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**Course:** Software Project Management

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**Dates Range of activities:** 24<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2025 – 15<sup>th</sup> Mar, 2025

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### Key Takeaways from the Course

This phase of the course enhanced my grasp of **Project Monitoring & Control** and **Project Closure**, which are essential for ensuring that software projects stay on track and deliver value. Monitoring involves measuring progress against baselines for **schedule, cost, and scope**, utilizing tools like **S-curves**, **Earned Value Analysis (EVA)**, and **performance metrics**. Project Control focuses on initiating timely **corrective actions**—such as task rescheduling or resource levelling—to address deviations and maintain project alignment.

We also explored **Project Closure**, which includes completing deliverables, managing **Git-based version control systems**, and **archiving metrics** for post-project analysis. A key takeaway was the role of **lessons learned reviews**—akin to Agile retrospectives—in shaping future project planning and risk mitigation.

One challenge I previously faced was handling **schedule slippage** due to unexpected dependencies. By implementing **Slack management** and leveraging tools like **Microsoft Planner** for dynamic task reprioritization, I was able to minimize delays. This aligns with **Scrum's adaptive planning approach**, where backlog items are re-ordered based on dependencies and urgency. This experience reinforced how structured monitoring, adaptive control, and thorough closure processes collectively improve project reliability and foster long-term success.

### Learning Through Collaboration & Peer Discussions

Collaborating with peers offered diverse perspectives on project monitoring, control, and closure in various domains. A standout discussion on **S-curve analysis** enhanced my grasp of tracking progress visually. A peer managing a mobile app project shared how monitoring

### Applying Concepts to Real-World Scenarios

The concepts deepened my understanding of **Project Monitoring & Control** and **Project Closure**, both vital to successful software project execution. Monitoring entails tracking performance against established baselines for time, budget, and deliverables using tools such as **Gantt charts**, **Burn-down charts**, and **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**. Control involves taking timely actions—like workload balancing or milestone adjustments—to resolve deviations and maintain alignment with project objectives.

In exploring **Project Closure**, we covered finalizing outcomes, utilizing **Bitbucket** for version control, and systematically storing project data for future reference. Documenting **lessons learned**, similar to Sprint reviews in Agile, ensures iterative improvement and risk reduction in subsequent projects. Additionally, I plan to explore **AI-driven resource allocation tools**, such as **Forecast**, to predict workload clashes before they arise. Integrating such predictive analytics into project monitoring could enhance proactive decision-making and reduce manual oversight.

A real challenge I faced was unexpected resource bottlenecks during concurrent tasks. By applying **resource utilization tracking** through **Trello integrations** and reallocating tasks based on team capacity, I mitigated the impact on timelines.

### Obstacles Encountered During Learning

One major challenge I encountered was accurately applying **Earned Value Analysis (EVA)**, particularly distinguishing between **budget variance** and **schedule variance**. Grasping how **baseline metrics** influence these calculations was initially confusing. Studying the **Denver International Airport (DIA) Baggage System**

**schedule variance** via S-curves enabled their team to identify timeline risks early, prompting timely task reallocation to maintain momentum.

Another valuable exchange focused on managing **requirement volatility** in Agile environments. A peer explained how integrating **Asana with GitHub** streamlined their backlog grooming process, enabling quicker adaptation to change requests. This prompted me to adopt similar real-time integration strategies for improved scope management.

Regarding closure, a peer emphasized the value of **retrospective analytics** using **Notion databases** to log lessons learned systematically. This shifted my mindset from viewing closure as a formal step to seeing it as a tool for **refining estimation accuracy** and enhancing future sprint planning. These peer insights significantly influenced my approach, reinforcing effective monitoring, adaptive control, and continuous improvement in my projects.

**Project**, known for cost overruns due to poor variance tracking, clarified how flawed baseline data can mislead budgeting and scheduling decisions. This helped me appreciate the critical role of **precise baseline setup** in ensuring accurate performance measurement.

Another difficulty was managing **scope changes** during rapid iterations. Adapting to evolving requirements without derailing timelines was challenging. Initially, I overlooked the role of **historical velocity metrics** in guiding sprint planning. However, after peer exchanges, I started using tools like **ClickUp** to analyze past sprints for better backlog prioritization. While progress has been made, I aim to further strengthen my skills in **agile scope control**.

To address these challenges, I'm dedicating time to practicing EVA with simulated project data, studying additional **case studies on closure best practices**, and refining my use of **performance dashboards** for tracking scope and progress more effectively.

#### **Additional Learning Activities & Self-Improvement**

To strengthen my grasp of Project Monitoring, Control, and Closure, I undertook several self-directed learning initiatives. I reviewed real-world cases, including the **Heathrow Terminal 5 IT Project**, which illustrated how inadequate variance tracking led to cost and schedule overruns. This enhanced my ability to interpret **performance indicators** and apply them for accurate **budget and schedule analysis**. I also honed my skills in baseline tracking and **resource allocation** using **Smartsheet** and **Trello**, which improved my confidence in utilizing project monitoring tools effectively.

To manage scope in Agile projects, I explored **Kanban workflows** and **velocity tracking** through **Asana**, focusing on techniques to minimize scope creep during iterative development. For project closure, I studied structured approaches to **knowledge capture** and experimented with **data visualization** tools like **Tableau** to derive insights from archived metrics, supporting better risk evaluation and decision-making.

These activities not only reinforced my theoretical understanding but also elevated my practical proficiency in applying monitoring, control, and closure strategies across various project environments.

#### **Goals For Next Week**

In the upcoming week, I plan to further develop my project monitoring and control capabilities by conducting **variance analysis** and **S-curve evaluations** on sample datasets, comparing results against standard industry metrics. I also aim to deepen my understanding of **Agile scope management** by analyzing real-world case studies from companies like **Spotify**, focusing on techniques for maintaining adaptability without compromising timelines. For project closure, I intend to study **knowledge management frameworks** used by organizations such as **IBM** and **Microsoft**, particularly their methods for capturing and reusing **lessons learned** to improve future estimations. Additionally, I will enhance my technical proficiency with tools like **ClickUp** and **Smartsheet**, concentrating on tracking **resource utilization** and **performance metrics**.

These goals align with my long-term objective of mastering software project delivery, enabling me to monitor progress effectively, handle dynamic scopes, and execute efficient closure strategies in both academic and industry settings.

By documenting my progress, I have been able to track how theoretical concepts translate into practical applications, ensuring continuous improvement in the course of Software Project Management.