

**London South Bank
University**

the **brighter** choice

MSc Business Project Management

Frequently Asked Questions



Frequently Asked Questions about the MSc in Business Project Management Course

You've probably got lots of questions about the Business Project Management course. That's entirely understandable; most of our students do, because they want to be sure that they are committing to a course that's right for them.

To help answer some of the queries you might have, we've put together a list of the most common questions we get asked. We've put them into three different categories: course benefits, course costs and general information. Hopefully these sections will address all of your queries but if not, don't hesitate to get in touch and we'll do our very best to help.

Course Benefits

Why undertake the MSc in Business Project Management?

This course is at the forefront of combining traditional approaches to business project management with the latest thinking in this fast-moving arena. It deals with both the theory and the application, helping you to put traditional and new approaches into action whilst embracing the new boundaries of the discipline's scope.

What is Business Project Management?

Business change through projects is an important concept being applied in public and private organisations. Projects are normally the development of new a product, process or service which improves performance of the business organisation. Examples of business

projects are wide ranging and can include: marketing campaigns, software applications, research and development, building constructions, and conference events. Businesses are annually investing significant amounts of money in projects in order to address the needs of the organisation. Employment surveys indicate the project management profession is continuously growing every year. Additionally, this has led to the inception of Association for Project Management (APM) and Project Management Institution (PMI) which are respectively the UK and USA professional bodies. There are many courses that teach traditional project management approaches which are underpinned by traditional concepts, principles and philosophy.

However, too many projects are associated with the symptoms of cost overrun, schedule slippage, poor quality and dis-benefits. Some causes of these symptoms are the limitations of traditional project management approaches (underpinning concept and principles), lack of project management knowledge and scope issues of the project management discipline. This has led to new thinking within the project management community, along with the need to utilise methodologies, methods or techniques – perhaps from different disciplines such Operational Research – –in order to deal with project complexity and uncertainty. This has led to the use of Systems-based methodology to tackle various project management tasks.

What are the unique features of the course?

This course is influenced by three important and interconnected areas: Profession, Practice and Research. This combination means that the curriculum has been developed with the awareness of the Association for Project Management (APM) and the Project Management Institute (PMI) and their bodies of knowledge, PRINCE2 (a UK governmental project management methodology), and MS Project. It is also informed by practical experiences and awareness of traditional methodologies, methods and techniques limitations.

The course has six unique features that are particularly relevant to these concepts of practice, profession and research:

1. We provide fundamental project management knowledge and practical experience ('doing the project right'). Traditional project management emphasises the need to address the following questions: what, where, who, how, when and why? We aim to explore these questions and connectivity with associative new and traditional methodologies, methods and techniques.
2. The course focuses on methodologies, methods and techniques to successfully manage different types of projects that enable successful business change. Knowledge gained through practice allows the attainment of an important set of skills which facilitates project management and related employment opportunities within different types of businesses.
3. The management of projects within a business context is linked to strategic planning ('choosing the right project') and project management ('doing the project right'). We examine various conceptual models and approaches to generate strategic plans and project scenarios which are rigorously evaluated in order to guide project selection that satisfies the change needs of the business organisation.
4. Operational Research (OR) has made a significant contribution to the project management profession. This discipline has evolved over the last three decades, and can be divided into three areas, namely: Hard OR, Soft OR and Multi-Methodological OR. The traditional approaches that are prescribed by APM's body of knowledge have connectivity with Hard OR. However, recent developments have connectivity with Soft OR and Multi-Methodology OR. These new methodologies are underpinned by systems ideas in order to deal with complexity and uncertainty at project, programme, portfolio, and organisation hierarchical levels.
5. The use of soft methodologies to assist professional thinking is an emerging area, and this is explored in the course. Soft approaches are being applied by professionals in order to understand problematic business situations and develop informed viable solutions. The OR and Systems module outlines problematic situations which enables the practice of different

soft approaches, and encourages reflection, meta-thinking and professional learning.

6. Lecturing staff have a history of publishing dissertations, with LSBU postgraduate students, in journals and conferences. Moreover, key staff regularly chair project management streams at Business Research Methodology and Operational Research conferences. Additionally, we have all the latest and relevant books, journals and magazines associated with business project management.

What skills will I gain from the course?

The course focuses on developing your knowledge and practical experience of new and traditional methodologies, techniques and methods that are applied to different business project management tasks. Additionally, the underpinning concepts, principles and philosophy of respective approaches are explored. You will conceptualise plans and business case using taught methodologies, techniques and methods to 'real-world' assignments. This is our 'strategy to skills' development. The course has seven distinctive modules and associated methodologies, methods and techniques (see tables 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0).

Semester 1

Module	Identified Skills
Business Case Development (20 credits)	Spreadsheet modelling, Cost/benefit Analysis Techniques, Value Management Methods, Resources Breakdown Structure, Benefit Management Methods, Sensitivity Analysis skills, Project and Product life Cycles Models, Business Case Performance Indicators, and Quantitative System Dynamics method.
Fundamentals of Project Management (2*10 credits) (10 credit semester 1)	PRINCE2 Methodology, Planning Performance Indicators and Measurement, Measurement Theory, Product Breakdown Structures, Work Breakdown Structures Requirements and Specification Methods, Productivity Measures, Rich Pictures, Critical Path Analysis, MS Project, Risk Identification and Analysis methods and Social Web-technology. .
Operational Research and Systems Approaches (20 credits)	Statistical Techniques for Project Management, Soft Systems Methodology, Cognitive Mapping, Project Facilitation skills, Complexity and Uncertainty Theory, Systems Thinking and Analytical Thinking, Traditional OR techniques used in Project Management, Understanding of Soft OR, Hard OR and Mutlimethodological OR, Systems Theory, Project Management Metaphors.
Business Risk, Innovation and Change (2*10 credits) (10 credit semester 1)	Business Strategy and Objectives Methodologies, Qualitative and Quantitative Investigation Methods, Analysis Needs Methods, Balance Scorecard Method, Requirements Elicitation Methods.

Table 1.0: Module Descriptions and Some Associated Skills

Semester 2

Module	Identified Skills
Research Methods (20 credits)	Research Methods, Research Methodologies, Report writing and presentation skills, Questionnaire design, Reflective Analysis, Generating Lessons Learned, Single and double loop learning theory, Social Theory, and Scientific Philosophies.
Fundamentals of Project Management (2*10 credits) (10 credit semester 1)	PRINCE2 Methodology, Earned Value Techniques, Resources Planning Techniques, Project Data Analysis, Project Team and Network, Communication Strategy, Community of Practice Theory, Change Evaluation Skills, Strategic Planning Methods, Programme Methodology and Portfolio methodology.
Business Risk, Innovation and Change (2*10 credits) (10 credit semester 1)	Risk Identification Methods, Uncertainty theory, Statistics for Risk, Risk Assessment Techniques, Risk checklists, Expected Value technique, Risk Tools, Quantitative and Qualitative Risk Approaches.
Quality Management and Standards (20 credits)	Lean Sigma Six Method, Statistics for Quality Assessments, Process Improvement Methodologies, Quality Performance Indicators and Measures, Quality is Free Concept, Quality Review Techniques, Project and Product Descriptions, Total Quality Management, ISO9000 and ISO 9124.

Table 2.0: Module Descriptions and Some Associated Skills

Semester 3

Module	Identified Skills
Dissertation (60 credits)	Report Writing and Structuring Skills, Research Skills, and Publication Skills

Table 3.0: Module Descriptions and Associated Skills

What employment opportunities are available to me on completion of the course?

Potential positions in the employment market are: Project Manager (IT, Marketing, Charity), Business Analysis, Health Service Manager, Charities Manager, Accounting and Finance Assistant, Performance Manager, Portfolio Assistant, Quality Manager, Executive Officer, and Operational Researcher, to name a few. We have developed a Professional Development Framework to help you to establish your career goals and then realise them by acquiring relevant new skills.

How does the course clarify my professional goals in project management?

The Professional Development Framework (PDF) is a set of methods and processes designed to improve student employment opportunities. The framework encompasses six methods, namely: SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis, SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-focused, Time-bound) Goals, Personal Development Plan (PDP), Skills Portfolio, Reflective Diary and CV development.

The SWOT analysis, SMART Goals and PDP establishes student career goals ('the whys') and required skills ('the whats'). The Skills Portfolio captures the use of a methodology in practice (which is viewed as a skill) by the student, which can be shown to a potential employer. The reflective diary encourages thinking about the strengths and

limitations of the methodology within the context of your career goals. The CV is viewed as a baseline document which needs to evolve as new project management skills are gained during progression of the course.

Additionally, business placements and dissertation can be part of the process in creating the path ('the how') of the professional journey (the means), and attainment of new skills ('the whats') are key milestones (reflected in the skills portfolio and CV). Monthly student and mentor meetings can be viewed as directing (or signposting) the pathway in order to achieve career goals (the whys').

How will the course help me to attain my professional goals?

We offer a mentoring scheme which is an integral part of the Business Project Management course. Our mentors have a broad range of experience and project management skills. You can meet your mentor once a month to discuss relevant project and career issues. Allocation of your mentor will be influenced by your career goals, which will be outlined in your PDP. Additionally, this is an opportunity to show your PDP, Skills Portfolio, reflective diary and CV, which may inform discussions with your mentor.

How will I gain experience in business project management?

All our courses have a 'real-world' problem to be tackled in their assignment. This enables you to apply taught methodology in order to gain experience. We're currently establishing a portfolio of business

project management placements that will contain opportunities with different types of organisation. The placement will be optional and undertaken during your dissertation, and provides a great opportunity to make contacts that could even lead to a full-time job once you graduate.

Is the course underpinned by the latest project management knowledge?

The course is influenced by current thinking in project management practice, profession and research. It is conceptualised and designed as an 'open system' – continuously evolving as a new developments emerge in project management and relevant disciplines. Lecturing staff regularly attend various conferences in order to identify new project management topics which need to be introduced into the course. We also aim to influence the Project Management discipline through various research activities, such as organising project management streams at conferences and publishing papers. Furthermore, published documents also contribute to our Business Project Management teaching materials. The library stores copies of all the most important project management journals and magazines as well as relevant Project Management, Operational Research, Risk Analysis, Accounting and Finance, Business Case, Business Research Methodology, Management and Business, Strategic Management, and Business Analysis books. The course maintains various e-learning resources to support units, e.g.

PRINCE2 and the APM Introductory Certificate. It is important to have the latest published articles to ensure teaching materials are relevant and current, which means the publication of postgraduate dissertations is a real possibility.

Is it possible that my dissertation will be published?

Informative and timely Business Project Management dissertations

which achieve a distinction grade are viewed as publishable materials. We encourage the students that have written these dissertations to work with their supervisor and write either a conference or journal paper. Our lecturing staff have a strong track record of publishing papers with postgraduate students, and we believe this will enhance your career opportunities.

Course Costs

What are the course fees?

The fees for this course are:

	Year	Home/EU	Overseas
Full-time	2013 (semester 1, 2 and dissertation)	£7,200 (180 credits)	£10,000 (180 credits)
Part-time	2013 (semester 1)	£2,400 (60 credits)	
	2014 (semester 2 and dissertation)	£4,800 (120 credits)	

This includes cost for PRINCE2 Foundation and Association of APM e-learning materials and examination. If you wish to take PRINCE2 Practitioner exam, an extra fee (heavily discounted) is required for the teaching materials.

How are payments of the course fees made to the University?

You can pay for your course in two different ways:

- Full payment when you start the course (with 5% discount)
- An initial payment (one third of course fees) with a further four instalments during the academic year.

See our fees and payments link for more information.

www.lsbu.ac.uk/fees/

Are there ways I can help to finance my studies?

The University provides information about gaining external funding for your course. Please look at the fees link (see above). Additionally, the University provides a leaflet entitled 'Fees and Financial Support For Postgraduate Students'. Two potential sources are Barclays Bank and Professional Career Development loans (interest free). Call 0800 100 900 or visit

www.direct.gov.uk/pcdl

General Information

What about accommodation?

The University has accommodation (halls of residences) which is close to central London (10 minutes on the tube). The accommodation office has various accommodation leaflets such as 'Your Home Away From Home', to assist postgraduate students. Additionally, you can find out more about accommodation at: www.lsbu.ac.uk/accommodation/

Will I get any assistance after completion of the course?

We are very keen to keep in contact with our students and to develop the business project management alumni. The aim is to assist students with their continuous professional development. Alumni are kept informed of our monthly presentations from speakers associated with the project management profession, practice and research. In addition, professional courses such as Management of Risk will be available (with heavily discounted fees), to assist you with your career development needs.

What is the view of industry about the course?

"I have just finished reading your document. I think the idea behind the course is wonderful.

Having completed a PRINCE2 course, your course will provide graduate students with a more extensive understanding of project management knowledge, technique and skills, plus practical experience and an insight into on-going research. This is more comprehensive course and should appeal to a lot of graduates or people looking to move into project management on a full-time basis..... I had no idea there were so many techniques for all sorts of things, fascinated by the whole Operational Research concept."

[A software project manager with 15 years of experience](#)

And finally...

The decision to enrol on this course can be viewed as a career project which requires a business case decision ('the why'). We believe that the answers to these questions show how the benefits far outweigh the course costs – a good reason (why) to undertake the MSc in Business project Management.

Apply Now

Course Enquiries

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