

ACCREDITATION

CASE STUDY



London South Bank University

Introduction

London South Bank University (LSBU) is one of London's largest and oldest universities and has been providing students with relevant, accredited and professionally recognised education since 1892.

This cosmopolitan university has more than 25,000 students from over 130 countries across its four faculties – Arts and Human Sciences, Business, Health and Social Care, and Engineering, Science and the Built Environment.

LSBU has an important, enduring and consistent mission to create student opportunity for future success and aspires to be the best in its field by implementing its vision 'to be the most admired UK university for creating professional opportunity'.

In recent years, the university has invested over £50 million in modern teaching facilities at the main campus in Southwark. These innovations continue, including a new Student Centre and the new Enterprise Centre which houses incubation space, allied retail units, meeting rooms and an open public reception space, gallery and café for students and staff to make connections with business and industry.

It was named a top 20 UK university for graduate starting salaries in the Sunday Times University Guide 2013 and received the highest possible rating for the quality of education from the Quality Assurance Agency. All courses are accredited by or developed in association with the leading professional bodies.

Focusing on the professional

The Faculty of Engineering Science and the Built Environment offers professionally focused education and knowledge transfer programmes. The Built Environment department is one of the biggest in the university and one of the largest providers of built environment related courses in the UK, with some 50 academic staff teaching more than 1,500 students, over half of whom study part-time and are sponsored by industry.

The department offers a range of courses, including the postgraduate level MSc in Construction Project Management.

The course developed out of a previous master's course in construction management that had catered for the needs of students working as project managers for building contractors. It became clear that many applicants for the course were working as project managers for clients, managing both design and construction. The current course was designed to cater for both types of project manager.

This well-established course tailored specifically for construction industry professionals recruits between 25-40 students each year and was originally awarded APM accreditation in 2002. Following continuous improvement and development, it has now received re-accreditation.

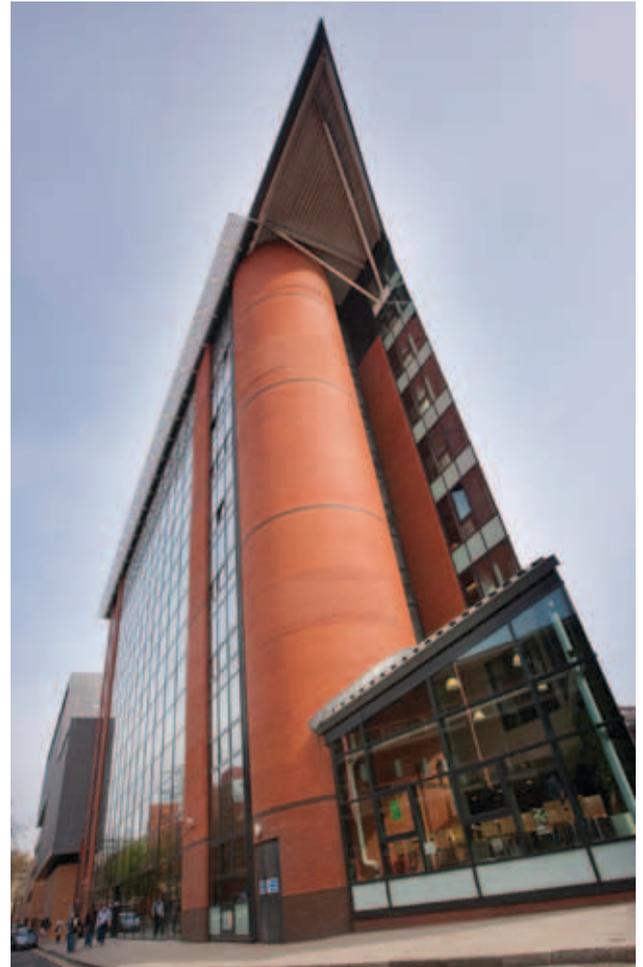
This was a result of a review and restructuring to incorporate feedback from students and employers, with input from three external examiners and a senior academic from another LSBU faculty.

The course still retains the breadth and depth of the previously well established and APM accredited format and is aligned to the *APM Body of Knowledge*. It also reflects three particular topics considered appropriate to the construction industry – procurement, financial management and construction law.

The MSc in Construction Project Management is for those who already have appropriate degrees or professional qualifications, or both, and who are either already working as project managers in the construction industry or aspire to do so.

In addition to APM accreditation, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and the Chartered Institute of Building also accredit the course.

"It is essentially a mid-career course that assists student in achieving their career aims," said Liz Whelan, the course director. "It makes a major contribution to the development of their professional competence but is of course complemented by training that part-time students receive at work or that full-time students will receive when they obtain employment."



Over recent years it has become increasingly apparent to us that APM has grown its profile with our students. More of our students are now keen to become APM members and APM accreditation has consequently become more important to LSBU.

"We are very pleased to have recently achieved re-accreditation and to receive some rather complimentary comments about our new course from APM assessor."

Steve Pearson, Director of Postgraduate Studies in the Department of the Built Environment, London South Bank University

Relevant by design

The programme aims to provide an intellectually demanding and vocationally relevant learning experience for construction industry professionals wanting to advance or redirect their careers, studying either full-time over 12 months or part-time over two-and-a-half years.

It provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding along with intellectual, practical and transferable skills. This includes the qualities required to exercise initiative, make decisions in complex and unpredictable contexts, embrace change and engage in future study or research and career development.

The course comprises six, 20-credit taught modules and a 60-credit dissertation.

The five compulsory taught modules incorporate the vast majority of *APM Body of Knowledge* topic areas. Students can choose optional modules from a further eight topics, four of which overlap with the *APM Body of Knowledge* and four that are relevant to building construction but not specifically related to the APM topics.

The knowledge and understanding outcomes are identified for each module, using coursework to consolidate understanding and develop the required skills. The curriculum is focused on the construction project and is client orientated, which is reflected in five compulsory modules:

- Procurement and Management Of Construction
- Corporate and Project Finance
- Construction Law
- Project Evaluation
- Management of People and Information

Procurement and Management of Construction is at the heart of the programme and explores the strategies available to clients and the procedures and techniques that are used to manage projects or programmes on their behalf.

Project Evaluation covers the range of appraisal techniques used by construction professionals to aid clients' decision making, while the Corporate and Project Finance unit develops business and financial management skills.

Management of People and Information aims to develop an active awareness of how people work together, how they can most effectively be led and managed within different types of organisation. The balance of the syllabus for this module focuses on the management of data, information and knowledge.

Construction Law covers the law that is relevant to construction work and methods of dispute resolution.

Two of the option modules are particularly exciting. The International Real Estate and Construction module involves a 10-day overseas study trip. In recent years there have been visits to Beijing, Shanghai, Dubai, Tokyo and Moscow. Intensive study programmes of site visits and visits to the offices of local consultants and contractors allow



Personal story

After graduating with a first degree in archaeology, Zoe Mulholland joined the estates property division of Imperial College London, initially in a capital projects support role before moving towards project management.

To progress further along her career path to becoming a fully-fledged project manager, she embarked on the MSc course at London South Bank University, studying part time.

"I didn't have any directly relevant project management qualifications and knew that if I wanted to be a project manager, I needed them," said Zoe.

"I chose LSBU because I wanted to study in London on a part-time course that required regular attendance so that I could to engage with other project professionals from a similar background on a regular basis. That was really important for me.

"Of particular benefit for me were the 'hard skill' modules of corporate and project finance, project evaluation and construction contract law, which were well-taught and gave me the confidence to deal in those areas. The APM elements and influence added flexibility and transferable skills."

Zoe's dissertation, *Sustainable Construction in a Recession*, took the temperature of opinion from consultants, clients and contractors. It not only helped her to achieve her Masters' degree with distinction, it was also the basis of a paper that was published for the proceedings of an industry conference in Helsinki.

The MSc has also helped boost her career. "After completing the course, I was promoted from assistant project manager to a full-time project manager, moving into development management and taking on projects at the specification stage, looking at the whole issue of viability."

students to compare practice in different parts of the world, acknowledging the international role of the project manager.

The second is Building Information Modelling and Collaborative Working. Business Information Modelling (BIM) is an approach to managing and planning every aspect of design and construction. The Government requires collaborative BIM on all its projects by 2016.

"LSBU has a BIM centre which acts as a hub for innovation, networking and training," said lead academic Steve Pittard. "Key contributors and collaborators are Crossrail and the consultant firm EC Harris. Students from all disciplines are able to take the BIM option module, whose raison d'être is collaboration and inter disciplinary working."

But the programme offers more than academic rigour. It also provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences between construction and property professionals operating in different parts of the industry and coming from different parts of the world.

During their studies, students are exposed to current research and practice and develop their ability to combine the theoretical and practical aspects of construction project management. Working on their dissertation helps to further develop research and analytical skills to an advanced level, which in turn helps to extend the boundaries of project management knowledge and professionalism.

All modules are allocated among five external examiners who approve all exam papers and course work briefs, scrutinise sample exam scripts and course work, attend examination boards and submit annual reports to the university to which the Departmental Director of Postgraduate Studies responds. Reports and responses are included in an annual programme monitoring report to the Faculty Academic Standards Committee, which in turn reports to the University Academic Standards Committee.

Student feedback through module evaluation questionnaires is also crucial to the ongoing monitoring and development of the programme. Twice-yearly course boards provide a forum for student representatives and staff to discuss and resolve module and course related issues.

In addition, each module coordinator produces an annual report reflecting on delivery and assessment, student performance, identifies an action plan for the next course and reflects on what has been achieved since the previous year's plan.

Successful completion of the MSc in Construction Project Management at LSBU allows students to pursue their careers in project management, confident that they have the particular blend of knowledge and skills that is required to manage projects on behalf of construction industry clients. This blend contains much that is generic but also reflects the particular characteristics of construction projects which dictate that managers have financial management skills and knowledge of construction contracts.



Association for Project Management and London South Bank University

London South Bank University is a corporate member of APM and two of the teaching staff are individual members. Students are also encouraged to become individual members and participate in APM events.

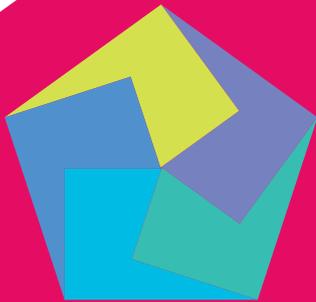
The MSc in Construction Project Management is aligned to the topics in the *APM Body of Knowledge*. The academic staff delivering the programme, their ongoing development of that of the course, together with the governance structure, are recognised as embodying APM's FIVE Dimensions of Professionalism.



Association for Project Management

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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.