



NEWS

APM ACCREDITATION

In December 2009 the Management Skills Centre was approved by the Association for Project Management (APM) as an accredited training provider for the APMP qualification - so both its APMIC and APMP courses are now accredited.



CAMBRIDGE

As well as operating its courses at Brands Hatch Kent, the MSC launched its first APM

Introductory Certificate course at the Trinity Centre, Cambridge Science Park on 5th/6th May 2009.



COMMENTS FROM PREVIOUS COURSE DELEGATES

"Very enjoyable and informative, keen to progress to the next level."

"An excellent course and presenter."

"Course above my expectations."

"When we emphasise procedures over skills we set a standard of mediocre performance."

Gary Klein in Streetlights and Shadows

This quotation, taken from Gary Klein's recent 2009 book *Streetlights and Shadows*, is relevant to what the MSC stands for.

We are not interested in mediocre performance and want to spend our training time on those skills that really contribute to best performance in project management.

Klein accepts that procedures are most useful in well-ordered situations when they can substitute for skill, not augment it. However in complex situations, procedures are less likely to substitute for expertise and may even stifle its development. *See page 2 for more details of this research.*

"I know of no one who combines theory and observation - intellectual rigor and painstaking observation of the real world - so brilliantly and gracefully as Gary Klein."

Malcom Gladwell, author of *Outliers* and *Blink*.

So what skills are the most useful?

This is where the other research mentioned on page 2 is relevant - emotional intelligence. It has often been said that projects are more likely to fail because the project team doesn't talk to each other than because of mistakes in the critical path analysis or earned value analysis. Thus the discussion of how we manage ourselves and our relationships should be central to excellent project management.

Can we learn these skills?

In the next issue we will explore ways that work in management development - the self-directed learning of Richard Boyatzis and Charles Pellerin's 4-D team-building process described in "How NASA builds teams". Both cases focus on behavioural improvements that last for years and contrast with the "all-too-familiar honeymoon effect of most training".

How can the MSC help?

The MSC is committed to helping individuals and organisations achieve the professional standards adhered to by the APM.

Thus it provides courses for APM qualifications (APMIC and APMP) and can help organisations in particular who have adopted Prince2 and now require a more rounded training course in project management.

The MSC specialises in providing tailored course materials or providing additional courses that cover the material omitted by Prince2.

MSC 2010 Open Programme

Brands Hatch, Kent

APMIC - 26/27 January, 23/24 March, 18/19 May, 13/14 July, 21/22 September, 16/17 November
APMP - 8-12 March, 7-11 June, 11-15 October

Trinity Centre, Cambridge Science Park

APMIC - 30/31 March, 5/6 October
APMP - 10-14 May, 22-26 November

Jottings

Emotional Intelligence

Much of what follows is taken from Primal Leadership - "Learning to lead with emotional intelligence" by Goleman D, Boyatzis R and McKee A (2002).

"When star performers were matched against average ones in senior leadership positions, about 85% of the difference in their profiles was attributable to emotional intelligence factors rather than to purely cognitive abilities like technical expertise".

The research being discussed is based on studying employees who were already outstanding performers in their job and systematically comparing them with those who were just average. This analysis reveals the distinguishing competencies exhibited by the star performers.

Emotional intelligence competence may be divided into two categories - Personal Competence and Social Competence. Personal Competence is how we manage ourselves and Social Competence is how we manage relationships. For each category there are two domains; in total there are 18 competencies across the four domains:

Personal Competence

1. Self-Awareness

- Emotional self-awareness - reading one's own emotions and recognising their impact; using "gut sense" to guide decisions
- Accurate self-assessment - knowing one's strengths and limits
- Self-confidence - a sound sense of one's self-worth and capabilities

2. Self-Management

- Emotional self-control - keeping disruptive emotions and impulses under control
- Transparency - displaying honesty and integrity; trustworthiness

- Adaptability - flexibility in adapting to changing situations or overcoming obstacles
- Achievement - the drive to improve performance to meet inner standards of excellence
- Initiative - readiness to act and seize opportunities
- Optimism - seeing the upside in events

Social Competence

1. Social Awareness

- Empathy - sensing others' emotions, understanding their perspective, and taking active interest in their concerns
 - Organisational awareness - reading the currents, decision networks, and politics at the organisational level
 - Service - recognising and meeting follower, client, or customer needs
- #### 2. Relationship Management
- Inspirational leadership - guiding and motivating with a compelling vision
 - Influence - wielding a range of tactics for persuasion
 - Developing others - bolstering others' abilities through feedback and guidance
 - Change catalyst - initiating, managing, and leading in a new direction
 - Conflict management - resolving disagreements
 - Teamwork and collaboration - co-operation and team-building

They found that effective leaders typically demonstrate strengths in at least one competence from each of the four domains. No leader has been found with strengths in all the competencies. Highly effective leaders typically exhibit a critical mass of strength in a half dozen or so EI competencies.

Leadership and decision-making

Gary Klein has been associated with empirical study of human decision-

making in the real world - ie outside the laboratory. In his recent book, *Streetlights and Shadows*, he debunks conventional wisdom about how to make decisions. He takes ten commonly accepted claims about decision-making and shows that they are better suited to the laboratory than for life.

The first claim is "Teaching people procedures helps them perform tasks more skillfully." He accepts that procedures are most useful in well-ordered situations when they can substitute for skill, not augment it. In complex situations, procedures are less likely to substitute for expertise and may even stifle its development.

He described how procedures can lead to mindlessness and complacency and quoted a 1996 study of forecasters in the US. The mediocre forecasters relied on procedural guides when collecting data, and also when turning the data into forecasts. In contrast, the highly skilled forecasters tried to understand what was going on. They foraged for data that helped them build a better understanding, and used their understanding to make predictions.

The procedures in one national forecasting service enabled mediocre forecasters to just follow some rules and still put out adequate forecasts. But these procedures degraded the performance of the skilled meteorologists so that their forecasts were also just adequate. The procedures were eroding the expertise of the skilled meteorologists.

Methods or procedures need to be taught in a way that ensures that their limitations are exposed. The scenario format in which various kinds of challenges are encountered seems to work better than having people memorize the details of each step of the procedures.

FAQs

What is the APM?

The Association for Project Management (APM) is the UK home of project professionals. The association has over 17,500 individual members in 3000 organisations and over 500 corporate members. APM was the fastest growing of all the UK's professional institutions throughout the 1990s and 2000s.

Project professionals demonstrate:

- * **breadth** of understanding as defined by the APM Body of Knowledge,
- * **depth** of ability in line with the APM Competence Framework,
- * **achievement** through professional qualifications and a portfolio of evidence,
- * **commitment** through Continuing Professional Development,
- * **accountability** through APM membership and its Code of Professional Conduct.

In March 2009, the UK Government (through its Programme and Project Management Council) recommended professional membership of the APM for Project Managers working in Central Government organisations.

It has also accepted the APM's competence framework as the industry standard.

APM and The APM Group - are they the same organisation?

They are separate organisations. The Association for Project Management (APM) is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. Its charitable objects are "to advance the science, theory and practice of project and programme management for the public benefit".

Whereas APMG-UK, which administers the Prince2 exams, is a

wholly-owned subsidiary of The APM Group Ltd.. It specialises in the accreditation and certification of organisations, processes and people.

What is Prince2?

Prince2 (PRjects IN Controlled Environments) is "a process-based approach for project management, providing an easily tailored and scaleable project management methodology for the management of all types of projects." It is published by The Office of Government Commerce (OGC), an independent office of HM Treasury.

Becoming a Prince2 Registered Practitioner is governed by the passing of two exams - the Foundation exam and the Practitioner exam. Often the two qualifications are taken consecutively within a five-day course.

Prince2 is the UK Government's recommended methodology standard for project management. This does not mean that it is "mandated" as there is no expectation that it will be adopted without adaptation to the local environment.

Is Prince2 enough?

Prince2 does exclude some important aspects of project management (Prince2 handbook (2005) p 8) because "there are certain aspects of project management that are well covered by existing and proven methods":

- **“People management techniques such as motivation, delegation and team leadership.**
- **Generic planning techniques such as Gantt charts and critical path analysis.**
- **The creation and management of corporate quality management and quality assurance mechanisms.**

- **Budgetary control and earned value analysis techniques.”**

It also excludes the contracting process.

The OGC Best Practice document on "Common Causes of Project Failure" includes in its list several items relating to these exclusions - inadequate approaches for estimating, monitoring and controlling the total expenditure on projects, too little attention to breaking development and implementation into manageable steps. Thus organisations which use Prince2 will need supplementary training to ensure that their project managers are adequately skilled.

This view is alluded to in the project management careers website, <http://www.pmcareers.co.uk/project-management-qualifications.htm>, which is concerned that:

“PRINCE2 is now seen as the solution to all ills in some quarters. Attending a one week (intensive) course does not make a Project Manager – it makes someone familiar with a well structured systematic approach for managing a project which some people do find difficult to carry over into the real world.

The APM offer much more rounded qualifications that take longer to acquire and like most things in life, the greater the effort, the greater the reward. If your ambition is to be a true professional Project Manager, then I would recommend working through the APM qualifications.”

The website emphasises that Prince2 and APM qualifications are complementary and that their ideal candidate would have APM and then PRINCE2 Practitioner.

FAQs continued

Which APM qualification is right for you?

An article written jointly by Susie Kay, Head of Professional Development at the Association for Project Management, and Peter Johnson, Deputy Director of Skills at the Office for Government Commerce (OGC), was published in Project magazine in November 2006. It suggests that for students who have taken the Prince2 Foundation course, the APM Introductory Certificate is appropriate as part of a move towards Professionalism; for associates who have taken the Prince2 Practitioner qualification then the five-day APMP level D course from APM is appropriate.

The article emphasises the OGC-APM alliance - "APM and OGC are working together to promote an understanding that to be best equipped for working in a project management environment it would be advisable for an individual to achieve early complementary qualifications from both organisations."

APM and Chartered status - what does this mean?

In October 2008 the APM formally applied to the Privy Council for Chartered status - an application supported by the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) on behalf of the government.

It is hoped that the Privy Council's decision will be received early in 2010.

During 2010 and subject to achieving chartered status, the APM hopes to initiate a register of the Chartered Project Professionals (ChPP's) which will become a mark that recognises all professionals working in project management including project and programme managers and specialists

such as planners, risk managers and project controllers.

The name positions project professionals alongside professionals from industries such as IT, Quality Management and Engineering.

Chartered Project Professionals will demonstrate the capabilities of a responsible leader, have the ability to manage a complex project and use adequate project management tools, processes and techniques.

As well as a direct route via APM to the ChPP, it is planned that there will be a corporate route where the corporate organisations will have to demonstrate with evidence to assessors that they are committed to the five dimensions of professionalism described in the adjacent column. This means for example that their achievements do not have to be entirely APM-based e.g. Prince2 qualifications may be submitted as part of the overall package.

APM Competence Framework - what is it?

It was published in 2008 and has been adopted by the UK Government as the industry standard. It is linked to the APM Body of Knowledge (5th edition) and the IPMA Competence Baseline (ICB) version 3.0. See the 136pp paperback for further details.

Project professionals should demonstrate a depth of ability in line with the APM Competence Framework.

The APM Competence Framework provides:

- a tool to assess the individual's knowledge and experience against a recognised project management benchmark,

- help in identifying training and development needs including the individual's readiness to obtain internationally recognised professional qualifications,
- specific areas of knowledge and experience needed as part of their Continuing Professional Development.

The Framework defines 47 competence elements needed for effective project management across three domains: technical (30 elements), behavioural (9 elements) and contextual (8 elements). For each competence element, four levels of competence are defined - for Project Management Associate, Project Manager, Senior Project Manager and Projects Director.

The degree of each competence is defined by general descriptions of knowledge and experience relating to up to 11 indicators. Each indicator requires a score of between 0 and 10 for both the knowledge and experience columns.

From this data one can work out an overall competency rating or identify competences in which one might be weak or need training.

In-house courses

Employers may book in-house MSC courses on:

- **People Skills (omitted from Prince2) - Communication and Stress, Conflict Management and Negotiation, Motivation and Leadership, Team-building**
- **Finance and Accounting for Project Managers**
- **Introduction to Project Management**
- **APMP and APMIC**