Project Management
Glossary

1-to-1 meeting	a performance review, usually between the project manager and a core team member or the project manager and the project sponsor, providing the opportunity to give positive and constructive feedback to each other.
acceptance	a formal agreement that an output meets the requirement eg user acceptance at the end of a project.
accountability	the extent to which an individual can be held to account for their decisions and actions – must equate to the level of authority held.
activity/task	a piece of work done during the project to transform inputs into outputs.
actual	the data about what is happening on the project at a particular point in time eg actual cost
authority	the extent to which an individual can choose their own actions or make enforceable decisions for others to act on.
backward pass	the procedure for determining the latest start and finish times of an activity.
baseline	the version of the project plan frozen to serve as a point of comparison with 'actual' data.
benefit	the long-term value added by a project stated in terms of the vision, mission, values of an organisation.
breakdown structure	a hierarchical list of all project outputs/work showing different levels of detail. Can exist in Product, Work, Cost or Organisational format.
budget	the total amount of money allocated to a project to cover the total cost of the work to be done.
business-as-usual	any work not classified as a project – typically repetitive work for which procedures exist.
business case	a strategic document which contains the organisational justification for the project.
calendar	shows how working time fits into calendar time either overall or for a particular resource.
change control	a procedure for identification, impact assessment and approval of alterations to the project objective/scope.
closure	the stage of a project when work is completed and handed over.
configuration	the defined standard of a project document or deliverable.
control	action to bring a project back on track based on an analysis of monitored data.
constraint	anything which limits the project eg time, budget, legal
contingency	risk management involving a costed back-up plan with a clearly defined trigger condition.
core team	a group of people with project-relevant knowledge, including the project manager, who are managing the project to achieve its objectives.
cost	the total amount of money required to pay for all aspects of the project work.

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cost benefit analysis	the procedure for determining if a project is sufficiently beneficial for the investment required.
critical path	the series of dependent activities from the start to the end of the project plan with the highest total duration.
critical success factor	anything which has a significant bearing on the success of the project
definition	the process of establishing the project objectives.
deliverable	an overall project output.
dependency	a relationship between two project activities, most commonly where the outputs of one provide the inputs for the other (finish-to-start). Other common dependencies are start-to-start and finish-to-finish.
duration	see 'time'
earned value analysis	a technique for analysing planned and actual data and providing predictions for the time and cost at project completion.
effectiveness	carrying out work which adds appropriate value.
efficiency	carrying out work as quickly and cheaply as possible whilst maintaining appropriate quality.
effort	the total amount of people's time required to do an activity (eg measured in person-days)
estimating	predicting the time, cost and resource requirements for a project or project activity.
evaluation	a review which focuses on learning for the future.
expectations	what stakeholders believe is going to happen.
feasibility	a term which relates to whether the project is achievable and justifiable.
float/slack	the amount of flexibility in the scheduling of a task: 1. without affecting the overall project time (Total Float) 2. without affecting another task (Free Float)
forward pass	the procedure for determining the earliest start and finish times of an activity.
Gantt Chart	a pictorial representation of the project time schedule showing tasks as bars plotted against a calendar.
impact	the effect which a deviation (eg from the project plan) has on the ability to achieve goals (eg the project objective).
inputs	whatever is required to commence an activity that is processed by that activity (eg raw materials, consumables).
issue	any deviation from the project plan – the priority of the issue depends on its impact.
lag	a forced time delay associated with the dependency between tasks.
lead	a forced time overlap associated with the dependency between tasks.
material	an input requirement for a task which is consumed or modified during the task to provide outputs.
milestone	a key point in time typically associated with something being complete.

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mitigation	immediate resolution of a risk.
monitoring	collecting data on the project as it progresses in order to control it.
needs	the long-term value/benefit which a stakeholder hopes to derive from having/using the project outputs.
network	a pictorial representation of the dependency relationships between tasks. Typically shown as task boxes linked by dependency lines.
objective	a brief statement of what the project will deliver at the point it is closed.
outputs	whatever is produced on completion of an activity.
performance	the extent to which someone fulfils their responsibility.
phase/stage	a part of the overall project life cycle with defined entry and exit criteria eg planning.
planning	the process of establishing how a project is to be done, typically identifying the time, cost and resource requirements.
predecessor	the first task in a dependency relationship.
priority	a function of the importance and urgency of an issue, activity or project – used to determine the order in which time, budget and resource are allocated.
process	an activity or set of activities which converts inputs into required outputs.
progress	the amount of work which has been achieved – typically reported as percentage complete.
project	a set of multi-disciplinary activities, many of which are conducted in parallel, to deliver a particular objective which will enable long-term benefits, within certain constraints and for which there is no immediately usable procedure.
Project Leader/Manager	the person leading the project team and taking overall responsibility for the delivery of the project objective/scope.
project (whole) life cycle	the entire period running from the identification of an idea, through the project itself, on into its beneficial use and finally to disposal.
project management	a dynamic process of planning and control which delivers beneficial objectives on time and within budget
Project Sponsor	the person taking responsibility, on behalf of the organisation, for delivery of the long-term benefits to that organisation.
project team	those working with the project manager to manage (core team) and do (resource) the project work.
purpose	the reason for doing the project in the first place.
quality	the measure of an output in terms of those things that make it fit for the use to which it will be put.
reactions	actions taken by stakeholders when the project affects them.
requirements	the outputs of the project expected by the stakeholders.

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resources	people, equipment and facilities which are utilised to carry out activities and are then released.
responsibility	the personal obligation taken by an individual to get something done.
review	an assessment of the project's status.
risk management	a process of identifying and dealing with things which might have an impact on the project.
schedule	the timing of a task and thus its resource requirement.
scope	a detailed specification of the content and quality of a project's overall outputs.
scope creep	uncontrolled changes in project scope.
stage/phase	a part of the overall project life cycle with defined entry and exit criteria eg planning.
stakeholder	anyone who has an interest in or is affected by the project and its outcomes.
standards	the criteria (usually quality related) which define the outcome and process requirements of a task.
strategy	relating to the high level goals of an organisation in line with its overall aim or mission.
success criteria	those measures which will be used to determine the project's success or failure.
successor	the second/last task in a dependency relationship.
task/activity	a piece of work done during the project to transform inputs into outputs.
time	1. Calendar time – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 2. Duration – the amount of working time (eg 8 hours a day, 5 days a week) taken to do something. 3. Points in time, conventionally referred to as the end of a period of time – projects then start at time = 0. 4. Timenow - a specific point in time at which monitoring occurs.
users	people who will operate the project's delivered outputs in order to produce the benefits.
variance	the difference between the baseline and actual data.