The standard for extraordinary
project professionals…

Association for Project Management
Registered Project Professional – **RPP**
**Candidate Guidance**

# **RPP** – the standard for extraordinary project professionals from the Association for Project Management

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# Introduction and background

APM Registered Project Professional (RPP) is a pan-sector competence standard in project management. Successful candidates are included on the publicly available APM Register of Project Professionals.

APM Registered Project Professionals will be able to demonstrate the capabilities of a responsible leader, have the ability to manage a complex project and use appropriate tools, processes and techniques.

Professionalism is defined through the APM Five Dimensions of Professionalism:

- **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 (CPD).
- **Accountability** through APM membership and the APM Code of Professional Conduct.

**Assessment process**

The assessment for APM Registered Project Professional has two parts:

- **A portfolio of evidence** – to demonstrate competence across 29 core and 18 complementary project management competences, which is to be accompanied by your CPD log.
- **A professional review** – an interview with two peer APM Registered Project Professional assessors.

Successful candidates need to be able to provide evidence of:

- Managing others in a complex project environment.
- Demonstrating responsible leadership.
- Exhibiting professional and ethical behaviour.
- Demonstrating competence in 29 core project management competences.
- 35 hours of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) within the last 12 months, in accordance with the APM CPD scheme.

**Payment**

The fee is paid in instalments at the two stages of the assessment process:

- Payable on submission of portfolio of evidence application form.
- Payable prior to professional review.

For a non-member of APM the first payment includes a membership fee covering the first year's subscription at Full member APM Registered Project Professional (RPP MAPM) rate. For current fees please refer to **apm.org.uk/rpp**

**FIVE**Dimensions
of Professionalism

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# Portfolio of evidence

The first part of the APM Registered Project Professional application is an assessment of your portfolio of evidence where the majority of evidence must be within the last eight years. The three main sections are:

| | Maximum word limit |
|---|---|
| Project track record | 1200 |
| Core competence statements | 4500 |
| Complementary competence statement | 250 |

The portfolio of evidence application form must be submitted in Microsoft Word format only. Any forms where formatting has been substantially altered will be returned to the candidate for rectification.

**Project track record**

A project track record summarises the projects featured within your portfolio of evidence. These are numbered so you can make reference to them in your competence statements. The majority of evidence must be current and recent, and therefore typically considered to have occurred within the last eight years. There may be circumstances in which this current and recent evidence may be supplemented and extended beyond the eight year expectation, but no portfolio in which the majority of the evidence is not current or recent will be acceptable.

All projects in the project track record must include evidence of managing others in a complex project environment, demonstrating responsible leadership through managing others and conformance to ethical behaviour. Complex projects are characterised as typically having many interrelated subsystems/sub-projects and other elements, both within the structures of the project and in the wider organisation. They often involve interaction with several organisations and/or different units in the same organisation – these either benefiting from or providing resources to such a project. They often comprise several different, sometimes overlapping, phases, and its effective management will require the coordination of the work of several different disciplines, as well as the use of a wide range of project management methods, tools and techniques.

Assessors are looking for evidence of the following:

- A brief description of the project.
- Why you consider the project to be complex.
- Summary of your role in managing the project and managing the input of others.
- Responsible leadership.
- Areas of success and/or achievement in your management of the complex projects (not necessarily overall project success as this can be very subjective).

To help you assess whether your project is considered to be complex you should:

1. Refer to the definition of a complex project in the RPP Competences.
2. Complete the Project Complexity Questionnaire.

Both documents are available from the APM website at **apm.org.uk/rpp**


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## Core competence statements

As an APM Registered Project Professional candidate, you must be able to demonstrate evidence using personal experiences and/or examples of how you have managed the execution of all 29 core competences in complex project situations. As a project professional, you will have ensured these competences are executed through your management of other people. The total word count should not exceed 4500 words, which means that about 150 words for each core competence statement are expected.

The statements should be written in the first person avoiding acronyms and jargon. It may be beneficial to consider the statements in terms of the STAR technique; describing the **S**ituation in which the competence was demonstrated; the **T**asks, **A**ctions and **R**esults. You may have demonstrated the competences yourself, however, you must always have managed project teams, senior stakeholders, sponsors and other managers demonstrating those competences.

For each core competence statement, candidates must demonstrate personal evidence of how they have ensured the execution of the core competence within a complex project environment to achieve the desired outcome. This statement must also include evidence of how the candidate has managed the input and performance of others in executing the core competence. Evidence of managing others may include management of wider project stakeholders and is not simply limited to direct reports. It is not necessary to provide evidence of managing others in each indicator used in the statement, but there must be evidence of managing others to execute the overall core competence.

Managing others – This is more than just managing those who directly report to you. This is ensuring you achieve project success through managing those more senior than you, such as your sponsor or a steering group, as well as managing other project managers and their teams, staff in the project management office and business as usual staff. In summary, managing your internal and external project stakeholders.

Using the competence indicators – Each core competence has a series of indicators providing guiding statements. These define the knowledge, skills, tasks or outputs required for each competence. Your evidence must demonstrate how you have met or satisfied **at least** 50% of the indicators for each core competence.

You, therefore, have some flexibility as to how you create a credible statement of evidence, related to one or more complex project situations by using the numbering of your projects in your project track record.

The use of 'we', 'the team,' etc. is discouraged. Although not mandatory, the use of the word 'I' could be used three times for each competence. The use of examples from your projects may provide the opportunity to make your evidence as transparent to the assessor as possible.

## Complementary competence statement

You must also provide a statement of how you satisfy the knowledge requirements for the 18 complementary competences from the RPP Competences. This can be demonstrated through your Full membership of APM or if you hold the APMP qualification or above, by just stating so.

If not, you should provide a single statement of 250 words or less demonstrating how your project management career has been developed to provide you with a broad knowledge base in the

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complementary competences. For example, you may have attained a degree in project management, or undertaken a structured project management programme within your company's professional development scheme. Other qualifications including PMP, MSP and PRINCE2 Professional would be accepted. You do not need to write evidence of knowledge for the individual complementary competences. Your knowledge of these competences may be further assessed during your professional review.

**Additional portfolio requirements**

To satisfy the requirements of APM Registered Project Professional you must also provide the following additional information:

**Support of two senior and informed stakeholder referees** – Your referees will be expected to confirm to us by email that you have managed others in a complex project environment, demonstrating responsible leadership, as well as exhibiting ethical behavior. At this point APM will contact your referees to provide the required confirmation statement (the applicant must not provide this). APM will not chase referees, so it is up to you to ensure they respond in a timely manner. Referees will not see your portfolio of evidence, so you may wish to make your own arrangements for them to review it.

**35 hours of project-focussed Continuing Professional Development (CPD)** – Your CPD must have been undertaken within the 12 months immediately prior to your application submission date. This must include a reflective statement of how you have applied the learning from your CPD activities, enhancing your project management knowledge, skills, or performance. No unfinished, on-going or future CPD will be permitted.

Your CPD is to be submitted on APM's CPD log, available on APM's web site, and must accompany your portfolio of evidence when submitted. For more information on the APM CPD scheme and the CPD log please visit **apm.org.uk/cpd**

**APM Code of Professional Conduct for non-members of APM** – You must adhere to the APM Code of Professional Conduct through membership of APM. You do not need to be a member of APM to apply for APM Registered Project Professional. Successful candidates who are not members when applying will qualify for Full membership of the association to ensure admission to the register.

**Portfolio assessment**

An assessor will examine your portfolio to determine whether its content meets the requirements of APM Registered Project Professional. You will remain anonymous to your portfolio assessor. However, in the unlikely event that an assessor is able to identify you, another assessor will be assigned.

If your portfolio assessment is successful, you will be invited to a professional review. You will also qualify for Full membership of APM if you are not already a member.

Any competences which are considered to be weak or borderline will be addressed specifically in your professional review, however, there is an absolute minimum that must be satisfied. To attain APM Registered Project Professional, you are expected to satisfactorily demonstrate competence in all 29 core competences. Where too many competences are considered weak or unsatisfactory, the portfolio assessment will be unsuccessful.


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# Professional review

## Scheduling and preparation

If your portfolio assessment has been successful, you will be notified by APM Customer Services, who will be able to provide details on how to schedule your professional review. It is best to schedule your review as early as possible for the best choice of venue, date and time. The review must be completed within 12 months of your successful portfolio assessment. If you wish to cancel or rearrange your professional review, please contact us as early as possible. Cancellations will be subject to our current cancellation fee policy.

Please bring photo identification to the review; a passport, photo driving licence or company ID badge, will all be considered satisfactory.

## The professional review assessment

Your review will be held with two APM Registered Project Professional peer assessors, one acting as a 'lead'. Assessors are asked to declare any conflict of interest. Your assessors will be made known to you before or on the day of your professional review and you should also declare any conflict of interest that might occur as part of the professional review. In most cases, a number of assessors will be available, so should a conflict of interest be declared the assessors can be reallocated.

## Professional review structure

The professional review will take approximately 45 minutes and will be based on your portfolio of evidence. You will need to prepare and present a talk of up to 10 minutes on why you meet the APM Registered Project Professional standard. The opening presentation should be suitably succinct, offering a clear view of your work and experience preferably using personal examples. Any supporting materials, including handouts and illustrative slides should be presented in hard copy only. The presentation should focus on **your** competence rather than the team you have worked with. Assessors will not see your complete portfolio.

Assessors will ask questions about your competence for the two mandatory competences: Leadership and Professionalism and ethics. They will then go on to explore several other competences, in particular any competences found to be weak during the portfolio assessment. During the professional review it is likely that about six to eight competences will be explored out of the 29 core competences.

Assessors will be seeking evidence of what you have done to execute the competence element. The assessors will be anticipating the use of the word "I" rather than "we" during the professional review.

## Unsuccessful candidates and appeals

Unsuccessful candidates can appeal on the basis of the assessment process only after their professional review. A decision to find your application unsuccessful at the portfolio assessment is not subject to appeal. Appeals must be made in writing within 28 days of receiving your results. The decision at the conclusion of the appeals process is final. Further information regarding the appeals process is available from **apmrpp@apm.org.uk**

Assessors are not required to give reasons for their decisions, but will give unsuccessful candidates a rationale for why any aspect of the assessment has been unsuccessful. This will form part of the feedback report to help with your future development and achievement of APM Registered Project Professional.

Unsuccessful candidates may have met the requirements for full membership of APM (MAPM), which will be offered if appropriate. Unsuccessful candidates who reapply will have to review their CPD to ensure that it has been completed within the 12 months before the date of reapplication.

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# APM Registered Project Professional (RPP) registration

Successful candidates will be entered onto the APM Register of Project Professionals. The register will demonstrate to the users of project management services and the wider public those professionals who have met the standard for APM Registered Project Professional. Normal data protection rules and procedures apply, so you can elect for your name and the date of your achievement of the standard to be made publicly available on the APM website.

To maintain your status as an APM Registered Project Professional you must:

- Maintain Full membership of APM, which includes commitment to APM's Code of Professional Conduct.
- Undertake CPD in line with the APM CPD scheme each year, which APM may audit at any time.

## Supporting literature

To help prepare your application to become an APM Registered Project Professional, the following documentation is available from the APM website:

- Frequently Asked Questions.
- APM Code of Professional Conduct.
- The Project Complexity Questionnaire to help you confirm whether you are working on projects considered to be complex.
- The RPP Competences, which is an essential tool to support you in compiling your application.
- CPD guidance.


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# Worked example of a core competence statement

**Each core competence is made up of several competence indicators as detailed in the RPP Competences. For example, the first indicator in Scheduling states:**
"Defines and sequences the activities and/or work packages taking into account any dependencies."
You should provide evidence of at least 50% of the indicators for each core competence. So, you have some flexibility as to how you create a credible statement of evidence, related to one or more complex project situations.

**Example core competence statement (Scheduling):**

### Example 1: Scheduling

In Project 1, I was responsible for managing the scheduling function. I deployed scheduling resource from the Joint Venture partners and supply chain. My scheduling staff defined the scope of the contract, the activities in each phase, durations of the activities and the interdependencies (predecessors/successors). The critical path was analysed and the key milestones defined in accordance with contract requirements. Through JV team meetings, which I chaired, the team reviewed the development of the schedule. Resources required for each activity were quantified to allow estimating of the overall contract price.

In Project 5, I managed the input of various departments and team members to establish and monitor progress against the schedule. Fortnightly, I chaired the team progress review meetings. Progress against schedule was reviewed, compared with the PMP and any key out of tolerance issues were escalated to the Executive Board. All changes to the project were agreed and the schedule updated accordingly. (Word count: 155)

**Why is this evidence satisfactory?**

- The candidate has demonstrated that they have managed others in the execution of the competence.
- The candidate's own role is clear in the execution of the competence.
- The candidate has demonstrated that the competence was undertaken in the context of a complex project as defined in the project track record.
- At least 50% of the indicators within the competence have been demonstrated.

### Example 2: Scheduling

When I took over Project 2 it was 6 weeks behind schedule. This was because there had been slippage in earlier work packages due to problems with procurement under NEC. The client required a new schedule to be produced that ensured completion on time. Each work package provider was then asked to create their own package schedule, which was then combined to form an overall new project schedule.

We reviewed progress on the project at weekly team meetings. The minutes of these meetings were written into the client progress report, which I sent to the client at the end of each month. Sometimes the client would require me to attend his own project meeting and ask me to present the latest progress report.

In Project 4 we reviewed the CP activities daily. This was to ensure that activities with no float were monitored closely for slippage. (Word count: 146)

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**Why is this evidence unsatisfactory?**

- The candidate has not provided evidence of how they have personally managed the input of others in the competence.
- There is little, if any, attempt to demonstrate at least 50% of the competence indicators.
- The candidate has focused too much on describing wider project issues, leaving little room to evidence their own competence.
- There is use of inappropriate acronyms. Would a project professional peer from a different sector know what NEC stands for? If not, then the evidence holds little value to the assessor.
- Were some of the activities managed by the candidate or someone else? For example, did the candidate manage the input of the work package provider? The assessor cannot tell from the evidence provided.
- Attending a meeting to present data is not strong evidence of managing the execution of a competence. It sounds like the client was managing our candidate.

The example below highlights how managing others can be much wider than managing direct reports. Here the candidate has evidenced how they have managed the input of the sponsor, wider stakeholders and direct reports. The candidate has also referred to complex project situations and has evidenced at least 50% of the core competence indicators.

### Example 3: Stakeholder Management

Project 4 contained challenging stakeholder management, being an improvement project across 15 business units. I managed the sponsor's input to identify all the key stakeholders, paying particular attention to identifying which stakeholders were the most influential and those who could negatively impact the project. I documented the result of this work and then created a stakeholder plan with the team. Working with the sponsor and other senior staff, we systematically met with the key stakeholders, ensuring that their concerns and needs were identified and, where possible, incorporated into the project.

I organised a series of workshops for specialist communities of practice. Here I engaged senior management to sponsor each workshop. This provided vision to the staff and also made the stakeholders feel engaged with the project. Through consultation with staff, we identified additional threats and opportunities and ensured these were captured and managed.
(Word count: 143)

**Special arrangements**

For candidates who have special requirements, arrangements can be made on an individual basis. Please contact APM to make any required special arrangements by calling +44 (0)845 458 1944 or send an email to **apmrpp@apm.org.uk**


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# Top tips for writing a great portfolio

**Tip 1** Read all of the guidance documents. These have been written to help you. Ignore them at your peril.

**Tip 2** Give yourself plenty of time to think before you ink. Don't rush your submission.

**Tip 3** Avoid acronyms and jargon. The assessor is a project management peer, but may not be a specialist in your sector language.

**Tip 4** Be really strict about how you use your word count. Always ask yourself whether the words/sentences truly add to the evidence.

**Tip 5** Put yourself in the assessors' position. Does the written evidence stand on its own? That's all the assessor has to go on.

**Tip 6** Make sure that your project track record demonstrates a broad range of complex situations. Cover the wide range of complexity indicators.

**Tip 7** Use projects sparingly. It's better to focus on a few strong projects that will provide great evidence than list-off a whole batch of projects. Quality not quantity.

**Tip 8** Focus equally on the core competences. They all count.

**Tip 9** Have you got the competence indicators to hand? These will give you the scope of what you must cover, but make sure the evidence is in your own personal context. Copying or restating the indicators for a competence is unhelpful. Use your own words, using personal examples if you can.

**Tip 10** Make life easy for the assessor. Ensure the competence indicators are clearly described and that your role in managing others is obvious.

**Tip 11** Focus on your own personal evidence. What did "you do" to execute the core competences through the management of others?

**Tip 12** Managing others means more than direct reports. Draw on evidence on how you have managed the input of a wide range of stakeholders, not just those that report to you.

**Tip 13** Avoid over-explaining the project situations. The assessor wants to hear about your personal evidence, not lengthy descriptions of the project.

**Tip 14** Use your word count wisely. Spread the word count to match the number of indicators that need demonstrating.

**Tip 15** After drafting your portfolio, leave it for a day or two and then review it again. Does the evidence stack-up on its own without you filling in the gaps in your mind?

**Tip 16** Seeking advice from someone who has been through the process, for example an RPP Champion, may prove useful. RPP Champions can be identified with the help of your local APM Branch.

**Tip 17** Re-read the portfolio you submitted and read the core competence definitions plus the indicators for each one. This will help to recognise statements and phrases during your professional review and help you to provide the evidence the assessors are seeking.

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