

APM Academic

ACCREDITATION

CASE STUDY



**University
of Wales,
Newport**
Newport
Business School

**Prifysgol
Cymru,
Casnewydd**
Ysgol Fusnes
Casnewydd

Introduction

Newport Business School (NBS) at the University of Wales, Newport is a leading and highly regarded interdisciplinary provider of business and management education in Wales. It has some 1,100 home students, 1,500 international students based overseas and more than 70 staff.

The School has recently been restructured and brings together much of the expertise of the former Department of Engineering and Professional Studies and the Department of Business and Computing. Its mission is to 'inspire and enable diverse and global communities to recognise and meet their full potential, contribute to

sustainable development and add value through a creative, stimulating and memorable experience distinguished by market-relevant initiatives and internationally recognised areas of excellence'.

This mission embodies the joint aims of global excellence, contributing to the knowledge economy of Wales and beyond, delivery of an excellent student experience and internationally recognised learning, teaching and research activity that consistently emphasises core values.

Rising to the challenge

Newport Business School's stated strategy is to expand its postgraduate portfolio in areas that have strong relevance to local and international markets and that meets with the school's vision in a number of areas, in particular supporting the regeneration agenda.

With a range of regeneration, construction, technology and community projects in Newport and across South Wales, together with the government's continuing public sector modernisation and transformational agenda, NBS identified the need for qualified and certified project managers and project support staff across all industries. This was underlined by the variety of project roles being advertised locally and significant demand from creative and voluntary sectors.

The school was also seeking to extend its multivalent module strategy, applying appropriate modules across a range of postgraduate programmes. By adding just four new ones – only two of which would be exclusive to the MSc Project Management course – it could offer a specific postgraduate qualification to new students which would also appeal to Newport graduates from all schools, irrespective of their first degree, and attract students from overseas seeking to develop their careers and enhance their job prospects.

Dr Brendan D'Cruz was the driving force behind the programme. "Given the regeneration and transformation agenda in South Wales, it was clear that there was nothing in Wales that met the needs of a wide range of stakeholders and student backgrounds," he said. "There were a few courses in construction, aerospace and also relevant project management modules on MBA programmes, but very little that met the professional standards and expectations promoted by the professional bodies."

At the start of the 2009-10 academic year, 13 students became the first to set out on the path to this newly established MSc in Project Management. The programme now recruits on average 20 students per intake, with two opportunities to join – in September and January.



Dr Brendan D'Cruz



A course to success

The MSc in Project Management is designed to be both challenging and rewarding. Open to candidates with an existing honours degree or equivalent in any subject, it aims to develop a deeper understanding of the theoretical and practical aspects to project management and to develop the essential skills and competencies necessary to plan, monitor, control and deliver successful projects.

There is particular emphasis on project environments that bring together resources, skills, technology and ideas to deliver business benefits or achieve business objectives, operating within the multiple constraints of scope, budget, time and quality.

In developing the programme, NBS took the APM Body of Knowledge and Competency Framework as the professional standards against which to map course content, aims and outcomes.

The school through Dr. Brendan D'Cruz has established links with the association through involvement in the APM Education Network Advisory Group, the Chartered Professional Standards working group and in Specific Interest Groups:

"Whilst we recognise that there is no single body that owns the holistic development of project management, we felt that APM offered something that would be of value to all our students, both home and international,"

he explained. "Having a recognised and accredited programme was therefore our aspiration, thus ensuring our graduating students have the best possible opportunity to succeed in their current or future careers."

The programme has six core modules and can be studied as either a one-year, full time course or a more flexible part-time course of study over two to five years. There are three two qualifications available, validated by the University of Wales, Newport. A Postgraduate Certificate in Project Management can be achieved after the successful completion of three core modules, a Diploma after six core modules and the full MSc programme on completion of the Diploma and a dissertation.

It covers knowledge, understanding and skills across a range of areas, from concepts, principles and best practice through leadership and people skills to managing challenges and issues to ensure effective organisational change and project delivery.

It also encourages students to develop a critical awareness of current problems and new insights into project and programme management that are at the forefront of the discipline and professional practice. As part of their learning, they need to demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems and acting autonomously in planning and implementing project and programme management tasks at a professional level.



Personal story

The graduate - Jo Felstead

After leaving university with a first degree in chemistry and management, Jo Felstead worked in the electricity industry before switching to management accountancy.

During her career she acquired project management experience, especially while leading a range of accountancy change management projects, such as setting up new business units, post merger and acquisition implementation.

Now director of her own limited company, Redpoll Consulting, Jo wanted more project management skills in her toolkit and applied for the NBS programme.

"I wanted to reinforce the experience that I had gained in a rather haphazard way and needed a course that was both practical and academic. The NBS MSc programme married the two nicely."

She opted for the flexible, part-time learning path. "Because of the way the course was structured, there was still an opportunity to continue work and bring in an income! It also gave me the time to reflect on managing projects and situations and to research leading edge projects."

As well as the academic experience, Jo said she also benefited from studying and networking with students from other sectors. "That gave me a much a better perspective on the breadth and depth of project management generally, which was a bonus that I wasn't expecting."

Jo graduated at the beginning of 2011. "Gaining my MSc has proved to be a talking point because finance project and programme managers are often not qualified. It shows to others you are more than an accountant, you are a professional with professional competencies."



Personal story

The student - Andrew Rees

As a Senior Process Control Engineer at the Port Talbot power station of Tata Steel, Andrew Rees has seen his role move more towards project management over the past six years as the company progressively increases investment.

He is currently seconded as Project Leader for a multi-million pound energy management installation and has been increasingly involved in the management of project work

"As my career path has been naturally heading in this direction, I have undertaken the NBS MSc project management course in order to develop new and consolidate existing skills and knowledge," he said.

Sponsored by Tata – formerly British Steel – he has chosen the flexible part-time route and has completed the first of his two years of study and has joined APM as a student member.

"So far, I am impressed by the content and presentation of the course. As an academic qualification it is also very practical with the content being immediately applicable to any working project situation as I am experiencing. Tata is a progressive company, continually undertaking various project schemes, therefore both the company and myself will benefit from the investment made in this training."

Primarily delivered through taught lectures, seminars and practical workshops, there is additional technology-enhanced learning that provides links to wider resources and materials provided by professional bodies and research community. Where appropriate, students are encouraged to take external project management qualifications, such as PRINCE2 and over time it is hoped that they will gain exemptions from relevant APM qualifications.

They are also expected to join APM at the start of the course and widen their learning and development by attending local events organised by the association and other relevant bodies, such as the British Computer Society, PMI and the Chartered Management Institute.

Said Brendan: "A key differentiator for the Newport programme is that students undertake 'live' project work with real beneficiaries and stakeholders, enhancing lifelong learning skills and personal development, so successful students are equipped to work with self-direction and originality and to contribute to business and society at large."





It is extremely important to us that NBS continues to maintain accreditation with APM for this programme. At NBS we already maintain professional body accreditation for a number of our professional programmes which further underpins our approach to teaching and learning, and continued professional development for both staff and students."

Lyndon Murphy, Academic Leader, NBS

Association for Project Management and Newport Business School

APM is the preferred professional body for NBS and the course was mapped against the breadth of APM Body of Knowledge and Competency Framework before validation. For its part, the association welcomed the education opportunities that the NBS MSc programme offered for those in South Wales and surrounding areas and supported its development with advice and guidance.

Students are encouraged to join APM at the start of their studies to encourage accountability and to have access to the code of conduct, materials and resources they can use during the course.

As well as established links with the APM Education Network Advisory Group, the Chartered Professional Standards working group and Specific Interest Groups, there are also natural synergies with the South Wales and West of England branch of APM. Students regularly attend branch events as part of their professionalism and commitment to CPD.

Association for Project Management

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APM Corporate Accreditation will help you stand out as an exemplar in the development of project management professionals. It provides assurances to your customers and suppliers and allows you to attract and retain the best project management talent in the country.

APM Corporate Accreditation recognises the commitment of organisations and professional development services to the defined, APM Five Dimensions of Professionalism, each of which is supported by an APM standard:

Breadth

The APM Body of Knowledge defines the knowledge needed to manage any kind of project. It underpins many project management standards and methods including the National Occupational Standard in Project Management.

Depth

The APM Competence Framework provides a guide to project management competences. It is part of your professional toolkit; mapping levels of knowledge and experience to help you progress your skills and abilities.

Achievement

APM qualifications take your career in new and exciting directions. They are recognised across the profession and aligned with IPMA's 4 level Certification Program.

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Continuing Professional Development helps develop your project management practice. A targeted development plan will enhance your project management career.

Accountability

The APM Code of Professional Conduct outlines the ethical practice expected of a professional. Becoming an APM member shows your commitment to the Code and sets you apart from others.