Project management @ Unisa

A complete guide to preparing yourself for career opportunities

UNISA | university of south africa

Contents

The information in this document was correct as on 20 September 2018. Visit the Directorate: Counselling and Career Development website (http://bit.ly/2ux94B5) for the latest version of this document.

Why should I know about project management?

- It is important to research as much information you can about possible career- and study options before you start with a qualification.
- Project management is an important workplace skill and an excellent supplement to existing qualifications or experience.

How will this information help me?

- It will provide you with insight into what project management is.
- It will help you gain more information about the skills needed in project management.
- It will help you identify possible career fields in project management.
- It will assist you in exploring project management qualifications offered by Unisa.

What is project management?

Project management can be described as the discipline of initiating, planning, executing, controlling, and closing the work of a team to achieve specific goals and meet specific success criteria. Simply put, project management is all about setting and achieving reasonable and attainable goals. It is the process of planning, organizing, and overseeing how and when these goals are met (*What is Project Management?* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_management).

According to the Project Management Institute, a project is "a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service or result", and project management, then, is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements (https://www.pmi.org/about/learn-about-pmi/what-is-project-management). Projects are found in all industries, including construction, human resource management, community development, mining, information technology and more.

Project managers are the professionals who are responsible for managing projects with specific resources and within a specific timeframe.

Effective project manager skills

Basic skills that are important when working within a fast-changing society include communication skills (reading, writing, creating online content, communicating

visually and evaluating information); social intelligence (connecting meaningfully with others and wanting to make a difference); teamwork (negotiating, motivating and engaging with diverse groups online and offline); problem solving and novel thinking (creating unique solutions to problems) and information management (filtering and making sense of information).

Think about your life experiences (work, volunteering, school, studies and personal) and then answer the following questions:

1. What skills do I have?
2. What skills do I need to develop related to the kind of opportunities I am hoping for?
3. How will I develop these skills?

As with most careers there are certain skills that the candidate is required to possess. Skills needed to be an effective project manager may include:

- Ability to multitask
- An orientation towards getting things done
- Analytical thinking
- Strong communication skills
- Strong leadership skills
- The ability to set and stick to a schedule

Qualities of a project manager

Various sources have stated that effective project managers possess qualities such as, but not limited to:

They are organised, naturally command authority, clear vision, be an extrovert, accountability, possess quick shifting abilities (knowing what to note and what to work), ability to delegate, leadership competence, empathetic, pragmatic, prioritise ruthlessly, a strong sense of teamwork, challenge assumptions and self-imposed limitations, manage the client's expectations, charismatic, anticipate and accommodate for change, look forward to doing work, ask good questions and listen to stake holders, have an attitude of gratitude and thank those who helped them succeed, and so forth.

For more information on the different qualities and personality traits of a good project manager visit the following website: http://markgibson.typepad.com/pgm_pm/2012/07/personality-traits-of-successfull-program-and-project-managers.html.

Learn more about project management

Search for free project management courses and open textbooks on these sites:

- Open University (http://www.open.ac.uk/openlearn/)

- Coursera (http://www.coursera.org/)

- Udemy (http://www.udemy.com/)

- Saylor Academy (http://www.saylor.org/books/)

- Open Textbook Library (http://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/)

- College Open Textbooks (http://www.collegeopentextbooks.org/textbook-listings/textbooks-by-subject/business)

- Open Culture (http://www.openculture.com/freeonlinecourses)

- iTunes university (http://www.apple.com/education/itunes-u/)

- YouTube (http://www.youtube.com/)

- FreeVideoLectures (http://freevideolectures.com/)

Careers in Project Management

Positions that you may apply for on the completion of your project management course may include things such as:

- Construction project manager *
- ICT project manager *
- Project administrator
- Project or programme manager *
- Small Business Manager *

Occupations marked with a * have been classified as high demand occupations (List of occupations in high demand, 2015).

Possible industries that project management can be used in can include:

- Advertising and Marketing
- Architecture
- Biotech
- Construction
- Health Services
- Engineering
- Legal
- Manufacturing
- Mining

- Real Estate
- Retail
- Technology and IT

Further information

Your career research will connect you to others who will help you to:

- answer questions you have with relation to your career choice;
- expand your understanding of the opportunities related to your career vision;
- identify "hidden" career paths that you did not think of previously; and
- think about how you could plan to pursue specific opportunities.

A quick search for Unisa alumni on LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) reveals the following information about Unisa alumni who indicate that they have studied project management:

Top 10 employers: Eskom, Standard Bank Group, Nedbank, Vodacom, Sasol, FNB, Transnet, Absa, Telkom, and Barclays Africa Group Limited.

Top 10 focus area of work: Program and project management, Operations, Information Technology, Engineering, Support, Sales, Consulting, Finance, and Administrative.

Top 10 study areas: Business Administration and Management, Project Management, Accounting, Information Technology, Psychology, Economics, Accounting and Finance. Marketing, Law, and Mathematics.

Top 10 skills: Project management, Management, Project planning, Change management, Microsoft Office, Strategic planning, Customer service, Business analytics, Leadership, and Microsoft Excel.

LinkedIn.com (23 June 2016)

Download the *Career research* brochure
http://www.unisa.ac.za/static/corporate_web/Content/About/Service%20departments/DCCD/Documents/career_research_interactive_unisa.pdf

Professional associations

Association for Project Management South Africa (APMSA)

The Mission of APSMA is to promote professional project management and move people forward. Professional project management means a deep understanding of project and general management tools, techniques and what is considered as "best practices". It requires a fundamental understanding of business and wealth creation processes. It requires a suite of value and guiding principles that will permit the project manager to do what is right rather than just expedient decision making. Respect for values and cultures, health and safety, and the environment of the interested parties is a paramount.

For more information on the APMSA visit their official website at http://www.apmsa.org.za/pages/page.php?pid=1.

SA Council for Project and Construction Management Professionals (SACPCMP)

The South African Council for Project and Construction Management Professions (SACPCMP) is a Juristic person established by Section 2 of the Project and Construction Management Act (Act No 48 of 2000).

The SACPCMP was established to regulate Construction Management and Construction Project Management Professionals to protect the public.

For more information on the SACPCMP visit their official website at: http://www.sacpcmp.org.za/.

Project management certification

You can choose to complete the necessary requirements to become a certified professional in project management. The Project Management Institute offers Project Management Professional (PMP) certification (http://www.pmi.org/certification/project-management-professional-pmp.aspx). The certification is an indication to employers that you have the necessary skills and knowledge related to project management. This certification may also be a requirement for some project management positions.

Think about…

- Why are you interested in project management?
- Where does your interest come from?
- Where are you hoping to be in five/ten years' time?
- What kind of opportunities are you hoping your studies in project management will prepare you for?

Interests are important to our choices. If you're interested in working with people, for example, how would you want to help them? If you're interested in working with money, would you want to manage other people's money?

What do you like doing? Write down at least three activities that you really enjoy (for example, reading books, gardening and playing soccer). Make some notes on how they relate to your interest in studying project management.

Your qualification will equip you with subject-specific knowledge and a number of work-related skills (transferable skills), for example the ability to learn fast in new

situations, to work independently, and to analyse, evaluate and interpret data. You should be able to identify and articulate the skills that you feel you are gaining through your studies. While you are busy with your studies, you need to reflect continuously on how you could apply the skills that you are learning to contribute to your professional development and who will be able to benefit from what you already know.

Project Management qualifications at Unisa

Unisa does not offer a specialised formal qualification in project management. If you are interested in completing a diploma or degree, you need to consider what skills you need to develop in order to be effective as a project manager, as well as which industry you plan to work in. Before you make your choice as to which programme to take, we encourage you to speak to individuals in your field/ economic sector to gather information about the suitability of a particular programme. For more information about beginning a career in project management and to help you select a qualification, you can read this article: http://bit.ly/2hgTfJg.

What is a Short Learning Programme?

Short Learning Programmes (SLPs) offered by Unisa focus on "just in time" and "just enough" learning to meet a specific learning need identified by society. This need can focus on enabling access to other Short Learning Programmes or to improve access to the study of formal qualifications at Unisa, or it can address a specific need in the workplace. Short Learning Programmes can update or broaden skills and knowledge in a specific area to enable life-long learning. In this manner, Short Learning Programmes assist students with their continuing professional development by upgrading their skills and knowledge in newly developed areas or by sharing the results of research.

These programmes are offered by various centres within the university, each with their own processes, rules and contact details. It is important to note that Short Learning Programmes are by nature short. They are not formal qualifications. Please note that Unisa is a public higher education institution established in terms of the Higher Education Act (Act 101/1997) and does not have or require a provider registration number at the Department of Education or SAQA.

Summary of Short Learning Programmes

Name of SLP	Offered by	Duration	Target group
Course in Basics of Project Management	Centre for Business Management	Six months	Any employee who may be involved with or who is interested in "project-type" work, similarly all people who may be responsible for planning and executing projects, aspirant project managers, junior project managers, assistant project managers, operations managers, project planners, project controllers
Programme in Basic, Intermediate and Advanced Project Management	Centre for Public Administration and Management	12 months	All local, provincial and central government sphere role players, NGOs, CBOs, communities, individuals and other interested clients
Practical Project Management Programme Advanced Project Management Programme	Graduate School for Business Learning (SBL)	One year	Middle-level managers in large organisation and persons who have a leadership role in smaller organisations
Applied project management in an information technology environment	Centre for Software Engineering	Six months	IT project managers
Managing Enterprise Agile Software Projects	Centre for Software Engineering	Six months	IT Project managers; general project managers; IT practitioners wanting to include project management of IT projects

Formal undergraduate qualifications at Unisa with Project Management modules

Qualification	Module Level	Module Name and Code
Diploma in Human Resource Management	Third level	PRM3701 Project Management
Diploma in Public Administration and Management	Second level	PUB2615 Project Management IIA PUB2617 Project Management IIB
Bachelor of Commerce (Generic)	Third level	INF3708 Software Project Management
Bachelor of Commerce in Business Informatics	Third level	INF3708 Software Project Management
Bachelor of Commerce in Public Procurement Management	Third level	PRM3701 Project Management
Bachelor of Commerce in Supply Chain and Operations Management	Third level	PRM3701 Project Management
Bachelor of Commerce in Quantitative Management	Third level	INF3708 Software Project Management
Diploma in Security Management	Second level	PUB2615 Project Management IIA PUB2617 Project Management IIB
Bachelor of Arts in Forensic Science and Technology	Third level	PMN501B Project Management V
Diploma in Information Technology	Third level	INF3708 Software Project Management
Advanced Diploma in Information Resource Management	First level	INF3708 Software Project Management
Bachelor of Science Chemistry and Information systems stream	Third level	INF3708 Software Project Management
Bachelor of Science Mathematics and Information systems stream	Third level	INF3708 Software Project Management

Qualification	Module Level	Module Name and Code
Bachelor of Science in Computing	Third level	INF3708 Software Project Management
Bachelor of Science in Informatics	Third level	INF3708 Software Project Management

Counselling and career development services at Unisa

The Unisa Directorate: Counselling and Career Development offers career-, academic- and personal counselling services to Unisa students and the broader community. You can talk to a counsellor about:

- **Career decisions.** I am not sure which career path to follow; I don't know which qualification would be best; I want to change my career direction…
- **Career information.** How can I find out more about a career in …
- **Employability.** How do I market myself to employers? How can I look for work? How can I compile an effective CV? How do I go about networking with others? How do I put together my career portfolio? How can I meet potential employers? How can I improve my interview skills?)
- **My studies at Unisa.** How can I get started with my studies? How do I plan my studies? How can I study more effectively? I don 't feel motivated to continue with my studies… I feel worried about preparing for/ writing the exams. I failed my exams – what now? I need to improve my reading/ writing/ numeracy skills
- **Personal issues.** How can I have better relationships with others? How can I cope more effectively with issues that impact on my studies?

Visit our website at http://www.unisa.ac.za/counselling to access many self-help resources, or talk to a counsellor by e-mail to counselling@unisa.ac.za.