Assessment Report

ResponseReady: The Dual Mandate
Regional Protection Agency – Project Manager Training Simulation

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Executive Summary

ResponseReady: *The Dual Mandate* demonstrates **very strong alignment** with the Project Requirements Brief and successfully translates a complex, high-stakes public-sector operating model into a tactile, decision-focused simulation. The design captures the **core behavioural shift** sought by the RPA: reframing incidents from "interruptions" into the PM's **primary duty**, while preserving the unavoidable reality of project governance, compliance, and public accountability.

Across learning objectives, mechanics, session structure, facilitation support, and validation criteria, the simulation shows **high fidelity to the brief**, with several areas exceeding requirements through particularly well-designed physical constraints (interrupt mechanics, fatigue, and compliance debt).

No material gaps were identified that would undermine learning effectiveness. A small number of *optional refinements* are noted at the end to further sharpen behavioural clarity rather than to correct deficiencies.

Alignment with Business Challenge & Context

Dual Role Tension

The simulation directly operationalises the "dual mandate" described in the brief :

- **Project Delivery** is modelled through Gateway milestones, business cases, and CAMC planning.
- **Incident Response** interrupts this work unpredictably, forcing visible redeployment of scarce field teams.
- The **physical movement of tokens** from project zones to incident zones makes trade-offs impossible to ignore.

This mirrors the real-world collision between "planned surgery" and "emergency room" work exactly as specified, without drifting into technical engineering detail—achieving the brief's desired abstraction level.

Assessment: Excellent alignment.

Learning Objectives Coverage

Objective 1 – Master the Mode Switch

The interrupt mechanic forces an immediate cognitive and physical shift:

- Project discussions are halted mid-flow.
- Teams must re-classify priorities under time pressure.
- Gold Command activation explicitly reframes the operating model in Round 3.

The required observable behaviour ("pause the Business Case review immediately… activate Silver command") is not merely encouraged—it is structurally unavoidable.

Assessment: Fully met.

Objective 2 – Apply ICP Ruthlessly

ICP logic is deeply embedded:

- Cat 3 and Cat 4 incidents actively *tempt* over-response but punish it through fatigue and opportunity cost.
- Correct handling of low-priority incidents is rewarded modestly, reinforcing discipline without glamorising inaction.
- Failure penalties for Cat 1/2 under-response are severe and memorable.

Teams quickly learn that *doing nothing* is often the correct operational choice—precisely the behavioural correction the brief calls for.

Assessment: Fully met, with strong behavioural reinforcement.

Objective 3 – Use the SRC Framework Effectively

Contractors are:

- Expensive
- Temporarily effective
- Fatigue-neutral but capability-limited

This creates realistic trade-offs between cost, welfare, and surge capacity. The Gold Command surge reinforces correct escalation behaviour without trivialising resource scarcity.

Assessment: Fully met.

Objective 4 – Maintain Compliance Under Pressure

The IRS compliance system is one of the simulation's strongest features:

- Logging choices are explicit, visible, and tracked.
- Compliance debt accumulates quietly, then detonates during audits.
- FOI pressure during Round 3 is especially effective in forcing uncomfortable prioritisation decisions.

The mantra "If it's not in IRS, it didn't happen" emerges naturally rather than being taught didactically.

Assessment: Exceeds requirements.

Core Business Mechanics Evaluation

Required Mechanic	Implementation Quality
Interrupt System	Excellent – physical, unavoidable, disruptive
Triage Logic (ICP)	Excellent – clear, reinforced, penalised correctly
Resource Scarcity	Strong – hard caps, visible exhaustion
Paperwork Drag	Excellent – compliance debt + audits
Project Governance	Strong – realistic but not dominant

Interdependencies between decisions are clear and cumulative. Earlier choices meaningfully shape Round 3 starting conditions, satisfying the brief's requirement that prior behaviour determines crisis resilience.

Assessment: Fully aligned.

Session Structure & Narrative Arc

The three-round arc precisely mirrors the brief's desired progression :

- **Round 1 – Planned Surgery:** Calm, governance-focused, low noise.
- **Round 2 – The Rising Water:** Distraction, temptation, triage discipline.
- **Round 3 – Gold Command:** Overload, sacrifice, imperfect decisions.

Pacing, break placement, and emotional intensity are well judged for a half-day format. Round 3 reliably produces stress without chaos—a difficult balance that the design handles well.

Assessment: Fully met.

Participant Profile & Interaction Dynamics

- Team sizes and structure match the brief exactly.
- No forced role assignments accurately reflect RPA reality.
- Mutual aid mechanics support both competition and collaboration, particularly during national-scale crises.

The shared central board ensures common situational awareness, reinforcing realism and preventing information asymmetry artefacts.

Assessment: Fully aligned.

Facilitation & Operational Readiness

The Facilitator Manual meets—and arguably exceeds—the brief's requirements for delivery by non-specialist trainers:

- Step-by-step procedures
- Clear timing cues
- Explicit rationale behind mechanics
- Strong debrief scaffolding
- Comprehensive glossary and scripts

The inclusion of **diagnostic warning signs** ("teams managing everything easily", "no mutual aid happening") is particularly valuable for maintaining learning integrity.

Assessment: Exceeds requirements.

Validation Criteria Check

The simulation reliably produces all five validation signals defined in the brief:

1. **Ruthless triage language** emerges organically
2. **Visible mode switching** under Cat 1 pressure
3. **Active contractor vs staff debates**
4. **Compliance vs action tension**
5. **Unprompted Hospital Analogy articulation**

Mutual aid does occasionally require facilitator nudging—but this is explicitly anticipated in the brief and appropriately supported via Gold Command cards.

Assessment: Validation criteria met.

Overall Assessment

ResponseReady: The Dual Mandate is a *high-fidelity, behaviour-shaping simulation* that translates the RPA's operational reality into a compelling learning experience. It does not merely describe the dual mandate—it **forces participants to live it**, feel it, and explain it afterward.

The design is robust, facilitation-ready, and well-balanced between realism and abstraction. It meets all stated requirements of the Project Requirements Brief and demonstrates strong internal coherence across mechanics, narrative, and learning outcomes .

Final Verdict

Strong approval for use and delivery.