



IPP

Institute of Project Professionals

INSTITUTE OF PROJECT PROFESSIONALS

IPP Competency Framework

8 Competency Areas, 41 Elements, 5 Proficiency Levels

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1. Purpose and Scope

The IPP Competency Framework defines the knowledge, skills and behaviours expected of project management professionals at each stage of their career. It is the foundation on which all IPP qualifications, assessments and membership grades are built.

The framework is organised into eight competency areas, each subdivided into individual elements. Every element is assessed against a five-level proficiency scale, from Aware through to Expert. The combination of area, element and level provides the granularity needed to drive meaningful development planning while remaining practical enough for day-to-day use.

The framework applies to:

- All IPP qualifications. Assessment criteria are drawn directly from framework elements.
- IPP membership grades. The grade requirements reference the expected minimum levels across areas.
- Calibrate, the IPP-aligned competency tracking platform, which uses this framework as its assessment layer.

The framework is reviewed annually. Version 1.0 was approved in April 2026.

2. Framework Structure

2.1 The Eight Competency Areas

The framework is organised into eight broad areas. Each area groups related knowledge, skills and behaviours, providing enough diagnostic resolution to drive meaningful development planning without making self-assessment feel like a bureaucratic exercise.

#	Competency Area	Elements
1	Governance and Lifecycle Management	5
2	Stakeholder Engagement and Communication	5
3	Leadership and People	6
4	Requirements, Scope and Benefits	5
5	Integrated Planning and Scheduling	5
6	Budget, Cost and Commercial	5
7	Risk, Issue and Change Control	5
8	Quality, Assurance and Closure	5
	Total	41

Area 3 (Leadership and People) contains six elements, reflecting the breadth and importance of behavioural competence at senior levels.

2.2 Areas and Elements

Area 1: Governance and Lifecycle Management

Element
1.1 Lifecycle model selection and application
1.2 Stage gates, phase reviews and documentation
1.3 Governance structures and decision-making authority
1.4 Escalation and reporting
1.5 Compliance, audit readiness and assurance

Area 2: Stakeholder Engagement and Communication

Element
2.1 Stakeholder identification and analysis
2.2 Stakeholder engagement planning and execution
2.3 Communication planning and delivery
2.4 Managing difficult or resistant stakeholders
2.5 Senior and executive engagement

Area 3: Leadership and People

Element
3.1 Leadership style and situational awareness
3.2 Team building, motivation and performance
3.3 Delegation and accountability
3.4 Coaching, mentoring and developing others
3.5 Ethics, professional standards and conduct
3.6 Diversity, inclusion and psychological safety

Area 4: Requirements, Scope and Benefits

Element
4.1 Requirements elicitation and documentation
4.2 Scope definition and baseline management
4.3 Scope change control and creep prevention
4.4 Benefits identification and mapping
4.5 Benefits tracking and realisation

Area 5: Integrated Planning and Scheduling

Element
5.1 Work breakdown and activity definition
5.2 Scheduling, sequencing and critical path
5.3 Resource allocation and levelling
5.4 Dependency and interface management
5.5 Plan monitoring, updating and re-baselining

Area 6: Budget, Cost and Commercial

Element
6.1 Budget development and cost estimation
6.2 Cost tracking, forecasting and variance reporting
6.3 Earned value and financial performance metrics
6.4 Procurement strategy and supplier selection
6.5 Contract management and commercial governance

Area 7: Risk, Issue and Change Control

Element
7.1 Risk identification and assessment
7.2 Risk response planning and mitigation
7.3 Issue management and escalation
7.4 Change request evaluation and governance
7.5 Baseline control and impact assessment

Area 8: Quality, Assurance and Closure

Element
8.1 Quality planning and standards definition
8.2 Quality control and non-conformance management
8.3 Reviews, audits and lessons learned
8.4 Transition, handover and acceptance
8.5 Administrative closure and knowledge retention

3. Proficiency Scale

Each competency element is assessed against a five-level scale. The scale is consistent across all eight areas and all qualification levels. Proficiency is determined by the combination of knowledge and demonstrated experience. Training alone is not sufficient to confirm a level.

Level	Label	What it means in practice
NR	Not Required	This competency is not applicable to this role at this level.
1	Aware	Has awareness of the competency. Not yet applying it independently.
2	Practised	Has working knowledge and applies the competency, primarily under supervision.
3	Competent	Applies independently in situations of moderate complexity.
4	Proficient	Applies independently in complex situations. Supervises and coaches others.
5	Expert	Recognised authority. Develops approaches and frameworks. Educates others.

Not Required (NR) is a valid level in organisational deployments where a competency area is not relevant to a particular role. For IPP qualification purposes, all areas are assessed at the applicable level.

4. Default Role Profiles

The default role profile matrix shows the minimum expected proficiency level for each competency area at each career level. These are the benchmarks against which an individual's confirmed competence is compared in gap analysis and development planning.

Organisations using Calibrate under an Enterprise licence may adjust these defaults. For IPP qualification purposes the default matrix applies.

Competency Area	Ast PM	PM	Sr PM	Prog Mgr	Sr Prog	Proj Dir	Prog Dir
Governance & Lifecycle	Aware	Comp	Comp	Prof	Prof	Expe	Expe
Stakeholder & Comms	Prac	Comp	Prof	Prof	Expe	Expe	Expe
Leadership & People	Aware	Prac	Comp	Prof	Prof	Expe	Expe
Requirements & Scope	Aware	Prac	Comp	Comp	Prof	Prof	Expe
Planning & Scheduling	Prac	Comp	Prof	Prof	Expe	Expe	Expe
Budget & Commercial	Prac	Comp	Prof	Prof	Prof	Expe	Expe
Risk & Change	Prac	Comp	Prof	Prof	Expe	Expe	Expe
Quality & Closure	Aware	Comp	Comp	Prof	Prof	Prof	Expe

Awar = Aware, Prac = Practised, Comp = Competent, Prof = Proficient, Expe = Expert

5. Qualification Mapping

IPP qualifications are assessed against specific elements of this framework. The table below shows the primary competency areas assessed within each qualification. Detailed element-level assessment criteria are published in the separate Assessment Standards document.

Qualification	Level	Primary competency areas assessed
ACPL — Award in Career and Professional Learning	Foundation	All 8 areas at Aware level
ACAL — Award in Communication and Leadership	Foundation	Areas 2, 3
ACBL — Award in Commercial and Business Literacy	Foundation	Areas 6, 7
PCPM — Practitioner Certificate in Project Management	Practitioner	Areas 1, 4, 5, 7
PCAPM — Practitioner Certificate in Agile PM	Practitioner	Areas 1, 4, 5, 7
PCBC — Practitioner Certificate in Business Change	Practitioner	Areas 2, 4, 8
FCPM — Foundation Certificate in PM	Foundation Cert	All 8 areas
FCAPM — Foundation Certificate in Agile PM	Foundation Cert	All 8 areas
FCBC — Foundation Certificate in Business Change	Foundation Cert	All 8 areas
APME — Award in Project Management Essentials	Award	Areas 1, 2, 4, 5
ABCA — Award in Business Change and Agility	Award	Areas 2, 4, 7, 8

6. Framework Governance

6.1 Ownership

The IPP Competency Framework is owned by the Institute of Project Professionals. Responsibility for its maintenance sits with the Standards and Qualifications Committee, which meets quarterly to review proposed updates.

6.2 Review cycle

The framework is reviewed annually. Minor updates may be issued between annual reviews as point releases (e.g. v1.1). Substantive changes to areas, elements or level definitions require a full Standards Committee review and consultation with qualification awarding bodies.

6.3 Versioning

Each version is identified by a version number and approval date. Previous versions are archived and remain available for organisations whose assessments were conducted against them. New qualifications and membership applications are assessed against the current version.

6.4 Alignment

The framework has been developed with reference to the APM Competence Framework (3rd edition) and the PMI Project Management Competency Development (PMCD) Framework. It is designed to be compatible with both, enabling professionals holding APM or PMI qualifications to map their existing competence against the IPP scale without duplication of effort.