

LESSON 1

Foundations of Project Management

What is a Project? | Life Cycles | Project Management | PMOs | OPM Hierarchy

*What You Will Be Able to Do



Define a project

and explain how success is determined from a stakeholder value perspective



Compare life cycle approaches

and identify when predictive, adaptive, or hybrid is most appropriate



Explain project management

and describe the core responsibilities of a project manager



Distinguish PMO types

and match each type to an organizational context



Describe the OPM hierarchy

and explain how projects connect to organizational strategy

What Is a Project?

Definition · Value · What Makes a Project Succeed

- Know this definition by heart and in detail.
 - Learn it like an elevator speech that you can recite to anyone and at any time.
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- A successful project provides value to the end-user in the quality they expected.
 - It uses resources and comes with risk.
 - It has a defined beginning and end.



What Is a Project?

A project is a **temporary endeavor** undertaken to create a **unique product, service, or result**.

Every project has a defined beginning and end — it is not ongoing operations.



Temporary

Projects have a start and a finish. When the goal is achieved, the project ends. This is what separates a project from ongoing business operations.



Unique

No two projects are exactly alike. Even similar projects involve unique teams, contexts, risks, and outcomes.



Value-Driven

Projects exist to deliver value. Success is not just completing on time and budget — it is whether stakeholders agree that value was delivered.



Exam Tip: When a question asks what makes a project different from operations — the answer is always: temporary + unique.

TOPIC 2

Project Life Cycles

Predictive · Adaptive / Agile · Hybrid
Choosing the Right Approach



Three Approaches to Delivering a Project



Predictive

(Waterfall)

USE WHEN:

Requirements are stable and well-understood up front

HOW:

Plan everything first, then execute in sequential phases

EXAMPLE:

Building construction, compliance projects, regulated environments



Adaptive

(Agile)

USE WHEN:

Requirements are unclear or expected to evolve

HOW:

Deliver in short iterative cycles; learn and adjust with each sprint

EXAMPLE:

Software development, product innovation, digital transformation



Hybrid

(Combined)

USE WHEN:

Some parts of the project are stable; others are exploratory

HOW:

Blend predictive planning with adaptive delivery where appropriate

EXAMPLE:

Large tech implementations, enterprise-wide programs

TOPIC 3

Project Management & the PM Role

What project management IS · What a PM actually DOES



A project manager takes a project from start to finish successfully.

Project Management & the PM Role

Project Management Defined

The application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities in order to meet project requirements and deliver value to stakeholders.

The PM's Primary Responsibility

Lead the team to deliver outcomes that create value — balancing constraints of scope, schedule, cost, quality, resources, and risk.



Lead & Develop the Team

Build trust, resolve conflict, empower members, adapt leadership style to individual needs



Engage Stakeholders

Identify, analyze, communicate with, and manage expectations of all who are affected by the project



Plan & Control Scope

Define what is included and excluded; manage changes to prevent scope creep



Monitor Time & Cost

Track schedule and budget performance; forecast and take corrective action early



Manage Risk & Quality

Identify risks proactively; ensure deliverables meet agreed standards



Deliver Value

Ensure the project outcome solves the real problem and stakeholders agree it was worth doing

TOPIC 4

PMO Types

Project Management Office

Supportive · Controlling · Directive · Agile CoE



Types of Project Management Offices (PMOs)

LOW CONTROL

HIGH CONTROL



Supportive

Low Control

Provides guidance, templates, training, and best practices — but cannot require compliance.

BEST FOR:

Organizations with experienced, autonomous PM teams

Think: library, not law



Controlling

Moderate Control

Requires that project managers use specific frameworks, tools, and reporting standards.

BEST FOR:

Organizations that want consistency across projects

Think: rules you must follow



Directive

High Control

Directly manages projects; assigns project managers and controls all project execution.

BEST FOR:

Organizations prioritizing centralized oversight and uniformity

Think: the PMO IS the project manager



Agile CoE

Enabling

Supports adoption of agile practices; coaches teams, facilitates community of practice.

BEST FOR:

Organizations transitioning to or scaling agile delivery

Think: coach and community hub



Exam Tip: Questions will describe an organizational scenario — your job is to match it to the correct PMO type.

TOPIC 5

The OPM Hierarchy

Portfolio → Program → Project → Operations
From Strategy to Execution

Organizational Project Management



How Projects Connect to Organizational Strategy



Key Insight: Projects are selected and funded because they support programs, which support portfolios, which advance organizational strategy. A PM who understands this connection makes better decisions.

5 Things to Carry Forward

1

A project is temporary and unique — when it ends, something new exists that didn't before.

2

Choose your life cycle based on how stable requirements are: predictive, adaptive, or hybrid.

3

A project manager's job is to lead — not just track. Value delivery is the ultimate measure.

4

PMOs range from supportive (low control) to directive (high control) — know which type fits which context.

5

Projects exist within portfolios and programs that connect to organizational strategy. Alignment matters.

Any Questions

