What is involved in Close Out Lifecycle 6

What is the Purpose of this Phase?

The purpose of the Close Out Phase is to finalise all activities and close out the project or the project stage (in the case of a premature close).

An important aspect of the Close Out Phase is to check with the Project Sponsor about the final acceptance of the quality of the output delivered and also any perceptions they have on how the project was managed.

This phase is also about capturing useful knowledge that might apply to projects in the future. This is called a lessons learned process and is completed as part of an internal Project Team Debrief. This Debrief is a good link to inform future Idea Creation and Opportunity Identification.

For details on specific roles and responsibilities by activity please refer to the Project Management Framework Overview.

What is considered to be a ‘Great’ Close Out Phase?

- The project is successfully delivered within the final contracted budget.
- The Sponsor is satisfied and has accepted the final deliverable.
- An internal Project Debrief Meeting is held and lessons learned captured.
- All accounts paid in full and reconciled.
- UQ’s policy and procedures regarding closing out of a project are adhered to.

What are the Key Activities?

1. **Report technical closure to SMI**
   
   Once the technical deliverables have been created it is important to let internal SMI reps know that the technical delivery has been completed and the project is nearing closure. Technical closure means that there is nothing more to be done technically save some edits to the final report if necessary.

2. **Report technical closure to Project Sponsor and schedule handover process**
   
   Once the technical closure has been achieved this needs to be formally communicated to the Project Sponsor. How this occurs might vary, it may be through a handover meeting or through email.

3. **Presentation and/or handover of finalised deliverables to Sponsor**
   
   Ideally at this point we are seeking approval of the final deliverable of the project by the Sponsor. This presentation and handover process has been established in advance with the Sponsor to their requirements and the process may vary.

4. **Receive approval of final deliverables by Sponsor (final acceptance)**
   
   This may take a variety of forms. The Project Sponsor might send an email confirmation or there might be a formal sign off required. At the very minimum a document should exist to say that the Sponsor accepts the
final deliverable and that from the Sponsors perspective the project is all but closed (save the final payment of accounts).

5. **Reconcile all approved plans, budgets templates with project actuals**

As part of close out of the process, a review back to the plans and budget templates is done and all are updated with actuals as part of a close out process. This reconciliation of the actual to the approved planned option will also give a good indication of how well the project was managed in the contracted budget and time envelop. This is also a good opportunity to assess what the changes were and why these occurred to inform the Project Team Debrief meeting.

6. **Conduct a Project Team Debrief meeting and document lessons (both good and bad) and recommendations/actions for the future in the minutes and actions from the meeting.**

The Project Team Debrief meeting is a key process to wrap up the project from a Project Delivery perspective. Ideally the agenda of the meeting is set up around the [Project Debrief Meeting Agenda and Minutes template](#) which has a focus on:

- Lessons Learned (good and bad)
- Recommendations and follow on actions (including impact demonstration plans)
- Project objectives review
- Project performance review
- Project team review
- Celebrate

The best way for this is to schedule a meeting for no more than two hours involving all relevant people including Portfolio Support roles to go through and document the above points together. It would then be good practice to send this minutes/action plan or closeout report to the Portfolio Support Team so that any learnings that might provide useful insights for future project management can be considered as part of the continuous improvement process.

7. **Disband project team.**

If there is committed funding project team members may be reallocated to new projects at this point and a new employment contract issued. If no committed funding project team members will finish up as per their contract with the institute.

8. **Update SMI Project Register to indicate close out and any new ideas**

Part of the Project Debrief Meeting is to determine if there are any ideas or opportunities that might have come from this project. If there are some new ideas, or perhaps a request by the Sponsor for another piece of work then it may kick off the Project Lifecycle again either into Opportunity Identification or Project Development. So therefore the SMI Project Register is updated to reflect close out as well as any new ideas that might have come from the Debrief meeting.

9. **Final invoice sent**

The FBS team will, upon the instruction that the official delivery has occurred, send the final invoice for payment. This will herald the beginning of the administrative close out of the process.

10. **Formalise archiving of files and data management.**

There might be a lot of data and files that need to be archived at the end of the project. This process was set up as part of the original project controls and therefore the [Data Management Plan](#) must be adhered to.
11. Close out of financial systems and accounts (as necessary once payment is received)

Once the final invoice is sent and payment received there is a close out of the relevant financial system and accounts for the project.

12. Close out through UQR&I and Contracts and Grants

A final activity in closing a project is to ensure that UQR&I and Contracts and Grants have the information they need to officially close off the project in the university systems. This is the final assurance that all project related activities are now fully complete.

What tools and templates might I use?

Mandatory:
- Update SMI Project Register
- Relevant internal financial reports and invoices
- Reconcile Project Management Plan/ Schedule
- Reconcile Budget
- Close out Project Control Log and transfer any follow on actions to Program Level.
- Project Debrief Meeting Agenda, Minutes and Actions
- Close out Data Management Plan

Optional:
- Internal Project Closure Report (including any follow up actions and any lessons learned)
- IP Register update