

APM Academic

ACCREDITATION

CASE STUDY



Introduction

The British University in Dubai (BUiD) is a not-for-profit university founded on the British model in the Gulf region. It was established in 2004 and is the Middle East region's first research-based postgraduate university.

Its purpose is to provide world-class scholarship, education and research that make a distinctive British contribution to supporting the aspirations of the Dubai Government and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and to become a hub for education and research in the region.

Founded by the Al Maktoum Foundation, Rolls-Royce, the National Bank of Dubai, the British Business Group and the Dubai Development and Investment Authority, the university has support from the very highest level.

The Chancellor is His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, who is at the forefront of Dubai's economic development.

In order to achieve the best of British standards of teaching and research, BUiD has bilateral agreements with the universities of Cardiff, Edinburgh, Manchester and Glasgow. This collaboration ensures common goals, objectives and procedures, while enabling BUiD to collaborate with these institutions in areas of shared interest including graduate studies.

BUiD also liaises closely with the Government of Dubai and the UAE Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research in order to be responsive to the educational

needs of the people of the UAE. In particular, BUiD is guided by the Dubai 2021 strategic plan and the ongoing review of educational provision in the Emirate.

This young and progressive university has three specialised faculties – the Faculty of Business, the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Engineering and IT. All programmes are delivered in English and have been awarded accreditation by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the UAE.

Its vision is 'to be recognised and supported as Dubai's premier resource and focus for the reflective pursuit, inclusive accessibility, effective transfer and liberal application of scientific, academic and professional knowledge'.

“ APM accreditation is testimony to the strengths of BUiD's MSc and Postgraduate Diploma in Project Management. Not only does this mean that our students benefit professionally from having a qualification that has internationally recognised accreditation, it also supports the commitment of the Faculty of Engineering and IT to progressive change in providing academically and professionally sound project management in the UAE. ”

Professor Abdullah Alshamsi, Vice Chancellor, British University in Dubai

Dr Paul Gardiner,
Head of Programme



Meeting the demand

Project management has been a flagship programme at BUiD since the university was founded, reflecting the demand for competent project management in the region.

Appropriate for both recent first degree graduates as well as practitioners with more experience from industry or the public sector, the course can be studied full or part-time and is designed to meet an increasing need for accredited postgraduate education offering both relevant professional development and academic awards.

As well as giving students a thorough understanding of the knowledge and skills necessary for their professional careers it also fosters the growth of project management research and high quality teaching in BUiD. Collaboration with industry and professional organisations ensures that the Masters programme evolves in line with the needs of a range of organisations.

It is one of the most successful programmes at the university in terms of student and graduate numbers and diverse profiles including around 30% Emirati, 25% Arab, 25% Indian subcontinent and 20% other global expatriates. Both the Postgraduate Diploma and MSc courses are fully accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHESR, UAE). They are comprehensively mapped against the *APM Body of Knowledge 5th edition* and particularly benefit from the experience that the University of Manchester has gained in the continuing design and delivery of the MSc Project Management Professional Development Programme for Rolls-Royce, AMEC and Goodrich.

"We use the *APM Body of Knowledge* because it adds value to our programmes," explained Dr Paul Gardiner, Head of Programme.

"It is a useful framework that achieves a balance between theory and practice and gives appropriate guidance without being overly prescriptive. It is accessible to all project management professionals and is up to date with new developments and practices that have transitioned into the general project management body of knowledge.

"As an academic institute we acknowledge the value of professional associations professional bodies and their published bodies of knowledge. In this regard, we direct students to become familiar with the Global Alliance of Project Performance Standards (GAPPS), which does cross mappings between the more important standards and bodies of knowledge, including APM's. In this way, students can make intelligent choices about which body of knowledge is suitable for them and their company's project management system.

"Of course, we also recognise and value the British-ness of APM and its body of knowledge, which is consistent with our university's vision and mission."

A high level of professionalism

The academic team boasts a wealth of international and UK project management experience and expertise. It is headed by Dr Gardiner – a leading UK figure and author in project management – and staffed by Professor Ashly Pinnington, Professor Mohammed Fadhil Dulaimi and Professor Udechukwu Ojiako. Professor Iain Cameron of Glasgow Caledonian University was the programme's external examiner for two years. Now succeeded by Dr Andrew Ross of Liverpool John Moores University.

Applicants for the MSc and Postgraduate Diploma must show evidence of a basic knowledge and understanding of project management principles. This can be demonstrated through at least two years' relevant work experience, evidence of introductory project management training and a related qualification such as the APM Introductory Certificate, or by passing a pre-masters programme offered internally by BUiD.

Students joining the demanding course are also expected to maintain a high level of commitment to the time, effort and resources required to gain the knowledge, intellectual, professional, practical and transferable skills needed to further their careers or to enter the project management profession.

As part of their studies, they are trained to be accountable for their efforts and decisions – values that they are expected to maintain and carry forward into their professional lives.

Both the MSc and Postgraduate Diploma courses are modular but with the flexibility to meet the needs and interests of students. They each consist of six taught modules with the addition of an independent, research-based dissertation for the MSc programme.

For each module, students are required to submit work that is part of a research-based assignment specifically dealing with the subject area of that module. The intent is to drive them into the depth of subject areas covering the majority of the competencies in the *APM Competency Framework*.

Learning is a mix of lectures and tutorials, online discussion with tutors, independent reading and web-based study. Examinations and coursework assessment challenges students to demonstrate both their breadth and depth of knowledge.

Assessments are carried out internally and the reports are sent to the external examiner who provides comments on them during a Board of Examiners' meeting.



Personal story

Yacoub Petro MSc (BUiD)

Yacoub graduated with a BSc in civil engineering 11 years ago and since then has been working as a design and construction civil engineer.

"My ambition to grow in my career never ended and my personal zeal towards this was my fuel to achieving my goals. Today we live in a very competitive market where skills, education and creativity make a big difference. This was one of the reasons that made me select a course in project management in BUiD. Its association with the University of Manchester gave me the final confidence in this course and was the push towards my enrolment.

"Post-graduation, I was appointed Senior Project Manager and Commercial Director for UAE branch of MWH Global – one of the world leaders in water and wastewater infrastructure engineering. Landing this role is one of my biggest achievements and I attribute this to the knowledge, skills and confidence infused in me from the course offered and completed successfully at BUiD."

From left to right:
Professor Mohammed Fadhil Dulaimi
Professor Ashly Pinnington
Professor Udechukwu Ojiako



A very real sense of being part of a professional community is fostered among the students through a range of internal and external activities, where they can share knowledge and understanding and discover how their project management skills apply in the workplace.

There are active Blackboard discussions among the students when they take modules. As BUiD is a postgraduate university with a large part-time proportion of students, communities of practice are integrated into the curriculum through online routes and university-industry projects and events.

Schemes such as BUiD's employer-student initiative, BESt, offer opportunities for students to take part in industry visits and round tables, industry communities of practice events and mentoring and coaching placements. A number of employers in the UAE have already shown interest in BESt and there is also an active advisory group and a recently established project management executive forum.

Joint conference and journal papers are regularly published and students are encouraged to participate at international conferences.

"The Project Management Programme is one of our strongest programmes and very popular among diverse applicants," said Professor Abdullah Alshamsi, BUiD Vice Chancellor.

"Around 175 Master's level students have graduated so far from the programme which has qualified them to contribute to their organisations' growth and developed their competencies at all levels of management.

"The programme has relevance for many different sectors such as oil and gas, IT and communications, transport, banking and finance, manufacturing, construction and government. Many of our graduates have secured advancement in their careers and an increasing number are also progressing onto our PhD."

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Professor Abdullah Alshamsi, Vice Chancellor,
British University in Dubai



Personal story

Amin Issa Ibrahim MSc (BUiD)

Amin has a BSc degree in Industrial Engineering and professional experience in the fields of strategic management, business excellence and quality management in management consultancy firms and government entities in the UAE.

"I chose to study at BUiD because of its reputation as a research-based university with strong British education system supported by leading British universities and because of the nature and structure of project management programme that helps to understand the real alignment of projects with organisation and business.

"It is different from programmes elsewhere which focus only on narrow and specific project management areas and fields. Older students and some professionals in my organisation recommended the MSc degree course.

"The research-based programme has helped me to enhance my knowledge and to gain understanding of work and operations in organisations. This has increased my abilities to assess and understand how projects can contribute to an organisation's performance and success.

"My BUiD qualification helped me to handle more challenging jobs and opened many new opportunities for me. In fact I have been transferred from operational staff level to specialists and expert level after gaining my MSc. Overall, I had a very fulfilling experience at BUiD and I wholeheartedly encourage others to join the MSc in Project Management programme."

Association for Project Management and the British University in Dubai

BUiD is a corporate member of APM and has aligned the project management Masters and Diploma programme to the *APM Body of Knowledge* and the *APM Competency Framework*. The course content, academic staff and expectations of its students embody the association's FIVE Dimensions of Professionalism.

The university collaborates with leading UK higher education institutions that are also active corporate members of APM and contributors to its events and activities.

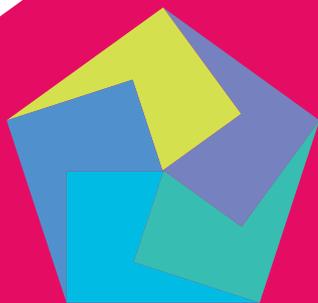
Head of Programme, Dr Paul Gardiner, is a full member of APM and regularly meets with APM's representative at meetings of the Global Alliance for Project Performance Standards (GAPPS) around the world. He also regularly presents at Project Management conferences. His published work is cited in the *APM Body of Knowledge* and is increasing the presence of the APM in the UAE.



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.