

# ACCREDITATION

## CASE STUDY



# ARUP

## Introduction

Arup is an independent firm of designers, planners, engineers, consultants and technical specialists offering a broad range of professional services globally. The firm is the creative force behind many of the world's most innovative buildings, infrastructure and change programmes.

Established in 1946, Arup first came to the world's attention with the structural design of the Sydney Opera House, followed by its work on the Centre Pompidou in Paris. Arup has since grown into a truly multidisciplinary organisation. Its work for the 2008 Olympics in Beijing reaffirmed its reputation for delivering innovative and sustainable designs that reinvent the built environment.

Arup is an employee-owned organisation, giving it the freedom to focus on clients, projects and people in

a dedicated pursuit of technical excellence. It has over 11,000 employees based in 90 offices across 38 countries. In the UK, over 3,700 employees work across a network of 14 offices.

The multi-award winning firm counts winning the APM Project Management Company of the Year, APM Overseas Project of the Year and APM Project of the Year amongst its achievements. It has also achieved success at the MCA Awards (several Categories, including the inaugural The Times Award for best Client Consultant Relationship), Building Magazine Awards (Project/Construction Management Firm of the Year and International Project of the Year) and the British Construction Industry Awards (Major Projects £50m+ Category).

## Shaping a better world

Arup has provided project management consultancy services to clients for over 20 years. The UK Programme and Project Management (PPM) Practice works on commissions in the UK and worldwide, averaging 10,000 live projects at any one time.

Arup has identified management consulting as a key business area, of which PPM represents a large chunk with over 500 staff globally and contributes to around 30 per cent of the firm's consulting turnover worldwide.

Its importance is reflected by the fact that Alan Belfield, who represents PPM in London, sits on the Management Group Board and takes an active role in raising the level of project management professionalism across the business.

As an employee-owned firm, emphasis is placed on quality, a holistic approach, honesty and fairness, social responsibility and a humane and friendly environment. Applying project management best practice supports these values and is at the heart of Arup's continuing commitment to 'shaping a better world'.

All projects have an assigned project manager and project director, and these roles are considered the most important for ensuring the long-term successful delivery of projects.

A strongly supported and embedded body of knowledge is seen as essential in ensuring that project

managers are focused on a defined best practice methodology and associated guidance. The *APM Body of Knowledge* is the core frame of reference and is accessible through the firm's project management tool, Apex, and a network of skills champions who actively disseminate developments, best practice and insight on key topics around the project management community and clients.

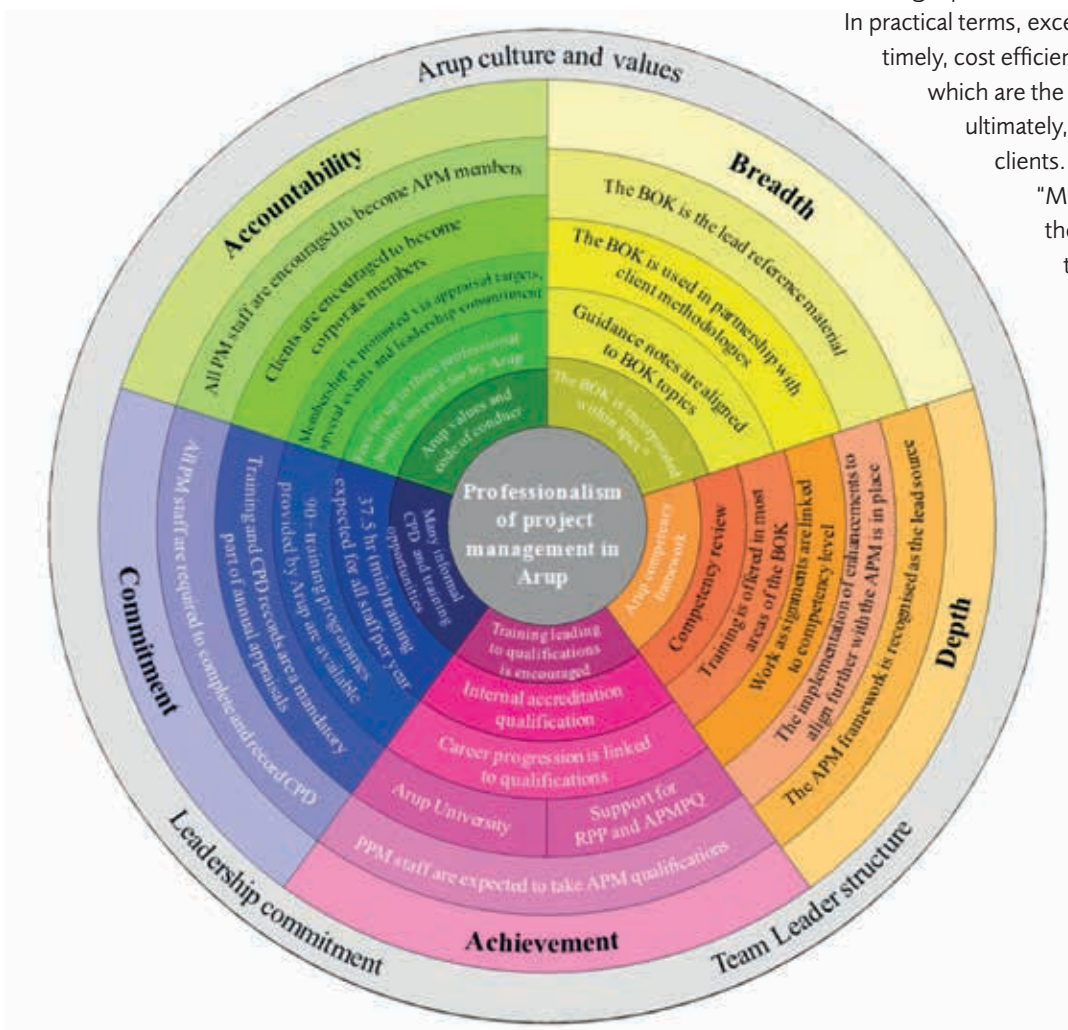
This is further strengthened through the Arup Future Skills initiative, launched in 2012 and led by PPM director and MAPM, David Twine, with the aim of continually evolving and increasing skills to ensure the firm provides the right services in five years' time and beyond.

If clients specify a particular methodology, such as PRINCE2 or the OGC Managing Successful Programmes (MSP), Arup has mapped the most commonly used workflows to the *APM Body of Knowledge* so that project managers are able to rapidly work with these variations of approach and terminology, confident they are still in line with APM principles.

Project managers and support staff also work with internal colleagues to help them deliver on time, to budget and to the agreed scope and assist colleagues to apply project management principles to support functions.

Arup Chairman, Greg Hodgkinson comments: "Arup has a strong reputation for excellence in project management. In practical terms, excellence is translated into consistently timely, cost efficient and high quality project delivery, which are the fundamentals of project success and, ultimately, of the long lasting satisfaction of our clients.

"Managing programmes and projects to these criteria is therefore fundamental to what we do."



**David Twine,**  
Arup PPM Director

## Investing in competency

Arup recognises that investing in the development of its people through experience, mentoring and formal training is vital to the ongoing health and success of the firm and an employee must be approved as competent before they can manage a project.

Much of an individual's development comes from the range of assignments on which they work and from their line managers who provide guidance, mentoring and monitor long-term development, performance and career progression.

Grades are linked to competence and all staff members are required to have a personalised development plan which is jointly agreed with their team leader during twice-yearly appraisals.

These discussions use both the general Arup competency framework and one specific to project management, which have been mapped and matched to the *APM Competency Framework*. Appropriate checks are in place to make sure this process is working for all and that there is an overall consistency of approach.

Project management staff at all levels are motivated and encouraged to follow the APMP, then APM Practitioner Qualification (APMPQ) and onto Registered Project Professional (RPP) career path, combining both learning and experience. These qualifications, as well as MSP and PRINCE2, are fully funded and supported by Arup.

For APMPQ, each candidate prepares a self-check against the competencies being assessed and scores themselves on their knowledge and experience, which is then validated by their team leader. An in-house course prepares them for the assessment, supported by an external trainer. If there are areas that require further development then these are addressed before sitting the assessment. As a result, since starting these preparation sessions, all but one of Arup's candidates have passed first time.

An APM accredited external training provider is brought in to coach nominated project managers through the RPP process.

Success in achieving APMPQ and RPP brings immediate recognition with a salary increase, internal recognition



and a raised professional profile. It also leads to additional professional, training, and promotion opportunities.

In addition to formal training, Arup also provides a diverse range of skills-related courses and e-learning modules, many of which are aligned to the *APM Body of Knowledge* and publicised on the firm's self-service learning management system. Special opportunities for staff to develop skills further include secondments abroad, pro-bono projects and working with other parts of the organisation.

Several project managers are also pursuing Masters and Doctoral qualifications through the Arup University, which provides formal, accredited training in partnership with world-leading universities. Teaching is delivered through a mix of university lecturers and Arup's own subject matter experts and the addition of new project management-specific modules based on APM methodology is being championed by Arup board-level representatives.

The importance of nurturing and developing young talent in order to both "future-proof" the organisation and contribute to the industry's wider talent pool is reflected in the Arup graduate scheme. Some 140 entrants joined in 2012 and all receive project management training to ensure early take-up of best practice.

David Twine, Director at Arup, explained how the company training and development process is reflected in improvements to the overall PPM competence and quality of project delivery.

"Sir Ove Arup said in his key speech 'All our people are part of us, part of our 'image', create the atmosphere we live in'. With this in mind, Arup strives to encourage and support its people to achieve their full potential, recognising that investment in their personal development is fundamental to both theirs and the firm's success.

"Professional development in PPM includes formal professional qualifications, coaching, mentoring, external and internal short courses and Masterclasses. Through this development process, Arup PPM has successfully created a large pool of skilled individuals who are highly competent in a variety of areas.

"This allows the firm to provide a consistent high quality service to clients, across a wide range of different market sectors and, as further added value, be able to cross-transfer excellence in knowledge and experience to find creative, sustainable and improved solutions for projects and businesses".

All training is recorded in the online Human Resources system, so that team leaders and employees can track progress. It also contains a record of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), and so is an essential tool in enabling the mandatory review of CPD that forms part of the Arup appraisal system.

Every employee is encouraged to take advantage of their allocated 37.5 hours CPD a year, with access provided to over 90 training and development programmes together with more informal opportunities.



## Personal story

Andrew Rae, Senior Project Manager

"Shortly after joining Arup, I was encouraged to take the APMP exam to demonstrate my project management competence.

"Although I had already been practicing many of the APM Body of Knowledge areas for a number of years, the APMP training and subsequent assessment provided me with not only a clearer framework for delivering my projects, but also guidance and skills for managing and controlling other aspects of projects which I had not yet been exposed to. The qualification also increased my confidence and credibility.

After consolidating my project management knowledge over a further few years, both by providing specialist support on large scale multi-disciplinary projects and directly managing smaller, client-focused commissions, I was put forward for the APMPQ assessment as a means of further demonstrating my project management credentials.

"This has been an important boost to my career and standing within the firm. Shortly afterwards, I was promoted and given more responsibility, including closing out the project which won APM Project of the Year 2009.

"It has set me up well for achieving professional status within the industry, an accolade I have been keen to achieve throughout my career."

For those in project management, CPD includes actively promoting APM membership and encouraging involvement in association activities, feeding back to colleagues either at a practice meeting, online on the Arup project management forum, or at one of the informal 'Lunch & Learn' sessions.

The Project Showcase initiative allows a team that has worked on a completed project to talk to invited colleagues and clients about the project management process, share lessons learnt and disseminate the successes of best practice application.

The firm also provides a project management 'centre of excellence' for the rest of the multi-disciplinary organisation. Through the online Project Management

Skills Network community, project management training programme and through face-to-face discussions, the centre disseminates best practice and provides advice and support to project management staff embedded in other practices.

Jerome Frost, Arup UKMEA Consulting Practice Leader, comments on how PPM role as a Centre of Excellence for project management has a positive effect on the entire firm:

"PPM has a proved track record of successfully delivering programmes and project management services for diverse, high profile projects across a wide variety of market sectors. One of their strengths lies on their creative and intelligent approach to delivery, which draws on the diverse background, personal quality and experiences of its people.

In looking for the most suitable solution they constantly connect with Arup's broader network of specialists, creating opportunities, giving exposure to the wider Arup community and disseminating project management best practice within it. As a consequence PPM has been significantly contributing to the company growth and its consolidation as one of the leading consulting firms"



**Jerome Frost,**  
Arup UKMEA Consulting  
Practice Leader



## Client testimonials

"Arup PPM has been working on the London Power Tunnels programme since 2012, providing Programme Management Office services. During this period their contribution has been significant in a variety of key areas such as scheduling, progress reporting, interface management, information management and project controls.

"They have also applied their project management and technical support expertise to the Highbury substation/residential and retail scheme, which has proved extremely beneficial via the inclusion of an innovative solution for alternative transformer cooling and a heat recovery network, that has enabled a reduced substation footprint and waste heat exportation to the new residential development and an existing neighbouring school.

"In addition to their PMO brief, we have also been able to use their broader skills in a number of key commercial negotiations and we often reach out to the team for general advice on a variety of programme related topics.

"Arup's integration in the wider LPT team, their creative and "can do" approach, promotion of best practice and consistency in seeking the most efficient solutions to the challenges arising has been crucial to programme progress so far and will undoubtedly be key to its future success."

**Owen Keith,**

Programme Manager, London Power Tunnels,  
National Grid

Through my exposure of working with Arup Project Management over the last five years on a number of highly complex projects with a multitude of stakeholders, I have found them to be 'hands on', committed at all levels, client focused; through this they also give me a high degree of confidence that they will not let me down."

**Kieran McDaid,**

Director of Capital Investment, University College  
London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (a former  
Assistant Director of Estates, Imperial College London)



## What APM accreditation means to us

"Achieving APM accreditation is recognition of the investment that we make into the development of our people, so they can fulfil their potential as project managers and give our clients a service that is 'best in class'"

**Julie Wood,**

Director and Leader of Arup Programme and  
Project Management

## Association for Project Management and Arup

Arup is a corporate member of APM and has some 100 individual members whose fees are paid for by the firm.

The *APM Body of Knowledge* is the core reference for project management best practice and is fully integrated and aligned with Arup's project management application, Apex. The competency framework for Arup project managers is aligned to the APM Competency Framework, with APM qualifications integral to progression and promotion opportunities.

The firm has appointed senior associate Mark Neller as the Arup APM champion responsible for maintaining links with the association through membership of the APM's Corporate Members Advisory Group and regular contact with APM staff.

APM SIG and Branch activities are promoted internally and Skills Champions are tasked with ensuring an appropriate member of staff attends. Arup Project managers are now being encouraged to promote the benefits of both individual and corporate APM membership to their clients and project team colleagues.



### Personal story

Liliana Cadau, Programme Manager and PMO Officer

"I came to project management from an unconventional academic background and career, having a degree in Political Science and past professional experiences in the consultancy industry but not related to engineering.

"However, I realised early on the importance of knowing how to prepare a work plan with clear objectives and a solid management and control system when trying to introduce change.

"My interest in project management grew quickly so I decided to self-study for the APM Introductory Certificate. Getting that qualification was the first significant step to formalise and give a framework to what I had been learning about managing projects. It was also the key that got me the first assignment as Programme Management Officer in a Real Estate and IT environment.

"Gaining the APMP qualification was the natural next step. Apart from formally certifying my project management knowledge, it strengthened my confidence in being able to deliver project successfully. I now recognise myself as a legitimate part of the project management community.

"I am just at the beginning of this professional path and I'm excited at the thought of the many opportunities to explore project and programme management topics in the years to come."

## Association for Project Management

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### **FIVE**Dimensions of Professionalism

#### **APM Corporate Accreditation**

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.

#### **Commitment**

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.