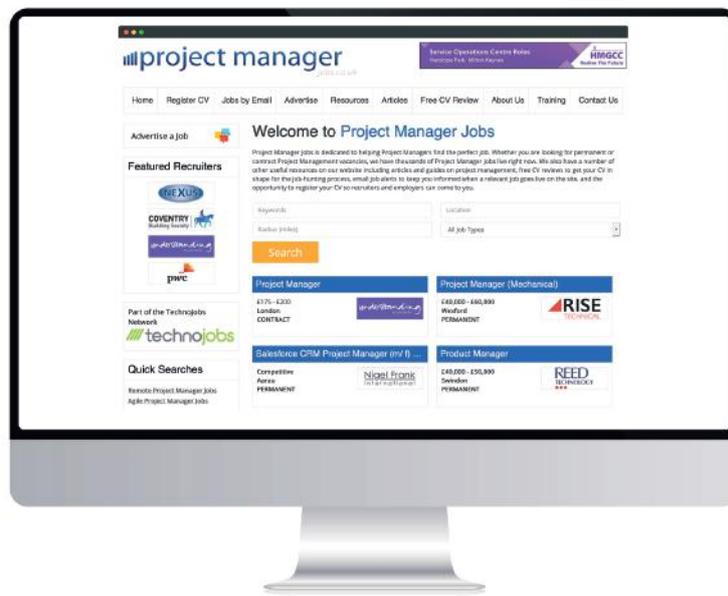


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GRADUATE GUIDE TO PROJECT MANAGEMENT



The demand for project managers is growing considerably compared to other occupations. According to a report released by the Project Manager Institute, the project management sector is expected to grow as much as 33% by 2027, creating 22 million new jobs in the 11 countries it looked at including the UK. There is a skill gap in project management as the demand is currently greater than the number of professionals able to fulfil the roles, therefore it's the perfect career for graduates to get into.

If you are a graduate looking to get into project management, then you've come to the right place. In this graduate guide to project management, we will cover topics such as the benefits of project management, the progression opportunities, gaining experience and how to go about securing a project manager job.

WHAT IS PROJECT MANAGEMENT?

Project management is when a project manager, looks after and 'manages' a project. It's a project manager's responsibility to create a project plan, create a budget, manage the team working on the project, and to keep the stakeholders informed, amongst a number of other activities. Businesses will create projects in order to grow and extend their businesses, so project management is essential for businesses and their growth.

CAN A BUSINESS GRADUATE BECOME A PROJECT MANAGER?

A number of universities offer business degrees with project management which means that you are able to cover project management modules such as fundamentals of project management, risk management and stakeholder and communications management. These are all really important parts of project management.

If your business degree has/had project management modules then this will put you in a better position when it comes to becoming a project manager as it gives you a slight head start.

However, even if your degree is not relevant to project management, there are several professional project management courses you can take following university. For example, it's recommended for anyone who wants to get into project management to acquire project manager qualifications such as Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM) (for project team members, entry-level project managers, undergraduate or graduate students studying project management) and Project Management Professional (ideal for project managers looking to develop their skills further). These courses are not a requirement, however, they will likely increase the likelihood of you securing a role if you don't have any other relevant qualifications or experience. Gaining these qualifications can give you a great starting point in your project management career as they will give you an overview and understanding of what project management involves.

There are also a number of other project management qualifications that you can acquire and these are:

- Prince2 Foundation – This is an entry-level project management qualification. It would be an ideal qualification for graduates to acquire the basic knowledge of project management.
- Prince2 Practitioner – Once you have completed the Prince2 Foundation, you can carry out this course to acquire the next level qualification. You will need to have either the Prince 2 Foundation level or the PMP/CAPM to do this course.
- ITIL v4 Foundation – Although not a typical project management qualification, it can be great for IT project managers.
- Six Sigma Collection – In this course you can learn about the different tools and techniques for process improvement.
- CompTIA Project+ – This again is an entry-level qualification for prospective project managers. This qualification is deemed the easiest out of the entry-level qualifications mentioned, so it would be ideal for those with little knowledge of project management.

WHY GRADUATES SHOULD GET INTO PROJECT MANAGEMENT?

There are a number of reasons why project management is a great career choice for graduates, and below are just some of them.

ALWAYS IN DEMAND

Project managers are always high in demand. Businesses are always looking to improve and expand, and when a business is looking to start any new projects they will naturally need a project manager to guide them through it.

PROGRESSION OPPORTUNITIES

You have great progression opportunities when you become a project manager. You will likely start off as a junior project manager and work your way up to become a senior project manager. You can even change the course of your career a little and start looking at programme management, which is considered one of the next steps up from a senior project manager.

REWARDING SALARY

As a project manager, you can earn a great salary. Of course as with the salary for any job it will depend on your experience, qualifications, and location as well as numerous other factors. However, generally, project managers are paid well. The starting salary that a graduate project manager can expect to earn in the UK is between £25,000 up to £32,500. In London, an experienced project manager can expect to earn around £62,500 according to Technojobs data. Therefore, there is a great potential to earn a higher salary within a couple of years of joining the industry.

DIFFERENT SECTORS TO CHOOSE FROM

You can work in multiple different sectors as a project manager. For example, you can become an IT project manager, construction project manager, or perhaps you might choose to project manage in the finance, banking and even education sectors.

VARIETY OF PROJECTS

The great thing about becoming a project manager is the variety of projects you will work on. No two projects will be the same so it won't ever get boring or repetitive. This is also great for gaining new skills and expanding your knowledge.

HOW TO GET A JOB AS A PROJECT MANAGER?

If you have decided that you want to become a project manager then here is how to secure a project manager role.

SHADOW A PROJECT MANAGER

A good way to find out about the day to day life of a project manager is to shadow a project manager for a day or a week. It may be difficult to find a project manager who will let you shadow them however there are ways to build connections and networks and you may be able to find a mentor who can give you the opportunity. A great way to do this is by using LinkedIn to connect with project managers or to join project manager groups.

GAIN EXPERIENCE

Having qualifications and a degree is a great starting point, however, you will need to start gaining experience as soon as possible to secure the right roles. Work experience or internships can be a great way to gain experience before stepping into your first junior level role. You might even consider taking a year during your degree to work in project management to gain relevant skills and experience.

BUILD A PORTFOLIO

Start building a portfolio of your successful projects to show to any potential employers and let your success speak for you. Also, make sure to get reviews, testimonials and feedback from clients as this can be imperative in getting your next client/job.

WHAT GRADUATE PROJECT MANAGER OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE?

As a graduate who has relevant knowledge, you are in a good position to get your career started. You can either try to secure a junior role and gain some relevant qualifications to boost your career or look at post-graduate degrees in project management. Here are some ways in which you can find opportunities within project management.

SEARCH ON JOB BOARDS

You can also find graduate project manager roles by carrying out a simple search on most job boards. Projectmanagerjobs.co.uk even has a dedicated section to graduate project manager jobs, which makes it easier to find a role to get started with your career.

COMPANY WEBSITE

If you have a list of potential 'dream' employers then it's worth keeping an eye on their website. Most companies have a recruitment page where they will usually advertise their vacancies. By keeping up to date with potential employers and their job opportunities, you might land your ideal role.

FORUMS

Forums are a great way to keep up with the latest in the project management industry and they allow you to get involved in the project management community. There are a number of project management forums that you can consider joining such as Project Smart forum and Project Management forum.

PROJECT MANAGER GROUPS

There are also groups, organisations and institutions that you can join to again keep up with the latest in the project management world, including the latest vacancies available. One of the most prominent is the Project Management Institute (UK). They are a community of project managers that hold events and promote project management in the UK and also help project managers develop and grow in their career.

SOCIAL MEDIA

You might not expect to find jobs on social media, however social media a powerful marketing tool utilised by companies and job boards to advertise roles. Therefore, it's worth following job boards social media accounts and any companies you might want to work for. You can also join groups on social media such as UK Project Manager Jobs for useful advice as well as the latest job openings with some of the biggest tech companies in the UK.

UNIVERSITY CAREER HUBS

As a graduate, you are still able to benefit from some graduate perks such as having access to university career hubs. Most universities have online career hubs where they post roles and vacancies which are most suited to graduates. If you are struggling to find a project management graduate role through other avenues, then consider looking up jobs available on your university career hub.

NETWORKING

Networking can open up a number of opportunities especially when you are trying to secure a role. Whether you network online on social media platforms such as LinkedIn or attend an event held by the Project Management Institute UK, get yourself out there. Build your network and start connecting with the people in the project management industry.

ABOUT US

Project Manager Jobs is dedicated to helping project managers find the perfect job. Whether you are looking for permanent or contract project management vacancies, we have thousands of project manager jobs live right now. We also have a number of resources for those looking to secure their next project management role including a free CV review, tailored email job alerts, the opportunity to sign up to a candidate database so recruiters can approach you with vacancies, as well as a number of guides looking at all aspects of project management.

Project Manager Jobs is part of the Technojobs network and you can contact us here:

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