

PROJECT: YOU

APM'S STUDENT GUIDE TO
PROJECT MANAGEMENT



THE CHARTERED BODY FOR THE PROJECT PROFESSION





WHERE IN THE WORLD?

- BURJ KHALIFA, UAE
- HS2, UK
- OLYMPIC STADIUM, JAPAN
- THREE GORGES DAM, CHINA

These are megaprojects costing billions of pounds, but the majority of projects are not this huge and some will be local to you, like a new supermarket or hospital ward.



WHAT ARE PROJECTS?

Projects come in different shapes and sizes and all have an impact on the world around us.

Every project needs a project team to keep a close watch on plans, budgets, teams, quality of outputs and any issues that may cause a problem to the project. Without one, projects are likely to fail. And that could mean the late opening of an airport or, even worse, no music festival.

So, what does a project professional look like?

They look like you.

This short APM guide shows you more about a profession that plays a big part in making things happen and keeps on growing as more companies in more sectors become project-based.

PROJECT SKILLS

So, you've decided that a career in projects looks interesting.

Now have a think about the skills you have, and compare them with those of a successful project professional:

ORGANISATION

The chances are that you are the one who arranges the holidays or evenings out with your friends. You probably don't like uncertainty and you prefer to get things done today – after all, why wait until tomorrow?

LEADERSHIP

You are happy to get the job done yourself, but it's no problem to get other people involved too, as they'll have different skills to you. Your talent is being able to bring the right people together at the right time for the right result. Project professionals are experts in making teams work effectively.

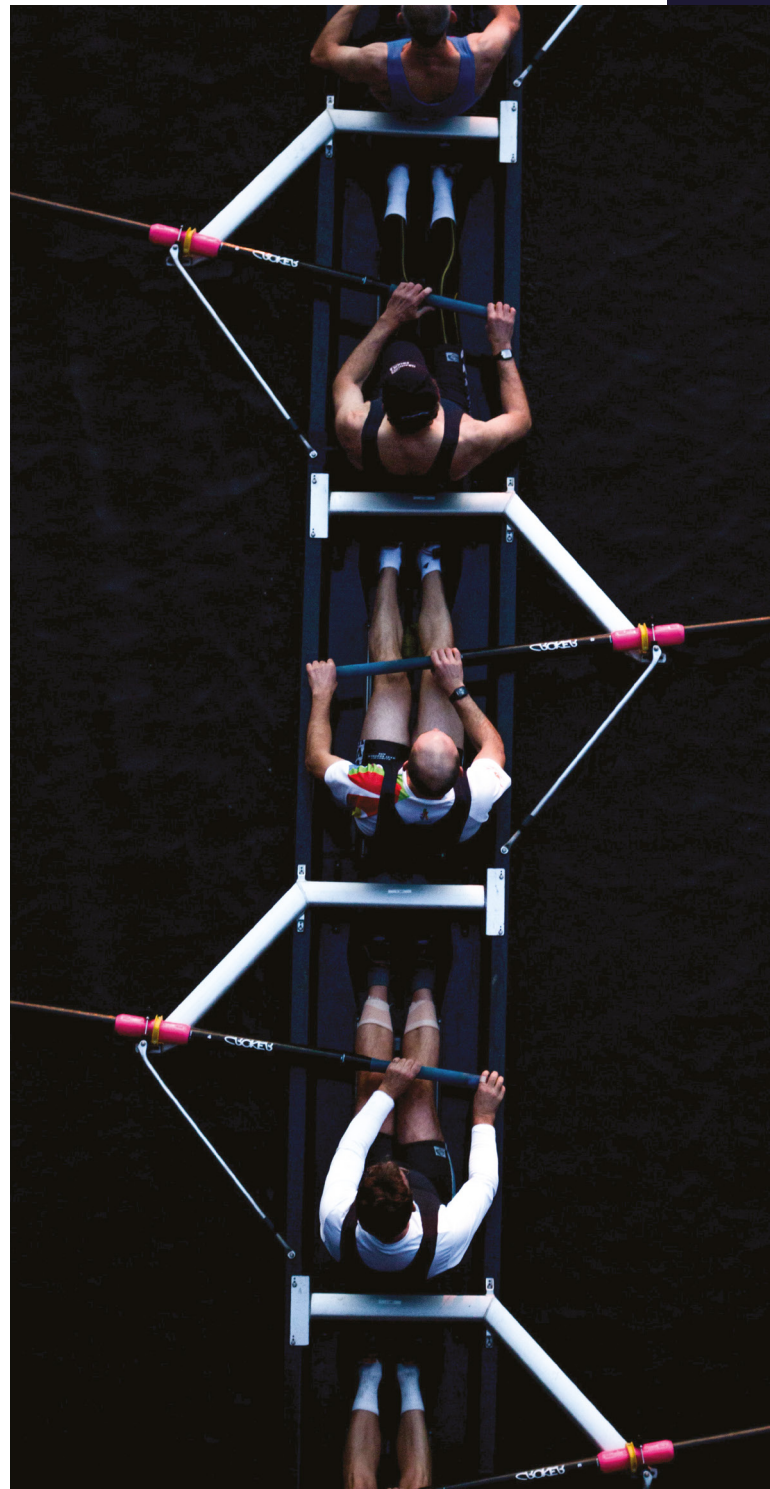
RESILIENCE

Mañana is not in your dictionary, and nor is failure. Your determination will get others working as a team and solving problems along the way so that together you'll succeed.

COMMUNICATION

Making sure that everyone knows what's happening, and what needs to be done, is a critical part of being a good project professional. Hiding is not an option.

You are not expected to be an expert in projects on day one – you will learn the technical parts on the job, but your attitude and soft skills are what will get you the role.



WHERE ARE PROJECTS?

Just about every sector has a project function, which means great opportunities for you to combine your job with your interests. Here's a flavour of some of the sectors that engage with projects, with an example of how for each one.



MEDIA

You could be involved in creating new studios for TV programmes, to make them more flexible for new filming technologies.



FINANCIAL SERVICES

Project professionals in this sector are busy helping large organisations change the way they engage with their customers, to make it more digital and 'always on'.



IT

Nearly every company has an IT function; and with the speed of change in IT, project-based teams are there to implement system updates smoothly across a business.



PUBLIC SECTOR

The NHS is one of the world's largest employers; with a huge workforce and estate of buildings comes a need for renovation, construction, efficiency and innovation – project professionals are ideally placed to do this.



CONSTRUCTION

Building a house is a classic project; but innovation exists here as more construction is done 'off-site' and good project planning brings materials to the right place at the right time, with the right experts on-site.



ENGINEERING

Another classic sector for project management; building a train line or a tunnel requires intense planning, careful budgeting and a lot of stakeholder management (getting everyone on side).



GOVERNMENT

The government is responsible for making important decisions about national infrastructure.



RETAIL

How do a retailer's fast fashion products get from the manufacturer to the store? Through good project management.



CHARITIES

These organisations have to make every penny count; what better way to do that than by project-based working?

...AND, AS YOU'D EXPECT, MANY MORE.

NETWORKS AND KNOWLEDGE

The Association for Project Management (APM) is the chartered body for the project profession. Tens of thousands of people in countries around the world, at different career stages, are APM members because we build your project knowledge and networks.

APM QUALIFICATIONS

APM designs professional qualifications which you can find on our website apm.org.uk/qualifications – the two you are most likely to see early in your career are our Project Fundamentals Qualification (PFQ) and the Project Management Qualification (PMQ).

PFQ gives you essential knowledge about the world of projects. It's ideal for those about to start a career in projects, and for those looking to be more efficient in other roles where project-based working is becoming more common.

PMQ is the qualification that sits within both project management apprenticeships and graduate schemes – employers value its holistic view of projects including the importance of soft skills.

APM MEMBERSHIP

If you are reading this, you are probably a student at a school, college or university. If you are older than 16 you can join APM as a Student member, for free, whatever subjects you're studying. You can sign up online via apm.org.uk/membership – and it's open to project management apprentices too.

Having APM Student membership on your CV and our digital badge on your LinkedIn profile shows prospective employers that you are serious about your project career. More importantly, membership gives you access to networking events with other Student members and young project professionals, to increase your knowledge and raise your profile.

As you develop your career you can become an Associate member, then a Full APM member (known as MAPM) and eventually become a Chartered Project Professional (ChPP), APM's newest and most valuable title.

CHARTERED PROJECT PROFESSIONAL

As well as being a Chartered body, APM issues the Chartered Project Professional (ChPP) designation to project professionals around the world who have the right mix of knowledge and experience. The chartered brand is valuable in many countries, in many different professions. Having the letters ChPP after your name makes it clear to companies that you are highly-qualified, and an asset to any organisation.

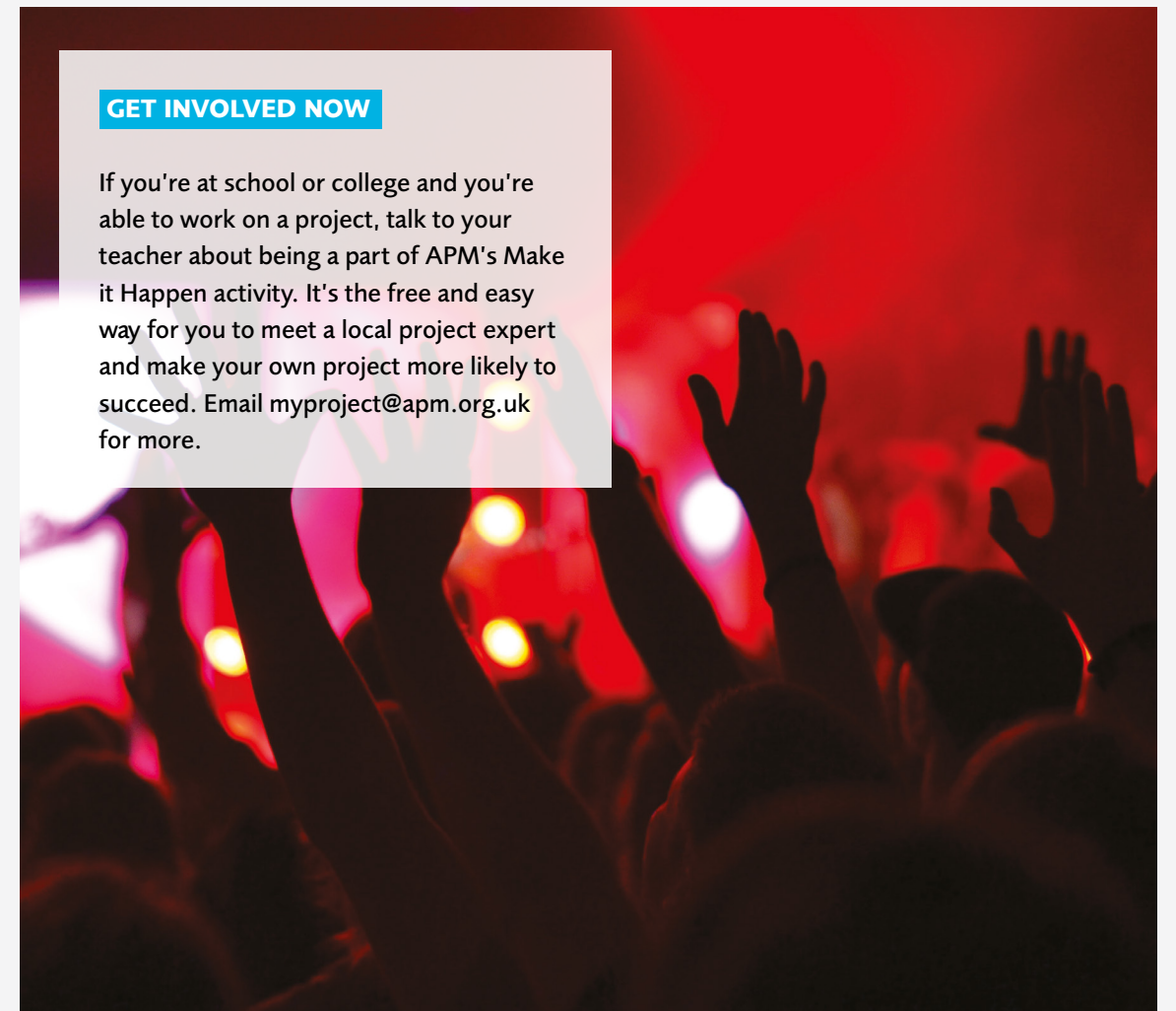
If you are looking to study at university you will see that there are Project Management degrees that link to our ChPP status. This linkage means that you don't have to take any further project qualifications after you graduate to be eligible to apply for ChPP – all you need to do is get the right kind of project experience.

To find out what it takes to become a Chartered Project Professional, and to see what others have to say about the value it brings, visit apm.org.uk/chartered



GET INVOLVED NOW

If you're at school or college and you're able to work on a project, talk to your teacher about being a part of APM's Make it Happen activity. It's the free and easy way for you to meet a local project expert and make your own project more likely to succeed. Email myproject@apm.org.uk for more.



CASE STUDIES



DILAN OTHMAN | **ROYAL HASKONINGDHV**

After studying Civil Engineering, I completed a Master's degree in Project Management which led to my current role in Royal HaskoningDHV as a graduate project manager within the Project Management Consultancy Advisory Group. Projects are a huge part of our everyday lives, yet they often go unnoticed.

For me, variety is the greatest appeal of working in project management. Every project is different, each comes with its unique challenges and each is accompanied by further learning opportunities. Working at Royal HaskoningDHV has provided me exactly that. So far, I have worked in teams delivering international projects including shipyards, airports, pipelines and environmental consent applications in project control, coordinator and assistant PM roles.

I realised early on that a PM's main role is to provide a seamless work environment for the team by handling all the processes, discussions and politics surrounding a project whilst also navigating the team towards the end goal. Besides knowledge in cost, schedule, and risk management, this requires a lot of diplomacy and interpersonal skills with the ability to observe and steer the wider picture. I am working towards my APM Project Management Qualification which I believe will make a great contribution to my professional and personal development.



RAVINDER KANG | **BT**

I joined BT straight from school, having done A levels in History, Economics and Religious Studies. I chose an apprenticeship rather than university because I wanted to gain work experience while studying, without incurring debt. I am currently working on a project to roll out laptops to employees of a client. The skills I have gained as a project manager don't just apply to my role; my apprenticeship has taught me to plan, budget, organise and work efficiently, and it has increased my confidence.

We all use project management in our day-to-day lives, sometimes without realising it. Think about booking a holiday, planning a wedding or organising an after-school activity. That's all project management. In our work lives we need to manage expectations, deadlines, budgets...the list of project management skills goes on. I enjoy the independence of managing my own workload and the satisfaction of overseeing projects from start to finish.

My Associate Project Manager apprenticeship is a great way for me to gain operational experience, and includes an APM professional qualification to help me progress my career. I'm looking forward to all the upcoming challenges and opportunities and hope to become a Senior Project Manager in future.



LAWRENCE THOMPSON | **CABINET OFFICE**

After graduating from the University of Leeds, I joined the Project Delivery Fast Stream graduate programme. I started at the Department for Transport where my project was to produce a mobile phone offering of 2,000 iPhones and Samsungs in exchange for everyone sacrificing their BlackBerry and desk phone.

What I thought was the easiest sell in the world initially ran into difficulties. I realised that the hardest thing to try to change is the way real people behave and act! I quickly learned that being a successful Project Manager requires the ability to analyse complex problems, build strong relationships based on trust and be a diplomat or take charge depending on what the situation requires.

I've now worked in several government departments and recently worked in the NHS. I'm very lucky to be working on a programme bringing together four national departments and organisations to deliver a genuine transformation in Children and Young People's Mental Health Services. Opportunities for progression are about working on programmes with greater impact, managing greater complexity or simply spending a lot more cash.

The profession is rare in that, although the context and situation will change, the skills will always be in demand. More than any other career path, you will have the ability to choose the setting in which you apply your craft.



LAURA SPRINGALL | **COMPUTACENTER**

I joined Computacenter in 2017 on the Project Management Graduate Scheme. This was a great route into the company where the first 6 months were spent rotating round different departments in the business. The rotations included sales, engineering, service management, international project management, and many more key departments besides; one of the most memorable being a visit to our Barcelona Global Service Desk. I also gained great exposure to the senior leadership team, who take an active interest in mentoring and supporting new talent.

Following rotations, I gained invaluable experience working for governmental and financial clients. A real plus of the role was the amount of responsibility I was given. I was also encouraged to gain industry-recognised qualifications. I completed the scheme and was promoted to Project Manager within 18 months.

I thoroughly enjoy being a Project Manager due to the positive impact that implementing change brings, for example seeing users adopt new technology that improves their productivity and work-life balance. The key to being a good project professional is having good soft skills, such as leadership, proactivity, excellent communication and problem solving.



SYDNEY WATERS | **FUGRO**

I am a project management apprentice, working towards my APM PMQ qualification. I joined a year after completing my A levels; previously I had worked in leisure, with no project experience. The apprenticeship has allowed me to gain knowledge and experience through my colleagues around me, who have impeccable knowledge of what it takes to be a successful project professional. Working with Fugro has given me the opportunity to work on a diverse range of projects, from small-scale geotechnical ground investigations to much larger, complex projects that involve both geotechnical and geophysical elements. I have also had the opportunity to work on onshore projects, within the lab and reporting packages.

These real-life experiences are not only invaluable to furthering my career, but also provide me with the depth of knowledge needed to succeed in my apprenticeship. The opportunity to study whilst in role allows me to apply the knowledge I am gaining from the APM to live projects. I find project management diverse and exciting; no two days are ever the same. From concept to close out, each project is unique and provides fresh experiences for me to both learn from and apply to projects in the future. My time with Fugro has been both innovative and challenging.



CARISS ADDY | **LINKLATERS**

After graduating with a degree in Mathematics, I began my career in project management working at Linklaters, a Magic Circle law firm. As you can imagine, this was a big shift from my subject, but my numeracy skills have proved to be invaluable in this new setting. I enjoy the variety that working in a corporate law firm affords me.

My projects range across different industries and countries, enabling me to work on very interesting high-profile matters which are sometimes on the news! In this role, attention to detail is important, as is being able to manage competing priorities and remaining flexible.

I have found it extremely rewarding setting up processes and applying project management principles which help the lawyers I work with to be more efficient in delivering excellent service to clients. I have obtained the APM PFQ and plan to complete the PMQ qualification next year. I have learnt a great deal since joining Linklaters, including (and especially) the fact that I have so much more to learn! However, I am confident that the combination of work experience as well as the framework provided by APM will set me up for a successful career in project management.

MONEY MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND

You'll spend a long time working, so doing something you enjoy will make your world a happy place. Mix work with your interests and values and you'll hit the jackpot.

If your motivation is travelling around the world, you could aim to get involved in megaprojects. So, rather than the Elizabeth Line in the UK, what about a megaproject like the Hong Kong to Macau bridge? Or the Etihad Rail project which plans to link UAE with Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait?

If you're more interested in socially-valuable projects in the developing world, take a look at a project like the Fael Khair Project, which saw schools in Bangladesh double up as cyclone shelters.

Once you've done your research on these astonishing projects, you can find out more about salaries – check out APM's annual Salary Survey which shows that some APM members earn more than

MORE THAN £100,000 A YEAR.

By the time you embark on your career, the Chartered Project Professional designation ChPP will have given a competitive advantage to project professionals and companies' project teams bidding for new contracts.

INFORMED CHOICES

The next step you make has to be the right one - **FOR YOU**

If uni isn't for you, discover apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships. You could even take a degree apprenticeship and get a Project Management degree, an APM professional qualification, a full-time, paid job – and a very positive bank balance.

Thousands of people have been on a project management apprenticeship, in a huge range of sectors and companies across the country. It's definitely a smart move for you if you're not sure about doing a full-time degree.

If you are off to uni, you could take a degree in Project Management. There are more than 30 universities that

offer undergraduate PM degrees, and more than 60 that run postgraduate ones. Remember that companies will recruit you based on you and your soft skills, not just the degree you hold.

YOU COULD MIX THE TWO – some have graduated from university before starting an apprenticeship.

KEEP YOUR OPTIONS OPEN – unless you're 100% certain about a specific path, apply for universities and apprenticeships.

...and if you can't see yourself as a project professional just yet, that's ok. People come in to the project profession after doing other roles as varied as TV production, engineering, being in the armed forces and event management.



APM LINKS WITH BUSINESS

These are just some of the companies that are corporate members with us. It's a great way of seeing the diversity of projects.



THE ROLES

Project managers play a key role in the project profession, BUT THEY'RE NOT THE ONLY ONES.

There are project co-ordinators, change managers, programme managers and directors, portfolio managers and directors, risk analysts, heads of transformation and many more versions of these job titles.

If you're new to the sector, the chances are you'll be a Project Co-ordinator. You could be involved in maintaining the project schedule, allocating tasks to different members of the project team and looking for ways to make the project as efficient as it can be. You will also update other people in the organisation on project progress.

As you gain experience and expertise you could become an Assistant Project Manager or Project Manager. This type of role will still see you doing some scheduling and managing stakeholders; you could also use your negotiation skills to iron out any issues between different interest groups; you might do some scoping of the project requirements; you could be involved in the handover of projects – when they become 'business as usual' (BAU); you could also be responsible for securing resources from inside and outside the business; scrutinising budgets and

controlling costs; looking at risks and opportunities, and designing responses to them.

With more experience you will know what you enjoy most, which could be building and leading teams; working on contracts; scoping project requirements; managing stakeholders; or getting approval for business cases.

For some, the next step could be Programme Manager, someone who oversees larger-scale projects undertaken in a sophisticated way; it could be Portfolio Manager – someone with oversight of many large projects at once. Others prefer to work as a Business Analyst, gathering and scrutinising data from across the business, before making recommendations for improvement. Some become a Change Manager, moving a company from how it functions now to where it would like to be.

The beauty of the project profession is that there is no prescribed path. You can shape the career journey that is right for you and your skillset.

For more information on the many different roles in the world of projects, visit apm.org.uk

CASE STUDIES



JOE BURROWS | **NATIONWIDE**

I started at Nationwide when I was 18, working in customer service, and stayed there throughout my degree. I loved the culture of 'growing your own talent' so, as I approached graduation, I applied for the Change Development Programme, to begin a career in project management.

Since joining the programme in 2017, I've completed two placements and am now in my third and final one. I've worked across Payments, Banking & Savings and Business Banking, with exposure to other areas of the business throughout. I've created project plans, funding submissions and RAID logs. I've seen each phase of a waterfall project and delivered benefits. Alongside the day job, I've gained my APM PFQ and PMQ, giving me a wider understanding of the what, why and when in projects.

The variety is the most enjoyable aspect of projects for me – there's never a dull day and there's never a day without learning. Working with incredibly talented people across the business is also very enjoyable, and quite unique to projects. From my short time in the project world, I think the two most important traits for a project professional are work ethic and attitude. If you've got these nailed down, then the rest will follow.



MITCH CLARK | **PROTOLAN**

After being a project management summer intern with Protolan, I was delighted to be offered a full-time position when I graduated. Protolan work primarily in the food manufacturing sector and 90% of the work is on-site. Every project we deliver is tailor-made to suit, which has been an excellent way to learn the fundamentals of project management and how they can be adapted. My engineering background supports my understanding of equipment-related projects and working alongside other industry professionals has given me a wealth of knowledge across a wide range of disciplines. I have learnt about everything from building construction methods to robotics and the operational demands of FMCG companies. It's this variety that makes project work so enjoyable. I've worked with 13 different clients since joining Protolan in 2016, in the UK, Ireland, USA and Poland.

One of my projects involved working on the design and procurement stages of a new ready-meal factory installation to supply products into a Texan supermarket chain. Much was done remotely but I did work in the USA with the client, equipment suppliers and architect to coordinate the design, specification and installation plan for the new facility. I have found that success as a project professional comes from having an open mind.



CLEO NKALA | **TELENT**

When I graduated in Accounting and Business, I had a rough idea of the career path I hoped to take but wasn't sure exactly what to expect. The graduate scheme at telent, designed in line with APM's Competency Framework, ensures that you work towards having all the skills you need to be a Project Manager.

I am currently working on a security project within the National Roads Telecommunications Service (NRTS). This network connects emergency phones and other roadside devices to a number of regional control centres. The project ensures that an IT health check is performed on the NRTS network by an agreed date. I was asked to manage this project just six months into the graduate programme. My role within this project is to ensure that all material and labour costs are forecasted, and spending justified. I also inform senior management on the project's progress and ensure our client is kept up-to-date. My liaison with suppliers allows me to gain experience in procurement and the governance behind it. I enjoy working on this project because I am accountable for all decisions I make, and to be responsible for a payment milestone at such an early stage into the programme gives a sense of fulfilment. To excel in projects, it is important to be a team player with effective communication and leadership skills. Furthermore, a can-do attitude is vital as is having the confidence to speak up when you need help. I hope to be a programme director one day and be accredited with APM.





GET IN TOUCH

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