

# Abu Dhabi University and APM Partner to Strengthen Project Management Education and Develop Future Industry Leaders

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**The College of Engineering at Abu Dhabi University has strengthened its commitment to developing the next generation of project professionals through a new strategic partnership with the Association for Project Management (APM), the chartered body for the project profession.**

The collaboration, formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), aims to enhance project management education, strengthen industry engagement and create new professional development opportunities for students, academics and practitioners across the UAE.

The agreement builds on Abu Dhabi University's growing presence within the project management profession following the recent accreditation of its Master of Engineering Management programme by APM. It also reflects the increasing importance of project management capability as the UAE continues to deliver ambitious infrastructure, energy, digital transformation and sustainability programmes.

## Strengthening the Talent Pipeline

The partnership has been designed to bridge the gap between academic learning and professional practice by creating stronger links between the university and the project profession.

Under the agreement, Abu Dhabi University and APM will collaborate on knowledge-sharing initiatives, research activities, professional development programmes and student engagement opportunities aligned with internationally recognised project management standards.

Planned activities include industry workshops, guest lectures, mentoring programmes, collaborative research projects and the development of a student-led project management community within the university.

For project leaders across the region, the partnership addresses a growing challenge facing many organisations: securing the next generation of project professionals capable of managing increasingly complex programmes and portfolios.

## Developing Future Project Leaders

As governments and organisations across the Middle East invest heavily in national transformation programmes, the demand for project management skills continues to rise.

From major infrastructure developments and smart city initiatives to energy transition projects and digital transformation programmes, successful delivery increasingly depends on professionals who can combine technical expertise with leadership, stakeholder management and strategic thinking.

The partnership is expected to provide students with greater exposure to professional project management practices, helping them build industry connections and develop skills that are directly relevant to modern project environments.

Professor Evan Paleologos of Abu Dhabi University's College of Engineering described the agreement as an important step in strengthening professional engagement and enhancing student opportunities.

"The collaboration with APM provides our students and faculty with direct access to a respected global professional community," he said. "It supports our ambition to integrate academic excellence with practical industry insight while creating pathways for innovation, leadership and lifelong professional development in project management and engineering management disciplines."

## Connecting Academia and Industry

One of the key themes behind the agreement is the need for closer collaboration between universities and industry bodies to ensure educational programmes remain aligned with evolving workplace requirements.

Project management has undergone significant transformation in recent years, with growing emphasis on agility, sustainability, digital capability, systems thinking and leadership alongside traditional delivery disciplines.

Dr Saad Sarhan, Assistant Professor at Abu Dhabi University, said the partnership would help students gain exposure to international best practices while strengthening their readiness for professional careers.

"This partnership represents more than a formal agreement; it is a platform for building future talent," he said. "Through collaboration with APM, our students will benefit from exposure to international best practices, networking opportunities and professional learning experiences that will strengthen their readiness for real-world project environments."

## Supporting the UAE's Growth Ambitions

The initiative also aligns with broader national priorities aimed at developing local talent and supporting the UAE's long-term economic diversification and development goals.

As the country continues to deliver large-scale programmes across infrastructure, renewable energy, transport, technology and urban development, organisations are increasingly looking for professionals equipped with internationally recognised project management skills.

Shiraz Amman, APM UAE Network Lead, welcomed the agreement and highlighted the important role project management plays in supporting the country's future ambitions.

"This is an exciting development for the project management profession in the UAE and for the future generation of project leaders," he said.

"The APM UAE Network looks forward to supporting the university and its students through knowledge-sharing initiatives, industry engagement, mentoring opportunities and the development of an active student club that encourages professional growth, collaboration and innovation."

He added that the partnership demonstrates the growing importance of professional project management standards in supporting the UAE's ambitious infrastructure, energy and transformation programmes.

## Building Capability for a Complex Future

For the project profession, the partnership highlights a wider trend emerging globally: the increasing integration of professional project management education into higher education programmes.

As projects become more complex and organisations place greater emphasis on successful delivery, universities are increasingly working alongside professional bodies to equip graduates with both technical knowledge and practical project leadership skills.

The collaboration between Abu Dhabi University and APM reflects a shared ambition to develop professionals capable of managing complexity, driving innovation and delivering meaningful outcomes across industries.

With project management continuing to play a central role in economic development and organisational transformation, partnerships such as this are becoming an increasingly important part of building the talent pipeline needed to support future growth across the UAE and beyond.