

The Definitive Guide



This guide will help you decide which project management qualifications are best for you as an individual or for your organisation. It presents an overview of the benefits of every major PM qualification available along with details of any pre-requisites, prior experience required, types of study methods and exams or assessments.



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Introduction

If you are involved in projects or project management then you already know that there are many professional qualifications available for people at different levels of experience. Project management is a fast growing profession in which qualified project managers are much in demand.

Regardless of your current career stage and existing project management experience a professional PM qualification will distinguish you in the job market and improve your ability to effectively deliver successful projects.

It is well-known that **qualifications can boost your career prospects and your salary** and provide access to new opportunities and professional roles. However, different countries, industries and organisations value certain credentials more highly than others. Some certifications test knowledge, others assess competence or performance; many require pre-existing qualifications and experience. Some certifications are based on a methodology, such as PRINCE2® while others such as those from PMI and APM are knowledge based. So the decision about which PM certification to choose is not always straight-forward.

Training courses that lead to project management qualifications are very intensive courses and most involve a significant amount of reading and preparation prior to the course, and revision and exam preparation during or after the course. So in order to pass a PM exam and reap the benefits of a recognised credential, candidates will need to choose wisely and prepare thoroughly.

APM

The **Association for Project Management** (APM) offers internationally recognised professional PM qualifications that are valued across a wide range of industries and organisations. Projects are carried out using the APM approach in colleges and universities, international engineering and technology companies, government departments and major organisations such as BAE Systems, Costain, Shell and Siemens.

The APM is the UK member of the International Project Management Association (IPMA), the global professional body for project, programme and portfolio management. All of the APM qualifications meet the well-established and respected four level certification system implemented by the IPMA that ensures a globally consistent standard in PM qualifications.

PMI

There are more than half a million PMI certification holders worldwide and they work in every industry, from healthcare, telecommunications and finance to IT and construction.

A PMI certification provides:

1. **Credibility.** An unbiased way of validating your knowledge and professional experience.
2. **Transferability.** PMI certification is not tied to any one specific methodology, industry, or region. A PMI certification can move and adapt with your career.
3. **Competitive advantage.** Many certification holders achieve salary increases, career advancement opportunities and employer recognition.
4. **Commitment.** Emphasises your commitment to professional growth. By earning and then maintaining a PMI certification, you continue to develop your knowledge, skills and abilities.
5. **Relevance.** Certifications are developed by practitioners, upheld by rigorous standards, based on ongoing research and always reflect current industry practices.

Axelos

PRINCE2® is a widely recognised approach that offers best practice guidance on project management and a clear road map for the delivery of successful projects. It is used extensively by the UK Government and by private sector organisations in the UK and worldwide.

Since the beginning of 2014 PRINCE2® certifications have been managed by Axelos, a joint venture between the UK Government and Capita.

Essential features of PRINCE2 include:

- Focus on business justification
- Defined organisation structure for the project management team
- Product-based planning approach
- Emphasis on dividing the project into manageable and controllable stages
- Flexibility that can be applied at a level appropriate to the project.

Introductory Qualifications

While most project management qualifications have pre-requisites there are some introductory courses that enable new project managers, project team members or project support staff to gain a good, basic understanding of why structured project management is needed and how it is implemented.

KEY FACTS – INTRODUCTORY QUALIFICATIONS

	Study Options	Course Duration (classroom)	Exam Type & Duration	Pre-requisites
Introductory Certificate: APM Project Fundamentals	Classroom Virtual Training Distance Learning e-Learning	2 days	1 Hour Multiple Choice – 60 Questions	None
PRINCE2® Foundation	Classroom Distance Learning e-Learning	3 days	1 Hour Multiple Choice – 75 Questions	None
CAPM	Classroom Distance Learning e-Learning	3 days	1 Hour Multiple Choice – 150 Questions	None

Introductory Certificate:The APM Project Fundamentals Qualification

The Introductory Certificate:The APM Project Fundamentals Qualification is a practical qualification for new project managers or members of project teams who want a better understanding of the processes, tools and language of project management.

There are no pre-requisites to attending a training course so it is suitable for anyone involved in project work.

At the end of a training course you will be able to:

- Apply the fundamental principles of project management including:
 - Defining the business case
 - Establishing scope
 - Drawing up a plan for project delivery
 - Identifying and managing risk
 - Monitoring and tracking project progress
 - Controlling change
- Be conversant with the words and language associated with project management
- Understand how project management can enhance your effectiveness in your organisation

The exam consists of a 1-hour multiple choice paper comprising 60 questions.

PRINCE2® Foundation

The PRINCE2 Foundation qualification is designed for aspiring project managers, project team members and those supporting project work.You will gain a detailed understanding of the terminology and principles behind this structured project management method. PRINCE2 is the leading “best practice” project management method that can be tailored to suit any type of working culture and any size of project in any industry.

Upon completion you will be able to:

- Understand the need for project management
- Understand how PRINCE2 meets that requirement
- Understand the principles, themes and processes of PRINCE2
- Participate as an informed member of a project team

No prior qualifications or experience are required – the period of study is 3 days in a typical classroom course but it can also be done as a distance learning course.The exam is a 1-hour multiple choice with 75 questions.

CAPM

Training Courses that prepare candidates for the Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM)® certification are based on the essential book *Project Management Body of Knowledge, PMBOK® Guide* from the **Project Management Institute** (PMI).You will learn about each phase of a project from the PMBOK.

At the end of a CAPM course you will be able to:

- Define the differences between project and operational work
- List the key initiating activities that help determine whether to start and/or continue with a project
- Create a detailed plan for the project which will include scope, time and cost baselines as well as the management strategies for the project
- Outline the purpose of quality planning, assurance and control
- Identify, analyse and manage project risks
- List a number of reporting and control techniques that can be used to help manage the project
- Define the interpersonal skills that will help engage and manage the team and other stakeholders
- List the key activities that will bring the project to an orderly close

There are no prerequisites for this course although some experience of a project environment is beneficial.

The exam consists of a 1-hour multiple choice paper with 150 questions.

APM Qualifications

KEY FACTS – APM QUALIFICATIONS

	Study Options	Course Duration (classroom)	Exam Type & Duration	Pre-requisites
APMP: The APM Project Management Qualification	Classroom Virtual Training Distance Learning e-Learning	2 days	3 hour written exam	2-3 years project experience
APMP for PRINCE2 Practitioners	Classroom Distance Learning e-Learning	3 days	2 hour written exam	Current PRINCE2 Practitioner certification
APM Practitioner Qualification (APM PQ)	Workshop	2 days	Assessment	APMP or equivalent plus evidence of 3 years managing non-complex projects plus relevant CPD
APM Registered Project Professional Workshop	Workshop	1 day	Portfolio Assessment plus 45 min. Professional Review Interview & Presentation	Evidence of 5 years managing complex projects plus relevant CPD

APMP: The APM Project Management Qualification

The APMP: The APM Project Management Qualification is an International Project Management Association (IPMA) Level D qualification designed for those who see project management as a key part of their role. It establishes a solid foundation in project management behaviours, skills, processes and tools. It is ideal for those with a few years' experience in project delivery, who are seeking to consolidate a structured approach to project management.

Training courses are based on the 73 assessment criteria from the **APM Body of Knowledge** and at the end of a training course you will be able to:

- Confidently apply the principles of project management to your project including:
 - o Defining the different roles in a project
 - o Describing the difference between a project, programme and portfolio
 - o Understanding the impact of project context on success

- o Establishing the project lifecycle and its benefits
- o Developing a project business case
- o Preparing a project management plan with the associated baselines
- o Describing the way in which project managers lead and develop teams
- o Describe how to control a project including applying earned value management
- o Explain how to procure external resources
- o Explain how quality can be managed during project delivery
- Explain the benefits of project management to your organisation.

Applicants typically have some pre-existing project management knowledge, although this is not essential.

There is a 3-hour written exam where candidates must answer ten out of sixteen questions.

APMP for PRINCE2 Practitioners

This is an alternative route to gaining the APM's flagship qualification, APMP, designed for project managers who are already registered PRINCE2 Practitioners. It involves a shorter training course and a 2-hour exam rather than the 3 hour exam in recognition of the existing experience and knowledge of PRINCE2 practitioners.

APMP develops knowledge and understanding beyond PRINCE2, such as budgeting and cost management, conflict management and teamwork.

Training courses and the exam only cover the assessment criteria from the **APM Body of Knowledge 6th edition** that are **not** covered by PRINCE2 Practitioner:

The benefits of this qualification:

- APMP fills the knowledge gap beyond PRINCE2 Practitioner
- Increased likelihood of project success
- Enhanced recognition of project management capability

APM Practitioner Qualification (APM PQ)

The APM Practitioner Qualification (APM PQ) is an IPMA Level C qualification and assesses the application of knowledge areas as defined by the APM Body of Knowledge. It is the natural next step in career development for project managers who have completed the APMP.

The APM PQ is assessed against 30 core criteria which are essential to project management, including:

- Understanding the project in the context of the overall business and business case.
- Applying effective project planning strategies to ensure the project has an effective baseline.
- Demonstrating an understanding to project risk and its potential effect on the successful delivery of the project.
- Managing change as it emerges during the project and establishing strategies to minimise the impact of change.
- Monitoring and controlling project progress and status, keeping stakeholders informed on issues which may influence the project outcome.

- Planning and implementing a post project review to ensure that lessons are captured for future projects.
- The ability to lead and motivate a team of individuals.

There is no exam for the APM PQ instead candidates attend a residential assessment centre where they take part in group and individual exercises, which include team analysis of a project, presentation of the project management experience, individual written exercises and role play. Candidates are also interviewed by the assessors, the aim being for the assessors to get a complete picture of a candidate's skills and capability as a project manager:

Candidates wishing to achieve this qualification must also satisfy one of the following pre-requisites:

- Hold the APMP qualification
- Demonstrate good familiarity with the APM Body of Knowledge and have gained a qualification equivalent to the APMP, such as PMP, BCS-ISEB Certificate in IS Project Management, Open University Project Management Module M865
- Demonstrate that they have good foundation knowledge of project management supported by evidence of relevant Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

APM Registered Project Professional Workshop

The APM Registered Project Professional (RPP) is a standard in professional project management aimed at recognising competent leadership, the ability to manage complex projects and a commitment to Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

There is no exam for the RPP instead there is an assessment for which candidates must collect evidence of managing complex projects and of successfully leading others during projects in addition to proving they have undertaken CPD.

Experienced project managers wishing to gain this credential must submit a written portfolio of evidence detailing their on-the-job experience on complex projects and undergo an assessment interview by RPP peer assessors called a professional review.

APM RPP coaching sessions and workshops are available on how to best present evidence of experience and how to most effectively articulate relevant skills and experience during the professional review.

PMP Certification from PMI

PMP training courses typically do not include the PMP exam, which needs to be booked directly with the PMI 3-4 weeks after the course.This will allow fuller preparation for the exam and maximise the chance of success.

KEY FACTS

	Study Options	Course Duration (classroom)	Exam Type & Duration	Pre-requisites
PMP	Classroom Virtual Training Distance Learning e-Learning	5 days	3 hour written exam	3-5 years managing projects (dependent on academic qualifications) plus relevant CPD

Project Management Professional, PMP® Certification

PMP certification from the Project Management Institute® (PMI) is the most widely recognised global project management qualification. PMP certification demonstrates that you have the experience, education and competency to successfully lead and direct complex projects. In addition to your knowledge of project management it also takes account of your experience and evaluates your ability to take critical decisions in difficult situations.

Once you gain the PMP you must also commit to continuing professional development (CPD) to maintain the credential, which is one of the reasons the qualification is so highly regarded.

It is the perfect choice of qualification for those project managers who work, or aspire to work, in an international market.

Education	Project Management Experience	Project Management Training Contact Hours
A bachelor's degree (or the global equivalent)	4,500 hours (about 3 years) of experience leading and directing projects	35 hours as provided by this PMP credential certification course
A secondary diploma (high school or the global equivalent)	7,500 hours (about 5 years) leading and directing projects	35 hours as provided by the PMP credential certification course

At the end of a PM training course you will be able to describe in detail the PMI approach to project management as described by their book **Project Management Body of Knowledge, PMBOK® Guide**, and demonstrate how the PMI processes can be used to improve project management in your organisation.

Detailed Pre-requisites for PMP Certification

The PMP credential is designed for experienced project managers who are looking for recognition of their competence to deliver projects.The PMI have specific pre-requisites depending on the level of academic qualification and experience in project management.

PRINCE2® Certifications

KEY FACTS

	Study Options	Course Duration (classroom)	Exam Type & Duration	Pre-requisites
PRINCE2 Practitioner	Classroom Virtual Training Distance Learning e-Learning	3 days	2.5 hour multiple choice	PRINCE2 Foundation or equivalent
PRINCE2 Professional	Classroom	2.5 days	Assessment	PRINCE2 Practitioner or equivalent

PRINCE2 Practitioner

This qualification provides a good understanding of how to apply the PRINCE2 method to projects to improve the chance of project success. Candidates learn how to prepare project plans using product based planning techniques, how to undertake risk analysis and risk management for the project and how to implement quality control and change control techniques.

The exam consists of a challenging two-and-a-half hour multiple choice paper based on 9 project scenarios.

Candidate must have passed the PRINCE2 Foundation exam or hold an equivalent qualification before taking the practitioner exam although in practise many training providers run a single concurrent 5-day course covering both syllabuses.

Other qualifications that meet the pre-requisite requirements for PRINCE2 Practitioner are:

- Project Management Professional (PMP)
- Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM)
- IPMA Level A® (Certified Projects Director)
- IPMA Level B® (Certified Senior Project Manager)
- IPMA Level C® (Certified Project Manager)
- IPMA Level D® (Certified Project Management Associate)

PRINCE2 Professional

The PRINCE2 Professional qualification is the next level for PRINCE2 Practitioners.This level test a project manager's ability to manage a PRINCE2 project across all aspects of the project lifecycle during a two-and-a-half day residential assessment at an Assessment Centre.

The assessment involves group activities and exercises based on a fictional project case study.

AGILE

The focus of agile project management is on developing solutions incrementally, enabling project teams to react effectively to changing requirements, whilst empowering project personnel and encouraging increased collaboration and ownership.

Agile project management aims to achieve a balanced combination of the standards, rigour and visibility required for good project management with fast pace, change and empowerment.

KEY FACTS

	Study Options	Course Duration (classroom)	Exam Type & Duration	Pre-requisites
AgilePM®	Classroom e-learning	4 days	Foundation: 40 min. multiple choice Practitioner: 2.5 hour written exam	Traditional PM knowledge and/or experience
PRINCE2 Agile™ Practitioner	Classroom e-learning	3 days	2.5 hour multiple choice	Current PRINCE2 Practitioner Qualification
PMI-ACP® (Agile Certified Practitioner)	Classroom e-learning	3-5 days	3 hour multiple choice	Experience in agile project teams

AgilePM®

The APMG-International AgilePM® certification aims to address the needs of those working in a project-focused environment who want to combine the flexibility of an agile approach with a proven process for successful project delivery. It is well-suited for integration in a PRINCE2 project environment.

It is based on eight principles for effective agile project delivery:

- Focus on the business need
- Collaborate
- Build incrementally from firm foundations
- Communicate continuously and clearly
- Deliver on time

- Never compromise quality
- Develop iteratively
- Demonstrate control

The AgilePM certification is aimed at aspiring and practising project managers, and at team members wishing to adopt a fast-paced, flexible and collaborative approach to project management whilst maintaining standards and rigour.

The exam consists of 2 parts:

- **Foundation**, which is a 40 minute multiple choice paper.
- **Practitioner**, which is a two-and-a-half hour written exam in which 4 questions must be answered. In order to sit this exam you must hold an AgilePM Foundation Certificate.

PRINCE2 Agile™ Practitioner

PRINCE2 Agile™ is a solution combining the flexibility and responsiveness of agile with the clearly defined framework of PRINCE2®. It covers a wide range of agile concepts, including SCRUM, Kanban and Lean Startup and provides guidance on tailoring PRINCE2 in an agile context including:

- How to tailor the integrated set of PRINCE2 principles, themes and processes
- How to produce the PRINCE2 management products
- How to map the common agile roles to the PRINCE2 project management team structure
- How to incorporate the fundamental agile behaviours, concepts and techniques into PRINCE2

The strength of PRINCE2 lies in the areas of project direction and project management whereas agile has a very strong focus on product delivery. When PRINCE2 and agile are combined, project direction, project management and project delivery are optimized to create a complete project management solution.

PRINCE2 Agile is an extension module tailored for forward-thinking organisations and individuals already benefiting from PRINCE2. It provides further guidance on how to apply agile

methods in a PRINCE2 project environment. The purpose of the qualification is to demonstrate that you can apply and tailor PRINCE2 Agile in a scenario situation.

As a pre-requisite candidates must already hold a current PRINCE2 Practitioner qualification (i.e. to have passed the PRINCE2 Practitioner or PRINCE2 Practitioner Re-registration exam within the last 5 years).

The exam is a two-and-a-half hour multiple choice paper consisting of 50 questions.

PMI Agile Certified Practitioner

The PMI Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP)® certification recognises knowledge of agile principles, practices, and tools and techniques across agile methodologies, and is not limited to one agile approach. It spans many approaches to agile such as Scrum, Kanban, Lean, extreme programming (XP) and test-driven development (TDD.)

The certification exam is 3-hours long and has 120 multiple-choice questions. To maintain your PMI-ACP, you must earn 30 professional development units (PDUs) in agile topics every three years so it also provides evidence of continued real-world, hands-on experience and skill.

Other Qualifications

Project Management Planning & Control™

Candidates will explore the vital importance of effective project controls and their role in commercial project success during each phase of the project from bidding to contract close. They will then look at how these principles can be applied in a flexible way to match the level of control to the complexity of the project.

A Project Management Planning and Control qualification is not just about learning processes but also the behaviours and culture needed to deploy an effective project controls framework. For this reason a training course is appropriate for the entire project management team including project managers, planners, quantity surveyors, cost estimators, risk analysts and project controls staff.

This course is based on the widely acclaimed guide **"Planning, Scheduling, Monitoring and Control: The**

Practical Project Management of Time, Cost and Risk" published by The Association for Project Management (APM). The course includes professional certification awarded by APMG-International.

Successful candidates will be able to:

- Describe how to establish a high quality project controls system.
- Explain how to establish a robust planning system.
- Explain the use of scheduling, cost control and risk management systems.
- Describe how to rigorously monitor a project that enables proactive project control.
- Analyse the effectiveness of a project plan.
- Establish a record keeping system that facilitates feedback and the learning cycle.

There are no pre-requisites but it is strongly recommended to review the contents of the guide "Planning, Scheduling, Monitoring and Control: The Practical Project Management of Time, Cost and Risk".

The exam consists of two papers. A foundation paper which is a one-hour multiple choice paper and then a two and a half hour case study based practitioner exam.

PPM Qualifications

The PPM Diploma and PPM Certificate concentrate on the development of a clear understanding of the range of disciplines and techniques that underpin successful programme and project management, and their practical application.

Candidates undertaking a training course will be able to:

- Understand the business, social and political contexts which impact on programmes and projects
- Understand the importance of focussing on business objectives not just delivering to a projects' time; cost & quality objectives
- Develop a focused and disciplined approach to developing and implementing plans and controls in programme and project management
- Apply a range of techniques to programmes and projects
- Enhance communication and use information more effectively
- Improve team and individual performance
- Combine knowledge of tools and techniques with an understanding of wider business and governance issues.

PPM Certificate

The Certificate in Programme and Project Management is an intermediate level, practical qualification created as a stepping-stone to the elite degree-level Diploma.

The Certificate is ideal for Programme or Project Managers who are interested in expanding and extending their knowledge and skills in programme and project management. It aims to be directly applicable to your workplace, and so quickly improve your capability and effectiveness.

There are no pre-requisites but it is expected that candidates will already be working in a programme or project management environment.

PPM Diploma

APMG International and the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) jointly developed the Level 5 Diploma in Programme and Project Management to satisfy the market need from Programme/Project Managers for a degree level qualification specific to their professions.

It is aimed at Project and Programme Managers and concentrates on developing a clear understanding of the disciplines and techniques which underpin successful Programme and Project Management. The Diploma also focusses on their practical application, ideally in your own workplace, and provides a foundation for CPD.

The PPM Diploma is a degree level qualification and will therefore be an impressive addition to your learning history. It demonstrates a breadth of knowledge beyond most Project Management, and all Programme Management qualifications

BCS-ISEB Certificate in IS Project Management

A high-level qualification from BCS aimed at IT project managers who require an understanding of structured PM methods as they apply to IT projects. It is built on the PRINCE2 methodology and the PRINCE2 Practitioner qualification is a pre-requisite but, in practise, many training providers also run the PRINCE2 Practitioner and BCS-ISEB course concurrently. Candidates are also expected to have between 3-4 years project management experience in a recognised methodology

The exam format is a 3-hour written paper and a 45 minute oral exam.

The International Project Management Association

The International Project Management Association (IPMA) is a Federation of the leading Project Management associations of over 60 nations and, as such, is unique global network with regional and local influence. It plays a significant role in the development of international standards through its work with ISO.

IPMA has a well-established and respected four level certification system. This system provides a rigorous and structured method to assess project management competence. It provides the assurance of a globally consistent standard whilst providing flexibility for local contextualisation. APM is the United Kingdom member association of IPMA.

Summary of PM Qualifications

Qualification	Level	Suitable For	Examining Body	Pre-requisites
Introductory Certificate: The APM Project Fundamentals Qualification	Introductory	New project manager Project team member PMO staff	APM	None
PRINCE2® Foundation	Introductory	New project manager Project team member PMO staff	Axelos	None
CAPM (Certified Associate in Project Management)	Introductory	New project manager Project team member PMO staff	PMI	None
IPMA Level D	Fundamental	New project manager PMO manager	IPMA	2-3 years project experience
APMP: The APM Project Management Qualification	Fundamental	New project manager PMO manager	APM	2-3 years project experience
APMP For PRINCE2 Practitioners	Fundamental	New project manager PMO manager	APM	Current PRINCE2 Practitioner Certificate
PRINCE2® Practitioner	Fundamental	New project manager PMO manager	Axelos	2-3 years project experience

Qualification	Level	Suitable For	Examining Body	Pre-requisites
PMP (Certified Project Management Professional)	Intermediate	Project manager	PMI	2-3 years project experience
IPMA Level C	Intermediate	Project manager	IPMA	At least 3 years' experience
APM Practitioner Qualification (PQ)	Intermediate	Project manager	APM	APMP or equivalent qualification
Project Management Planning & Control™	Intermediate	Project manager Project planner Cost estimators Risk analysts Project controls staff	APMG International	10-15 hours pre-reading
AgilePM®	Intermediate	Project manager	APMG International	Traditional PM knowledge or experience
PRINCE2 Professional	Intermediate	Project manager	Axelos	Current PRINCE2 Practitioner qualification
PRINCE2 Agile™	Intermediate	Project manager	Axelos	Current PRINCE2 Practitioner qualification
PMI-ACP®	Intermediate	Project manager	PMI	Experience in agile project teams
PPM Certificate	Intermediate	Project manager	APMG International	Programme or project management experience

Qualification	Level	Suitable For	Examining Body	Pre-requisites
IPMA Level B	Advanced	Senior project manager	IPMA	At least 5 years' experience, including 3 years managing complex projects
BCS-ISEB Certificate in IS Project Management	Advanced	Senior project manager	BCS	3 years' experience using PRINCE2
APM Registered Project Professional	Advanced	Senior project manager	APM	At least 5 years managing complex projects
PPM Diploma	Degree-level	Senior project manager	APMG International	Programme or project management experience

Resources

- Project Management Institute
- Association for Project Management
- APMG International
- Axelos
- International Project Management Association

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