

Explore project management roles

You are about to start on your path to securing a high-demand position as a project manager. One of the greatest benefits of the project management field is that it encompasses a wide variety of positions across numerous industries. As you complete this certification, you will acquire skills that will qualify you for various job titles. Here, we will discuss some different project management job categories and some common roles within those categories. We'll also describe the great potential for career progression in project management, from entry-level positions to senior program management roles, and the many opportunities in between!

Project management job categories and common roles

Introductory-level project management roles

Entry-level project management positions are a great opportunity to get your foot in the door and learn the ins and outs of how a company operates and manages projects. The lessons you learn from these experiences are extremely valuable to your growth in project management. Some entry-level project management positions include:

- **Junior Project Manager:** Performs all aspects of being a project manager alongside a more experienced professional.
- **Project Administrator:** Assists the rest of the project team with administrative tasks.
- **Project/Program Assistant:** Supports team members working on a project and offers administrative support. May perform research or create training documents along with other jobs as assigned by program leaders.
- **Project/Program Coordinator:** Participates in hands-on project work and administrative tasks. Works under a project manager to make sure projects are completed on time and within budget.
- **Project Support Specialist:** Works alongside a project manager and team members to oversee assigned projects. May also be responsible for training and developing employees to perform designated tasks.

Traditional project management roles

Once you have gained some experience in introductory-level positions, you can explore traditional project management roles, such as:

- **Project Manager:** Responsible for the initiating, planning, executing, monitoring, and closing of a project. Includes industry-specific titles like IT project manager, construction project manager, or engineering project manager, which utilize skills that are transferable among industries.
- **Project Analyst:** Moves a project along by sharing information, providing support through data analysis, and contributing to strategy and performance.
- **Project Leader/Director:** Drives core decision-making and sets the direction for the project. Usually knowledgeable about the product or deliverable.
- **Project Controller:** Primarily responsible for project planning. You are likely to see this job title in industries like engineering and construction.
- **Technical Project Manager:** Conducts project planning and management for identified goals within a company. Ensures that projects are completed to the requirements within a defined time frame and budget.
- **Project Management Office (PMO) Analyst:** Manages the progress of complex projects to ensure timely execution and completion.

Program and portfolio management roles

As you have learned, project managers are responsible for the day-to-day management of projects. They shepherd projects from start to finish and serve as a guide for their team. Project managers must apply the right tools, techniques, and processes to complete the project successfully, on time, and within budget.

After you have carried out projects successfully and feel you are ready for a step up in responsibility, a program manager position may be the next step for you. While a project is one single-focused endeavor, a **program** is a collection of projects. Program managers are responsible for managing many projects. At Google, all project managers are called program managers because they manage multiple projects simultaneously.

Successfully implementing programs as a program manager can eventually make you a great fit for more senior positions, such as a senior program manager or a portfolio manager. A **portfolio** is a collection of projects and programs across an entire organization. Portfolio managers are responsible for portfolios of projects or programs for one client. Over the course of your career, you might progress from project manager to program manager to portfolio manager roles.

While project, program, and portfolio managers hold different types and levels of responsibility, they are all project managers. In Course 4 of this certificate program, you will learn more about differentiating projects, programs, and portfolios.



- **Program managers:** Manage a group of projects that are related or similar to one another and handle the coordination of these projects. They facilitate effective communication between individual project managers and provide support where necessary. They also help create and manage long-term goals for their organization.
- **Portfolio managers:** Responsible for managing a group of related programs within the same organization. They coordinate various programs in order to ensure they are on track and that the organization is meeting its strategic initiatives. Portfolio managers look at all projects and programs within the organization and prioritize work as necessary.

Operational management roles

In operational management roles, you will get the opportunity to experience several different departments and how they interact and operate. Operational management roles allow you to work alongside peers and management from various business segments, giving you an appreciation for what each segment does on a daily basis. Key elements of project management include making sure a project is on budget and on schedule. This course, and your experience as a project manager, will give you the tools to be able to apply those skills to running a business. Some operational management positions include:

- **Operations Analyst:** Manages and coordinates research, investigates workflows, creates business procedures, and recommends changes to improve the project and company.
- **Operations Manager:** Oversees strategic decision-making and rolls out plans of action based on financial, schedule, and resource reporting.
- **Chief Operating Officer:** Responsible for overseeing the day-to-day administrative and operational functions of a business.

Agile roles

We will discuss the Agile project management approach in depth later, but here are a couple of the positions you may see that are related to that approach:

- **Scrum Master:** Coordinates and guides the Scrum team. Knowledgeable in Agile framework and Scrum and is able to teach others about the Scrum values and principles. May also be listed as a Technical Program Manager or Technical Project Manager.
- **Product Owner:** Drives the direction of product development and progress.

Industry-specific management roles

As you search for project management roles, you may see positions with titles like “engineering project manager” or “construction project manager.” Keep in mind that the skills you learn in one industry can be applied to another industry. For example, you may have experience as a software engineer but are interested in pursuing a career in project management. You will be able to apply what you’ve learned working in a technical field, as well as with the skills you have picked up in this certification course, to a project manager position in multiple industries. Having experience working on a team to achieve a task and understanding how to execute an effort on schedule and on budget are aspects of your professional experience—combined with your project management knowledge—that make it possible for you to move between industries.



Key takeaway

Project management is a career path with a great deal of potential!

With each step along your career path, you are building yourself up to be a significant contributor to any company. We have discussed a number of possible job titles for you to search for when you start exploring project management roles. Regardless of the industry in which you currently work, you have gained **transferable skills**. Transferable skills are abilities that can be used in many different jobs and career paths. Your transferable skills can likely be utilized in project management roles in many other industries.

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