

# Project:You

A student guide to  
project management

Because when projects  
succeed, society benefits

# What are projects?

Projects come in different shapes and sizes and all have an impact on the world around us.

Every project needs a project team to keep a close watch on plans, budgets, teams, quality of outputs and any issues that may cause a problem to the project. Without one, projects are likely to fail. And that could mean the late opening of an airport or, even worse, no music festival.

**So, what does a project professional look like?**

**They look like you.**

Our short guide shows you more about a profession that plays a big part in making things happen and keeps on growing as more companies in more sectors become project-based.



Burj Khalifa, UAE

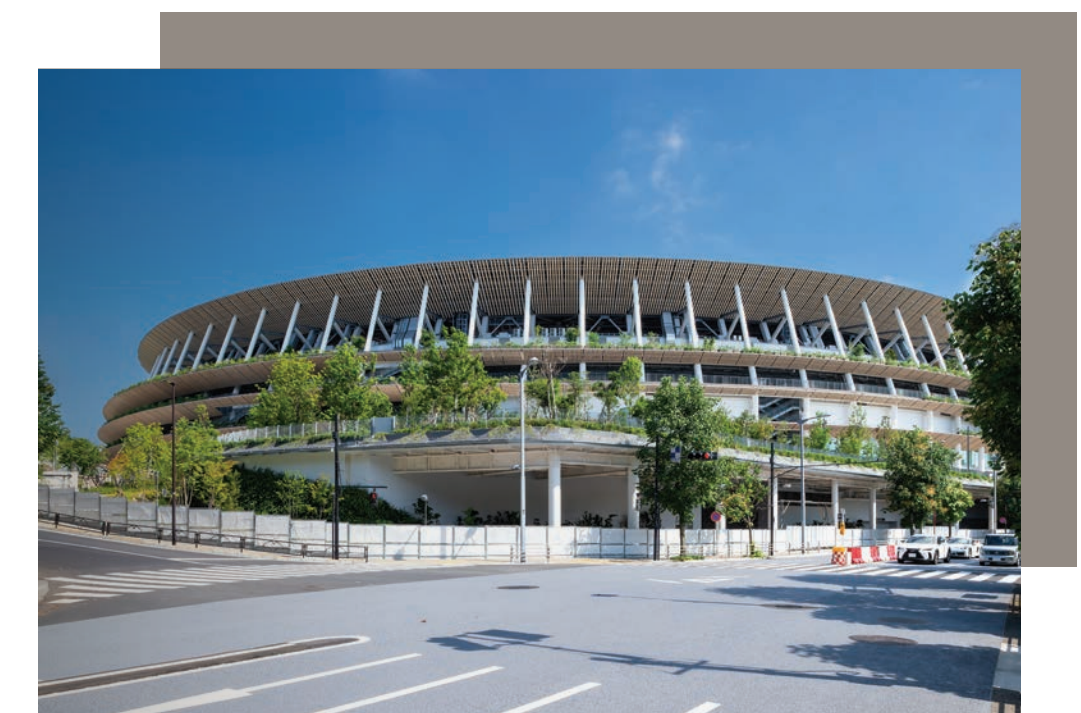
## Where in the world?

- Burj Khalifa, UAE
- HS2, UK
- Olympic stadium, Japan
- Three Gorges Dam, China

Projects come in all shapes and sizes and happen all across the globe. When projects succeed, society benefits. The projects listed above are known as megaprojects costing billions of pounds, but the majority of projects aren't this huge and some will be local to you, like a new supermarket or hospital ward.



Three Gorges Dam, China



Olympic stadium, Japan

# The skills you need

So, you've decided that a career in projects looks interesting. Now have a think about the skills you have and compare them with those of a successful project professional.



## Organisation

The chances are that you're the one who arranges the holidays or evenings out with your friends. You probably don't like uncertainty and you prefer to get things done today – after all, why wait until tomorrow?



## Leadership

You're happy to get the job done yourself, but it's no problem to get other people involved too, as they'll have different skills to you. Your talent is being able to bring the right people together at the right time for the right result. Project professionals are experts in making teams work effectively.



## Resilience

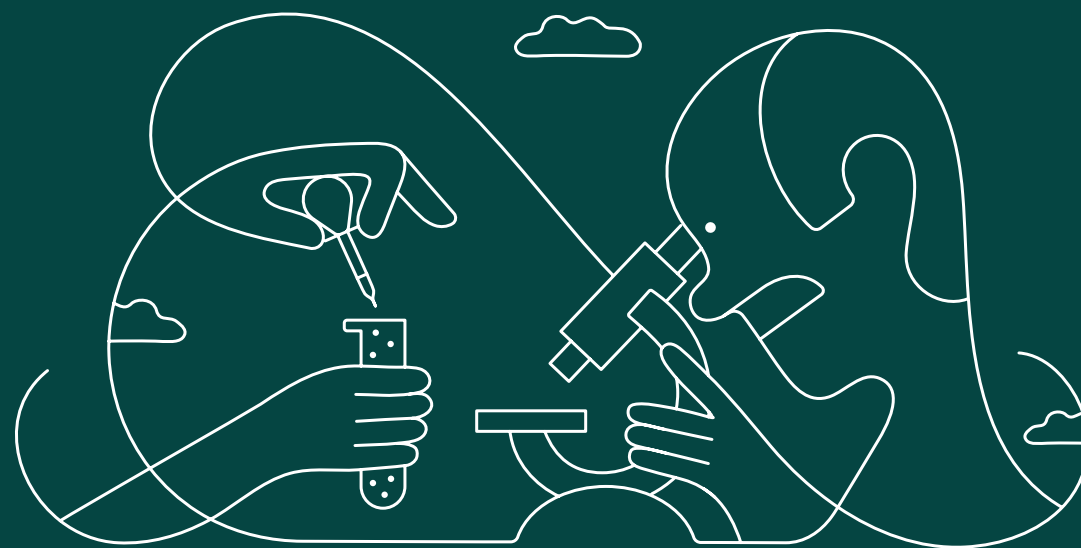
Mañana is not in your dictionary, and nor is failure. Your determination will get others working as a team and solving problems along the way so that together you'll succeed.



## Communication

Making sure that everyone knows what's happening, and what needs to be done, is a critical part of being a good project professional.

You're not expected to be an expert in projects on day one – you'll learn the technical parts on the job, but your attitude and soft skills are what will get you the role.



# What kind of projects can you work on?

Just about every sector has a project function, which means great opportunities for you to combine your job with your interests. Here's a flavour of some of the sectors that engage with projects, with an example of how for each one.

## Media

You could be involved in creating new studios for TV programmes, to make them more flexible for new filming technologies.

## Public sector

The NHS is Europe's largest employer and played a vital role during the worst of the Covid pandemic; major projects included Nightingale hospitals and the vaccine rollout.

## Construction

Building a house is a classic project; but innovation exists here as more construction is done 'off-site' and good project planning brings materials to the right place at the right time, with the right experts on-site.

## Financial services

Project professionals in this sector are busy helping large organisations change the way they engage with their customers, to make it more digital and 'always on'.

## Government

The government is responsible for making important decisions about national infrastructure.

## Engineering

Another classic sector for project management; building a train line or a tunnel requires intense planning, careful budgeting and a lot of stakeholder management (getting everyone on side).

## IT

Nearly every company has an IT function; and with the speed of change in IT, project-based teams are there to implement system updates smoothly across a business.

## Retail

How do a retailer's fast fashion products get from the manufacturer to the store? Through good project management.

## Charities

These organisations have to make every penny count; what better way to do that than by project-based working?

## There are many, many more.

## Money makes the world go round

You'll spend a long time working, so doing something you enjoy will make your world a happy place. Mix work with your interests and values and you'll hit the jackpot.

If your motivation is travelling around the world, you could aim to get involved in megaprojects. So, rather than the Elizabeth Line in the UK, what about a megaproject like the Hong Kong to Macau bridge? Or the Etihad Rail project which plans to link UAE with Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait?

If you're more interested in socially-valuable projects in the developing world, take a look at a project like the Fael Khair Project, which saw schools in Bangladesh double up as cyclone shelters.

Once you've done your research on these astonishing projects, you can find out more about salaries – check out our annual Salary and Market Trends Survey which shows that some APM members earn more than more than £100,000 a year.\*

By the time you embark on your career, the Chartered Project Professional standard (ChPP) will have given a competitive advantage to project professionals and companies' project teams bidding for new contracts.

\*APM Salary and Market Trends Survey 2021

## Informed choices

The next step you make has to be the right one – **for you**.

If uni isn't for you, consider an apprenticeship. You get an APM qualification, a full-time job and a very positive bank balance. Or a degree apprenticeship, which also includes a BSc Project Management paid for by your employer.

More than 10,000 people have been on a project management apprenticeship, in a huge range of sectors and companies across the country.

If you're off to uni, you could take a degree in Project Management. There are more than 20 universities that offer undergraduate PM degrees, and more than 70 that run postgraduate ones. Remember that companies will recruit you based on you and your soft skills, not just the degree you hold.

**You could mix the two** – some have graduated from university before starting an apprenticeship.

**Keep your options open** – unless you're 100% certain about a specific path, apply for universities and apprenticeships.

If you can't see yourself as a project professional just yet, that's ok. People come in to the project profession after doing other roles as varied as TV production, engineering, being in the armed forces and event management.



Hong Kong to Macau bridge



# Project management roles



Project managers play a key role in the project profession, but they're not the only ones.

There are project co-ordinators, change managers, programme managers and directors, portfolio managers and directors, risk analysts, heads of transformation and many more versions of these job titles.

If you're new to the sector, the chances are you'll be a project co-ordinator. You could be involved in maintaining the project schedule, allocating tasks to different members of the project team and looking for ways to make the project as efficient as it can be. You will also update other people in the organisation on project progress.

As you gain experience and expertise you could become an assistant project manager or project manager. This type of role will still see you doing some scheduling and managing stakeholders; you could also use your negotiation skills to iron out any issues between different interest groups; you might do some scoping of the project requirements; you could be involved in the handover of projects – when they become 'business as usual' (BAU); you could also be responsible for securing resources from inside and outside the business; scrutinising budgets and controlling costs; looking at risks and opportunities, and designing responses to them.

# Build your own career

With more experience you will know what you enjoy most, which could be building and leading teams; working on contracts; scoping project requirements; managing stakeholders; or getting approval for business cases.

For some, the next step could be programme manager, someone who oversees large scale projects undertaken in a sophisticated way; it could be portfolio manager – someone with oversight of many large projects at once. Others prefer to work as a business analyst, gathering and scrutinising data from across the business, before making recommendations for improvement. Some become a change manager, moving a company from how it functions now to where it would like to be.

The beauty of the project profession is that there is no prescribed path. You can shape the career journey that is right for you and your skillset.

Jack Stacey, Student member



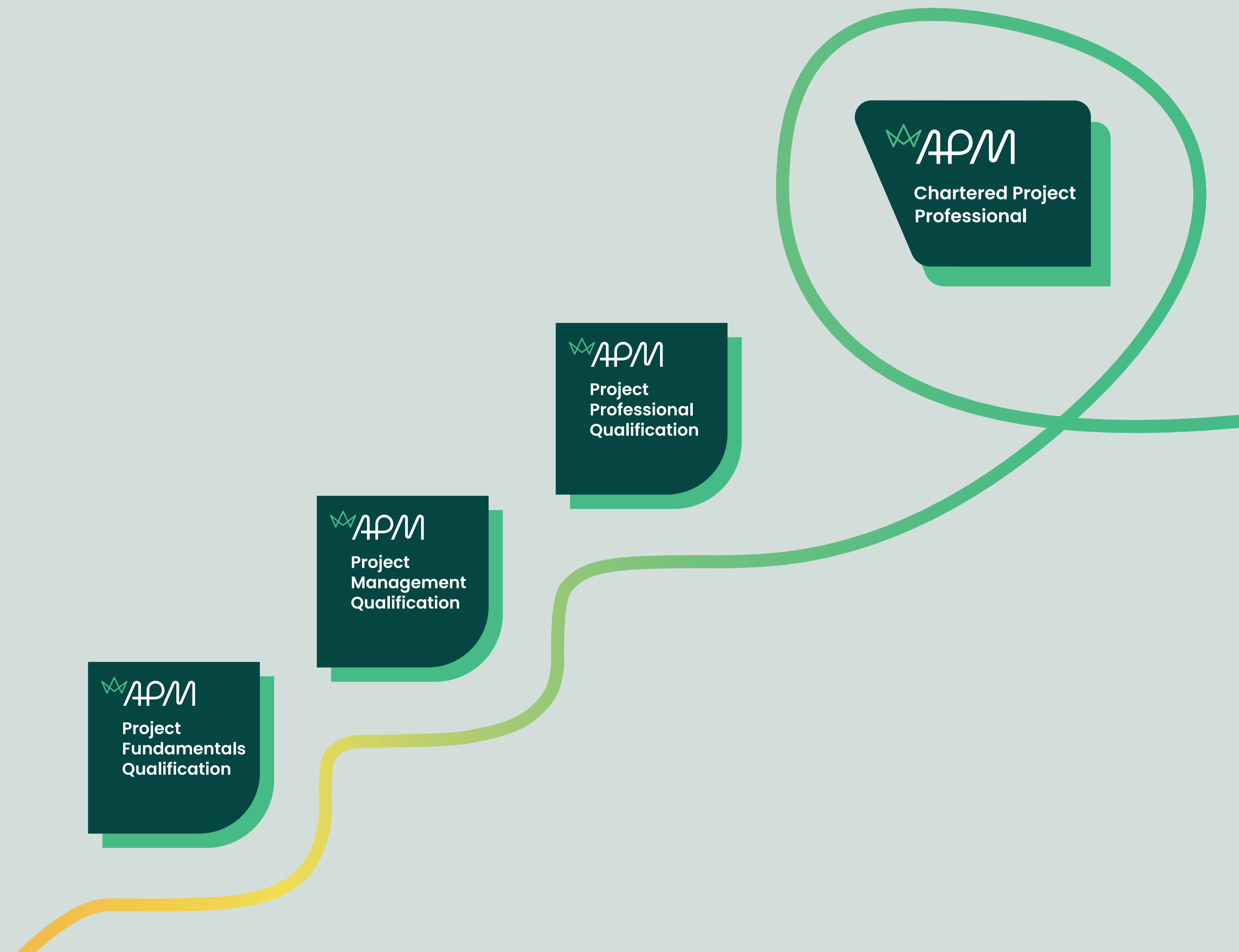
## We help the profession deliver better

We're APM: Association for Project Management. We're the only chartered membership organisation for the project profession in the world. Our activities – from qualifications and networking to research, resources and debate – raise the profile of the project profession, challenge the status quo where it matters and set the highest standards. In a complex world, we're helping the project profession deliver better.



## Stand out from the crowd with our qualifications

We design professional qualifications which you can find on our website [apm.org.uk/qualifications](https://apm.org.uk/qualifications) – the two you are most likely to see early in your career are the APM Project Fundamentals Qualification and the APM Project Management Qualification. The Fundamentals Qualification gives you essential knowledge about the world of projects. It's ideal for those about to start a career in projects, and for those looking to be more efficient in other roles where project-based working is becoming more common. The Management Qualification is the qualification that sits within both project management apprenticeships and graduate schemes – employers value its holistic view of projects including the importance of soft skills.



## Become a member, unlock your potential

If you're older than 16 you can join us as a Student member, for free. You can sign up online via [apm.org.uk/membership](https://apm.org.uk/membership) – and it's open to project management apprentices too. Having APM Student membership on your CV and our digital badge on your LinkedIn profile shows prospective employers that you are serious about your project career. More importantly, membership gives you access to networking events with other Student members and young project professionals, to increase your knowledge and raise your profile. As you develop your career you can become an Associate member, then a Full APM member (MAPM) and eventually become a Chartered Project Professional (ChPP), our most valuable title.



## Make an impact and get recognised

As well as being a chartered membership organisation, we issue the Chartered Project Professional (ChPP) designation to project professionals around the world who have the right mix of knowledge and experience. The chartered brand is valuable in many countries, in many different professions. Having the letters ChPP after your name makes it clear to companies that you are highly qualified, and an asset to any organisation.

If you are looking to study at university you will see that there are Project Management degrees that link to our ChPP status. This linkage means that you don't have to take any further project qualifications after you graduate to be eligible to apply for ChPP – all you need to do is get the right kind of project experience. To find out what it takes to become a Chartered Project Professional, and to see what others have to say about the value it brings, visit [apm.org.uk/chartered](https://apm.org.uk/chartered)



Tariro Chinyamakobvu, Student member



# What our members say



**Teresa Richards**  
AlphaPlus

Before starting my career as a Project Manager at AlphaPlus, I was a BSc Psychology and MSc Management graduate at the University of Manchester.

I always knew I wanted to find a way to combine psychology and business, but I had no idea how to do it. It was only when I attended a webinar on starting out in project management that I realised that project management was the career I wanted. It's such an exciting career filled with many opportunities.

Since joining AlphaPlus as a graduate, I have managed large-scale cross-functional assessment projects including the implementation of adaptive assessments in schools. I genuinely believe that the projects I manage at AlphaPlus are making a big difference in how society views assessments and is improving the learning environment for school children.

I believe in the importance of continuous professional development, which is why I studied and passed the APM Project Management Qualification. This has helped me to deepen my understanding of the core project management values. My overall goal is to become an APM Chartered Project Professional and therefore, as an active Associate member of APM, I have attended various APM events including the APM Power of Projects conference, and I have also started to volunteer at my local branch.

A great project manager is proactive and is always thinking ahead about the threats and opportunities of the projects they are working on. They are also good storytellers – they have a deep understanding of why they are doing the project and can bring stakeholders with them on the journey from start to finish.



**Richard Groom**  
Cambridge University Press & Assessment

My career was in sales: in retail first and then at Cambridge, in the publishing sector. I wanted to take my career in a different direction, so I did some research and realised I had a lot of transferable skills from previous roles that I could stretch in project management.

My apprenticeship, which includes the APM Project Management Qualification, coincided with the pandemic. Education was suddenly transformed around the world, and so was our organisation. This sparked several time-pressured projects for me to test my fledgling skills on. I learnt how critical good planning is in complex projects!

I completed the apprenticeship and qualified in 2021. I did not want to lose any momentum or skills gained during this time, so I applied for a new role to grow my experience quickly. I am now a senior project manager in a different branch of the organisation, and I am currently working on three very different projects which help to expand my knowledge, experience, and skillset.

Learning did not stop when the apprenticeship stopped. My course gave me a robust structure that still underpins my work today, and the apprenticeship also taught me how to continuously learn. I am a member of the APM, regularly accessing their CPD sites for assistance, and there is a great community of experienced colleagues at Cambridge to call upon. The opportunities are very varied, and I get to learn about different and new parts of the organisation. It is very exciting work, and I look forward to continuing this journey in project management.



**Lily Ayres**  
Draken

When I was growing up, my passion was aviation, and I always knew that I wanted to work within the aviation industry. After finishing my university studies, I received a place on Draken Europe's Graduate Scheme, based out of Bournemouth Airport, and was beyond thrilled at the opportunity.

The Graduate Scheme allowed me to experience a new role within a new department every six months, which really gave me an appreciation for how different roles and the departments that they sit within contribute to a business as a whole.

It was during my Project Management placement that I realised this appreciation and understanding of a business's different functions becomes part of your daily work as you bring them together as you work towards the completion of vital projects.

After six months in this placement, and one APM Project Management Qualification exam later, I was offered a permanent position as a Project Manager on Draken Europe's primary flying contract, which has given me a holistic view of our operations as an aviation business working within the defence market.

My role at Draken Europe has given me such a varied portfolio of projects to manage, which in turn has given me some fantastic learning and experience. To anyone who enjoys completing a variety of tasks and enjoys working with multiple functions and departments to achieve a common goal, project management is the role for you!



**Bel French**  
Gleeds

My career in project management began straight after my A levels. My first role was with Turner & Townsend as a Trainee Project Manager, where I completed the Associate Project Manager Higher Apprenticeship. This included the APM Project Management Qualification and AgilePM Foundation. During this time, I was an Assistant Project Manager on various infrastructure programmes.

After four years, I joined Gleeds as a Project Manager where I worked towards my Chartered Project Professional (ChPP) standard. I found doing my ChPP was a lot more enjoyable than I had expected. I was worried about revising my technical knowledge and writing the application, but I found the process of refreshing my theoretical understanding of project management to be great for my role.

I enjoy working as a Project Manager because I love the impact that projects can have. I feel a sense of pride as I walk past railway stations that I have worked on. A lot of these projects will be around for years to come so I look forward to telling people my little project stories forever!

I now enjoy supporting colleagues with their project management journeys, whether they are new to projects or more senior professionals. There are so many different routes to choose from – it's great to know that there are options for everyone.



# What our members say



**Misha Patel**  
Pcubed

I joined MI-GSO | PCUBED (MIP) and their Degree Apprenticeship programme after finishing my A levels in Biology, Business and Economics. It was an interest in gaining a deeper insight into business functions and seeing projects' roles as part of the bigger picture, which encouraged me to pursue a career in project management. Combining the work I do to support my client, and weekly learning at university has allowed me to apply new skills and processes day-to-day, and truly understand the application of project management fundamentals.

I have had the great opportunity of working within MIP's Energy team with our client, Veolia Nuclear Solutions (VNS). The project is focused on the delivery of a remotely handled system to help with the clean-up of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant in Japan, after an earthquake and tsunami in 2011. I have been working in VNS's Project Engineering function, supporting project planning, communication across business functions and risks & issues monitoring and management; all of which are fundamental skills for all project professionals. Being part of such an impactful project has felt rewarding, both personally and professionally.

Within MIP, my learning is ongoing with great training on offer, including a Scrum Master qualification and Mental Health Awareness Training. Both have encouraged me to approach my work in different ways, as well as build relationships with my peers.

As a APM Student member, I am looking forward to taking the APM Project Management Qualification and deepening my knowledge of key project management elements.



**Lauren Garrett**  
Pinsent Masons

Before joining Pinsent Masons, I obtained a legal secretary qualification and a Law degree. I also recently completed my APM Project Fundamentals Qualification.

My career in project management started when I had the opportunity to do a secondment with the Tech Services team in Pinsent Masons. During this secondment, I took the lead on a project, assisted with the draft business case and organised the relevant training. In addition, I assisted with a desktop refresh project, carrying out user calls to obtain the relevant information to pass on to the teams. I have also worked on a number of other projects which have involved the installation of a finance application, a climate change app pilot and a cloud-based project.

To support my ongoing learning and development, I have regular meetings with my internal mentor to discuss various aspects of project management. In addition, I regularly sign up for APM webinars and look at the various resources available.

To be a good project professional, you need to be good at solving problems as they arise in a timely manner. Also, team management, communication skills and organisation are important, to ensure that everyone is aware of their role and the tasks are being completed to the deadlines we have in place for the project.



**Jess Thompson**  
QinetiQ

Having always enjoyed A level Business Studies – a subject that applies to real life – I was keen to pursue a degree in Business Management (including an industrial placement).

I decided to apply for Project Management graduate schemes, as I enjoyed the pace, variety, and satisfaction I experienced during my industrial placement at Mitsubishi Motors.

The QinetiQ Graduate Scheme encourages continuous learning and development supported by the Early Careers team, the Performance Excellence Function, and my placements. Also, QinetiQ provides the opportunity for you to become an Associate member of APM. I completed the APM Project Fundamentals Qualification and I will take my APM Project Management Qualification towards the end of the scheme. QinetiQ has introduced a personal development fund, which we can utilise for our career growth.

Confidence and strong communication skills are paramount to being a great Project Manager. I also recognise that a project professional who is engaging and works collaboratively creates a strong team. Strong leadership skills are important since it takes a confident negotiator and problem solver, who pays attention to detail, and time management with lots of emotional intelligence.

To date, I have experienced two placements. My first was with our Cyber and Intelligence business, where I was part of the Mission Systems Integrated Delivery Team (IDT) working on various projects for Ministry of Defence customers and Primes.

My second is with the Chief People Officer and People Leadership Team. This placement has enabled me to work on strategic and functional projects key to the future success of QinetiQ. The approach in this placement has been different but with the same goal of successful delivery.



**Paul Strutt**  
Turner & Townsend

After graduating with a degree in Geography, I knew I wanted a career where I could take on large amounts of responsibility and make a difference. I also wanted a career which had structured progression and development potential. After a lot of research, I decided a career in Project Management sounded like a great choice.

I joined Turner & Townsend's Graduate Development Programme and currently work as an Assistant Project Manager within the Infrastructure business. The development programme will allow me to rotate around various clients' projects and in turn, develop my skills across multiple sectors.

Entering the project profession from a non-cognate background can be something that people may be apprehensive about; however, I feel it has not hindered my progress. The excellent support and community within the company have allowed me to develop my skills and knowledge through on-the-job training and classroom-based learning. In addition to day-to-day learning, I will shortly complete the APM Project Management Qualification which will further develop my technical knowledge.

I believe that a career in project management enables individuals to make a real difference in projects which deliver key socio-economic and environmental benefits. To do so successfully, I think a good project professional needs to have strong leadership potential, the ability to see the bigger picture, and a desire to continuously learn and develop both technical, and interpersonal skills.

# Our partners

We have over 500 organisations working with us as part of our Corporate Partnership Programme. Here are just a few to help you see the diversity of projects and potential future employers.





**We are the only chartered membership  
organisation for the project profession**

**Association for Project Management**  
Ibis House, Regent Park, Summerleys Road  
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apm.org.uk



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Royal Charter RC000890 and a registered charity  
No. 1171112. Principal office as shown.