



# Project Management for Development Organizations

## About PM4DEV Distance Learning

### Why do people undertake distance learning with PM4DEV?

Our students state many reasons why they study with us, including:

- a need to update knowledge
- wanting to add expertise
- to understand the task of the people I manage
- to boost my CV
- a organization decision to invest in their staff
- a desire to increase salary
- other courses have been really beneficial
- to show employers I'm interested in investing in my capability
- to open new employment opportunities
- an inexpensive way to study a subject
- develop new knowledge and skills
- a cost-effective training method
- make me feel better about myself
- to understand a subject
- to develop self-management skills

### Is distance learning right for me?

Distance learning can be highly beneficial to a large variety of people. With courses being delivered at different levels, from short introductory courses through to long academic programs, distance learning can meet the needs of a diverse student body. High competition for jobs means having additional training and education can be a real advantage, whether someone is in the market for a new career or simply wants to progress in their existing position.

Like any kind of educational program and delivery method, distance learning comes with advantages and challenges, and it is always important that a student carefully considers these in order to be sure they will be getting an education program that meets personal needs, strengths, career goals and maybe organizational objectives.

## Why is distance learning so popular?

Distance learning is the fastest growing study method for professionals. Benefits include:

- **Access** – Students can undertake a program of study from just about anywhere in the world, providing they have a computer and internet connection – and in most cases can download printed materials to even reduce this need. This allows students to work where and when it is most convenient for them without having to squeeze scheduled classes in to an already busy life. By studying a distance learning program students gain access to expert tutors who would not normally be accessible.
- **Flexibility** – The hours when study can be undertaken are flexible, and students can work at their own pace and on their own time, completing work during times when they are free, rather than scheduling their lives around a set classroom time.
- **No travel** – Taking a course by distance learning or online can be one way to cut down on costly transport and accommodation costs. Since students can work from the office or home, or even a hotel when travelling for work, to undertake their study and complete their assignments, both time and money are saved in cutting out the trips to and from class.
- **Level and progression** – Distance learning can help students obtain everything from introductory certificates to a professional certification credential.
- **Lowered costs** – Fees for online courses are generally cheaper than their equivalent classroom tutor-led counterparts and do not include all the substantial additional hidden costs, such as commuting, accommodation, meals etc. that are incurred when learning away from home.
- **Part-time study** – Distance learning courses are usually for part-time study, so you learn whilst you continue to work and earn an income. You don't need to take days-off like full-time courses require.
- **Tutor support** – Tutors can teach students from all around the world using technology which allows them to facilitate collaborative tutorials, project work, focused content and educational enrichment via modern delivery methods. Distance learning brings you tutors who would not normally be available locally.
- **Learn while working** – As distance learning can usually be completed on your own schedule, you can keep working full-time whilst studying. Keeping your job gives you more income, experience and stability while completing your course; giving you less to worry about and more time to focus on your studies.
- **Professional classmates** – Mix and network via online forums with like-minded professionals on a global basis.
- **Learning style** – people learn in different ways. Distance learning has many benefits for students as you take control of your preferred means of studying our material, and our course instructors will help ensure you stay motivated and we'll help you plan your study schedule.
- **Social interaction** – Some distance learning providers can leave you feeling isolated during your study, but with our courses you always have your course instructor, course coordinator

and fellow students available via interactive course forums and email so that support is available, and you can benefit from all important social learning.

### **Does distance learning work?**

After years of experience of delivering distance learning, we can say the answer is most definitely yes! Our past students, who number in their many hundreds, are evidence of this. Many students have studied multiple courses with us as they have reaped the benefits of undertaking a program and want to progress even further, and organizations with project teams have returned to us year after year. For many, distance education is the learning style of choice as it offers a lower cost and longer term learning engagement. Study can fit around available time without interfering with work or family arrangements; the training is non-geographic specific and does not require travel, and is free of any other considerations that may preclude individuals from attending traditional classroom courses.

### **Is distance learning as effective as attending classroom sessions?**

Numerous academic research reports have been conducted, and results suggest that:

- Distance learning "works" in the sense that students experience at least as much success when they utilize distance learning modes of study as compared to when they pursue conventional bricks and mortar education.
- Distance learning programs are usually far more cost-effective learning and training investments, either for students, companies, organizations or governments.
- Some students do better when undertaking distance learning compared to classroom tuition, based on grades and subsequent academic success as the format better matches their learning style.
- Often a distance learning faculty can be more experienced than a classroom equivalent as distance learning courses are able to draw on a far wider course team.

On the whole, the numerous research reports produced on the subject conclude "no significant difference" exists between the accomplishment of a distance learning student and a classroom based one, but a student's learning style(s) and receptivity to distance learning influence the overall student success.

One lasting benefit of distance learning is that it instills self-directed learning habits and fosters intellectual curiosity which will encourage students to keep developing themselves personally and professionally.

### **How is PM4DEV distance learning delivered?**

All PM4DEV distance learning courses are managed over the internet using a dedicated online learning management system (LMS) which manages each participant's learning schedule.

Courses are delivered using videos and access to electronic PDF documents which can be worked through on the computer screen, downloaded and studied offline or printed - check the individual course brochures for delivery details for the program you are interested in.

All our courses offer the option to download the course material as PDF documents which can either be printed by the student, or purchased printed and bound from PM4DEV online publisher. This permits our students the maximum flexibility to study where and when they want – such as on a train on the way to work, or while flying to meetings overseas. What happens if you're away somewhere without your printed course notes? With our course materials being available over the internet, as long as you have an internet connection you can log in and download your course materials.

All courses include access to online forums for networking and interacting with tutors. All forum discussions are retained for the duration of a course and allow students to cooperate across time zones and share knowledge, experience or discuss the course content with other students and course tutors.

### **How are courses assessed?**

All our courses are assessed. Some assessments are via online tests, others via written tutor marked assignments, some by exam and some via a blend of assessment methods.

Online assessments are managed by our learning management system and are used to test student understanding and learning. Some courses may include essays or an exam at the end of the course.

### **How can students maximize the opportunities offered by distance learning?**

Students who work well independently and who are strongly motivated to succeed in their goals will benefit the most from taking one of our distance learning courses. As students are not in a classroom and will not be closely monitored by a tutor, reading, projects and other assignments must be completed in a timely fashion – learning time management skills as a by-product. Tips for students to succeed at distance learning are:

- Set yourself targets for completing the course – maybe with a specific reward at the end.
- Set aside a quiet area in which to study where you will not be interrupted by your colleagues, family, telephone, television etc.
- Plan your week and schedule regular time to undertake your study.
- Start studying a module as soon as it is released.
- Read the course materials and concentrate on what you are reading.
- Take frequent pauses in which to organize and review the material in your mind.

- At the end of each study session, review everything you have read, making notes of important points. Undertake any assignments and tests promptly – do not delay and let them build up. Target to complete them early.
- Engage in social interaction with fellow participants via the course forum and chat room - introduce yourself to other participants at the start of the course via the forum.
- Regularly check the forum and discuss subject issues with your fellow participants.

### **Can a course be delivered as on-site training for a client?**

On-site training delivery of our courses can be customized to the client's specific needs and requirements. This may include instructor led workshops or webinars to reinforce learning, additional content specially authored in partnership with the client, alternative assessment arrangements, and client supported tutoring, mentoring and/or coaching programs and additional online testing and assessment. We even develop whole custom courses for organization wide initiatives.

For more details please contact [info@pm4dev.com](mailto:info@pm4dev.com)