

APM Academic

# ACCREDITATION

CASE STUDY



Anglia Ruskin  
University

**London**

## Introduction

Anglia Ruskin University, London (ARU London) began in 2000 as the privately-owned London College of Accountancy (LCA), focused on delivering courses for professional accountancy qualifications and awards.

The scope widened in 2007 with the introduction of a franchise-based collaborative partnership with Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), which validated a range of undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes in accounting and business.

At the time of a 2012 revalidation review by ARU, the vast majority of students were international and were enrolled as students of the university under the government licensing scheme for full-time courses for study in the UK.

In 2015, following a review by the Quality Assurance

Agency, the school was formally designated as a faculty of the university.

The relationship has continued to develop positively. ARU undertook a periodic review in 2018 and the finding was a rare 'Unconditional Continuation' of course provision at ARU London'.

Today, ARU London offers degrees in business, law and healthcare. Students also have access to a host of potential employers and careers through an employability scheme of paid placement opportunities to gain experience of the business world.

There are currently some 299 postgraduate 3902 undergraduate and students from the UK and EU and 10 students from other nations on undergraduate courses.

## A degree for a changing world

ARU London always strives to offer and deliver courses which have both a market and student demand and which are relevant and attractive to potential employers. The MSc in International Project Management (MScIPM) was introduced in 2013, mainly as a result of student demand and market research.

However, with international student numbers in decline, the university realised that in order to sustain its future, it had to change tack and transform the curriculum and delivery strategies to attract a different type of student.

In particular, it had to take into account that the expectations and needs of UK and EU students differ fundamentally from those of other international students.

The teaching and learning strategy changed from a fairly didactic, lecture-based approach to one which places the student at the centre of the learning process and which is characterised more by small group work rather than traditional lectures.

A new delivery mechanism was introduced for all masters' courses – including the MScIPM – which saw students attending on an evening and weekend basis. This attracted UK students who wished to study alongside

work and other commitments as well as those from other countries. The MScIPM course is particularly attractive to students from the Greater London area who can reduce their costs even further by living at home.

A core objective of the MScIPM course is to provide a practical and professional treatment of project management, providing students with a combination of project management techniques that can be applied in a variety of real business environments in a rapidly changing 21st century business environment.

Drawing on the international project management experience of the academic staff, the course developed to take into account the application in different countries and across an international student body. 'Real world' case studies and projects together with materials from APM and other global project management bodies also contribute to a holistic approach to the subject.

The application for APM academic accreditation was led by the students themselves, who felt that accreditation by the UK's chartered body for the profession would be in line with practice and advancement within their intended or chosen career paths.



## A dynamic approach to delivery

ARU London believes that for most professional organisations, providing evidence of knowledge and a certificated academic appreciation is just no longer enough. The ability to deliver hard, measurable results is required.

With this in mind, the MScIPM is designed to give both a thorough academic grounding in established theory and to offer a practical emphasis on understanding, evaluating and practicing proven tactics and skills.

The course focuses on the advanced study of project management and the dynamic context in which the discipline contributes. It prepares students for a specialist role focusing on strategic project management, taking into account the accelerated rate of change experienced across most sectors.

From the outset, course content has been mapped to the *APM Body of Knowledge 6th* edition and is informed by the APM Competence Framework. Students are introduced to the APM Five Dimensions of Professionalism to which the course is also aligned, to the APM Code of Conduct and the wider range of other resources available through the association.



“We are extremely proud of the accreditation of our MSc International Project Management course. Our students, almost all of whom are student members of APM, are already reaping the benefits of membership and professional affiliation especially in terms of learning resources, communities of learning and communities of practice that flow from such membership.”

### Dr Muke Ferguson

MSc International Project Management programme lead  
Anglia Ruskin University London

## Student story



### Dana F. Raileanu

Before starting my MSc full-time at ARU London at the age of 29, I had been working for nine years in different industries and roles. I wanted to study an MSc so I could challenge myself professionally and personally, I also thought that it would help me progress in my future career.

For the past four years I have been working as a manager in online gaming and financial markets. My role mainly consists of building projects from scratch and delivering them as a successful department. I was delighted to have the trust and the freedom of creating a niche plan on paper to a fully functional team.

Since joining ARU London I have found that the amazing staff have helped me to increase my knowledge and apply it to my current job. This has helped me in my current role and has also developed skills which I can apply to many different areas. The dedication and professionalism of the lectures alongside the core modules mapped to APM have created a course that has equipped me with an understanding and knowledge to progress in my career.

It is hard to work and study full-time, however it is not impossible. ARU London has often given me the required boost to push me forward and I would encourage anyone to choose the path I did.



"Organisations sometimes struggle to reach the required levels of quality and effectiveness from projects because their methods, tools, and practices are not adapted to a global multicultural environment, where communication may be asynchronous and involve different cultures and languages," explained course leader Dr Muke Ferguson.

"The APM Body of Knowledge, together with the APM Competency Framework, forms a solid basis for processes, tools and methods. Our diverse student population reflects the reality of the global project management workforce and APM standards instil in our students the skills and values to work in multinational multicultural workforces.

"This helps to ensure that MScIPM graduates will be able to meet the challenges of managing projects in the modern globalised environment."

The APM's interaction with professionals working in industry who also have close relationships with the university underpinned APM as the established UK standard of professionalism, added Dr Ferguson. It directly links to the International Project Management Association (IPMA) and growing reputation as an international body for project professionals were also important factors.

Project management topics are balanced with modules on research, leadership, law, change management and an understanding of the global business environment. The business, ethical and cultural considerations emerging from the market place are built into the MScIPM experience.

There are three phases to the course:

- **the certificate phase** – providing a foundation through the study of subjects within a business context;
- **the diploma phase** – focusing on specialist subjects in a project management environment;
- **the masters' phase** – connecting learning through complex case studies and research into contemporary, project-based issues.

Through an applied, practical emphasis rather than an overtly academic or theoretical approach, the course covers core project management concepts combined with a step-by-step, hands-on approach to specific tactical skills, preparing students for the challenges of the next stage in their career.

Students will most likely hold a UK university degree or an equivalent professional qualification, have experience of project management and wish to build their skills and become senior practitioners. The international mix of students contributes to a valuable multi-cultural perspective on project management.

A key centrepiece of this course is its focus on developing leaders and it is committed to character building in all students by bringing together the student body, faculty and academic curriculum to maximise professional and personal learning.

Teaching, learning and assessment have been designed to increase critical reflection within the study programme, while celebrating and learning from the cultural diversity of the student body.



The course is delivered through a wide range of approaches, including lectures, seminars, videos and case studies. There is particular emphasis on team teaching and setting of work-based tasks at strategic level.

Individual personal tutors are appointed for all students, with tailored support if required. Many students come from a non-traditional educational background, English may not be their first language, they may have been out of education for some years and many may have caring responsibilities.

Management of the curriculum takes all this into account through timetables which enable students to manage their extra-curricular responsibilities alongside studying the course.

“ There is particular emphasis on team teaching and setting of work-based tasks at strategic level.”

“ A key centrepiece of this course is its focus on developing leaders...”

## The Association for Project Management and Anglia Ruskin University, London

As a faculty of Anglia Ruskin University, ARU London is a corporate affiliate of APM and a number of those on the MScIPM course have taken up student membership of the association.

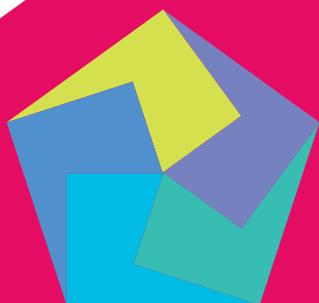
Members of the academic staff are also members of the association and take an active interest in the profession, particularly Dr Muke Ferguson and Tom Farnsworth

Course content aligns with it. Students are also directed to other APM standards and resources, including the *APM Competence Framework* and the *APM Five Dimensions of Professionalism*. Links to APM resources are available on the university's Virtual Learning Environment spaces.

## Association for Project Management

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### **FIVE**Dimensions of Professionalism

#### **APM Corporate Accreditation**

APM Corporate Accreditation will help you stand out as an exemplar in the development of project management professionals. It provides assurances to your customers and suppliers and allows you to attract and retain the best project management talent in the country.

APM Corporate Accreditation recognises the commitment of organisations and professional development services to the defined, APM FIVE Dimensions of Professionalism, each of which is supported by an APM standard:

#### **Breadth**

The *APM Body of Knowledge* defines the knowledge needed to manage any kind of project. It underpins many project management standards and methods including the National Occupational Standard in Project Management.

#### **Depth**

The *APM Competence Framework* provides a guide to project management competences. It is part of your professional toolkit; mapping levels of knowledge and experience to help you progress your skills and abilities.

#### **Achievement**

APM qualifications take your career in new and exciting directions. They are recognised across the profession and aligned with IPMA's 4 level Certification Program.

#### **Commitment**

Continuing Professional Development helps develop your project management practice. A targeted development plan will enhance your project management career.

#### **Accountability**

The APM Code of Professional Conduct outlines the ethical practice expected of a professional. Becoming an APM member shows your commitment to the Code and sets you apart from others.