Graduate Program in Business and Project Management

APIC

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit." Aristotle

...The Home of Transformative Education...
“The MBPM is a very good idea and the program is very well structured and aligned to business needs. Almost everybody agrees that PM is a combination of science and art.”

Hiroshi Tanaka, President of Global Project Management Forums, President of Japan Project Management Forum, April 2005.

“There is a strong pedagogical focus that encompasses industry relevance throughout the program. In addition, there is a strong linkage between theory and practice which according to current adult learning theory underpins best practice philosophies.”

Sheri Evans, BBehavSc (Monash), MBA (Macq) MEDLD (HE) (Macq), University Lecturer, Director of Chancellor College and Expert in Business and Leadership Education and Development, April 2005.

“The material is very impressive as it covers most major elements. I recently saw some Open Learning Material from MIT and believe what your organisation has provided is very much on par.”

David Watt, Senior Consultant and Contractor to Defence, April 2005.

“I recall the debates about University degrees that created graduates who knew everything but couldn’t do anything. With this new transformational approach, a practical element that is readily transferable to industry would be refreshing.”

Dr. Steve Whittle, BSC (Hons), MSC, MPM, DBA, FAIM, PMP, Managing Director, BusTech Solutions, April 2005.

“There is an increased need to have better skills to tackle increasingly more complex challenges; professionals are looking for ways in which to do this in a manner that fits in better with their busy schedules (as they try to achieve a better work/life balance). This program responds to this need in a systematic manner.”

Natasa Gadzuric, Organisational Development Officer, Downer Engineering, April 2005.

“The program is designed very professionally, focusing on core needs in business world. It is excellent to see such program is designed to have more practical approach and fill the gap which exists in most MBA programs. Such programs enable graduates to be ready for complex challenges in business environment.”

Ramin Vatanparast, (Dr. Tech), Senior Research Manager, Nokia Inc., USA.

Competent, confident, leaders with acquired new capabilities

“With significant internal and external change affecting businesses and projects today, I feel there are tremendous opportunities for professionals to expand their capabilities and value to an organization through programs such as the Graduate Program in Business and Project Management at APIC. This program offers flexibility and brings business leaders together to discuss, share, compare best practices and learn from each other. APIC’s program, combined with a complex, dynamic business or project management environment, provides the leadership skills necessary to link projects to company strategy and organizational goals.”

Kathy Cowan Sahadath, HonBA, AGDM, MBA, Project Manager, Hydro One Networks Inc. Ontario, Canada, April 2006
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Graduate Program in Business and Project Management at a Glance

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit." Aristotle

GPBPM is a high quality government accredited competency-based flexible program for combined professional development and postgraduate education leading to recognised postgraduate degrees as follows:

- **MBA in Project and Program Management, MBA (PPM)**
- **Master of Business and Project Management (MBPM)**
- **Postgraduate Diploma in Project Management (GradDipPM)**
- **Postgraduate Certificate in Project Management (GradCertPM)**

The program has been designed to impart high level professional competencies. Entry is open to graduates of all relevant disciplines. Professionals with appropriate qualifications who have not completed a bachelor’s degree may be considered for admission into the program subject to meeting the required criteria.

The program caters for a range of needs, from learning core knowledge on project and program management, acquiring skills in effective management of projects through to the acquisition of high level competencies needed to set strategic direction, govern and lead complex projects, programs and project businesses.

The program provides a holistic learning and development experience. It equips graduates with competencies needed to deliver results in an increasingly complex environment. APIC has developed professional competency models, frameworks, tools and standards that transcend the traditional vocational competencies and equip the professional person with the abilities needed to manage projects, programs and project-based business units in an environment of uncertainty, complexity and accelerated change. These competencies apply to a range of roles in a range of organisations.

In summary, APIC’s Graduate Program in Business and Project Management:

- Is flexible and delivered using workshops and project-based clinical learning;
- Uses recognised standards as the underpinning knowledge for project and program management fundamentals;
- Applies unique tools and systems to support individual learning and development in a dynamic fashion;
- Designed to align individual learning & development with organisational goals and strategies;
- Encourages individual professionals to seek career growth and capitalise on their full potential (based on systemic goal-based learning and development plans);
- Links professionals of diverse background and experience systematically;
- Provides a stimulating environment for peer group support, exchange of expertise and benchmarking to calibrate and test professional competencies in different contexts.

Master of Business Administration
*(in Project and Program Management) MBA (PPM)*

**Objective**

The objective of the MBA (PPM) is to encourage development of a superior grade of project and program management executives as business leaders, strategic thinkers and agents of change. Typical roles in industry include Program Manager, Project Director, Department Head and Director. Given the complexity and uncertainty that characterise large complex projects and programs, as well as their business environments, the industry
needs higher level professionalism and meta-cognitive abilities not normally catered for in traditional master degree courses. Numerous studies show that professionally-trained leaders with refined intellectual and professional skills are needed globally to lead project-based business endeavours.

Research has shown that this type of far-sighted and well-developed professionals are in demand in all sectors of the economy, particularly as the project-based management philosophy and practice spread and as project management professionals assume the charge of project-oriented business units. Formulating major projects, programs, portfolios and networks- a traditionally complex area of business- has become even more complex due to the prevalence of major risks, uncertainty and complexity in ventures and their environments. To succeed one needs a blend of focused leadership, business acumen and professional skills. The MBA (PPM) aims to prepare professionals for such roles.

In summary, the MBA (PPM) is a formally accredited and recognised postgraduate degree conforming to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). It is different to typical MBA programs in that it is strongly project-oriented and competency based, promoting leadership, innovation and transformative practice. It focuses on strategy and project-based management within a wide range of contexts and applications.

### Course Structure

MBA (PPM) is awarded after completing 10 course units (60 credit points), of which 4 (24 credit points) are Primary Core, 4 (24 credit points) are Secondary Core and the remaining 2 (12 credit points) are selected from the range of Elective units on offer (see Table 1). In addition, all candidates are required to pass the MBA Seminar after completion of all the required units of study. All candidates may select to enrol in and complete an MBA dissertation in lieu of the 2 Elective units.

MBA (PPM) can be completed in 3 semesters, full time, though the recommended minimum duration is 4 semesters. The number of units undertaken in each semester can be varied to suit individuals, subject to the total duration of candidature not exceeding 4 years (8 semesters) and subject to other conditions as advised at the time of enrolment.

All credit points gained as part of the Master of Business and Project Management or Postgraduate Certificate and/or Postgraduate Diploma in Project Management will count towards the MBA (PPM) degree requirements provided that the candidate does not exit the program. (Students may transfer their enrolments subject to conditions advised at the time of transfer.)

### Entry Requirements

Admission to the MBA (PPM) degree is subject to meeting the specified criteria. As a minimum, a bachelor degree (or equivalent) in an applicable discipline, (e.g. science, IT, software, construction, engineering, architecture, economics, commerce and planning) is required. Candidates without a bachelor degree may be admitted to the MBA (PPM) subject to achieving at least Credit Average result (65% WAM) in the units of study undertaken as part of their MBPM course.

### Master of Business and Project Management (MBPM)

#### Objective

MBPM graduates will demonstrate a command of contemporary project management literature, theory and practice as well as high level professional skills and attitude. The emphasis is on the acquisition and or enhancement of specific professional skills and knowledge, undertaken in a combination of coursework and research, as well as the acquisition of specialist knowledge in a specific area of project and program management. It is possible to study MBPM degree as either a generalist degree or select one of the two streams: strategic management and quantitative management.

The Master of Business and Project Management is a formally accredited and
Table 1: Graduate Business and Project Management Program Structure.
(Note: A Certificate of Attainment will be issued for every subject successfully completed as a CPD unit.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STREAM</th>
<th>CORE UOS</th>
<th>CREDIT-POINTS SEMESTER</th>
<th>SECONDARY CORE UOS</th>
<th>CREDIT-POINTS SEMESTER</th>
<th>ELECTIVE UOS</th>
<th>CREDIT-POINTS SEMESTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Strategic Management</td>
<td>SBM1101 Project Management Fundamentals 1 (project/program strategic context, business case, framework and governance)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>SBM1103 Project and Program Information &amp; Communication Systems</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>SBM1105 Strategic Project, Portfolio &amp; Program Management</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>SBM1102 Project Management Fundamentals 2 (HR, teamwork &amp; communication management)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>SBM1104 Project/Program Leadership and Change Management</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>SBM1106 Assessment and Development of Project-based Organisations</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Quantitative Management</td>
<td>SBM1201 Project Management Fundamentals 3 (project scope, time and cost management)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>SBM1203 Venture/Project Economics and Finance</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>SBM1205 Project Formulation and Business Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SBM1202 Project Management Fundamentals 4 (project quality, risk and procurement management)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>SBM1204 Project/Program Delivery Systems</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>SBM1206 Advanced Risk and Uncertainty Management</td>
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</table>

recognised postgraduate degree conforming to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). It is different to typical MBA and master degree programs in that it is strongly project-oriented and competency based, promoting leadership and transformative practice. It promotes strategy-based project-oriented management within a wide range of contexts and applications.

**Course Structure**

**MBPM** is awarded after completing 8 course units (48 credit points), of which 4 (24 credit points) are Primary Core, 2 (12 credit points) are Secondary Core and 2 (12 credit points) are selected from the range of Elective units on offer (see Table 1). Candidates may complete a Master dissertation in lieu of the elective units. In addition, all candidates are required to pass the Master Seminar upon completion of all their units of study.

MBPM can be completed in 2 semesters, full time, though the recommended minimum duration is 3 semesters. The number of units undertaken in each semester can be varied to suit individuals, subject to the total duration of candidate not exceeding 4 years (8 semesters) and subject to other conditions as advised at the time of enrolment.

All credit points gained as part of the Postgraduate Certificate and/or Postgraduate Diploma in Project Management will count towards the MBPM degree requirements provided that the candidate does not exit the program (students may transfer their enrolments subject to conditions advised at the time of transfer).

**Entry Requirements**

Admission to the MBPM degree is subject to the candidates meeting specified criteria. As a minimum, a bachelor degree (or equivalent) in an applicable discipline, (e.g. science, IT, software, construction, engineering, architecture, economics, commerce and planning) is required. Candidates without a bachelor degree may be admitted to the MBPM candidature subject to achieving at least Credit Average result (65% WAM) in the units of study undertaken as part of their Postgraduate Diploma course.
Postgraduate Diploma in Project Management  
(GradDipPM)

Objective

The Postgraduate Diploma in Project Management is a formally accredited and recognised postgraduate award conforming to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). It is project oriented and competency based, promoting the acquisition of advanced project and program development and management expertise within a wide range of contexts and applications.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Project Management is designed to broaden the professional skills already gained in undergraduate programs and or in the Postgraduate Certificate in Project Management course, and impart further specialisation in the discipline of project management as well as enhancement of professional skills and attitude in this field.

Course Structure

The GradDipPM is awarded after completing 6 course units (36 credit points), of which 4 (24 credit points) are Primary Core, 1 Secondary Core (6 credit points) and 1 selected from the range of Elective units on offer (see Table 1).

It can be completed in 2 semesters, full time. However, the number of units undertaken in each semester can be varied to suit individuals, subject to the total duration of candidature not exceeding 3 years (6 semesters) and subject to other conditions as advised at the time of enrolment. All credit points gained as part of the Postgraduate Certificate in Project Management will count towards the Postgraduate Diploma requirements provided that the candidate does not exit the program (students may transfer their enrolments subject to conditions advised at the time of transfer).

Entry Requirements

Admission to the Postgraduate Diploma course requires a bachelor degree (or equivalent) in an applicable discipline, (e.g. science, IT, software, construction, engineering, architecture, economics, commerce and planning). Candidates without a bachelor degree may be admitted to the GradDipPM candidature subject to achieving at least Credit Average result (65% WAM) in the units of study undertaken as part of their Postgraduate Certificate course.

Postgraduate Certificate in Project Management  
(GradCertPM)

Objective

The Postgraduate Certificate in Project Management is a formally accredited and recognised postgraduate award conforming to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). It is competency based and focuses on the acquisition of core project and program management expertise within a wide range of contexts and applications. Graduates of this course are expected to demonstrate competency needed to successfully plan and deliver a wide range of projects and participate in the conceptualisation and realisation of major projects and programs.

Course Structure

The GradCertPM is awarded after completing 4 course units (24 credit points), all of which are Core (see Table 1). It can be completed in 1 semester, full time. It may be completed over 2 or more consecutive semesters. The number of units undertaken in each semester can be varied to suit individuals, subject to the total duration of the candidature not exceeding 3 years (6 semesters) and subject to other conditions as advised at the time of enrolment.

Entry Requirements

Admission to the Postgraduate Certificate course requires a bachelor degree (or equivalent) in an applicable discipline, (e.g. science, IT, software, construction, engineering, architecture, economics, commerce and planning). Candidates without a bachelor degree may be admitted to the GradCertPM candidature subject to meeting a number of criteria such as possession of a Diploma in Project Management or equivalent and a minimum of 2 years professional experience,
or possession of a recognised professional qualification. The eligibility of applicants will be considered on a case by case basis.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Each of the units of study listed in Table 1 is designed to be a self-contained learning and development package. Each unit can be undertaken independently by any person wishing to acquire the relevant expertise. To add to the flexibility, each unit may be assessed formally with the award of a Certificate of Attainment and a grade. The grades thus accumulated may be transferred towards the completion of the above-mentioned formal postgraduate degree courses. It must be noted that no more than 50% of the total units of study for any formal award may be studied in this manner. In addition, all the formal requirements of the award courses must be met.

The CPD studies may be undertaken in the following units:

- Project/Program Strategic Context, Business Case, Framework and Governance
- Project/Program Human Resources, Teamwork and Communication Management
- Project/Program Scope, Time and Cost Management
- Project/Program Quality, Risk and Procurement Management
- Project and Program Information & Communication Systems
- Project/Program Leadership and Change Management
- Venture/Project Economics and Finance
- Project/Program Delivery Systems
- Strategic Project, Portfolio and Program Management
- Assessment and Development of Project-based Organisations
- Project Formulation and Business Planning
- Advanced Risk and Uncertainty Management

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

APIC recognises that many professionals in the course of their careers have undertaken studies and or achieved professional certification or registration status through relevant professional bodies or have otherwise developed competency that can be recognised as being equivalent to having completed one or more units of study of the Graduate Program in Business and Project Management (as part of the requirements for any of the award courses).

APIC’s policy and regulations require that all applications be formally documented and submitted for assessment. Submission of an application for credit does not by itself secure credit as all applications will need to be formally assessed. To facilitate the process, APIC has adopted a set of Guidelines and Criteria for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), which can be viewed on APIC’s web site. All applicants seeking credit are invited to study the Guidelines carefully to decide for themselves if they qualify for any credit and whether they wish to formally apply for the same or not. The PDP workshop will provide additional guidance regarding substantiation of claims for credit and formal documentation requirements.

The World of Business and Project and Program Management

Project way of thinking and project-based management are now fully accepted as means of responding to the challenges of a fast changing business environment, rising customer expectations and tighter regulatory environment. Risk and uncertainty management has become pivotal to business success. To be successful businesses have to take on increasingly more complex and daring projects and programs to maintain their position, improve their profitability and respond to competition. They need a range of project-based management capabilities at different levels of organisation and for different roles to be able to perform at a competitive level and deliver results.
An organisation needs to have a vision and leadership to guide it towards attainment of its goals and realisation of its vision. It needs to undergo assessment and planning to map its capabilities at different levels (Figure 1). Organisational capabilities are developed through a 3 dimensional approach covering people, organisational systems and culture and environmental alignment. Organisations do not furnish capabilities, their people do.

They need an appropriate blend of competencies. While competencies espoused for different levels need to integrate well across an organisation, individual competencies should reflect the respective roles (Figure 1). For example, portfolio managers need to implement strategies, guide business value creation and optimisation, and deliver business outcomes.

Program managers need to align with business strategies, apply governance to their project portfolio and programs and manage resources and risks. Project managers/directors need to concentrate on project value management, integration of inputs and holistic management of projects and programs.

Teams need to manage project challenges, apply creativity, and participate in development and application of innovative holistic solutions. This narrative implies that for an organisation-wide learning and development plan to be effective it has to factor in the differing needs of all professionals and their current or intended roles. Both seasoned and young professionals can acquire relevant knowledge and competencies at different levels through different means, including learning through experience. However, unstructured learning can be a hit-and-miss affair and it can be costly; it is not certain that the relevant staff member will be exposed to the latest areas of thinking. Also, opportunities for first hand engagement with diverse assignments at different levels are limited.

It is not practical to undertake experimentation at work front either. Time span to development is significant; for most professionals it is beneficial to accelerate the process through a more systematic framework. Asia Pacific International College recognises these realities and offers an effective program in this field; it provides opportunity for professional people to fast track their professional and managerial development and acquire high level project and program management competencies. Key attributes targeted are:

- Transformative leadership
- Creative and interpretive mindset
- Management of discontinuities/dissonance (opportunities)
- Strategic project/business management abilities
- Management of relationships/networks
- Customer strategic advantage and value focus
- Leverage of communication and information technologies for superior performance
- Promotion of strong personal and corporate values & ethics

![Fig. 1: Spectrum of managerial competencies pertinent to each level of organisation](image-url)
Integrated Assessment Frameworks

APIC provides appropriate means to assess the competencies of a person, the health of a project/program or the capability of an organisation. Assessment at appropriate intervals provides an opportunity for the respective managers to initiate and apply targeted and effective interventions. APIC’s integrated assessment methodologies for project/program health assessment, professional competency assessment and organisational capability assessment are summarised below.

Framework for Individual Competency Assessment

APIC’s approach to professional competency assessment is based on a comprehensive framework, competency scale, criteria and tools developed to capture the high level performance needed from managers in today’s fast changing world (Figure 2). APIC assists individual professionals to determine the competency areas that are relevant to them and their employer or client organisations. This is achieved through APIC’s professional development planning (PDP) process.

Professional people are assisted to assess their current competencies and set themselves learning and development targets applying the aforementioned framework and tools. The outcome of this process is a clear picture of where the missing competencies are and how to derive individual priorities for learning and development. As seen from Figure 2, the competency gaps so identified form the scope for individual professional development. This approach results in proper diagnosis of missing competencies which can be used to design planned customised responsive competency based solutions that are structured to suit individual needs cost effectively.

Project/Program Health Assessment

APIC has developed a Project/Program diagnostic tool and methodology called PH-Check. It is based on research and study of a significant number of complex and challenging case projects. It produces graphical presentation of the health of the project/program under consideration. PH-Check applies a number of criteria and indicators. Figures 3 and 4 show examples of the high-level graphical reports produced by the PH-Check. It can be applied as frequently as desired to assess the health of the subject project/program throughout its life cycle. PH-Check also generates a plot of the status of a project/program health over time which can be used to assess the adequacy of the intervention measures applied by the project team.

It is important to assess a project/program in terms of its capacity to deliver planned strategic and business outcomes (Figure 3) as well as its implementation effectiveness and efficiency (Figure 4). The result conveyed graphically provides a valuable basis to diagnose shortcomings and design intervention measures to improve the chances of project/program success. Great benefits can be gained from systematic application of...
competencies, business processes and organisational factors is a critical determinant of business performance. APIC provides a holistic solution to corporate clients. APIC will be able to further customise and readjust the system of assessment at individual, project/program and organisation levels to respond to unique requirements of corporate clients.

Assessment of the individual competencies, project/program health and organisational capability are only part of the picture; as these diagnose the nature and size of the problem. The other part is provision of cost effective responsive solutions. APIC realises this challenge and has developed a range of solutions to assist clients in an effective and timely manner.

APIC has designed and developed its consulting services and learning and development systems to offer cost effective and just in time solutions to all clients globally. These work hand in hand to advance the insights and competencies of students and professionals. See the Graduate Program in Business and Project Management, described earlier.

Teaching and Learning Methodologies

The Graduate Program in Business and Project Management focuses on holistic project-centred learning and development. Projects are not just means to orderly delivery of a given outcome but paradigms for multi-
discipline teamwork, development of breakthrough solutions and achievement of stretched targets. They are also paradigms for holistic evaluation of decisions resulting in increased project value on a global level thus delivering not only economic benefits but also improving the quality of stakeholders' experience generally.

The GPBPM has been designed to promote multi-discipline teamwork, creativity, reflective learning and self management. It is student-centred, offering customisable, flexible planned and structured solutions meeting the needs of each individual student or professional person within an integrated total framework as already described. Figure 6 provides a schematic presentation of the GPBPM.

Learning and Development Philosophy

“I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.”

Confucius quotes (China's most famous teacher, philosopher, and political theorist, 551-479 BC)

APIC subscribes to the philosophy of learning through engagement in realistic settings (Figure 7). APIC emphasises the non-linear and complex nature of professional assignments and their complex environments. While learning is context-based, the development of competencies is not constrained. Competency acquisition is generally internal to the actors who engage with the project and the host environment. Of course, there is intervention in terms of advice and mentoring, e.g. models needed to interpret the complex setting and the attendant challenges, theories, techniques and tools, assessment and feedback etc. This model of learning and development is synonymous with “clinical learning”. It must not be confused with unstructured learning or ad-hoc experience.

Under APIC’s approach individual learning deepens within a teamwork context and process. Typically teams study their project challenges and the host environment collectively, make sense of the same, design and apply their own actions then evaluate the results, adjust their actions and continue the process till they can meet or exceed the goals in an optimal manner. This is termed high performance team learning and practice. The course provides an opportunity for development of cohesive and high performing teams. The whole environment is rich with opportunities for engagement, reflection and learning.
Unit of Study Design

Our approach to unit of study design is depicted below (Figure 8). As seen, each unit of study has 3 components:

1. Intensive knowledge workshop
2. Project and teamwork phase
3. Competency assessment

Intensive Knowledge Workshops

Each unit of study commences with its own intensive knowledge workshop. The purpose of the workshop is to lay an intellectual framework for the subject unit, present the fundamentals, engage students in intensive learning, debate and discourse, achieve a degree of knowledge alignment and test the adequacy of the participants’ knowledge prior to the start of the project phase. It will also provide an opportunity for students and staff to get to know one another better, and to socialise and receive intellectual stimulation in the process.

Project Phase

Each unit of study has its own project phase, typically lasting 10 weeks. The project phase is an opportunity for a team of 4 to 6 students to work together effectively on a case project responding to a specific project brief which lays down terms of reference, criteria and constraints that need to be observed in deriving a solution for the case project.

Each team will typically work on a single case project that is sourced from one employer organisation or otherwise provided. Selected case projects are neither too simplistic so as to be of limited value nor too complex that cannot be tackled during the currency of the course by student teams. All case projects are unique though different aspects of the same case project can also be considered in certain units of study.

Figure 9 shows the generic process students apply when conducting their project work (within the framework of APIC’s online learning system). Figure 10 shows the quality assurance and teamwork planning and control processes also embedded in each unit of study. The learning and development process can be integrated with the workplace dynamics through the selection of the case project. For example, if a group of students leans towards the IT sector they may source a case study project that has an IT context in an organisation employing one or more of the students in the team, although projects sourced from other organisations may also be acceptable. The project phase aims to engage students in
systemic teamwork, knowledge development and application, as well as creative thinking, development of innovative solutions and transformative practice that contribute to sustained organisational performance.

The whole approach is structured to challenge the teams to learn, apply and extend relevant knowledge under mentoring and continuous feedback. This approach is labelled clinical learning (Figure 10). It promotes a culture of research and innovation.

**Competency Assessment Phase**

Each unit of study culminates with the competency assessment phase during which students demonstrate their acquired competencies to the examiners. The focus is on the specific competencies targeted in the unit of study under consideration. The examiners use the following evidence to assess each student through a viva process:

- Student’s Final Report (FR) specifically written by each candidate in each unit of study as evidence to support the student’s case;
- Examiner’s own observation and assessment of a student’s level of expertise;
- Confidential performance rating of students in each team by their peers, and
- Any additional assessment that is prescribed by the assessor/examiner

Each student is required to compile his or her final report progressively independent of their team. Students need to record their observations and reflect on the work undertaken by their team. They need to delineate how the learning activities have contributed to the acquisition of target competencies. The range of evidence includes peer and employer competency assessment results, self-assessment, contribution to the project work and other evidence that the student can assemble to support or substantiate his or her competency claim in a given unit of study. The process of individual reflection is integrated with that of team performance assessment and improvement.

![Professional Development Planning (PDP) Workshop](image)

**Fig.10: Team project quality management framework**

**Professional Development Planning (PDP) Workshop**

The aim of the PDP Workshop is to assist fresh graduates as well as experienced professional and executive people to set goals and optimise their learning and development efforts in their field of interest. All graduate students are required to undertake Professional Development Planning (PDP) prior to commencing their studies. To facilitate this process APIC stages a scheduled PDP Workshop in each semester. The PDP workshop is designed to be of interest to employer organisations too in terms of aligning graduate and executive development with the organisational improvement goals. Through its structured process, and under guidance of qualified mentors, participants will develop their L&D plans that will guide their attempt in acquiring target competencies in an efficient and effective manner. Figure 11 shows the simplified PDP process.

**Frequently Asked Questions on PDP Workshop**

What will the PDP workshop deliver?

Each participant will be assisted to deliver an individualised L&D plan. Upon endorsement of individual L&D plan APIC will award a Certificate of Attainment and a
Grade to the participant.

What are the benefits of L&D Plan?
The L&D plan provides a most direct path to achieving one's career goals and accelerated self development. It can be aligned with an employer organisation’s improvement plans. It is also a pre-requisite for entering APIC’s formal award courses.

Who will conduct the workshop?
The workshop will be conducted by senior academics and leading practitioners from industry.

How will it be conducted?
The workshop will be conducted face-to-face and in a seminar format; participants will work with the workshop presenters and mentors to develop, refine and validate their plans. The outcome will be a realistic plan that will be finalised, formatted and formally submitted by each participant. After assessment and grading, L&D plans are used as the base documents by students to track their competency acquisition progress throughout their studies at APIC and beyond.

Where will it be held?
Workshops are normally held in APIC’s Seminar Room. Additional workshops can also be held in other locations and in employer premises where numbers justify.

What will be addressed?
Participants will assess their current competencies using the APIC’s well articulated Chart of Competencies and associated tools, and contrast these with their target (needed or aspired) competencies. They then develop a practical plan for addressing the competency gaps.

Professional performance indicators
- How good are you in acting as leader & communicator?
- How capable are you in delivering results to your employer or client organisations?
- Can you manage projects and programs in terms of their strategic goals and other business imperatives?
- Can you lead and promote high performance teamwork?
- Can you integrate information, teams, goals and requirements in time and space?
- Can you manage change and achieve stakeholders’ satisfaction?
- Can you apply organisational concepts optimally?
- Can you apply sustainability and social equity concepts to project decisions and outcomes?
- Can you set and follow strong personal ethics and group behavioural standards?

Steps in professional development planning
Obtain a realistic view of where you are in your career
Identify your personal needs (needs analysis):
- promotion
- keeping abreast of the field
- enhance your competence
- improve life skills such as self management

Identify outside influences, such as your employer’s needs, business trends (e.g. growth of e-commerce and technological changes);
Develop a statement of your personal aims and objectives - your mission;
Evaluate alternative strategies and select an optimum (include the value of time);
Formulate a plan to fulfil missing competencies (include scope, program, budget, resources, etc.)

Continuous professional development
Systematically document your achievements for future needs
Professional certification/registration
Professional engagements
Evaluate your achievement periodically; and
Review and update your plan at least annually. Evaluate the benefits you have gained from your plan at this time. **Why you should consider learning and development planning**

- An L&D plan is a personal plan and a commitment to excellence in your chosen field of endeavour
- You will learn to be in charge of your destiny and prepare yourself for emerging professional challenges
- You will gain valuable insights in terms of thriving in an environment of change and uncertainty
- You will learn about specific issues such as, competency models and their utility, qualifications needed, certification options, etc.
- You will be able to link your career development goals to your employer’s organisational capability development plan or your clients’ needs and aspirations.

**Frequently asked Questions**

- **What is unique about the Graduate Program in Business and Project Management?**

  **Advantages are (but not limited to):**
  
  - Learning from industry leaders and frontline thinkers in this expanding field of endeavour
  - Project/program management taught as the best combination of science and art on a foundation of business
  - Short intensive courses offered for boosting and alignment of knowledge
  - Holistic project-centred clinical learning and development, resulting in real world competencies applicable to projects, programs, portfolios and project businesses
  - Industry and career oriented courses that meet today’s professional needs
  - Flexible global delivery, supported by APIC’s unique online learning system
  - Up to one half of the total required credit points for each academic award can be earned and accumulated flexibly
  - Courses are customisable to suit individual professionals and diverse organisational needs
  - Peer group interaction at a global level permitting cross industry fertilisation of ideas and transfer of knowledge
  - Government accredited academic awards that are endorsed by relevant professional bodies.

  In short, the **GPBPM** provides unique opportunities to both fresh graduates and seasoned professionals to undertake studies on a convenient and flexible basis. As the courses are designed from the industry and practitioners’ perspectives, their effectiveness in imparting real world competencies is assured.

- **What is project and program management?**

  Project and program management is an emerging knowledge-intensive field of endeavour. The trend to flatten organisations, downsize departments or divisions, achieve cross functionality and resort to outsourcing for the supply of goods and services hastens the shift to project-based management at enterprise level and in networks. Project-based management has become a core organisational capability as well as a dimension of individual professionalism at different levels of an enterprise. Project management is essential to business success within all sectors of the economy. Professionals need to leverage business and project management expertise to deliver optimal outcomes that meet or exceed relevant client and stakeholders’ expectations. In its generic form, project and program management encompasses core competencies needed to function effectively in today’s fast paced economy.

- **Who are project and program managers?**

  Today’s project and program managers are knowledge integrators, optimisers and strategists, who use their knowledge and competencies creatively to respond to the needs and challenges in all sectors of the society, create value, minimise risks and contribute to the business competitiveness of employer or client organisation. With the advent of outsourcing and business eco-systems, there is demand for professionals who can plan and deliver projects and programs that span an enterprise and its network of business partners.

- **Why is project management so important?**

  Project Management, once the domain of construction and military projects, has become indispensable for delivering innovation and change, creating wealth, and for responding to commercial and global leaps in technology, new regulations and evolving social needs. Project management has become vitally important to all branches of industry. Both
public and private sector organisations depend on delivering and sustaining innovations, as they need to compete both locally and worldwide with the best in their class. Research has shown a high degree of correspondence between project management performance, innovation and economic performance.

- **How widely is project management used?**
  It is used virtually across all branches of industry, from finance, pharmaceuticals to electronics and computer software, through to space exploration, organisational restructure, government services, and engineering and construction industries and so on. Studies have put the share of export business delivered via projects at above 60% and growing. Globally all industry sectors need to broaden their understanding of project management. In particular, how project-based management can help companies embrace a culture of innovation and global competitiveness. They need to learn how to approach the question of culture change, professionalisation of their organisation and wealth creation, particularly in the services sectors of the economy.

- **How important is project management to business competitiveness?**
  As the knowledge economy develops further the competitive equation will change with it, forcing industries around the world to transform themselves. The trend to customisation of goods and services will accelerate further. The dynamics of change and transformation favour those organisations that are agile and project-based, as they can respond faster and tap market opportunities quicker through project-based solutions.

- **Why is it necessary to conduct Professional Development Planning?**
  The current view of project and program management among many professional groups is mixed. A number of misconceptions influence their perception: many see it more as a set of tools and techniques; others confine their thoughts to downstream delivery of projects. Today, project management is a business method for exploiting cross functionality and for reducing the cycle time or achieving breakthrough solutions. Many professionals have realised how far reaching their own professional development should be. Research has shown that organisations engaged in the delivery of non-standard goods, facilities and services typically require staff with high level competencies not just in standard project tools and techniques but also, and perhaps more importantly, in project formulation, strategic analysis and systematic business integration to deliver the planned benefits to customer organisations.

- **What is the purpose of the PDP Workshop?**
  PDP Workshop is staged to provide an opportunity for professional people to develop their own dedicated learning and development plans in this field. Participants study the accelerated change occurring in all fronts and its impacts on professional development and practice. They consider the range of competencies that need to be mastered, including socio-cultural and leadership competencies, ethics and social responsibility. Individuals can then articulate their professional goals and aspirations, assess their current competencies and develop a workable solution to meet their needs. Courses offered by APIC provide a cost effective and efficient pathway to accelerated and structured learning and development.

- **What are the factors to consider in optimising L&D efforts?**
  In assessing different options, methods and strategies to reach the desired level of competency it is important to consider the following:
  - What is the opportunity cost of one’s time in each option?
  - How much is the estimated total cost of each option? (Include tuition fees and all direct expenses, such as computer, books, transport costs etc.)
  - What is the worth of the end result, e.g. will it expand one’s understanding and intellectual framework for informed professional practice?
  - Will it relevant to one’s current and future professional career?
  - How well will it prepare the person for coping with future change and uncertainties; and
  - Will it provide a proper foundation for professional performance and growth?

- **Can the PDP Workshop fit into an existing organisational capability development plan?**
  Yes, in fact the PDP workshop provides an ideal means for alignment of individual professional development efforts and that of employer’s organisational capability development framework.

- **Is there potential for workplace integration?**
  As stated already, this program promotes a
holistic project-based learning philosophy that requires students to learn through engagement in projects under mentoring. They are encouraged to select a case project related to their work front. Students are thus able to integrate learning and practice or transfer their newly acquired expertise to their work front. Team and peer group interaction form an essential part of the learning and development process.

- **How can employers benefit from sponsoring their staff development in this program?**
  
  “The rate at which companies lose their leadership positions doubled from the mid-’70s to the mid-’90s”... McKinsey Quarterly, 25 January 2005, members’ edition.

Organisations need to develop capability in speed, openness, flexibility, and forward-focused thinking. Enterprise project and business management capabilities are pivotal to this quest. Such capabilities are manifested through staff competencies, organisational systems and culture, leadership and continuous development. Investment in developing staff skills in business and project management will pay large dividends over the long run but need articulation, assessment, development and certification.

- **How can staff and employers’ interests be aligned?**
  
  Staff members of an organisation are able to fully factor in their employers’ needs and strategic goals when developing their L&D plans. If the employer organisation has a strategic plan in place, they can use it to vet their staff L&D plans before offering sponsorship. They can also appoint an internal mentor and facilitator to monitor the progress of their staff. In addition, and to ensure effectiveness, they can record the actual job performance of their sponsored staff and link that to the individual L&D progression. This approach maximises work front performance vis-à-vis individual competency acquisition.

- **Who are course convenors or mentors?**
  
  APIC’s policy is to mix academic rigour with industry pragmatism and hence provide opportunity for the acquisition of new perspectives that can be applied to projects or businesses. To achieve this aim, APIC employs leading practitioners and recognised academics to lead the delivery of the course units. They are referred to as course convenors and mentors.

- **Are the courses within GPBPM fully endorsed by Professional Bodies?**

  In 2005 the Australian Institute of Project Management (AIPM) assessed and endorsed APIC courses in project management. It must be noted that the GPBPM has been formally assessed and accredited by the Higher Education Recognition Directorate of the Department of Education and Training in NSW, Australia. The independent panel appointed by the DET had full representative from Engineers Australia the peak professional engineering body in Australia.

- **Does the GPBPM cover recognised PM Standards?**

  The GPBPM cover recognised PM Standards but is not a training course for PM Standards. APIC’s courses are very rigorous and aim to impart higher levels of knowledge and abilities, well above those contemplated in typical Standards.

- **Does GPBPM cover the registration/certification requirements of professional bodies?**

  The GPBPM applies a high level professional competency assessment model in all of its courses that values intellectual agility, encourages systemic approach, critical thinking and professional and ethical behaviour. APIC does not follow the normative model of professionalism that has been the basis for certification in most professional registration and certification schemes. APIC applies a system of evidence-based competency assessment that is in addition to the knowledge test and project-based assessment. Graduates are able to use their evidentiary documents to demonstrate their competencies to the relevant professional bodies and obtain the desired certification. This is a separate process conducted by individuals at their own time and expense.

- **What is the target age range for students in GPBPM?**

  There is no minimum or maximum age for undertaking postgraduate studies in GPBPM. There is no discrimination on the grounds of gender, age, religion, ethnicity or other socio-economic differentiators. Note however that admission in any of the formal award courses is conditional upon the candidate holding recognised undergraduate qualifications and or other acceptable qualifications and professional experience.

- **What are the admission criteria?**

  - Any person with appropriate qualification may complete any unit(s) and achieve a Certificate of Attainment and a grade (subject to assessment).
  - Those with appropriate qualifications may be admitted to the Postgraduate Certificate
candidature.

- A bachelor degree in a relevant field will permit admission to the Postgraduate Diploma, MBPM or MBA (PPM) candidature.
- English proficiency certificates are also needed for admission of students from non-English speaking countries except when their degree is awarded by a recognised English speaking university or college.

### How do I enrol and choose my study program?

There are two enrolment processes (running side by side):

- Enrolling in the chosen units
- Formal admission and enrolment as a graduate student of Asia Pacific International College (candidate for one of the aforementioned academic awards)

Enrolment in a chosen unit can be requested by visiting the web site, then clicking on "Online Enrolment". After choosing the desired units or components of the courses the student can submit the form on-line. The enrolment request will be processed by APIC staff and the applicant informed of the fees and charges payable. Formal admission requires lodgement of a duly-completed application form together with the supporting documentation as per the instructions on the application form. The application form can be obtained in hard copy form or downloaded from the web site. It can be used for requesting admission in the following academic awards:

- Postgraduate Certificate in PM
- Postgraduate Diploma in PM
- Master of Business and Project Management
- MBA (Project and Program Management)

### Where can I get information on tuition fees and administrative charges?

For up-to-date information regarding tuition fees and relevant administrative charges, as well as refund policies please visit the web site:

www.apicolleger.com

### How long does it normally take to do the Master degree?

GPBPM provides maximum flexibility. For the MBPM and MBA (PPM) degrees the maximum duration of candidature is 4 years. The minimum duration is 12 and 18 months respectively. For the GradCertPM and GradDipPM the maximum duration is 3 years. The minimum duration is 6 months and 12 months respectively.

### What is covered in each unit of study?

The contents of each unit is described in a 4-5 page outline that may be found online. Table 1 lists the units currently offered in this program.

### Is there any face-to-face teaching in GPBPM?

Yes! In addition to the 2-day intensive PDP workshop, each unit of study begins with a 4-day knowledge intensive workshop. Each knowledge intensive workshop will:

- define and lay an intellectual framework for the subject unit
- teach the fundamental principles
- engage students in intensive learning, debate and discourse
- achieve a degree of knowledge alignment
- test the adequacy of students’ knowledge prior to the start of the project phase
- provide an opportunity for students and staff to get to know one another better and to socialise and receive intellectual stimulation in the process.

### Where can I get further information?

Please visit the web site and click on FAQ (frequently asked questions). If you have a question not covered by the FAQ section of the web site please contact:

The Academic Management Office
Asia Pacific International College
admin@apicolleger.com
Asia Pacific International College
(A.C.N.061 101 488)

A Recognised Higher Education Institution for Transformative Education

Asia Pacific International College (APIC) is an independent, government registered, not-for-profit higher Australian education institution devoted to providing planned, customised, responsive, structured, competency-based accredited courses, flexible to suit professional people, individual organisations, industry sectors and government. APIC aims to produce graduates who are competent, confident leaders with acquired new capabilities. Asia Pacific International College’s Charter is:

- Development of wisdom to cope with a world characterised by complexity, uncertainty and change
- Customisation of education and training to meet individual and organisational needs
- Promotion of clinical learning and practice to engender professionalism and ethical behaviour
- Integration of learning and practice
- Transplantation or enhancement of a culture of creativity and innovation
- Provision of meaningful graduate education and professional development globally, particularly in emerging economies
- Effective partnership with business, government agencies, communities and society at large for advancement of knowledge and its beneficial application to the relevant spheres of human activity

Asia Pacific International College is a student-centred and customer-focused higher education institution offering postgraduate degree qualifications. It operates on the basis of modern management principles, blending entrepreneurship with speed, openness, flexibility, and forward thinking. APIC’s core competitive advantage is its ability to deliver its courses and services to any organisation and any individual around the globe. APIC recognises that for it to be successful and effective, it must work internationally within a network of partners and suppliers to respond to the changing demand of the customers and provide just-in-time graduate education and professional development services. APIC is governed by its Board of Directors though it takes advice from the Governors’ Council and an independent Advisory Board.

The Governors’ Council
The Governors’ Council is a council of all persons and body corporates who have made or are making a substantial financial contribution to APIC’s objectives. The Council meets at least once a year to advise the Board of Directors and review and facilitate the College’s progress towards achieving its mission under its Constitution. Life Governors, Governors and Corporate Members of the Governors’ Council are entitled to the privileges determined by the APIC Constitution. Life Governors and Governors are entitled to one seat each on the Governors’ Council, while every 5 Corporate Members of the Council are entitled to one seat.

The Board of Directors
APIC’s Board of Directors has responsibility for strategic planning, positioning and growth of APIC and for meeting its objectives; it is made up of the President, Chancellor, Deputy Chancellor, Chair of Academic Board, Director of Finance and Director of Due Diligence and other co-opted Directors. Most of the Board members are external to APIC to ensure sound governance practices.

The Advisory Board
APIC’s Advisory Board plays a key role in its formation and operation. The Advisory Board comprises the following:
- Representatives from students and alumni
- Representatives from academic and administrative staff
- Representatives from government and business community
- Representatives from relevant professional bodies
- Prominent academics and community leaders (by invitation)
- Others at the discretion of the Board