

APM Academic

ACCREDITATION

CASE STUDY



Introduction

The University of Reading is one of the UK's leading research-intensive universities.

Originally founded in the 19th century as an extension college of the University of Oxford, in 2016 Reading celebrated the 90th anniversary of the granting of its Royal Charter – the only UK university to be awarded a charter between the two world wars.

Today, Reading is ranked among the world's top 200 universities, is home to 17,000 students from more than 150 nations and employs over 4,000 administrative and academic staff.

As well as the three campuses in Berkshire and Oxfordshire, there is also the University of Reading Malaysia and the Henley Business School South Africa.

The university offers a wide range of programmes from pure and applied sciences to languages, humanities, social sciences, business and arts. New research and the latest thinking continually feed into the teaching, with academic staff working at the forefront of their fields of expertise.

Building the framework

The University of Reading's reputation for innovation and internationally-leading research is reflected in the work of the School of the Built Environment (SBE) which offers the MSc in Project Management programme.

This interdisciplinary school is regarded as an internationally leading built environment research group. The academic staff has extensive experience of commercial organisations, governments and universities throughout the world and come from diverse backgrounds such as architecture, construction management, surveying, sociology, anthropology, civil engineering, organisational behaviour, energy and environmental engineering.

The MSc in Project Management programme is run by research-active academic members of staff who are considered to be among the top in their field.

The programme first started in 1998 and its aim is to provide a coherent framework for the discipline and practice of project management for the built environment. The programme focuses on the strategic leadership and management of projects and project-based organisation in a global context.

The programme is continually informed by the latest developments in industry, government and the professional institutions and by on-going international research. Content is mapped in detail to the *APM Body of Knowledge 6th edition*, together with other international industry standards, including those of the International Project Management Association (IPMA).

"*The APM Body of Knowledge 6th edition* provides a valuable and structured project management framework that promotes best practice," said programme director Dr Shu-Ling Lu.

"It offers a holistic vision and practice of project management that resonates with our programme's focus."

Candidates are expected to have a good undergraduate honours degree or equivalent. Those with other qualifications and a number of years' relevant work experience may also be eligible. Graduates typically develop their careers in senior leadership positions in construction and other project-based organisations.



Dr Shu-Ling Lu



Project management for the real world

The MSc in Project Management can be studied as either a one-year, full-time course or as a part-time, flexible modular programme over two years.

At its heart is the recognition that effective project management requires a sound knowledge of tools and techniques and an ability to think strategically. Notions of command and control have to be matched with an ability to manage 'soft' issues, with people management central to the art of successful project management. This in turn requires a high level of interpersonal skills to motivate diverse team members towards the realisation of project success.

The programme is made up of six core modules and a further four optional modules chosen from a list of 14 available topics.

Apart from the two core modules (Research Skills and Dissertation, and Principles and Practice of Project Management), all modules are taught intensively in one-week blocks. These include sessions delivered by leading practitioners, giving students insight of the real-world challenges faced by project managers and the latest developments in the construction industry.

Each of these weeks consists of a mix of formal lectures, participative activities and study and research time. Learning materials to support each module are available on the dedicated online platform, Blackboard Learn, which can be accessed on and off campus.

Between the one-week teaching blocks, students work on dissertations, carry out assignment work and attend talks by guest speakers. Full-time students in particular are required to attend site visits offered by construction companies.

The dissertation element of the Research Skills and Dissertation module is spread throughout the programme after the research skills element is delivered. It is designed to develop students' understanding, knowledge and the necessary skills to conduct and communicate research in construction at a postgraduate taught level.

A range of different assessment methods are used, including written assignments, on-line tests, group work and presentations. The course also promotes and reinforces ethical behaviour and teamwork.

"We have created a programme which covers a wide variety of contexts, people, delivery, interfaces, techniques and tools, giving more importance to those aspects and environments where a project manager might be working after graduating," said Dr Lu.

Right from the start, students are left in no doubt about the importance of continuing professional development (CPD). In particular, students are offered multiple alternatives for improving their training, as well as to reinforce those areas that they consider of interest for their careers.

Thanks to the school's close links with industry, students have opportunities to attend presentations from industry speakers, participate in workshops, visit construction sites and industry fairs, and undertake internships.

As well as receiving APM academic accreditation, the programme is also accredited by the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

■ ■ We are delighted to receive APM accreditation for our long-established MSc in Project Management. The School of the Built Environment at the University of Reading shares APM's commitment to the continued development of project management as a discipline. It is through our interactions with professional bodies such as APM that we are able to ensure that our MSc in Project Management remains a market leader for those working in the construction sector."

Professor Chris Harty,

Head of School of the Built Environment



Student story

Damian Cleveland,
Architectural project manager

Damian works with UK-based design practice Arctica, focused on industrial process / food manufacturing buildings and graduated with the MSc in Project Management from UoR in 2015.

"I was drawn towards the programme because the prospectus aims and objectives most closely reflected the day-to-day activities of the role I was performing," he said. "The modular course structure also appeared more manageable with my family and work commitments."

"I have particularly enjoyed and valued the relationships built from working and sharing experiences with other delegates, as well as academics and industry professionals from all over the world. Whilst the course demands a high level of hard work, commitment and self-discipline, the university, together with its proactive tutors, support staff and excellent resources makes the whole experience one to enjoy, providing the perfect platform for personal professional development and hopefully a much longer and more successful career in the future."





Student story

Khiem Nguyen Tran
Senior quantity surveyor

Khiem graduated with his MSc in 2014 and is working as a cost consultant with Arcadis Vietnam on various residential, office, and hospitality projects. He is currently involved in a 5-star hotel renovation project.

"The critical requirements from the emerging construction industry in a developing country such as Vietnam led me to the door of the MSc in Project Management programme, which is one of the best programmes in this field," said Khiem.

"The inspiration and guidance of many excellent lectures from the UK and international construction industry and the lessons learned from the course have provided me with great ideas and solutions for a better Vietnamese construction industry."

"Furthermore, the success of the knowledge-sharing from the programme and the helpful support from the university's staff have educated an excellent generation of project managers for more sustainable construction all over the world."

Testimonials

"The modules covered under Reading's MSc Project Management programme directly relate to competencies required when working towards full membership of key industry institutions. It also provides graduates with the theoretical background to key management concepts which can then be applied within the project environment to enable them to successfully lead and manage teams."

"An in-depth understanding of the different construction contracts, their key components and how they are applied with the project environment is an invaluable skill as a project manager and a key component of further qualification. Our graduates have greatly benefited from the MSc's Construction Contract Law module, as it enables them to learn first-hand from industry legal experts about core contract terms and principles."

"We have found that the course greatly improves graduates' understanding and knowledge of all aspects of project management which provides an accelerated career development route."

Nick Clare Head of Project Management, JLL

"Arcadis, for many years, has been recommending the University of Reading MSc Project Management course to its graduate recruits based on the university's reputation for offering a conducive environment for students to engage, learn and flourish in their learning and development. The University of Reading has a strong reputation for developing students to a high standard, one which Arcadis recognises, and our leaders are happy to recommend it to both potential recruits and existing employees."

"APM accreditation is a widely recognised mark of quality for organisations, training providers and academic institutions. It offers assurance for those wanting to access the best project management professional development services available."

"In the current market the fight for top talent is massively important and Arcadis recognise the benefits to both The University of Reading and ourselves that this accreditation will bring. It can only enhance Reading's attractiveness to potential students and to future employers like Arcadis who are looking for the best talent in the market. It engenders industry best practice from day one of a student's career development, which is a massive benefit to both the student and future employer."

Tim Walder Partner, Arcadis UK



APM and the University of Reading

The University of Reading is a corporate member of APM and, following accreditation, members of the academic staff at the School of the Built Environment will be applying for individual membership.

The school also ensures that students on the MSc in Project Management course recognise the significant benefits of working for APM qualifications following graduation.

The content, design, development and delivery of the course incorporates the *APM Body of Knowledge 6th edition* and embraces the Five Dimensions of Professionalism.

APM events are actively promoted, with past students benefiting from attending such activities.



Student story 3

Jun Jing Tan

Assistant project manager

Jun Jing works with leading Malaysian engineering, property and infrastructure company, Gamuda Berhad.

"After having worked for two years in construction project management on a mega railway infrastructure project worth approximately US\$10 billion, I saw the MSc in Project Management course as a means to strengthen my credentials."

"The flexible course structure as well as the short, one-year programme also aided in my selection, as I couldn't take too much time off work."

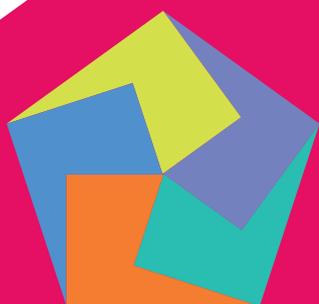
"The course gave me a broad understanding of the different aspects of project management, which equipped me to be a better and more well-rounded project manager. However, what I value most from the course was the opportunity to learn alongside course-mates from all around the world, such as the UK, Japan, Australia, China, Denmark, India, Middle East, Hong Kong, Korea and Turkey."

"Not only was I able to learn different construction practices, values and culture through their experience, the friendships built and fostered are invaluable. We still keep in contact and meet up where possible and are able to consult, seek opinions and compare notes among one another."

Association for Project Management

Ibis House, Regent Park
Summerleys Road
Princes Risborough
Buckinghamshire HP27 9LE

Tel. (UK) 0845 458 1944
Tel. (Int.) +44 1844 271 640
Email info@apm.org.uk
Web apm.org.uk



FIVEDimensions 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.