

ITAM Certification Program - Discussion Document

This paper outlines the vision and framework for a personal certification programme in IT Asset Management (ITAM) designed to address skills gaps, define career pathways, and elevate industry standards while attracting and empowering talent in a technology-driven world.

Executive Summary

The IT Asset Management (ITAM) industry is growing rapidly, yet it faces a critical skills gap and a need for structured career pathways. Existing certifications provide foundational value but need to meet evolving demands in areas like cloud management, sustainability, and FinOps.

This paper outlines a vision for a globally recognised ITAM Certification Program that addresses these challenges. The program will offer clear progression paths, from foundational to leadership roles, alongside specialised tracks for niche areas. By aligning with standards such as ISO 19770 and ITIL, it will elevate ITAM as a profession while driving personal and organisational growth.

A phased implementation plan emphasises stakeholder collaboration, regular content updates, and robust governance. Barriers such as cost and resistance to change will be mitigated through tiered pricing, fast-track options, and targeted marketing.

This initiative is a call to action for stakeholders to help shape a certification framework that attracts talent, validates expertise and ensures ITAM’s strategic relevance in a technology-driven world.

Version History

Version	Author	Date	Changes Made
0.1	Martin Thompson	5th Dec 2024	Initial draft
0.2	Martin Thompson	17th Dec 2024	Added reviewer’s guide

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1. Introduction

Overview of the ITAM Industry

The IT Asset Management (ITAM) industry has grown significantly over the past two decades, fuelled by the rapid expansion of digital transformation initiatives and the increasing complexity of IT ecosystems and new technology. Organisations across the globe now manage a diverse portfolio of hardware, software, cloud services, and other digital assets, making ITAM a critical discipline for controlling costs, ensuring compliance, and driving value from IT investments.

However, this growth has also exposed a substantial skills shortage. The ITAM field requires a unique combination of technical knowledge, strategic thinking, and operational expertise—qualities in high demand but often lacking among current IT professionals. This shortage has created a gap between the industry's evolving needs and the available talent, challenging organisations to find qualified individuals who can manage IT assets effectively in an era of hybrid environments and subscription-based models.

The increasing relevance of ITAM is particularly pronounced in a world where technology underpins nearly every business process. IT assets are foundational to organisational success, from enabling remote work to supporting digital innovation. As a result, ITAM has shifted from being a back-office function to a strategic enabler of business outcomes, underscoring the need for structured career paths and robust certification programmes to attract, develop, and retain top talent in this critical field.

The Role of Certification in Professional Growth

Certification is pivotal in fostering personal growth and attracting new talent to the IT Asset Management (ITAM) industry by providing clear, structured pathways for skill development, career progression, and professional recognition. Here's how:

1. Personal Growth and Development

Certification equips individuals with the specialised knowledge and practical skills required to excel in ITAM. By offering a structured learning framework, certifications:

- **Validate Expertise:** They act as a formal recognition of an individual's skills and competencies, enhancing their credibility within the industry.
- **Drive Continuous Learning:** Certification programmes encourage professionals to stay updated with industry trends, regulatory changes, and emerging technologies, fostering a culture of lifelong learning.

- Accelerate Career Advancement: With clearly defined certification levels, professionals can map out their career growth, moving from foundational to advanced roles and ultimately becoming recognised experts in the field.

2. Attracting New Talent

The ITAM industry faces a skills shortage, making it crucial to attract fresh talent. Certifications help bridge this gap by:

- Raising Awareness: A well-recognised certification programme highlights ITAM as a viable, rewarding career path that appeals to individuals from IT, procurement, finance, and other disciplines.
- Simplifying Entry Points: Certification programmes define precise entry-level requirements, reducing barriers for those new to the field and providing them with a roadmap for progression.
- Building Industry Credibility: A structured certification framework elevates the profession's status, positioning ITAM as a strategic and essential discipline within modern organisations.
- Encouraging Diversity: Certifications open doors for people from diverse educational and professional backgrounds, enriching the talent pool with varied perspectives and experiences.

3. Benefits for the ITAM Industry

By supporting personal growth and attracting talent, certifications raise overall industry standards. They create a well-trained, capable workforce, fostering innovation, improving organisational outcomes, and addressing critical challenges such as compliance, cost control, and asset optimisation.

In summary, certifications are more than just a badge of competence; they are a catalyst for professional growth and a magnet for new talent, ensuring the ITAM industry remains dynamic, relevant, and equipped to meet the demands of the digital era.

4. Retaining Talent Through Certification

Certification is a powerful tool for retaining talent in the ITAM industry fostering employee satisfaction, progression, and loyalty. By supporting certifications, organisations demonstrate a commitment to professional growth, enhancing job satisfaction and reducing turnover.

Certification pathways provide employees with clear career progression, encouraging internal mobility and long-term engagement. They also appeal to younger professionals who prioritise development opportunities, helping organisations meet the expectations of a modern workforce.

To maximise retention, organisations should cover certification costs, recognise achievements, and align certifications with strategic goals. This ensures employees feel valued, skilled, and motivated to contribute to the organisation's success.

The purpose of this discussion paper

This paper aims to explore the development of a structured personal certification programme for the IT Asset Management (ITAM) industry. This initiative seeks to address critical challenges, including the growing skills gap and the need for clear career pathways while enhancing the professional credibility of ITAM practitioners. By outlining the current landscape, future vision, and practical considerations, the paper seeks to provide a strategic framework for creating a certification programme that validates expertise and inspires individuals to join and thrive in the ITAM field. Ultimately, this discussion paper serves as a call to action for stakeholders to collaborate in shaping a programme that elevates industry standards, supports personal and professional growth, and ensures the ITAM profession remains relevant and vital in a technology-driven world.

2. Current State of ITAM Certifications

Existing Training and Certification Offerings

Here is a summarised view of ITAM-related certifications and training organised by the provider:

BSA Verafirm provides certifications focused on ensuring compliance with software licensing regulations and optimising software asset management, emphasising improving software compliance and risk mitigation. Company activity hasn't been updated since 2020.

IAITAM (International Association of IT Asset Managers). IAITAM offers some of the most widely recognised certifications in ITAM, SAM, and HAM, focusing on lifecycle management and strategic practices. Key Certifications include CITAM, CSAM, and CHAMP.

ITAM Forum (incorporating ITAM Review and LISA Training). The ITAM Forum and its associated initiatives, including The ITAM Review and LISA Training, provide a mix of independent certification programmes and practical training. Key Certifications and training include Practical IT Asset Manager (PITAM), ISO/IEC 19770-1 Practitioner and software vendor-specific licensing (e.g., Microsoft, Oracle, Adobe).

ITIL-Driven Initiatives - ITAM courses aligned to ITIL methodology e.g. ITIL 4 Specialist: IT Asset Management: A module within the ITIL framework, aligning ITAM with ITSM for enhanced value delivery.

Niche ITAM-Related Training - Specialised training providers and niche certifications address specific ITAM areas such as IT Asset Disposition (ITAD), software licensing, FinOps, contract negotiation and audit defence.

Analysis of Market Demand and Skill Gaps

The ITAM industry faces a significant skills gap, with high demand for training and certifications in Software Asset Management (SAM), Hardware Asset Management (HAM), and ITAM overall. Over the past decade, salary surveys by The ITAM Review indicate a consistent demand for skilled professionals, with salaries reflecting this need. However, existing training provisions are often flat, offering limited progression beyond initial certifications. The re-certification process is generally weak or non-existent, adding little value to professionals seeking to advance their careers. This highlights the need for more comprehensive and evolving certification pathways to meet industry demands.

Stakeholder Feedback on Current Certification Models

IAITAM is a market leader and is commonly cited as a requirement in job descriptions as a desired certification. Professionals cite that courses need to be updated and re-certification adds little value. Other providers (Including ITAM forum) have little market recognition for their certifications.

3. Vision for the ITAM Certification Program

For the new ITAM certification program, the vision includes several goals and objectives:

Goals and Objectives

- **Career Pathways:** Develop a structured certification pathway that allows progression from foundational to advanced levels, accommodating early-career professionals to experienced veterans.
- **Recognition of Experience:** Incorporate mechanisms to recognise and validate industry experience, such as peer reviews or portfolio assessments, alongside traditional exams.
- **Standardisation:** Create a globally recognised standard for ITAM professionals, elevating the profession's credibility.
- **Industry relevance:** Align with international standards like ISO 19770 and related disciplines such as ITIL and FinOps to ensure global relevance and recognition.
- **Talent Attraction:** Promote ITAM as an attractive and rewarding career path, drawing fresh talent to the industry.

Defining Success

Success is defined by providing clear career advancement opportunities, enhancing professional credibility, and improving organisational ITAM practices.

Establish metrics for success, such as increased certification uptake, improved job performance, and greater alignment with industry best practices.

Target Audience

- **Early Career:** Individuals new to ITAM seeking foundational knowledge (Needs: Foundational understanding of ITAM principles, practical skills, and guidance on career pathways.)
- **Mid-Career:** Professionals looking to deepen their expertise and assume more responsibility (Needs: Deepened technical expertise, leadership skills, and exposure to advanced practices (e.g., cloud management, FinOps).)
- **Experienced Professionals:** Seasoned professionals aiming for leadership roles or specialisation in complex ITAM areas (Needs: Recognition of expertise, mentoring opportunities, and thought leadership credentials.)

The program should address the gap where existing training lacks progression beyond initial certification, and re-certification processes need to be stronger or more present. The program can better meet industry demands by offering a robust framework that supports continuous learning and skill validation.

Conclusion

The vision for this ITAM certification program is to create a comprehensive, inclusive, and globally recognised framework that fosters personal growth, validates expertise, and attracts new talent. By addressing the needs of professionals at all stages of their careers, the programme will ensure the ITAM profession remains vibrant, relevant, and well-equipped to meet the challenges of an increasingly digital world.

4. Framework for Certification Development

The framework for the new ITAM certification program will serve as a blueprint for ensuring quality, accessibility, and relevance. It will focus on three key components: Curriculum Design Principles, Certification Levels and Progression Tiers, and Assessment and Accreditation Methods.

Curriculum Design Principles

- **Industry Alignment:** Ensure the curriculum aligns with current industry standards and best practices, such as ISO 19770, ITIL and FinOps.
- **Competency-Based:** Focus on developing specific competencies required for various ITAM roles, including technical skills, leadership skills, strategic thinking, and compliance management.
- **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Design the curriculum to be adaptable to emerging technologies and evolving industry needs, allowing for updates as necessary.
- **Practical Application:** Incorporate real-world scenarios, case studies, and hands-on exercises to enhance practical understanding and application of ITAM principles.

Certification Levels and Progression Tiers

- **Foundation Level:** Introduce basic concepts and principles of ITAM that are suitable for early-career professionals or those new to the field. (e.g. ITAM Foundations)
- **Intermediate Level:** Build on foundational knowledge with more in-depth exploration of specific areas such as SAM, HAM, and niche topics. (e.g. ITAM Practitioner)
- **Advanced Level:** Focus on management and leadership skills, preparing professionals for senior roles in ITAM. (e.g. ITAM Manager)
- **Strategic Level:** Equips seasoned ITAM professionals with the expertise to align ITAM practices with business strategy, drive enterprise-wide transformations, and establish themselves as thought leaders in the field. (e.g. ITAM Director)



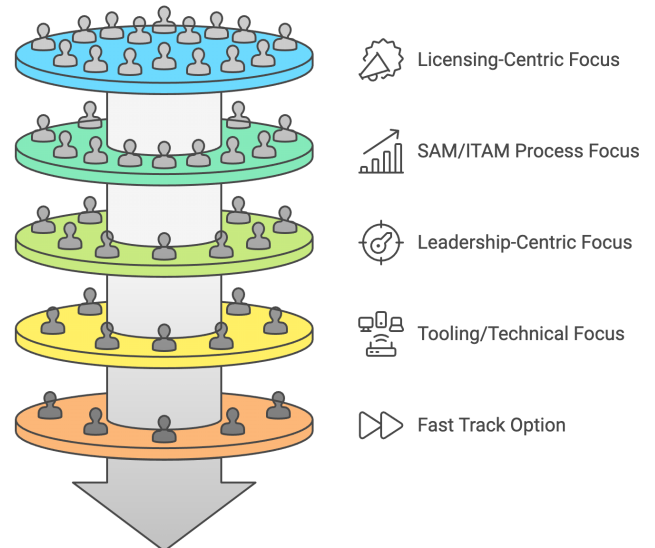
- Specialisation Tracks: Offer specialised tracks for niche areas, creating a roadmap towards recognition as an ITAM industry expert. (e.g. Oracle Licensing Expert).

Specialist Tracks

Potential specialist tracks:

- Licensing centric careers
- SAM or ITAM process-centric careers
- Leadership-centric careers
- Tooling or Technical centric careers
- Fast tracks - for those with prior learning and industry experience.

Pathway to ITAM Expertise



Assessment and Accreditation Methods

Methods:

- Examinations: Use a combination of multiple-choice exams and scenario-based assessments to evaluate theoretical knowledge and practical skills.
- Experience Validation: Implement mechanisms to assess and recognise professional experience, such as portfolio reviews or project assessments.
- Peer Reviews: Incorporate peer review processes for advanced certifications to ensure candidates demonstrate leadership and strategic capabilities.
- Continuous Learning and Re-certification: Establish a re-certification process that requires ongoing education or professional development activities to maintain certification status.

Accreditation Standards:

- Establish clear criteria for course providers to ensure consistency and quality across training.
- Implement a governance structure to oversee content development, updates, and delivery.
- Partner with recognised industry bodies and standards (e.g., ISO 19770-10) to enhance global credibility.
- Recertification and Continuing Professional Development (CPD):
- Introduce recertification requirements to ensure professionals stay current with industry advancements.

- Provide CPD opportunities through workshops, webinars, and additional certifications.

This certification framework will ensure a well-rounded, flexible, and globally relevant program that meets the diverse needs of ITAM professionals. The framework will elevate ITAM standards and empower individuals to excel in their roles by focusing on practical skills, career progression, and rigorous assessment.

5. Implementation Considerations

To effectively implement the ITAM certification program, the following key areas need to be considered:

Resource and Infrastructure Requirements

- **Technology Infrastructure:** Continued investment and development of the LISA training LMS to deliver online courses in innovative ways, track learner progress, and administer exams.
- **Qualified Course Leaders:** Continue to recruit experienced ITAM professionals and educators to develop and deliver course content, ensuring high-quality instruction.
- **Support Services:** Provide comprehensive support services, including technical assistance, academic advising, and career counselling to enhance the learner experience.
- **Assessment Tools:** Online proctoring solutions and practical project submission platforms.
- **Certification Portal:** A digital hub for candidates to track their progress, access materials, and download certificates.
- **Financial Resources:** Allocate budget for marketing, development of course materials, and ongoing program evaluation and improvement.
- **Revenue Model:** Pricing strategy to ensure affordability while covering costs and enabling reinvestment in the programme.

Strategic Partnerships and Collaborations

- **Industry Partnerships:** Collaborate with leading ITAM organisations, technology vendors, service providers and industry experts to ensure the curriculum remains relevant and aligned with industry needs.
- **Academic Institutions:** Partner with universities and colleges to offer joint programs or pathways integrating academic credentials with professional certifications.
- **Industry Bodies:** Work with alternative certification bodies and trade associations to gain endorsement and recognition for ITAM careers.
- **Collaborate with vendor-specific organisations** (e.g., Microsoft, Oracle) to integrate relevant licensing or tool-specific training.

Governance and Quality Assurance

- **Advisory Board:** Establish an advisory board comprising industry leaders, educators, and certification experts to guide program development and ensure alignment with industry trends.
- **Quality Assurance Processes:** Implement rigorous quality assurance processes to regularly review and update course content, assessment methods, and delivery mechanisms.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Maintain channels for collecting feedback from participants, instructors, and industry stakeholders to improve the program continuously.
- **Compliance and Standards:** Ensure the program complies with relevant educational standards and industry regulations to maintain its integrity and reputation.

6. Benefits and Challenges

The development of a new ITAM certification program presents several benefits and challenges:

Value for ITAM Professionals: Career Advancement and Skills Recognition

- **Clear Career Pathways:** Certification tiers provide professionals with a structured roadmap for career progression from entry-level to expert roles.
- **Enhanced Employability:** A recognised certification validates expertise, making candidates more competitive in the job market.
- **Skills Recognition:** Certifications formalise knowledge and experience, offering credibility to individuals who may have gained skills informally.
- **Specialisation Opportunities:** Certifications in niche areas, such as cloud asset management or FinOps, enable professionals to differentiate themselves.
- **Increased Earning Potential:** Certified professionals often command higher salaries due to their validated expertise and ability to deliver value.
- **Continuous Learning:** Recertification and advanced certifications encourage ongoing development, ensuring professionals remain current in a dynamic field.

Benefits for Organisations and the ITAM Industry

Benefits for Organisations:

- **Improved ITAM Practices:** Certified professionals bring standardised, best-practice approaches to asset management, driving better outcomes.
- **Enhanced Compliance and Risk Management:** Organisations are better equipped to meet regulatory and contractual obligations with trained staff.
- **Cost Optimisation:** Certified ITAM practitioners can identify savings opportunities and maximise the value of IT investments.
- **Strategic Contributions:** Advanced certifications enable ITAM professionals to align asset management with broader business objectives, increasing IT's strategic role.
- **Staff Retention and Talent Attraction:** Certification programmes demonstrate an organisation's investment in professional development, helping to retain skilled staff and attract new talent seeking growth opportunities.

Benefits for the ITAM Industry:

- **Professionalisation of ITAM:** A structured certification programme elevates ITAM as a recognised and respected career path.

- Talent Attraction: Clear entry points and career pathways make the ITAM field more appealing to new talent, addressing skills shortages.
- Standardisation: Certifications help standardise skills and practices, improving consistency and quality across the industry.
- Increased Visibility: The programme reinforces the value of ITAM to business leaders, encouraging more significant investment in ITAM practices.

Anticipated Barriers and Mitigation Strategies

Barrier 1: Cost of Certification

Challenge: High certification fees could deter candidates or organisations from participating.

Mitigation Strategies:

- Offer tiered pricing models based on region or organisational size.
- Introduce sponsorship opportunities or financial aid for underrepresented groups.
- Develop partnerships with employers to subsidise costs as part of employee development programmes.

Barrier 2: Lack of Awareness and Engagement

Challenge: Potential candidates or organisations may need to see the value of certification or may be unaware of its existence.

Mitigation Strategies:

- Launch a targeted marketing campaign to highlight the programme's benefits.
- Work with industry bodies, employers, and training providers to promote the certifications.
- Provide free introductory courses or webinars to showcase the value of the programme.

Barrier 3: Resistance to Change

Challenge: Experienced professionals may resist new certifications, viewing them as unnecessary or redundant.

Mitigation Strategies:

- Recognise prior learning and offer "fast-track" options for industry experts.
- Provide expert-level certifications that emphasise thought leadership and strategic contributions.

- Engage industry experts in developing and promoting the programme to enhance credibility.

Barrier 4: Quality and Consistency

Challenge: Maintaining consistent standards across multiple training providers and regions can take time and effort.

Mitigation Strategies:

- Establish rigorous accreditation standards for trainers and course providers.
- Implement regular audits and feedback loops to ensure quality.
- Centralise certification assessments to maintain uniform standards.

Barrier 5: Keeping Content Relevant

Challenge: Rapid changes in technology and business practices could render certifications outdated.

Mitigation Strategies:

- Commit to regular curriculum updates, informed by an advisory board of industry experts.
- Include modules on emerging trends, such as sustainability, AI, and cloud optimisation.
- Encourage ongoing learning through CPD and recertification requirements.

Conclusion

The new ITAM certification programme can deliver substantial benefits to individuals, organisations, and the industry, advancing careers, improving business outcomes, and professionalising ITAM. The programme can ensure widespread adoption, sustained relevance, and long-term success by proactively addressing potential barriers.

7. Roadmap and Next Steps

Phased Development and Launch Plan

Phase 1: Research and Planning

- Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to identify key competencies and industry requirements. Share this paper with industry stakeholders and solicit feedback.
- Develop a detailed project plan outlining timelines, resources, and budget.

Phase 2: Curriculum Development

- Design the curriculum framework, including course content, certification levels, and assessment methods.
- Collaborate with subject matter experts to ensure content accuracy and relevance.

Phase 3: Pilot Testing

- Launch a pilot program with select participants to test the curriculum and delivery methods.
- Gather feedback to refine content and processes before full-scale implementation.

Phase 4: Full Launch

- Roll out the certification program to the broader audience, supported by marketing and outreach efforts.
- Implement continuous improvement processes based on ongoing feedback.

Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback Mechanisms

- Advisory Board: Establish an advisory board of industry experts, educators, and stakeholders to guide and oversee development.
- Feedback Channels: Create multiple channels for collecting feedback from participants, instructors, and industry partners, such as surveys, focus groups, and online forums.
- Regular Updates: Communicate regularly with stakeholders about progress, changes, and upcoming milestones to maintain transparency and engagement.

Immediate Actions and Milestones

- Develop Discussion Paper: Publish this discussion paper outlining the vision, framework, benefits, challenges, and roadmap for the certification program.
- Stakeholder Review: Share the discussion paper with key stakeholders for review and feedback to ensure alignment with industry needs and expectations.

- Establish a Development Team and Governance Framework
- Initial Curriculum Design: Compare the modules and infrastructure required based on stakeholder input and research with what already exists and can be provided with the LISA platform.
- Create marketing and branding materials to promote the program.
- Pilot Program Preparation: Identify pilot participants and prepare materials for testing the program in real life.

The success of this certification programme hinges on a collaborative, phased approach that incorporates stakeholder feedback at every stage. By finalising this discussion paper and initiating immediate actions, the foundation will be set for a globally recognised ITAM certification framework that meets the needs of professionals, organisations, and the wider industry.

8. Reviewers Guide

This reviewer's guide is to help ITAM industry stakeholders critically evaluate this document and provide feedback.

Oversight, Validation, and Quality Assurance

- External vs. Internal Validation: Should certification oversight rest with an independent, external body or can the function be effectively managed by an internal governance board of the ITAM Forum with robust processes?
- Global Recognition: What steps must we take to ensure the certification is equally respected globally?

Balancing Quality, Cost, and Market Adoption

- Affordability vs. Rigour: Can we deliver a high-standard certification at a competitive price, and how do we ensure it remains accessible to individuals and smaller organisations?
- Revenue Models: What financing models could encourage widespread adoption without compromising quality?

Specialisations, Career Progression, and Continuous Development

- Career Pathways: How clear, flexible, and motivating are the proposed career tiers, from foundational roles to strategic leadership positions?
- Specialist Tracks: Are there any specialisations missing?
- Ongoing Relevance: Is the proposed recertification and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) model ambitious enough to ensure that certified professionals remain at the forefront of industry practice?

Please send feedback to Martin Thompson martin@itamf.org

9. Appendices

ITAM Certifications:

Institution	Levels	Methodology	Examinations	Other
IAITAM https://iaitam.org/	Asset class-centric Certifications CAMP, CSAM, CHAMP, CITAM, CAMSE	Courses are based on IAITAM Best Practice Library (IBPL), covering 12 Key Process Areas.	Multiple choice exams, 100 questions per exam, 85% passing score, 3 hours duration, open book.	Certifications can count towards a Master of Science Degree in Technology and Innovation Management. Online certification testing is available.
LISA from ITAM Forum https://lisa.training/	PITAM and Licensing certifications only. There are no formal levels.	On-demand and live course options. Multiple choice exams.	Computer-based exams. Open book,	Offers comprehensive training for significant software publishers and ITAM use cases.

How other industry organisations deliver their certification programs:

Institution	Levels	Methodology	Examinations	Other
ITIL https://www.axelos.com/certifications/itil-service-management/	Foundation, Managing Professional, Strategic Leader, Master	Multiple choice exams. Higher tiers require verified experience in the field, a work proposal and an interview with an assessment panel.	Closed book, Proctored.	Training delivered by accredited partners. A focus on continuous learning and specialist modules on emerging technologies and practices.
AAT https://www.aat.org.uk/	Foundation Level - no previous experience, Advanced Level - more complex, Professional Level- significant experience, prepares for senior	Combination of computer-based assessments and projects.	Computer-based exams at each level.	Offers flexibility with part-time study options and online learning resources. Accredited by Ofqual and recognised globally.

	roles.			
CPA https://www.aicpa-cima.com/home	An entry-level exam is followed by professional-level exams after completing the degree and experience requirements.	It requires a degree and 1-2 years of experience under an existing qualified professional—continual Professional Development to maintain the CPA license.	Uniform CPA Examination consists of four sections: AUD, BEC, FAR, and REG.	Administered by the American Institute of CPAs (AICPA). Recognised globally as a mark of accounting excellence.
PMP	CAPM - Entry Level, PMP 3-5 years experience, PgMP - 4-11 years experience, PfMP - a portfolio of strategic objectives 8 years plus experience	Proctored exams, verification process for the experience.	Main tiers and specialist certifications	Offered by the Project Management Institute (PMI). Recognised globally as a standard in project management credentials.