



The Project Manager's role at CIRIA

CIRIA Project Managers provide a value-adding, facilitating role forming an important hub between topic experts, regulatory and other stakeholders, publishing/media experts, CIRIA Members and other information end users. Relationship-building is an important part of the role which is a blend of project management and business development activities.

This document describes CIRIA's work and Project Managers' roles. We hope it answers some of the questions you may have in order to consider whether this fits your existing skills, experience and career aspirations.

About CIRIA

CIRIA is a member-based organisation with over 500 Members including the construction supply chain, private and public sector clients, regulators, policy-makers and research bodies. We have a strong collaborative ethos, our work being industry peer-reviewed.

CIRIA projects are typically valued in the range of £10k - £200k and are very diverse in nature, ranging from scoping studies, collation of case studies, development of guidance documents, dissemination initiatives, knowledge sharing platforms, training etc. They are usually desk-studies, although some may occasionally involve field work and/or implementation trials, or may take the form of member "clubs" where members informally "benchmark" their approach to particular challenges.

Projects are usually collaboratively funded across the sector, although some are won through competitive tender. Project Managers lead on both these aspects within their area(s) requiring initiative, good interpersonal skills and some business development.

Most projects are sub-contracted to specialist consulting or other organisations (project contractors - PC) which means that CIRIA can draw on the knowledge of leading experts. The PCs are overseen by an independent industry steering group chaired by a representative of industry. The overall process is managed by a CIRIA Project Manager.

CIRIA Project Managers

CIRIA Project Managers are responsible for the development and delivery of a range of activities and establishing a thorough understanding of relevant topic areas.

The Project Manager role will suit individuals with industry experience – possibly supplemented with post-grad and/or research who:

- seek best practice approaches to particular problems
- question why do we do things in a particular way
- recognise the scope for improvement across all stages of the construction cycle
- enjoy working on their own initiative and working with others to develop ideas and deliver high quality outputs
- would welcome the opportunity to work with industry experts to produce the authoritative and independent guidance documents for which CIRIA is recognised.

The Project Manager is responsible for the overall delivery of projects

- Identifying and/or developing project ideas of relevance to the industry
- Raising project funding or responding to tender opportunities
- Liaising with experts, project steering group members and funders
- Managing the project contractor and project steering group
- Liaising with publishing and events teams to deliver the outputs.

Requirements of the Project Manager role

Project Managers need to be good networkers, enjoy sharing and developing ideas with others, and developing ideas into fully defined and costed projects.

Project Managers work with leading industry experts and a range of stakeholders including design and other consultants, building and civil engineering contractors, clients, regulators and policy bodies etc.

Since most of CIRIA's work is sub-contracted, the opportunity for individuals for "hands-on" work is limited with most managing a portfolio of projects involving several external teams rather than undertaking a detailed technical project within CIRIA. However, the process of managing the collaborative process involving project contractors, steering group, and other stakeholders and consultees helps the Project Manager develop a broad, and often, deep understanding of the topic.

- Educated to degree level or equivalent with a professional qualification (or approaching this) in a related engineering discipline. Many CIRIA Project Managers also have post-graduate qualifications.
- Commercial experience
 - able to identify and respond to relevant opportunities as they arise
 - willingness to negotiate (preferably with proven experience) with prospective project funders
 - developing business case / benefit statements for research work
 - responding to tender opportunities
- Interpersonal skills
 - appreciate the views and needs of different stakeholders
 - able to draw out key points from complex discussions and summarise these clearly
 - able to deliver collaboration and consensus
 - enjoy networking with established network and developing new contacts
- Communications and people skills
 - proven written skills – both in producing notes of meetings, developing high quality documents for different target audiences
 - proven verbal communication – comfortable liaising and presenting to diverse and influential groups and individuals
- Good project management skills
 - managing external project teams
 - managing consortia
 - managing large dynamic research projects
- Flexible approach to work
 - able to efficiently respond to market changes and other challenges
 - able to develop a diverse range of outputs, including:
 - § Guidance documents
 - § Briefing papers/articles
 - § Events (seminars, conferences, workshops)
 - § Training packages
 - § Web sites

Opportunities at CIRIA

The Project Manager role at CIRIA will provide an opportunity to:

- Broaden understanding of a range of leading edge industry issues and the differing perspectives of stakeholders
- Work alongside leading private and public-sector organisations
- Form wide networks within the relevant industry sectors
- Develop interesting portfolios of projects that will help improve awareness and drive change across the industry.

CIRIA's structure is sufficiently flexible to permit Project Managers over time to either build extensive programmes of work or to become involved in new areas. Managers have found that the experience and contacts gained at CIRIA open up a number of opportunities within the wider industry and many go on to more senior positions in industry.