

ACCREDITATION

CASE STUDY



Introduction

Canterbury Christ Church University is the largest provider of education, training and skills in the South East for public services – notably teacher training, nursing, policing, health and social care – and a significant provider of programmes in a wide range of academic and professional areas.

It is a multi-campus university based in Canterbury, Broadstairs, Medway and Tunbridge Wells, offering over 1,000 academic and professional study programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level, all designed to equip students for their future careers. Courses carry internationally recognised professional body accreditations

and provide opportunities for internships and placements.

The Business School, part of the Faculty of Social and Applied Sciences, is committed to developing individuals and organisations through excellence in business and management education, research and consultancy through its Business School and the Department of Leadership and Management Development.

It also runs management training and education programmes in partnership with private and public sector organisations, such as the police, the NHS, fire and rescue and local government.

Pathway to project management

The Business School offers qualifications in wide-ranging combinations of business and management disciplines at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Programmes are designed to meet individual academic, professional and social needs whether the student is a school leaver, an international student aiming to develop their knowledge of business and management or a professional looking to update skills and knowledge.

There are a number of pathways within the degree leading to specific degree awards such as single honours BSc Business Studies, BSc Marketing, BSc Accounting and Combined Honours degrees such as BSc Accounting and Business Studies or combined with a half degree such as Computing or Leisure and Tourism.

The project management course sits within the BA and BSc degree framework. It was included over a decade ago as a subject applicable to any career path. Within the last five years the numbers taking this module have increased from 75 to over 200, representing more than 50 per cent of students taking a business-related degree.

The module has been based on staff experience of running projects, together with the *APM Body of Knowledge*, PMI's *PMBOK Guide* and best practice drawn from professional organisations.

Creating a professional foundation

All students have a common first year, whichever degree they are working towards. During this year, they cover essential topics such as the foundations of management, contemporary business issues and financial accounting. Most will also study marketing principles and practice, an introduction to quantitative techniques and the business environment.

Although it is an optional second year module, Project Management is highly popular with a large take-up by students across all pathways. It focuses on the effective management of projects and is supported by other modules containing aspects of finance, managing information and managing people.

Led by Bob Fielden and module tutor George Havloujan, the project management course can be studied either full or part time and is open to candidates from the UK and overseas who can show an appropriate level of pre-qualification.



Bob Fielden, course leader

As well as the academic rigour expected on a higher education course, members of staff also bring practical, personal experience of managing real projects such as the development, validation and delivery of new qualifications, bids for funding for research projects, provide consultancy and have managed projects in previous organisations.

The module uses the online training package from ILX Group, which is based on the APM Introductory Certificate syllabus, and has three main aims:

- to critically examine the role of project management within a contemporary business context
- to explain how specific project management applications play an important role in producing successful business outcomes
- to examine the philosophies, principles, structures and methodologies of project management.

Students undergo three assessments during the course. The first is to research and assess case studies of real world projects to identify reasons for their success or failure. Recent case studies include the construction stages of Wembley Stadium, T5 at Heathrow Airport, Portsmouth's Spinnaker Tower, rebuilding St Pancras Station, the Edinburgh tram system and the Scottish Parliament building.

For their second assessment, students work in groups on a competitive bid to a client, combining technical knowledge with the interpersonal aspects of project management.

The third phase is a time-constrained, multiple-choice assessment based on knowledge of the underlying theory and best practice of project management, as required for the Introductory Certificate benchmark qualification and as laid out in the *APM Body of Knowledge*.

The portfolio of work built up by a student during these stages is also assessed by the examination board to determine their degree classification.

At the end of each academic year, students are invited to review the courses they have been studying and the results are used to adapt and improve the modules.

“ Thanks for an interesting module. One of the ones I looked forward to turning up to.”

James Ball, second year student

In addition, the academic external examiner provides quality assurance of the course as well as sitting on the examination board that oversees the setting and marking of all papers and course work.

By the end of their study, students should have the sound theoretical and practical knowledge of managing projects equivalent to that of a capable project team member or leader of a small-scale project working within an organisation. They should be able to:

- analyse the main features of project management and critically evaluate how projects are selected for implementation
- explore the role of the project manager and the team
- critically analyse the differing ways in which projects can be organised
- apply appropriate planning methodologies
- critically evaluate the effectiveness of a project against established control criteria
- evaluate and locate project management concepts within the generic theories of management.

They are also encouraged to become Student and Associate members of APM and to continue with the personal development plan they have begun as part of their studies. Both staff and students attend and present at national and local South East region branch APM events.

Said Bob Fielden: "Every person and organisation will be involved in projects at some time or other. An understanding of how to effectively plan, control and work with others will be very, very beneficial, for employers and employees. The added benefit is that anyone can use the techniques in their personal life as well."

The importance placed on project management skills is such that, for some students, it is no longer an optional module. It has become a core subject in the Accounting Pathway degree programme in the business school

Explained Suzanne O'Brien, programme director, accounting: "The modern accountant is more than just debit and credit. They provide value to business, undertaking a range of advisory and operational roles, often managing projects, not merely counting the associated costs!"



Success under pressure

In addition to their second or third year studies, students put their project skills to the test as part of an inter-university challenge and have proved just how good they are!

For two years in a row, teams of business school students who had completed the project management module were in the top 10 of more than 260 teams drawn from 75 universities in the IBM Universities Business Challenge.

The competition involves a business simulation project, calling for teamwork and making decisions under pressure.

Said Dr Wim van Vuuren, director of business consultancy for the Faculty of Business and Management: "It's a wonderful result for the students involved. They have displayed excellent teamwork, drive, and commitment throughout the competition. It highlights our students' potential, as well as the strength of our teaching programme."



Canterbury's 2011 Universities Business Challenge team get down to winning business (left to right): Jack Dalton, Michael Alexander, Christopher Andersson, Moses Aluasa and William Hahlani.

Far left: Suzanne O'Brien, programme director

Left: Dr Wim van Vuuren, director of business consultancy

A view from abroad

Among those studying project management at Canterbury are employees of German-based energy company, MVV Energie, working in the UK on the construction of a waste incineration plant in Devonport, Plymouth.

This plant is due to be in operation by 2014 and will turn waste that can't be recycled into heat and energy able to supply more than 37,000 households with electricity and approximately 1,200 households with heat. The project has already been awarded the Grand Prix by Partnership Bulletin for the best national public private partnership project for its Energy from Waste with Combined Heat and Power scheme.

"2012 was the fourth year that MVV Energie AG sent students to Canterbury Christ Church University to undertake a three-week company-related project to build their project management expertise," said MVV's Johanna Emrich, Competence Center Human Resources.

Topics covered by the delegates in the past four years include:

- A comparison of British and German engineering qualifications to enable appropriate selection of staff for their UK operations
- The structure of the UK energy market
- The attitude of the UK population towards green energy, sustainability and nuclear energy
- Future trends in the energy market from a political perspective.

Among the students on the summer 2012 course for MVV Energie was Fabian Lenz. "Our supervisors at MVV Energie were very pleased with our work and will use some of the ideas in our company's future progress.

This project made us aware of the different ways of thinking and working in a country that shares many of the developments that we are experiencing in Germany. We would like to thank the supervisors of our project, Bob Fielden and Terry Bevis, for the valuable guidance and advice. Their willingness to motivate us contributed tremendously to our project.

We also would like to thank Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) for providing us with a good environment and facilities to complete this project."

" Tough assessments but relevant and well thought out. "

" Interesting, relevant and absorbing. "



What APM accreditation means to us

The Business School has chosen APM as one of its accreditation partners because professional body recognition of our courses is important. It indicates to potential and existing students and their prospective employers that knowledge and skills have been developed not only to academic standards but also to standards identified as essential by the professional body.



Heather McLaughlin,
director of Business School

Association for Project Management and Canterbury Christ Church University

Canterbury Christ Church University has been a corporate member of APM since November 2003. It has based much of the project management module for its business and management degrees on the association's standards and qualifications, including a simulated APM Introductory Certificate test as part of the assessment process.

Project management module content, assessment stages and learning outcomes have been mapped against the *APM Body of Knowledge* and use the APM Competence Framework as a benchmark, closely tracking the Five Dimensions of Professionalism. The Business School actively encourages students to apply for APM membership at Student and Associate level.

The university has hosted branch meetings and conferences. Staff are members of the APM Education Network Forum and have taken part in the consultation for the development of the 6th edition of the *APM Body of Knowledge* and the Introductory Certificate question bank. The university is also a member of the Accredited Providers' Forum.



Testimonial

GW Pharmaceuticals is based in the UK and specialises in cannabinoid therapeutics. In addition to research and development, the company also has a manufacturing base. We make use extensively of project management in a whole range of projects from new facilities through to new product development. Close control over timings, resources and costs is important to all of these projects.

The training of the staff in project management techniques is important therefore to the general running of the business. We have worked successfully with the Business School and the Department of Leadership and Management Development at Canterbury Christ Church University to provide project management training for our middle management team and are expecting to work with them in 2013 to provide further training for our senior management team.

Dr Peter Gibson, technical director, GWPharma Ltd

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.