Routes into Practice

Project Management Career Guide

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What are Project Managers?

The project manager is responsible for day-to-day management of the project and must be competent in managing the six aspects of a project, i.e. **scope**, **schedule**, **finance**, **risk**, **quality** and **resources**. Project managers work on specific projects that have definite outcomes, have time limits and have to stay within a budget. They are vital to the businesses they work for.

Jobs are available across all sectors, from business, IT and engineering to healthcare, marketing and retail.

What qualifications do I need?

You can get into general project management with any degree, although courses in business or project management are particularly useful. However, for more specific project management roles, such as those in engineering or IT, subject knowledge is more important, so an undergraduate degree in a related subject will prove useful.

You don't need a postgraduate qualification but if your first degree is unrelated a Masters could increase your chances of success.

Project Management qualifications

While a degree in project management will qualify you for the job, it's the additional knowledge gained through professional qualifications and short courses that will help you to progress.

Completing these qualifications before finding employment isn't necessary, as the majority of employers provide new recruits with on-the-job training.

Courses are available in the various project management methodologies, such as:

- **PRINCE2** - a structured methodology, commonly used for end-to-end project management. Courses are available at foundation, practitioner and agile level. Foundation courses are suitable for new recruits with a basic knowledge of project management processes. You'll then progress to practitioner level, which is aimed at working professionals.

- **Agile** - is suited to fast-moving environments such as IT. Agile methodology uses short development cycles called sprints to focus on continuous improvement in the development of a product. Training is available at foundation and practitioner level. For more information on Agile courses, see IT training.

What skills are linked to Project Management?

- **Time management** - you'll spend time figuring out how other people spend their time, but it's equally important to be skilled in managing your own workload. It's your job to prioritise and delegate tasks successfully. You need to be skilled at identifying the most important tasks, and saying no to requests that will get in the way of completing priority tasks.

- **Organisation** - how can a project manager organise the work of others if they're unorganised themselves? The job demands a high level of responsibility from setting goals, managing meetings and creating estimates and timelines to scheduling and tracking the progress of a project.

- **Communication** - the majority of your time will be spent liaising with others. You need to be able to clearly articulate visions, ideas, goals and project issues to a variety of people, from team members to stakeholders. Your written communications skills need to be honed for report writing, while your verbal skills need to be up to scratch for meetings and presentations. Good listening ability is also essential.

- **Negotiation** - project managers need to be excellent negotiators in order to find common ground to accomplish project goals. You'll need to work with teams, often with competing interests to negotiate resources, budgets and schedules. Knowing how to negotiate a win-win outcome for all parties is the sign of a good project manager.

- **Risk management** - identifying and managing risk shows that you're in control of your project. You need to stay ahead of the game and predict and create solutions to problems before they arise in order to deliver projects successfully.

- **Leadership** - being able to lead your team, as well as manage their activities is vital. You need to be able to inspire team members, set the project vision and motive your colleagues.

Gaining experience that relates to Project Management

Project management skills and experience can be gained in a variety of ways!

1. Gain experience in an entry level project management role: Junior Project Manager, Project Assistant, and Product Assistant

2. Gain experience in a role which will include aspects of Project Management: project coordinator, marketing assistant, operations specialist or office manager

3. Gain work experience which will build up your Project Management skills: take on management or leadership responsibilities within existing employment, become involved with staff training, development, rotas

4. Work experience: arrange a period of work shadowing with an experienced professional

5. Volunteering: work with a local charity and take part in organising and arranging events

6. At university: get involved with schemes and societies connected with the university e.g. work with the student union and help to organise and manage an event. Join a society and take on a responsibility

7. Mentor: find a mentor within the industry who can guide you in your career

8. Virtual work experience – Bite-sized 5-6-hour virtual work experience programs that give students a genuine career advantage with the world's top companies

   a. [Free Virtual Work Experience Programs from Top Companies - Forage (theforage.com)](theforage.com)
   b. [Free Virtual Work Experience | Springpod](Springpod)

Project Management Graduate Schemes
- Network Rail
- Computacenter
- Babcock
- [BT](BT)
- [DHL](DHL)
- Fujitsu
- Artelia
- Atos
- Reinshaw
- Mace
- BAE Systems
- Mott Macdonald

Other companies hiring for Project Management Jobs
- [NHS](NHS)
- [IBM](IBM)
- Jaguar Land Rover
- Capita

- [Barclays](#)
- [Amazon](#)
- [Deloitte](#)
- [Verizon](#)
- [Accenture](#)
- [Bank of America](#)

Further Resources

[How to become a project manager | Prospects.ac.uk](#)
[How to become a Project Manager | reed.co.uk](#)
[How To Become a Project Manager | Indeed.com UK](#)
[Project Management in 2023 - A Complete Guide (monday.com)](#)