



ITIL® 4 Reader's manual | Official Practice Guides

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expand all | collapse all

Cover	Cover
Title Page	iii
Copyright Page	iv
Contents	v
List of figures	vi
List of tables	vii
Welcome	viii
▼ 1. About this document	1
▼ 2. General information	6
▼ 3. Value streams and processes	12
▼ 4. Organizations and people	17
▼ 5. Information and technology	21
▼ 6. Partners and suppliers	27
7. Capability assessment and development	30
8. Recommendations for practice success	33



ITIL® 4 Reader's Manual

Global Best Practice



For Official Practice Guides



ITIL[®] 4 Reader's Manual

Global Best Practice





Unlocking your potential to achieve more

Welcome to the ITIL® 4 Reader's Manual: For Official Practice Guides.

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Contents

› List of figures

› List of tables

› Welcome

› Chapters

1. About this document

1.1 The examination syllabi

1.2 The ITIL® 4 management practices and Official Practice Guides

1.3 A common structure

2. General information

2.1 Practice purpose and description

2.2 Terms and concepts

2.3 Scope

2.4 Practice success factors

2.5 Key metrics

3. Value streams and processes

3.1 Processes

3.2 Value stream contribution

4. Organizations and people

4.1 Roles, competencies, and responsibilities

5. Information and technology

5.1 Information exchange

5.2 Automation and tooling

6. Partners and suppliers

6.1 Dependencies on third parties

6.2 Support from third parties

7. Capability assessment and development

8. Recommendations for practice success



List of figures

Figure 1.1 ITIL qualification scheme

Figure 3.1 Workflow of the change lifecycle management process

Figure 7.1 Design of the capability criteria



List of tables

Table 2.1	Examples of purpose statements
Table 2.2	Examples of terms and concepts
Table 2.3	Examples of activities outside the scope of the ITIL® 4 Change Enablement Official Practice Guide
Table 2.4	Examples of practice success factors
Table 2.5	Examples of key metrics
Table 3.1	Examples of processes
Table 3.2	List of workflow diagram symbols
Table 3.3	Inputs, activities, and outputs of the change lifecycle management process
Table 3.4	Availability management in the key service value streams
Table 4.1	Competency codes and profiles
Table 4.2	Examples of competency profiles
Table 4.3	Examples of teams and structures considerations
Table 5.1	Examples of key information used by practices
Table 5.2	Automation solutions for the availability management practice
Table 5.3	Grouping of tools in the 15 and the 19 Official Practice Guides
Table 5.4	Examples of automation and tooling recommendations
Table 7.1	Example of the capability criteria for the service configuration management practice
Table 8.1	Example of the recommendations for the service level management practice success



Welcome





Acknowledgements

PeopleCert International Ltd. is grateful to everyone who has contributed to the development of the Official Practice Guides and this manual. These materials incorporate an unprecedented level of enthusiasm and feedback from across the ITIL community. We will continue to develop these Official Books based on the ongoing feedback from the readers.





Information icons

-  Key message
-  Definition
-  Tip



Chapter 1

About this document

ITIL® 4 has been created to help organizations meet increasing demands from the current complex digital environment. This reader’s manual is designed to help readers understand and use the ITIL® 4 Official Practice Guides. It provides an overview of their structure, content, and key concepts. It also explains how the Official Practice Guides support ITIL® 4’s qualification scheme and associated Official Books.

The Reader’s Manual has been updated to address the changes made to the Official Practice Guides in 2023-2024.

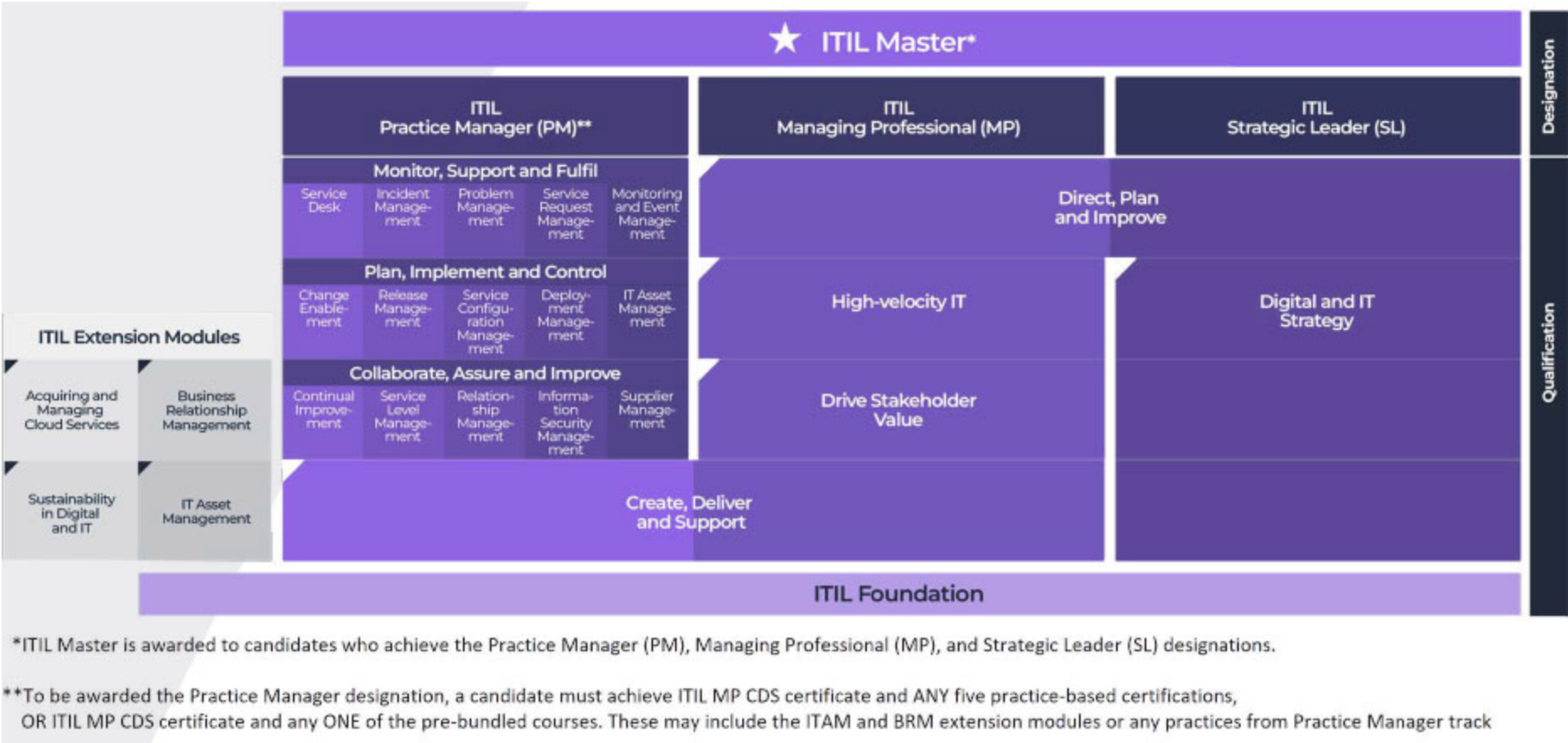


Figure 1.1 ITIL qualification scheme

1.1 The examination syllabi

The ITIL Specialist, Strategist, and Leader syllabi are based on content from two sources:

- the respective core Official Books (of the same name)
- a selection of content from the Official Practice Guides.

The ITIL Practitioner and practice-based ITIL Specialist syllabi are based on the respective Official Practice Guides (one practice guide per ITIL Practitioner and five practice guides per Practice-based ITIL Specialist module).

1.2 The ITIL® 4 management practices and Official Practice Guides



Practice

A set of organizational resources designed for performing work or accomplishing an objective. These resources are grouped into the four dimensions of service management.

Management practices are important components of an organization’s service value streams. They contribute to the service value chain activities and ensure that the organization achieves its goals.

ITIL® Foundation provides a brief overview of every practice. Details of each practice are provided in the ITIL® 4 Official Practice Guides. The other ITIL® 4 Official Training Materials describe how the practices can be applied in various contexts.

Each Official Practice Guide provides structured information about one ITIL practice. Official Practice Guides may be complemented by supplementary Official Books such as templates and detailed descriptions of methods and techniques.

1.3 A common structure

All ITIL® 4 Official Practice Guides follow the same structure, featuring these main sections:

1. About this guide
2. General information
 - 2.1 Purpose and description
 - 2.2 Terms and concepts
 - 2.3 Scope
 - 2.4 Practice success factors
 - 2.5 Key metrics
3. Value streams and processes
 - 3.1 The processes of the practice
 - 3.2 How the practice contributes to the organization’s service value streams
4. Organizations and people
 - 4.1 Roles, competencies, and responsibilities
 - 4.2 Organizational structures and teams
5. Information and technology
 - 5.1 Information exchange: inputs and outputs
 - 5.2 Automation and tooling
6. Partners and suppliers
 - 6.1 Dependencies on third parties
 - 6.2 Support from third parties
7. Capability assessment and development (only in the Official Practice Guides updated in 2023)
 - 7.1 The practice capability levels
 - 7.2 Capability self-assessment
 - 7.3 Capability development
8. Recommendations for practice success.

The remainder of this reader’s manual explains the key terms used in the Official Practice Guides and the assumptions that were made when the guides were designed, written, and updated. This information will help readers to navigate and use the Official Practice Guides.

It is important to remember that, although each Official Practice Guide helps organizations to build a sound foundation in that practice, the guidance it contains is not exhaustive; there are always opportunities for further nuance and innovation.

Chapter 2

General information

The general information chapter covers the following areas:

- purpose and description
- key terms and concepts
- scope
- practice success factors
- key metrics.

2.1 Practice purpose and description

Each Official Practice Guide begins with a purpose statement. The purpose statement is a brief description of the role that each practice plays in an organization.

The purpose statement explains what may be derived from the practice, although the practical implementation of that practice may differ from what is described in ITIL® 4, depending on the needs of the organization. Practices may be combined, split, or only partially implemented. More importantly, practices never fulfil their purpose in isolation; for a practice to be effective, other practices are always needed.

The purpose statement establishes the scope for the Official Practice Guide that follows, and the Official Practice Guide will cover all the elements mentioned in the purpose statement.

The purpose statement is supplemented with additional descriptions of the practice. The purpose and description information align with the information that is presented in the ITIL® Foundation, although additional detail may be provided in the Official Practice Guide. Table 2.1 provides some examples of purpose statements.

Table 2.1 Examples of purpose statements

Practice	Purpose
Incident management	To minimize the negative impact of incidents by restoring normal service operation as quickly as possible
Problem management	To reduce the likelihood and impact of incidents by identifying actual and potential causes of incidents and by managing workarounds and known errors
Service level management	To set clear, business-based targets for service levels, and to ensure that delivery of services is properly assessed, monitored, and managed against these targets



Study tip

Understanding the relevant practices' purpose statements is important for successfully passing the Specialist, Strategist, Leader, and Practitioner exams. The purpose statements do not need to be memorized, but it is important to understand and tell them apart from each other.

Along with practice statements and descriptions, this section includes two lists of the practice benefits: benefits for service provider and benefits for service consumer. The latter are based on the assumption that service provider(s) of the consumer organization has an effective and well-organized practice. In other words, these are service consumer's benefits of service providers having good practices. For example, according to the ITIL® 4 Incident Management Official Practice Guide, if a service provider has effective incident management practice, their service consumers are likely to benefit from:

- reduced losses caused by business service unavailability
- better image due to uninterrupted business services
- higher client and employee satisfaction.

2.2 Terms and concepts

Each Official Practice Guide introduces key concepts that are specific to the practice being described, along with key terms and definitions. These terms and concepts are usually:

- specific to the practice
- important for fulfilling the purpose of the practice
- applicable in most scenarios where the practice is applied.

Some examples are provided in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Examples of terms and concepts

Practice	Key terms and concepts
Incident management	Incident Incident model Workaround
Problem management	Problem Known error Workaround
Service level management	Service level Service quality Service level agreement Service review

Key concepts may differ in their nature and in the structure of their description. Definitions introduced in the ITIL® Foundation and its associated glossary are not altered but may be amended with further commentary in the Official Practice Guides. Definitions introduced in the ITIL® 4 Specialist and Strategist Official Books also match the definitions provided in the Official Practice Guides.



Study tip

Some of the key concepts may be examinable; refer to the respective Specialist, Strategist, Leader course materials and syllabi and make sure to understand the key concepts of the relevant practices. For the practice-based Specialist and Practitioner exams, the key concepts are always examinable, and candidates are expected to know them well.

2.3 Scope

The scope section provides a list of activities and responsibilities that are included in the practice. It also provides a list of adjacent activities and responsibilities that are not included in the practice, with references to the practices where these activities are described.

The ITIL® 4 scoping of the practices should not be treated as definitive. Organizations should adapt these recommendations, based on their scale, structures, competencies, and other factors. The ITIL® 4 practices may be merged or further split when institutionalized in the organization.

For example, some activities included in the scope of the ITIL® 4 Change Enablement Official Practice Guide are:

- planning individual change workflows, activities, and controls
- scheduling and coordinating all ongoing changes
- communicating change plans and progress to relevant stakeholders
- assessing change success, including outputs, outcomes, efficiency, risks, and costs.

Examples of activities that are not included in the ITIL® 4 Change Enablement Official Practice Guide are listed in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Examples of activities outside the scope of the ITIL® 4 Change Enablement Official Practice Guide

Activity	Practice guide
Costs control, financial evaluation of changes	Service financial management
Management of projects	Project management
Management of organizational change	Organizational change management



Study tip

In rare cases, this section may be examinable; refer to the respective Specialist, Strategist, Leader course materials and syllabi. If the syllabus includes the Scope section of an Official Practice Guide, make sure to understand the scope of the practice described, even if it is different from the way it is defined in your organization.

2.4 Practice success factors

Each Official Practice Guide includes a number of practice success factors (PSFs).



Practice success factor (PSF)

A complex functional component of a practice that is required for the practice to fulfil its purpose.

The word 'complex' in the definition does not refer to a high level of complexity. Rather, it indicates that a PSF is more than a task or activity; it includes components from all four dimensions of service management. A PSF can also be defined as 'a key capability of the practice'. The nature of the activities and resources of PSFs within a practice may differ, but together they ensure that the practice is effective.



Study tip

If a practice is examinable as part of a syllabus, it always includes understanding of the PSFs. It is very important to understand the substance of the PSFs well. Remembering the PSFs in your own words is more effective than memorizing them. Apart from being a cornerstone of understanding a practice, PSFs also create foundation for two other examinable section: the Key Metrics and the Capability Assessment. Good knowledge of the PSFs is a key to success in many practice-based exam questions.

Table 2.4 gives some examples of PSFs for various practices.

Table 2.4 Examples of practice success factors

Practice	Practice success factors
Incident management	Detecting incidents early Resolving incidents quickly and efficiently Continually improving the incident management approaches
Problem management	Identifying and understanding problems and their impact on services Optimizing problem resolution and mitigation
Service configuration management	Ensuring that the organization has relevant configuration information about its products and services Ensuring that the costs of providing configuration information are continually optimized

Key metrics (section 2.5 of every Official Practice Guide) and capability criteria (chapter 7 of the Official Practice Guides updated in 2023) are based on the practice success factors.

2.5 Key metrics

Organizations need appropriate methods for determining the degree to which a practice is achieving its objectives, or how well the practice (or some part of it) is contributing to the service value streams.

Each Official Practice Guide provides ways to measure the success of the practice through the use of key metrics.



Metric

A measurement or calculation that is monitored or reported for management and improvement.

When using the practice metrics, it is important to consider the following points:

- Metrics are insufficient for assessment and decision-making. To be used as an indicator, a metric must have a pre-defined target value and may also have a tolerance. Each organization will define its own target values and tolerances; these cannot be taken from ITIL® 4 or any other Official Book.
- The effectiveness and performance of the ITIL practices should be assessed within the context of the value streams to which the practices contribute. The context of the business and the value streams are important to define what is considered good or not so good performance of a practice. This is why Official Practice Guides cannot recommend universal key performance indicators for each practice: the target values for each metric can only be defined in the organization's context. For example, a popular metric of 'incident first line resolution' may have a target value of 90% in an organization, where most incidents are reported by inexperienced users and are well-known; the same metric may have a target value of 25% in an organization, where users are highly qualified and only report new and unusual incidents.

ITIL® 4 provides a list of key metrics (that may be used as indicators) and related measurement suggestions for each practice. These are not prescriptive and should be adapted to each organization's objectives and practice design. Table 2.5 provides examples of key metrics for various practices. More details on key metrics can be found in the ITIL® 4 Measurement and Reporting Official Practice Guide.

Table 2.5 Examples of key metrics

Practice	Practice success factors
Incident management	Time between incident occurrence and detection User satisfaction with incident handling and resolution
Problem management	Average time of change realization per change model Business impact of change-related incidents Stakeholder satisfaction with realization of individual changes
Service configuration management	Stakeholder satisfaction with configuration information Stakeholder satisfaction with service configuration management interfaces, procedures, and reports Percentage of CMDB data verified over the period



Study tip

Key metrics may be examinable. In these cases, exam questions never require memorization of all metrics from this section. To successfully answer questions on metrics, it is important and sufficient to understand the practice's PSFs and be able to link them to metrics in the question. Understand what is examined, do not memorize.


Chapter 3

Value streams and processes

- This chapter covers the following areas:
- the processes and activities of the practice
 - the contribution of the practice to service value streams.

3.1 Processes

Each Official Practice Guide includes processes and activities that are necessary to fulfil the purpose of that practice. Some examples of processes are presented in Table 3.1.

**Process**

A set of interrelated or interacting activities that transform inputs into outputs. Processes define the sequence of actions and their dependencies.

Table 3.1 Examples of processes

Practice	Practice success factors
Incident management	Incident handling and resolution Periodic incident review
Problem management	Proactive problem identification Reactive problem identification Problem control Error control
Service configuration management	Management of service level agreements (SLAs) Oversight of service levels and service quality

Official Practice Guides also include activity descriptions, which outline commonly recognized and recommended ways of performing processes.

The processes and activities described in the Official Practice Guides highlight areas that organizations may find beneficial; they may inspire an organization to redefine its own processes and activities. However, if adopted, they should always be adapted to the organization's architecture, needs, and objectives.

Process workflow maps are provided for all processes; Figure 3.1 shows the workflow map for the change lifecycle management process (Figure 3.2 ITIL® 4 Change Enablement Official Practice Guide).

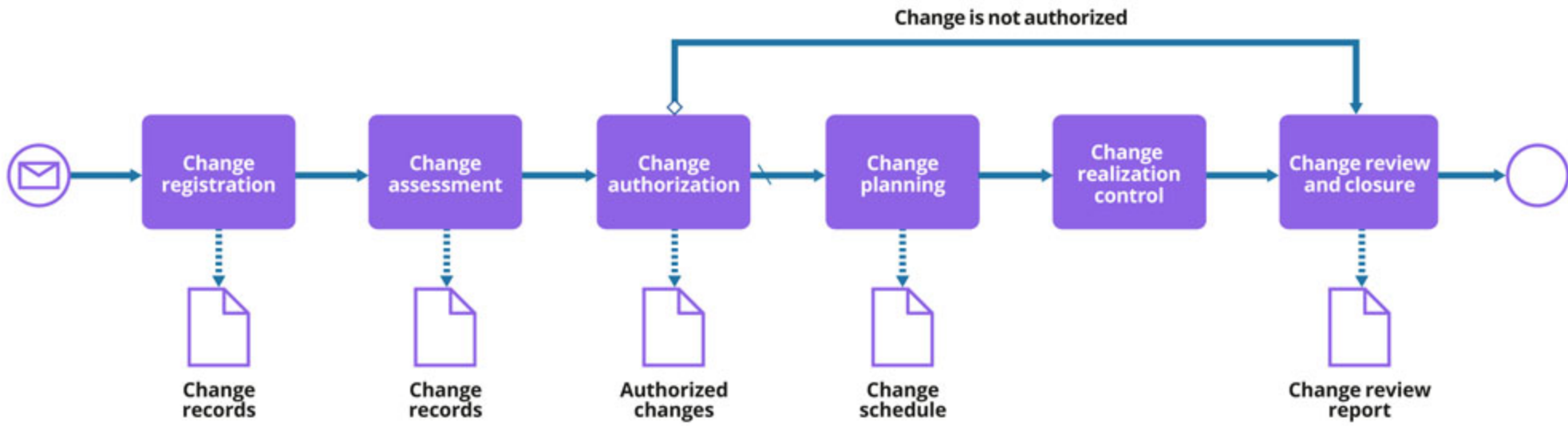












Figure 3.1 Workflow of the change lifecycle management process

All process workflow diagrams in ITIL® 4 Official Practice Guides use a simplified BPMN notation. In most cases, knowledge of the symbols listed in Table 3.2 is sufficient for correct understanding of the diagrams.

Table 3.2 List of workflow diagram symbols


Symbols	Meaning in Official Practice Guides
	Process activity
	Start event: message
	Start event: periodic review
	Start event: event or signal
	End of process
	Transfer of activity
	Default transfer of activity
	Conditional transfer of activity
	Transfer of information
	Outputs (documents and records)

A complete guide to BPMN notation can be found online or in your software tool for workflow design and management.

This section also includes a list of the inputs, activities, and outputs for each process. The change lifecycle management process is shown in Table 3.3 as an example.

Table 3.3 Inputs, activities, and outputs of the change lifecycle management process

Key inputs	Activities	Key outputs
Change requests Change models and standard change procedures Policies and regulatory requirements Configuration information IT asset information Service catalogue SLAs with consumers and suppliers/partners Financial guidelines and constraints Risk information Capacity and performance information Continuity policies and plans Information security policies and plans	Change registration Change assessment Change authorization Change planning Change realization control Change review and closure	Change records Change schedule Change review reports Change resources and services

**Study tip**

Although descriptions of process activities in the Official Practice Guides are not prescriptive or exhaustive, they are included in some modules' syllabi. Check the course material and syllabus of the module you study; if they include process activities, make sure you understand the activities described in the tables in section 3.1 of the Official Practice Guide. There is no need to memorize them; good understanding of the described activities is sufficient for exam preparation.

3.2 Value stream contribution

- This section includes:
- a brief introduction to service value streams
 - description of the practice's contribution to some key value streams of a service provider
 - recommendations on value stream analysis focused on the specific practice's role.


In most cases, the practice's contribution is described for the following common service value streams:

- creation of a new or changed product or service
- service delivery
- product and service support
- product and service operations
- continual improvement of products and services.

Table 3.4 provides an example of the availability management practice's contribution to the service provider's value streams.

Table 3.4 Availability management in the key service value streams

Service value stream	Role of availability management
Creation of a new or changed product or service	Evaluating customer requirements for availability and helping to analyse the costs and risks of alternative solutions to achieve these. Design for monitoring and reporting service availability to be included in the overall service design.
Service delivery	Monitoring service availability and identifying trends and risks that could result in failure to meet agreed service level targets.
duct and service support	Analysis of incident data that could impact availability targets. Creation of problem records based on analysis of availability data.
Product and service operations	Monitoring service availability and identifying trends and risks that could result in failure to meet agreed targets. Proactively taking action when agreed availability targets are at risk. For example, by negotiating for additional resources to monitor services or purchasing additional vendor support for a short period of time. Regular testing of availability controls, such as dual network routing or failover between instances of a service.
Continual improvement of products and services	Identifying opportunities to improve service availability or reduce costs, while still achieving agreed levels of availability. Continual improvement of the availability management practice itself.

**Study tip**

Syllabi of the practice-based Specialist and Practitioner modules include practice's role in service value streams and value stream analysis. Section 3.2.3 ('Analysing a service value stream') of every Official Practice Guide describes six steps of value stream analysis and mapping. Section 3.2.3.1 is repeated without changes in all Official Practice Guides; section 3.2.3.2 is practice-specific. A good understanding of the steps described in section 3.2.3.1, including activities within the 'Do the value stream walk', is essential to successfully answer exam questions on this topic.

Chapter 4

Organizations and people

This chapter describes the following areas:

- roles, competencies, and responsibilities
- organizational solutions and teams (specific to the practice).

4.1 Roles, competencies, and responsibilities

The Official Practice Guides do not describe the practice management roles such as practice owner, practice lead, or practice coach. Instead, they focus on the specialist roles that are specific to each practice. The structure and naming of each role may differ from organization to organization, so any roles defined in ITIL should not be treated as mandatory. It is important to remember that roles are not job titles. One person can take on multiple roles and one role can be assigned to multiple people.

Most Official Practice Guides describe one or two roles specific to the described practice.

For example, the ITIL® 4 Service Level Management Official Practice Guide describes two roles: service owner and service level manager.



Study tip

Syllabi of the practice-based Specialist and Practitioner modules include knowledge of the key roles of the practices. Most questions are based on the understanding of differences between the roles described in each Official Practice Guide. For example, in the case of the ITIL® 4 Service Level Management Official Practice Guide, this would be differences between responsibilities of service owner and of service level manager.

Roles are described in the context of processes and activities. Each role is characterized with a competency profile based on the model shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Competency codes and profiles

Competency code	Description
L	Leader: decision-making, delegating, overseeing other activities, providing incentives and motivation, and evaluating outcomes
A	Administrator: assigning and prioritizing tasks, record-keeping, ongoing reporting, and initiating basic improvements
C	Coordinator/communicator: coordinating multiple parties, maintaining communication between stakeholders, and running awareness campaigns
M	Methods and techniques expert: designing and implementing work techniques, documenting procedures, consulting on processes, work analysis, and continual improvement
T	Technical expert: providing technical (subject matter) expertise and conducting expertise- based assignments

The competence profile for each role is formed of one or more competence codes shown in Table 4.1, arranged in order of importance. For example, 'MC' means 'main competency: methods and techniques expert, secondary competency: coordinator/communicator'. Examples of competency profiles for various roles are provided in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Examples of competency profiles

Activity	Responsible roles	Competency profile	Specific skills
Management of service level agreements			
Definition of customer requirements	Customer Relationship manager Service architect Service designer Service owner	CTA	Good knowledge of the service consumer's business Good knowledge of the service provider's portfolio Communication and coordination
Viability analysis	Product owner Service architect Service designer Service owner Technical expert Supplier manager	TC	Business analysis Risk analysis Good knowledge of the service provider's portfolio
Drafting an SLA	Relationship manager Service designer Service owner	ACT	Good knowledge of the service provider's portfolio Good knowledge of the products, including their architecture and configuration Business analysis

The Official Practice Guides may describe organizational solutions for the practices, if there are recognized, common solutions in the industry. However, these are only recommendations; each organization should design its structures and teams according to its own architecture and objectives. This also applies to the naming of teams. Some examples are given in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Examples of teams and structures considerations

Practice	Teams and structures
Incident management	Tiered versus flat team structures
Problem management	A dedicated job position for the problem manager role
Change enablement	Positioning of a change authority team



Study tip

Syllabi of the practice-based Specialist and Practitioner modules include organizational solutions. Good understanding of the key models described in section 4.2 of an Official Practice Guide and their applicability in particular circumstances is required to successfully answer exam questions on this topic.

Chapter 5

Information and technology

The information and technology chapter covers the following areas:

- information exchange
- automation and tooling, including recommendations for successful automation of the practice.

5.1 Information exchange

In each Official Practice Guide, the information and technology chapter describes the key information used by the practice. The lists are not exhaustive but include the most common inputs to the practice. Some examples are given in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Examples of key information used by practices

Practice	Key information
Incident management	Architecture and design of services Partners and suppliers information, including contract and SLA information on the services they provide Policies and requirements which regulate service provision Stakeholder satisfaction with the practice
Change management	Services and their architecture and design Proposed changes
Service level management	Ongoing service delivery



Study tip

This section is not examinable in any of the modules, as it merely gives an overview of the inputs and outputs covered in section 3.1 of the Official Practice Guide.

5.2 Automation and tooling

Each Official Practice Guide includes recommendations on automation and tooling. These recommendations are mapped to the process activities within each practice against the available means of automation, key functionality of the tools, and impact of the automation on practice effectiveness. ITIL® 4 does not recommend specific tools, nor does it describe the tools and functions attributed to specific vendors or solutions.

All Official Practice Guides refer to the relevant automation systems from the following list:

- analysis and reporting tools
- asset management tools
- automated testing tools
- business continuity planning tools
- business process modelling tools
- capacity management tools
- CI/CD Tools
- collaboration and communication tools
- contract management tools
- CRM tools
- emergency management tools
- enterprise architecture management tools
- external professional content libraries
- financial management system (FMS)
- geolocation and geofencing systems
- discovery and inventory tools
- job scheduling tools for backup, batch, and other automated tasks
- knowledge and document management tools
- labelling, barcode, QR code reader systems
- learning management system (LMS)
- monitoring and event management tools
- orchestration and integration platforms
- procurement systems
- remote administration, diagnosis, deployment, and other infrastructure and software management tools
- risk management tools
- security information and event management (SIEM) tools
- service catalogue tools
- service configuration management tools
- social media
- solution design and development tools
- survey tools
- supplier management tools
- system dynamics simulation software
- talent management and HR tools
- workflow and task management tools.

Each tool in this list may be available as a stand-alone software solution or as a part of a multi-functional system. Many are integrated in the common ITSM toolsets. The ITIL® 4 Official Practice Guides do not include references to any specific software solutions or vendors; every organization decides which tools to use based on the circumstances, requirements, budget, and other relevant factors.

The Official Practice Guides include two tables describing software tools’ role in the practice. Table 5.1 lists the tools common to the practice; Table 5.2 shows how these tools support activities of the practice processes.

Table 5.2 below lists the tools common to the availability management practice.

Table 5.2 Automation solutions for the availability management practice

Automation tools	Application in availability management
Analysis and reporting tools	Analysis of availability data and creation of regular availability reports
Automated testing tools	Regular testing of availability management controls to ensure that they will work correctly when needed
Business process modelling tools	Identification and prioritization of VBFs
Availability and capacity modelling and management tools	Modelling the effect of availability controls to help predict availability of new and changed services
Collaboration and communication tools	Working across practices and teams to integrate availability management into value streams for designing, creating, maintaining, monitoring, and continually improving services
Architecture management tools	Integrating availability management into architectural plans to ensure it is used consistently
Knowledge management tools	Sharing knowledge and information about availability management tools, techniques, and controls
Monitoring and event management tools	Measuring availability of services and components to support the creation of regular availability reports Triggering corrective action when trends indicate that availability targets might be breached
Risk management tools	Documenting availability related risks and managing them through their lifecycle
Service catalogue tools	Identifying services and service models to help identify the need for availability controls Service portal can be used for sharing availability dashboards and reports
Service configuration management tools	Identifying components that contribute to services to enable design and management of availability controls
Workflow and task management tools	Initiating changes to implement new or changed availability controls Identifying incidents that may impact availability of services

Note: the 15 Official Practice Guides updated in 2023 use slightly different grouping of tools (as can be seen in Table 5.3). The differences are listed in Table 5.3 below:

Table 5.3 Grouping of tools in the 15 and the 19 Official Practice Guides

Tools in the 15 Official Practice Guides updated in 2023	Tools in the 19 Official Practice Guides updated in 2024
Workflow management and collaboration tools (including user query (‘ticket’) management tools)	Workflow and task management tools and Collaboration and communication tool
Work planning and prioritization tools	Workflow and task management tools
Classification and analysis tools, including ML-enhanced	Analysis and reporting tools



Study tip

Syllabi of the practice-based Specialist and Practitioner modules include automation tools (based on Table 5.1 of an Official Practice Guide). Refer to the respective course materials and syllabi to gain an understanding of the listed tools and how these can be used.

Details of the automation of practice processes and activities are NOT examinable.

Table 5.4 shows how automation solutions are used in the change lifecycle management process.

Table 5.4 Examples of automation and tooling recommendations

Process activity	Means of automation	Key functionality	Impact on the effectiveness of the process
Change enablement planning and optimization process			
Change enablement initiation	Workflow management and collaboration tools Analysis and reporting tools Work planning and prioritization tools Orchestration systems Knowledge management tools	Analysing existing procedures, resource and role planning for processes and procedures, documenting and communicating formalized procedures	Low to medium, especially for pattern analysis and discovery
Change review and planning	Analysis and reporting tools	Remote collaboration; change data analysis	Medium to high, especially for high volumes of changes
Change model and procedure improvement initiation	Workflow management and collaboration tools Work planning and prioritization tools	Formal registration of the initiatives	Low to medium
Change model and procedure update communication	Workflow management and collaboration tools Orchestration systems Knowledge management tools	Communicating updates to the affected teams	Medium to high, especially when the organization is large and the number of updates high

Chapter 6

Partners and suppliers

The partners and suppliers chapter covers the following areas:

- dependencies on third parties
- support from third parties.

6.1 Dependencies on third parties

Very few services are delivered using only an organization's own resources. Most, if not all, depend on other services which are often provided by third parties. Relationships and dependencies introduced by supporting services are described in the Official Practice Guides for Service Design, Architecture Management, and Supplier Management.

It is important to ensure that dependencies on third parties do not limit practice performance. This section may include recommendations on agreements, information exchanges, system interfaces, responsibilities, and other solutions that can help to establish effective and beneficial relationships with partners and suppliers when certain components of a practice are outsourced.

This section is included in the Official Practice Guides where there are generally recognized, effective solutions specific to that practice.

6.2 Support from third parties

The Official Practice Guides describe at least three forms of support available from external parties for each practice:

- provision of software tools for the practice
- performing select activities of the practice
- consulting and advisory.



Study tip

Syllabi of the practice-based Specialist and Practitioner modules include the role of third parties in the practice. Good understanding of the sourcing considerations helps to successfully answer questions related to third parties' participation in the practice activities. Recommendations related to the provision of software tools and consulting services are similar across the Official Practice Guides.

Chapter 7

Capability assessment and development

In 2021, Axelos released the ITIL Maturity Model¹. One important feature of the model is the capability assessment of all 34 ITIL practices, based on their practice success factors. Although the full list of the capability criteria is only available to the Axelos Consulting Partner organizations, the updated Official Practice Guides include the capability criteria for the respective practices. Besides the capability criteria, chapter 7 of an updated Official Practice Guide includes a brief description of the capability levels, as defined in the ITIL maturity model, and recommendations on the practice self-assessment and development.

The ITIL maturity model defines the following capability levels applicable to any management practice:

- Level 1** The practice is not well organized; it is performed as initial or intuitive. It may occasionally or partially achieve its purpose through an incomplete set of activities.
- Level 2** The practice systematically achieves its purpose through a basic set of activities supported by specialized resources.
- Level 3** The practice is well-defined and achieves its purpose in an organized way, using dedicated resources and relying on inputs from other practices that are integrated into a service management system.
- Level 4** The practice achieves its purpose in a highly organized way, and its performance is continually measured and assessed in the context of the service management system.
- Level 5** The practice is continually improving organizational capabilities associated with its purpose.

For each practice, the ITIL maturity model defines criteria for every capability level from level 2 to level 5. These criteria can be used to assess the practice's ability to fulfil its purpose and to contribute to the organization's service value system.

Each criterion is mapped to one of the four dimensions of service management and to the supported capability level. The higher the capability level, the more comprehensive realization of the practice is expected. For example, criteria related to practice automation are typically defined at level 3 or higher because effective automation is only possible if the practice is well-defined and organized.

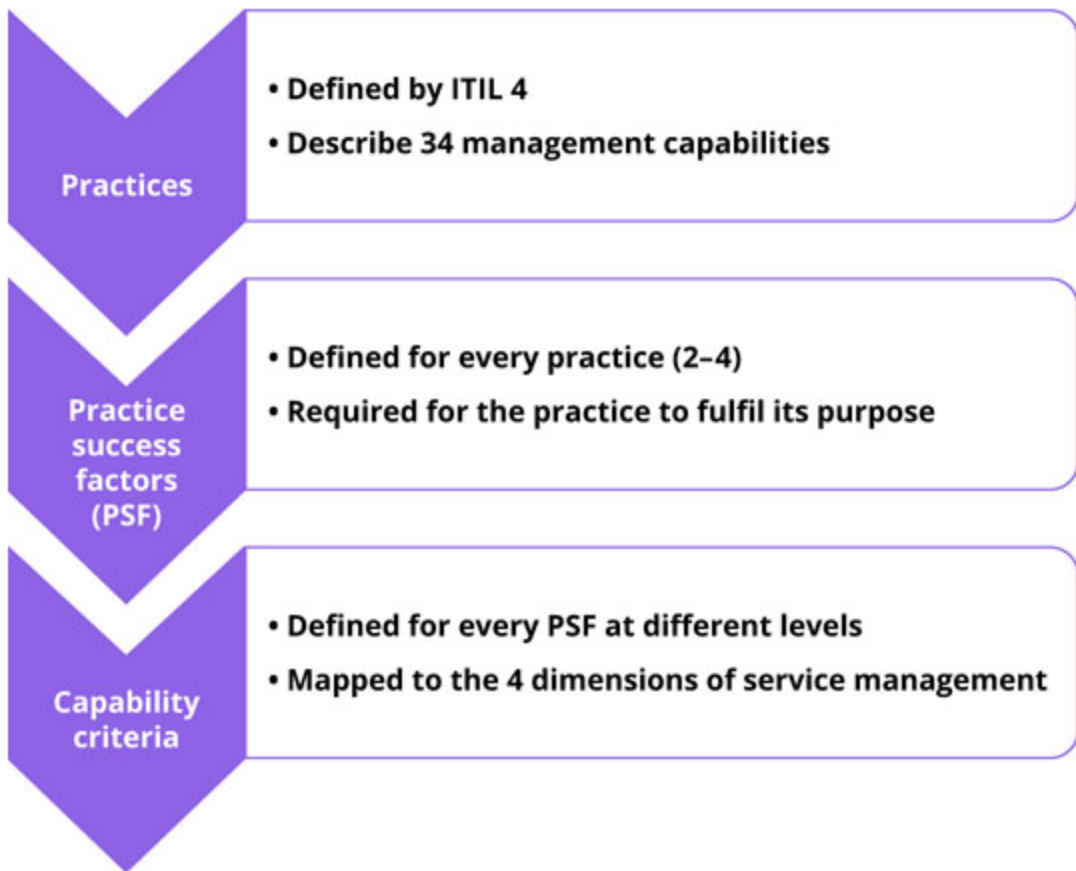


Figure 7.1 Design of the capability criteria

An example of the capability criteria for service configuration management is shown in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Example of the capability criteria for the service configuration management practice

PSF	Criterion	Dimension	Capability level
Ensuring that the organization has relevant configuration information about its products and services	Key users of the configuration information and their requirements are identified	Value streams and processes	2
	Information about product and service configuration is available when needed and meets user requirements	Information and technology	2
	Procedures for requesting and obtaining configuration information are defined and communicated to relevant stakeholders	Value streams and processes	3
	Responsibility for the management of configuration information is clearly defined	Value streams and processes	3
	Configuration information covers relevant details about third-party services	Partners and suppliers	3
	Configuration information is managed using an integrated information system	Information and technology	4
	Configuration information is exchanged between the organization and its suppliers and partners, where needed	Partners and suppliers	4
	The quality and availability of the configuration information is continually reviewed and improved	Value streams and processes	4

Chapter 7 of each Official Practice Guide includes a brief description of the capability levels defined by the ITIL maturity model and a list of the capability criteria defined for the described practice (section 7.1); a short self-assessment guide (section 7.2); and recommendations for the use of the Official Practice Guide to plan practice improvements (section 7.3).

Together these sections offer a powerful toolset for assessment and continual improvement of the practice.



Study tip

Syllabi of the practice-based Specialist and Practitioner modules include capability levels and criteria described in section 7.1. In most cases, understanding the capability levels defined in the ITIL maturity model is sufficient for successfully answering exam-related questions. In rare cases, when exam questions are based on the capability criteria of the practice, good understanding of the PSFs and ability to correctly map criteria to one or another PSF is sufficient. Memorization of the capability criteria is not expected from candidates.

¹ An overview of the ITIL Maturity Model: <https://www.peoplecert.org/en/Resources%20Pages%20Folder/itil-maturity-model-core-guidance>

Chapter 8

Recommendations for practice success

The final chapter of the Official Practice Guides includes a table with practical recommendations for the practice success, mapped to the ITIL guiding principles. An example from the ITIL® 4 Service Level Management Official Practice Guide is provided in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1 Example of the recommendations for the service level management practice success

Recommendation	Comments	ITIL guiding principles
Ensure clear ownership of all services	Regardless of the responsibility for the service components, there should be clear accountability for each service and its quality. Service owners should be known to the service provider's teams and have sufficient authority to drive the service improvement.	Think and work holistically Focus on value Collaborate and promote visibility
Include in SLAs what is important for the customers	SLAs are not a means of avoiding liability; they should be used for the communication and improvement of service quality. For this, they need to be focused on the service quality as perceived by the customers, not on technical measurables readily available for the service provider.	Focus on value Collaborate and promote visibility Keep it simple and practical
Continual improvement of services is more important than SLAs	Service level management is not about management of SLAs, it is about management of the service quality. The main focus of the practice should be on continual service improvement, and SLAs should be considered as a means to that end.	Progress iteratively with feedback Focus on value
For user-facing services, consider experience management	Service value is subjective, and experience is an important aspect of continual service improvement. Consider including user experience in the SLAs, if that is what is important for the customers. But even if it's not in the SLAs, capture the feedback, process it, and use it for continual improvement.	Focus on value



Study tip

Syllabi of the practice-based Specialist and Practitioner modules include recommendations for practice success. Like in all other sections, exam questions test the understanding of the recommendations rather than the ability to recall and recite them. Some questions may require the ability to map guiding principles to the recommendations. Detailed description of the guiding principles is available in the ITIL® 4 Foundation Official Book and courseware.