residential** **3rd Residential**

Pre-Residential Reading Groups
- Pre-residential reading material and reading group sessions

Residentials
- Three five-day residentials for Modules 1, 2 & 3

ALS 1 **ALS 2** **ALS 3** **ALS 4** **ALS 5** **ALS 6** **ALS 7**

Facilitated Action Learning Sets
- Four facilitated Action Learning Sets
- ALS 1 during Residential 1

Ongoing Action Learning Sets
- ALS members are encouraged to continue meeting, facilitating the ALS themselves

MC 1 **MC 2** **ES**

Master Classes
- Deep dive into subjects introduced during residentials

Elective Sessions
- Optional thematic sessions run across cohorts in addition to the core programme

IPA Reviewer Training **IPA Review** **WA 4**

IPA Reviewer Training
- Participation in one IPA Review Training session (if applicable)

IPA Review
- Conduct one IPA Review of a Major Project in the GMPP

MDP **WA 1** **WA 2** Portfolio of Evidence (PoE) **WA 3**

Portfolio of Evidence (PoE)
- Develop and submit: MPLA Development Plan (MDP), 360 Feedback reports and Written Assignments 1-5 (WA)

Assessment Preparation **WA 5**

Assessment Preparation
- Session with ALS Facilitator
- 360 feedback

Assessment

Assessment
- Presentation
- Panel Interview including review of PoE

CE

Cohort Closing Event

Residential Weeks

There are three residential weeks for the MPLA. The format of the residential programme involves a core curriculum of subjects which are worked through by faculty members from Monday to Friday. This core teaching is delivered by a faculty team who aim to draw the cohort into discussion about the subject areas, whilst contributing their own experiences and understanding. A number of practitioners will also provide input to these discussions in the form of their own views and experience. The residential timetable also includes activities to support participant learning such as morning energiser sessions including Tai Chi, running and access to the on-site gym. After breakfast a review and overview session where events of the previous day are considered and pointers to the day ahead provided is conducted. The end of the taught sessions is punctuated with a session to recap the material covered and to invite reflection, observations and feedback. The evenings have a more informal air with sessions timetabled that provide space for broad discussions on wide topics.

All residential weeks will be held at the Business Schools premises at Egrove Park. Details about Egrove Park can be found in Section B.

Pedagogy - Delivering the Residential Courses
Some Major Project topics require a substantial amount of time to grasp as they are substantial ideas and the details are important, for example 'Being the leader of a temporary organisation' is a key concept and one that reframes the notion of Major Project Leadership. It is also known that adult learning requires providing participants the opportunity to 'experience' (e.g. hands-on) the material, and to reflect on their experience. This means the residential courses requires clear signposting of the Academy's learning objectives and the time and space for participants to engage with the learning material.

Achieving the residential course's learning objectives, and providing opportunities to engage participants, means delivering the programme successfully through introducing and closing the week in an effective manner, setting up and concluding each day well, and providing regular opportunities for discussion in every session. Descriptions of each of these aspects to the programme are provided below:

Introduce and close the week effectively
The old adage, "well begun is half done" provides a reminder of the importance to getting the week off to a great start and it is the Cohort Manager or Academy Director's responsibility to launch the residential course in this spirit. The introduction highlights the focus for the week, walks the participants through the timetable for achieving this, and stresses the collective responsibility to contribute to the success of the Academy.

Closing the week effectively involves summarising the topics covered in the residential course and ensuring these are linked clearly back to the learning objectives.

Organise the day well: A day in the life of the Academy
Each day begins with a reflection on the material covered the previous day. This provides the opportunity for participants to link the material with their experience and to identify opportunities to apply the ideas to the Major Projects they lead. From here, the day ahead is introduced:

- Clear focus on key learning objectives

- Set up the day: explain to participants the structure and purpose and key learning objectives
- Ensure balance is achieved between taught input; class discussion; case studies; practitioner input
- Close the taught content: return to key learning objectives
- Reflection (30 mins): What were the key points from the day for you? What can you take away? What questions do you have? (BCD – Benefits, Concerns and Do Next)
- Signpost forward

In every session, allow regular opportunities for discussion

Within each 90-minute session, participants are given the opportunity to discuss key points with each other. This is achieved by structuring the session into two or three sections, for example: input (20 mins); discussion in pairs / table (5–10 mins); debrief discussions (5-10 mins). Repeat. The discussion sessions will make use of one or a cascade of levels of the class 'pyramid' below:

The 'participant pyramid'

- Individually, e.g. write 3 key points
- Discuss in pairs / threes
- Discuss in small groups, e.g. on tables
- Debrief in plenary

Module 1 Residential Programme

The purpose of the first residential programme is to begin the journey of transforming the implementation of Government policy through world-class delivery of Major Projects. This is achieved by examining current Major Project delivery performance and considering the technical, commercial and above all leadership aspects of what is required to succeed. In doing so, we believe there is a need to break away from 'managing projects' and to reframe around 'leading temporary organisations'. This idea will be extended in module 2, which will focus on managing risk and understanding the causes of failure as well as the causes of success, and in module 3, where the emphasis will be on building the future through mastering the delivery organisation and realising benefits. This means that while we will make a good start during Module 1, the Academy outcomes are not fully delivered until the full programme is completed.

Module 1 learning objectives

The learning objectives for the first module introduce the three primary themes identified for the Academy by the IPA, which are:

- *Leadership of a Major Project:* Here we aim to understand what it means to be a Major Project Leader, where the role is positioned as being the CEO of a temporary organisation, and the implications that arise from this for individuals, their teams and the Major Project organisation.
- *Technical Understanding:* To develop the necessary technical understanding of major projects by looking at the conventional approaches to project and programme management and reassessing and examining their applicability to the Major Project environment. This will include developing an understanding of organisation design theory and practice.
- *Commercial Competence*: To build the commercial competence of project leaders, the historical performance of Major Projects is reviewed and consideration is given to why this is both poor and not improving. The aggregate effect of poor performance of Government Major Projects will also be examined, with a particular focus on the challenges that this lack of improvement over time presents for the Government.

The week is arranged so that the Monday lays a foundation of understanding for the core topics of (i) Major Projects and (ii) Leadership. Tuesday introduces the notion of Major Projects as large scale, temporary organisations and examines the structures employed in their management and leadership. Wednesday focuses on how Major Projects are delivered and the alternative approaches available. Thursday and Friday examine in depth the role and capabilities of the 'Major Project Leader', the challenges this role presents and how effectively leaders can address these challenges. The week concludes with a wrap up and planning on how to deliver maximum benefit from the non-residential elements of Module 1.

Module 2 Residential Programme

The first residential programme began a journey of transforming the implementation of Government policy through world-class delivery of Major Projects by examining current Major Project delivery performance and considering the technical, commercial and above all leadership aspects of what is required to succeed. In doing so, the need to break away from 'managing projects' and instead to reframe around 'leading temporary organisations' was introduced and established. This idea will be extended in module 2, which will focus on managing risk and understanding the causes of failure as well as the causes of success and subsequently in module 3 where the emphasis will be on building the future through mastering the delivery organisation and realising benefits. Participants should recognise that this means that although we will make significant progress in delivering the objectives of the Academy, the overall outcomes are not fully delivered until the full programme is completed.

Module 2 learning objectives

The learning objectives for the second module continue to build the three primary themes identified for the Academy by the IPA, which are:

- **Leadership of a Major Project:** Recognising the personal contribution you make to the success and failure of a Major Project; understanding the challenges of operating effectively in a dynamic Major Projects environment, and identifying the limits to leaders and leadership.
- **Technical Understanding:** Understanding risk: the problems, causes and cures; understanding the risks and rewards apportioned between Government and contacting organisations.
- **Commercial Competence:** Deeply examining the risks in a Major Project and considering the sources of moral hazard and effect of optimism bias and strategic misrepresentation on outcomes; developing the ability to assess the effectiveness of alternative methods employed to manage Major Projects; understanding and employing different procurement, supplier and contract management mechanisms, and designing and implementing strategic financial control mechanisms.

The week begins by laying a foundation of understanding of Major Project risk, which is then considered from technical and commercial perspectives through the week. Monday and the morning of Tuesday set up the key challenges, causes; and cures of Major Project Risk. This extends into Tuesday afternoon, where working with the contractor community and wider supply chain is examined. This discussion sets up Wednesday's and Thursday's focus on the commercial side to Major Projects. On Wednesday we take a legal and contractual perspective on the Major Project lifecycle while on Thursday and into Friday we view this in terms of financial control. The week concludes with a wrap up and planning on how to deliver maximum benefit from the non-residential elements of Module 2. Given the profile of the Academy participants, i.e. highly experienced Major Project Leaders, the course will be delivered in line with these two principles:

a) Participants are required to prepare before coming to Oxford through completing the readings and the formative assignment. The session leaders will look to participants to share their knowledge and experience of Major Project leadership and link this to the cases, readings and material presented in class.
b) The role of the session leader will often be that of a facilitator of debates rather than a traditional lecturer who transmits pre-packaged knowledge. Class participation and knowledge sharing will be a key feature of the learning experience and it is expected that participants will learn from sharing their experiences as much as they will from reading the cases and study material. Cases and readings will be thus utilised for bringing this experience out to the fore rather than as providing 'instructions' or definite 'guidelines' on how to lead Major Projects.

Module 3 Residential Programme

The first residential programme began a journey of transforming the implementation of Government policy through world-class delivery of Major Projects by examining current Major Project delivery performance and considering the technical, commercial and above all leadership aspects of what is required to succeed. In doing so, the need to break away from 'managing projects' and instead to reframe around 'leading temporary organisations' was introduced and established. This idea was extended in module 2, which focused on managing risk and understanding the causes of failure as well as the causes of success. In module 3 the emphasis will be on building the future through mastering the delivery organisation and realising benefits.

Participants should recognise that the objectives of the Academy are built over the three modules so as the end of the Academy approaches, they should spend time to draw key themes together as well as to plan for continued personal development beyond the Academy.

Module 3 learning objectives
The learning objectives for the third module continue to build as well as round off the primary themes identified for the Academy by the IPA, which are:

Leadership of self: Taking on the mantle of leadership, being responsible for yourself, your team and your Major Project.
- Inspiring and enabling people to change/act
- Managing and dealing with 'politics'
- Finding time for reflection
- Developing resilience and approaches to manage self under pressure

Leadership of a Major Project: Creating a culture of engagement where everyone takes on and lives up to their responsibilities. Creating a compelling answer to the question, "Why would anyone be led by you?"
- Managing, influencing and engaging stakeholders (including senior stakeholders)
- Leading and managing change

Technical Understanding: Deploying the Major Project organisation to implement, sustain and amend itself through the Project's life cycle
- Adapting the major project leader role over the project life-cycle

Commercial Competence: Setting in place structures to manage risk and focus on delivery
- Maintaining focus and direction
- Benefits realisation
- Managing and improving project performance

MPLA Assessment

Overview

The MPLA assessment is both summative (it assesses learning from the course) and formative (it guides future development and learning). All MPLA participants will be assessed at the end of the programme using a standard and consistent process.

The purposes of summative assessment are:

- Confirming that MPLA learning outcomes have been achieved; and,
- Enabling you to demonstrate that you have sufficient competency in project leadership to be appointed to lead projects in the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP)[1] by:
  - Assessing how you have applied learning from the MPLA in your role as Major Project Leader; and
  - Assessing your development and progress against the MPLA competency framework.

The model of the "incomplete leader" underpins the MPLA programme. We do not expect participants to become experts in all areas outlined in the MPLA Competency Framework. However, we do expect participants to develop sufficient knowledge and self-awareness so that they can build an effective leadership team around them and identify their own development plan to be a successful Major Project Leader.

We recognise that professional development as a Project Leader will continue after the MPLA programme. Accordingly, the formative purpose of the assessment process is to make clear what support Departments should provide to participants in addressing on-going development needs to be a successful Major Project Leader.

The assessment process has been developed on the following principles:

- The MPLA curriculum forms the foundation of the assessment process;
- Participants will be assessed on their knowledge and competence in all four areas of the MPLA Competency Framework, as this describes the qualities/characteristics a Major Project Leader should possess to conduct their project leadership role effectively - it describes what 'good' looks like; and,
- Participants are assessed against simple and understandable assessment criteria.

The MPLA assessment focuses on three areas, and asks the following questions of participants:

- **Personal Development:** How effectively have you used the opportunity for addressing your own development? How well are you able to take account of your own strengths and weaknesses in leading a project?
- **Understanding of project leadership:** How well do you demonstrate understanding of relevant concepts, frameworks? How well can you apply frameworks to explore and critically assess project leadership challenges?
- **Application of Learning and Demonstration of Benefits:** What have you learned and how have you applied your learning from the MPLA, within the context of your particular situation? What quantifiable benefits are you able to demonstrate personally; for your project and for your organisation?

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[1] This is a requirement from the Civil Service Reform Plan

MPLA Assessment is made up of three elements:

1. Portfolio of Evidence (PoE), consisting of your MPLA Development Plan (MDP), 5 written assignments, and your 360 reports;
2. Presentation about your development and progress on the MPLA; and,
3. Panel Interview drawing together all elements of assessment process and providing an opportunity for you to demonstrate your ability to address the challenges of Project Leadership.

Academic rigour

Written assignments provide the opportunity to reflect on how the learning from modules can apply to your project and are also one of the means to assess whether you can demonstrate the standard of capability required to 'pass' the Academy. Both learning and demonstration of capability require rigour, and in an academic contest this includes the need to correctly reference the ideas that underpin your thinking and sources of material you employ. As the University's regulations note, "It is a principle of intellectual honesty that all members of the academic community should acknowledge their debt to the originators of the ideas, words, and data which form the basis for their own work." (Oxford, 2013). Doing so allows you to put your opinion in the context of the available evidence base and research.

Referencing is also essential to avoid plagiarism, where, "Plagiarism is a breach of academic integrity ... Passing off another's work as your own is not only poor scholarship, but also means that you have failed to complete the learning process. Deliberate plagiarism is unethical" (Oxford, 2013). To ensure your compliance with the principle of avoiding plagiarism, you are required to complete an 'own work declaration' for each assignment and assignments are reviewed using Turnitin, a plagiarism detection package.

Previous participants have noted that, while more time consuming, the process of writing the assessments provided them with robust arguments, supported by evidence, to make changes in their projects and to challenge stakeholders' opinions of how they should be delivered.

If, at any point during the course, you find you are struggling with the workload involved, please arrange a discussion with your Cohort Manager as early as possible.

> *"The MPLA has undoubtedly taught me some new and relevant concepts and re-enthused me with the power of academic rigour. If the MPLA only makes a small difference to the outcome on this £15bn+ acquisition programme with impacts and further costs reaching 50 years into the future then the leverage is huge."*
>
> *– Cohort 1 Participant*

Reference:
Oxford, University of, (2013) *What is plagiarism?* [online] Available at: http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/goodpractice/about/ [accessed 24 October 2013]

Summary of MPLA Assessment

		Assessed?	Assessment Criteria	Competency Area Assessed			
				Leadership of Major Projects	Leadership of Self	Commercial Leadership	Technical Leadership
Portfolio of Evidence Section A: MPLA Development Plan	**Sections of the MDP:** A: Strength and development areas B: Development Objectives C: Action Learning Objectives D: Sharing Knowledge, Experience and Learning Plan E: Additional Objectives F: Achievement of Objectives G: Ongoing Development Plan	✘	None -Included as input to the Panel Interview and to inform the overall assessment of the Participant	✔	✔	✔	✔
Portfolio of Evidence Section B: Course work	**Residential 1 written report** (max 2000 words) *Title: Discuss the alignment tensions within and between: (i) the Major Project; (ii)the Operating Environment, and; (iii) planned change to the Operating Environment*	✔	Written Report Marking Criteria				✔
	Residential 2 written report (max 2000 words) *Title: Describe the challenges and causes of, and cures for, the risk in the specific UK Government Major Projects you are familiar with.*	✔	Written Report Marking Criteria			✔	
	R**esidential 3 written report** (max 2000 words) *Title: Why should a Major Project and/or the Operating Environment for Major Projects be led by you?*	✔	Written Report Marking Criteria	✔			✔
	IPA Review written report (max 2000 words) *Title: Reflect on your experience of conducting an IPA Review of a Major Project and discuss:* *1) the commercial and technical aspects of the major project reviewed and what you would recommend to improve quality and performance?*	✔	Written Report Marking Criteria	✔		✔	✔

	2) *what you would do differently on your Major Project having understood the impact of project governance and audit assurance on project performance* Participants also asked to submit Feedback from Review Team.						
	Presentation written report (max 2000 words) *Title: How has the MPLA contributed to your professional development as a Project Leader, and what impact has this had on the performance of your project?* This written report forms the foundation of the Participant's presentation to the Assessment Panel	✔	Presentation & Interview Marking Criteria	✔	✔	✔	✔
Portfolio of Evidence Section C: 360 Report	Included as input to the Panel Interview and to inform the overall assessment of the Participant	✘	None	✔	✔	✔	✔
Presentation	Duration: 15mins When: On assessment day Presentation that summarises the written report (as submitted in the PoE) that answers the question, '***How has the MPLA contributed to your professional development as a Project Leader, and what impact has this had on the performance of your project?***' Presentation will be one input to the panel interview Presentation materials to be submitted to Academy Director	✔	Presentation & Interview Marking Criteria	✔	✔	✔	✔
Panel Interview	Duration: 45mins When: On assessment day Panel Interview to draw all elements of the assessment process together Panel will assess participant outcome against overall assessment evaluation	✔	Presentation &Interview Marking Criteria	✔	✔	✔	✔

MPLA Alumni

All participants completing the MPLA programme are eligible to join the Oxford Business Alumni (OBA) Network.

The OBA is Saïd Business School's official global business alumni network. Launched in 1998, the OBA Network brings together individuals who share a common interest in business, ensuring an active network of emotionally and intellectually engaged members.

The OBA Network continues to expand and now boasts more than 10,000 members, comprised of School degree programme alumni, current School post-graduate degree programme students, University of Oxford alumni with an interest in business and Executive Education participants.

Membership in the OBA Network offers Executive Education participants a lifelong connection with Saïd Business School and University of Oxford.

The benefits you will receive as a member of the OBA Network include:

- Access to OBA Network members: Contact OBA Network members via the exclusive OBA Directory. Search for members based on geographic location, company or industry sector to establish new business contacts, corporate connections or networking opportunities.
- High profile events in Oxford: Invitations to attend high profile events at Saïd Business School such as our Distinguished Speaker seminars.
- International events: Invitations to attend high profile events being held throughout the world in support of the Saïd Business School and University of Oxford such as the India Business Forum and China Business Forum.
- Join geographic-based OBA chapters and industry-based OBA groups (coming soon): Invitations to attend alumni-led events such as black tie dinners, debates, guest speaker events, networking opportunities and informal drinks receptions.
- Lifetime email account and forwarding facility: Receive a personalised @oxfordbusinessalumni.org or @oba.co.uk email account, which can forward to a designated personal email address.
- Insider news from the OBA Network: Receive insider news in the monthly eNewsletter from the Saïd Business School Alumni Relations Office.
- Discounts on Executive Education Open Programmes: Receive a 15% discount on select Executive Education Open Programmes.

How do you join the OBA?Upon successful completion of your assessment panel at the end of the MPLA programme, you will receive an invitation by email to join the OBA, which gives full instructions on how to apply. *Please note:* Participants will need to wait for this invitation as it will confirm the personal *Alumni Card Number* which participants will be asked to provide when applying for membership.

In the meantime, should you wish to learn more about the OBA you can visit their website: **www.oxfordbusinessalumni.org**