

ITIL Qualifications Explained

ITIL is the most widely adopted approach to IT Service Management. It provides a cohesive set of "best practice" guidance drawn from the public and private sectors across the world. ITIL is a central component both in ensuring efficient service delivery and in meeting IT Governance objectives.

For those new to ITIL, this White Paper introduces key aspects of the framework and explains the structure of training and qualifications that is available. The ITIL framework was re-launched in 2007 ("version 3"). The new courses and qualifications have been introduced progressively and are now all available.

The high level qualification is now referred to as ITIL Expert.

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IT Service Management

Service provision is not new. Musicians have entertained, cooks have cooked and barbers have cut hair since time immemorial. What's new in the last 30 years is three fold:

1. Service Complexity. Services have become more complex and sophisticated, and have rapidly become by far the most significant portion of the economy. Think of the financial services, internet shopping, travel options and on-line media which did not exist in the 1970s.

2. Revolution in Information Technology. Rapid growth in the power and pervasiveness of computing power has helped stimulate this growth in services – and it has also become central to effective delivery of both information-based and more traditional services.

3. New Focus on Service Delivery. Managers in both public and private sectors now know it is essential to focus on service delivery if they are to succeed in an increasingly competitive world. This is apparent in terms of interaction with external end users but is also vital between internal departments and when interfacing with outsourced service providers.

Those in the Information Services arena have been pioneers in this new environment. It is clear that technology alone will not ensure the levels of cost, availability, security, and quality that customers demand. Value driven service management is what ensures success.

IT Service Management always views IT from an end user perspective

High-performing service providers share common characteristics in the ways in which they plan, develop and manage their operations. Within the IT community there have been a number of documents, frameworks and guidelines which seek to define and share such knowledge. ITIL (originally the IT Infrastructure Library) was a set of best practice developed in the late 1980s by the UK government. It has developed into the most commonly adopted framework worldwide across public and private sectors.

What is ITIL?

In one sense ITIL is simply a codification of knowledge developed in conjunction with the IT community to improve the way in which IT services are managed.

It has become more than this in that the knowledge and guidance has been distilled – and there is strong emphasis on training and support materials which enable ITIL practices to be adopted across the whole cycle of Service Provision. Many organisations have adopted an **ITIL Philosophy** that provides a structured and systematic approach to their information systems – yielding cost efficient and high value services.

A feature of ITIL is the breadth of its relevance; it provides a common approach spanning new software development, service desk operation, through to the integrity of enterprise systems. It is also scalable: the ITIL principles and approaches are freely available for anyone to adapt to the needs of their own organisation – large or small.

The latest version of ITIL is centred on 5 manuals:

- **Service Strategy** *"A view of ITIL that aligns business and IT so that each brings out the best in the other. It ensures that every stage of the service lifecycle stays focused on the business case and relates to all the companion process elements that follow."*
- **Service Design** *"In order to meet current and future business requirements, Service Design provides guidance on the production and maintenance of IT policies, architectures and documents for the design of appropriate and innovative IT infrastructure solutions and processes."*
- **Service Transition** *"Service Transition focuses on the broader, long-term change management role and release practices so that risks, benefits, delivery mechanisms and the ease of ongoing operations of service are considered. This publication provides guidance and process activities for the transition of services into the business environment."*
- **Service Operation** *"By focusing on delivery and control process activities, a highly desirable, steady state of managing services can be achieved on a day to day basis. To ensure it is integrated with the rest of the ITIL library, guidance is based on a selection of familiar service support and service delivery control points"*
- **Continual Service Improvement** *"Alongside the delivery of consistent, repeatable process activities as part of service quality, ITIL has always emphasised the importance of continual improvements. Focusing on the process elements involved in identifying and introducing service management improvements, this publication also deals with issues surrounding service retirement."*

These manuals have each been authored by experienced service management professionals with a global perspective. They are published by the TSO in conjunction with the Office of Government Commerce. A useful additional publication is "The Official Introduction to the Service Lifecycle" which describes each of the 5 ITIL elements, relates these to the well established ITIL processes (eg Availability or Release Management) and includes a comprehensive glossary of ITIL terminology.

ITIL Version 3

The latest version of ITIL was published in 2007. It builds on the well established ITIL approaches but interprets them in the context of **service lifecycle**. It recognises the shift that has occurred as IT/IS operations have become an integral element of all modern organisations - rather than a discrete bolt on function.

Many people familiar with earlier editions of ITIL have come to think of it in the context of a number of key processes. In most cases these remain important knowledge sets within ITIL:

Process	Summary	Version 3 – “Location”
Availability Management	Planning, implementation, measurement and risk management to ensure that service availability to customers meets the business needs	Service Design
Capacity Management	Involves balancing costs v IT resources needed to ensure that capacity and performance match agreed demands of the business	Service Design
Change Management	Adaptation to evolving business needs whilst reducing incidents, disruption and re-work	Service Transition
Configuration Management	IT assets and service components must be managed in a visible and structured manner to support the success of other ITIL processes	Service Transition
Financial Management	The quantification in financial terms of the costs and benefits of IT services	Service Strategy
Incident Management	Procedures to log, resolve, escalate any event which disrupts or could disrupt a service	Service Operation
Problem Management	Addresses the root cause of “incidents” – including detection, diagnosis, resolution, documentation and prevention	Service Operation
Release Management	ITIL Release and Deployment practices aim to ensure fast and effective achievement of user benefits when systems and services are launched	Service Transition
IT Service Continuity Mgt	The IT section of the disaster recovery plan – evaluating risks and planning for potential major disruption to services	Service Design
Service Desk	The single point of contact for IT users designed to handle Incidents and Service Requests in a systematic and efficient manner	Service Operation
Service Level Management	Negotiation, agreement, measuring, and reporting of Service Level Requirements	Service Design

The new aspects of ITIL v3 manuals and training:
- Service Strategy as the central driver
- Emphasis on Service rather than Process
- Integration (not just alignment) of IT and rest of organisation
- The cycle of Continuous Service Improvement

ITIL Certification

ITIL certification is for individuals and it signifies different levels of awareness and capability with regard to ITIL. During 2007 a new accreditation authority, APMG, was appointed to oversee training, examination and certification on an international basis.

A useful web site with information on many aspects of ITIL (and complementary methodologies such as PRINCE2 project management) is operated jointly by OGC (the "owner" of ITIL), TSO (the publisher of official ITIL documentation) and the APMG:

<http://www.best-management-practice.com>

ITIL training is undertaken in the UK alone by over 30 specialist training companies. All of these will have been accredited on behalf of the OGC. They use approved course materials based on the official ITIL manuals – and they prepare delegates for exams which are again supervised by accredited examination authorities.

As an individual or a business the ITIL accreditation structure gives you a strong guarantee of quality and consistency.

ITIL is not a company standard and ITIL does not provide accreditation of company procedures. There is in fact a new international IT service management quality standard called ISO/IEC20000 which incorporates many of the ITIL approaches.

ITIL Qualification Structure

A new hierarchy of ITIL qualifications has been introduced in order to:

- reflect the ITIL version 3 content
- provide a more systematic route from Foundation through to higher level management qualifications

There are four levels within the new scheme:

- Foundation
- Intermediate
- ITIL Expert
- ITIL Master

The new ITIL qualifications scheme recognises the value of existing v2 qualifications and introduces a system that gives credits for both ITIL v2 and v3 courses.

To achieve the ITIL Expert qualification, candidates must achieve at least 22 credits, two of which can be gained at Foundation level. (Full details of the credits system, examinations and pre-requisites can be found via the www.best-management-practice.com website.)

ITIL Master

Proven Application & Experience

ITIL Expert

22 Credits

5 Credits

Managing Across the Lifecycle

17 Credits

3 Credits Each

Service Lifecycle Stream

Service Strategy

Service Design

Service Transition

Service Operation

Continual Service Improvement

4 Credits Each

Service Capability Stream

Planning, Protection & Optimisation

Service Offerings and Agreements

Release, Control & Validation

Operational Support & Analysis

2 Credits

V3 Foundation Certificate

ITIL Foundation

This is the first step on the ITIL v3 education programme. The course explains the basics of ITIL, its terminology and common processes. It also travels through the Service Lifecycle, defining the roles and responsibilities involved.

Who should attend: Anyone involved in IT or the business

Duration: 3 days non residential

Exam: 40 Questions multi choice – pass mark 26

Credits: 2 (but only 1.5 for non version 3 courses)

For those with a version 1 or 2 Foundation qualification you should note that a supplementary 1 day Foundation Bridge course will be necessary to update the knowledge gained to the latest version of ITIL.

The new Foundation qualification is designed to give a comprehensive overview of ITIL – possibly at the expense of some detail when it comes to specific topics compared to its predecessor.

ITIL Intermediate

At the intermediate level there are 9 modular courses from which students will typically need to acquire 15 credits in order to move on to the “cap-stone” Managing Across the Lifecycle Course and achieve the ITIL Expert qualification. (They will need correspondingly fewer credits if they hold existing ITIL Practitioner certificates.)

The courses are grouped into 2 streams. It will be possible to “pick and mix” from these various modules to suit the requirements of you and your organisation. There are some constraints to ensure a good mix of topics is covered.

The Service Lifecycle courses (each worth 3 credits) align to each of the 5 core ITIL manuals.

Service Strategy
Service Design
Service Transition
Service Operation
Continual Service Improvement

The Service Capability courses (each worth 4 credits) focus on ITIL processes:

Planning, Protection and Optimisation
Availability, Capacity, Service Continuity, Demand, Risk & Security Management
Service Offerings and Agreement
Service Portfolio, Service Level, Service Catalogue, Demand, Supplier & Financial Management
Release, Control & Validation
Change, Service Release & Deployment, Validation & Testing, Asset & Configuration, Knowledge Management, Request Fulfilment, and Service Evaluation
Operational Support & Analysis
Event, Incident, Request, Problem, Access, Service Desk, Technical, IT Operations and Application Management

Who should attend:	IT professionals interested to develop specific ITSM skill sets and those who seek to achieve ITIL Expert status
Duration:	Service Lifecycle – 21 hrs minimum (3 or 4 day course) Service Capability – 30 hrs minimum (4 or 5 day course)
Exam:	90 minute graduated multiple choice with scenario based questions. Pass mark 65% (75% for a Distinction)
Credits:	Service Lifecycle – 3 Service Capability – 4

At this time it is still possible to study the version 2 Practitioner curriculum where this is preferred by your organisation.

ITIL Practitioner

These version 2 courses focus on specific ITIL processes so are suited to anyone in a specialist role or who is required to lead a specialist team in Configuration Management, Service Desk and Incident Management, Problem Management, Change Management, Service Level Management or IT Service Continuity Management. The knowledge learned is consistent with version 3 and credits will be given towards the new ITIL Expert certification (2 credits for each single Practitioner Certificate and 3.5 credits for clustered Certificates).

For both the existing Practitioner courses and the new Intermediate modules it is a pre-requisite to have passed the ITIL Foundation Certificate.

ITIL Expert

The ITIL Expert will replace the current ITIL Manager certification which distinguishes experienced IT service leaders who have studied the application of ITIL in depth.

The version 3 ITIL Expert qualification is obtained upon achievement of 17 or more credits from the Foundation, Intermediate, Bridge or v2 Courses – followed by the broad and high level course – “Managing Across the Lifecycle”.

Managing Across the Lifecycle

The purpose of this module is to consolidate and test the content of the 5 core guidance ITIL manuals. The focus is on business, management and supervisory aspects, with attention given to the interactions between the different ITIL processes.

Who should attend: CIOs, IT Managers, IT Professionals

Duration: 5 days

Exam: 8 multiple choice, scenario based, gradient scored questions.

Pass Mark 28 marks (70%)

Credits: 5

An alternative route to achieve the ITIL Expert qualification is through a Manager's Bridge course which is available to those who are already holders of the ITIL v2 Manager's Certificate (see below).

ITIL Manager's Certificate

The ITIL Manager's Certificate will continue to be a valuable qualification for those responsible for ITIL implementation and operation (exam expected to remain available until at least mid 2009). The training and qualification are capability rather than simply knowledge based. They will help you create a 'world class' IT Service Management function that will provide your organisation with competitive advantage.

Training and exams are split into 2 strands covering specific ITIL processes:

ITIL Service Delivery

Service Level; Financial; Availability; Capacity; Service Continuity

ITIL Service Support

Service Desk; Incident; Problem; Change; Release; Configuration

Courses: The Manger Certification process comprises two 5 day courses followed by a revision day nearer the exam and then the exam itself.

Exams: The exams consists of 2 closed book, written papers covering Service Support and Service Delivery (though there will be overlap). Each paper will have 5 questions worth 20 marks each. Three hours are allocated for each paper and 60% of the questions are based on a case study sent to candidates prior to the exams. In order to be awarded

the certificate, candidates must pass both papers (50% or greater in each).

The exams are available on a limited number of dates, set by the relevant examination authority. It is recommended that the exam is taken at least one month after completing the training.

Candidates must hold the ITIL Foundation Certificate and must attend a formal training course run by an accredited course provider. It is not necessary to hold the ITIL Practitioner Certificate.

In addition, candidates must be able to demonstrate at least 5 years of IT experience and have at least 2 years of experience in an IT service Management environment in a supervisory, managerial or consultancy role.

ITIL Master

Candidates for this level will be required to have achieved the ITIL Expert certification and to have demonstrated practical application and experience. They will be assessed on the broader issues of ITSM implementations including:

- Managing cultural and organisational change
- Responding to industry change
- Continual improvement of ITSM capability
- Preparing organisations for audit and certification

This qualification will not be associated with an accredited course. Details of the qualification have not yet been finalised.

ITIL Bridging Courses

An interim set of Bridging Courses has been introduced for those who have already undertaken training under earlier versions of ITIL and who wish to update their knowledge to reflect the latest release.

Foundation Bridge

Who should attend	Existing holders of the Foundation Certificate. Active members of Service Management teams.
Duration	1 Day
Content	An overview of the lifecycle approach to ITIL – highlighting key changes and explaining the benefits
Exam	30 minute multiple choice paper with 20 questions – 65% pass mark
Credits	0.5 (which can be added to the 1.5 earned from version 1 or version 2 foundation certificates)

Manager Bridge

Who should attend	Existing holders of the Manager's Certificate who wish to upgrade to the new ITIL Expert qualification. It is not necessary to have taken the Foundation Bridge. CIOs, IT Managers, IT Professionals
Duration	4 or 5 Days
Content	In depth coverage of the lifecycle approach to ITIL – highlighting key changes and explaining the benefits
Exam	90 minute multiple choice paper with 20 questions – 80% pass mark
Credits	5 (which when added to the 17 earned from version 1 or version 2 Service Manager certificates result in the 22 credits required to qualify as an ITIL Expert)

Practitioner Bridge

Those with at least 12 credits from v2 Practitioner courses but who do not hold the Manager's Certificate may achieve ITIL Expert status by:

- First completing the Manager's Bridge course and exam
- Then completing the Managing across the Lifecycle Course and Exam

This enables part qualified individuals to obtain ITIL Expert certification without the need to study at the new Intermediate level.

Benefits of ITIL

Investments in information services have frequently been characterised by over spend, under delivery, and a lack of transparency. ITIL provides a maturity path for IT which is not technology based – providing practical management tools which are accessible to a wider audience.

Benefits of adopting ITIL can include:

- Increased productivity
- Higher levels of customer satisfaction
- Reduced costs
- Improved communications between the IT function and its customers
- Improved morale of service delivery staff
- Lower costs of training
- Better asset utilisation

Savings in total costs of ownership of 48% have been reported in case studies. P&G has attributed savings of 10% of their total IT costs to adoption of ITIL.

Total Cost of Ownership studies by Axios and others suggest 75% of your IT costs are associated with Service Management rather than acquisition and commissioning. ITIL training and certification can help you understand and optimise the effectiveness of this spend.

Who uses ITIL?

Over 3,000 professionals per month are proving their competence by taking the ITIL Certifications.

Organisations which deploy ITIL include:

Barclays Bank
Boeing
British Airways
Caterpillar
Guinness
HSBC
Hewlett Packard
IBM
Microsoft
Procter & Gamble
Shell
UK Ministry of Defence

ITIL Training and ISO20000

ITIL embodies the methodologies which underpin the ISO/IEC20000 quality accreditation for organisations with respect to their information systems. This is displacing BS15000 in the UK and is rapidly being adopted as the definitive international standard for IT Service Management.

ISO/IEC20000 is an auditable standard which specifies five key service management processes:

- Service Delivery Processes (including Service Level Management, Availability Management and Capacity Management)
- Relationship Processes (those involving the interfaces between the service provider and both customers and suppliers)
- Resolution Processes (those focused on incidents being resolved or prevented)
- Control Processes (those involved with managing changes, assets and configurations)
- Release Process (looking at the roll-out of new or changed software/hardware)

Training in ITIL approaches and processes forms a key element in the successful achievement of ISO20000.

About:

Focus on Training specialises in provision of Best Practice training within the Project Management and IT Service Management sectors. A comprehensive range of ITIL, ISO/IEC20000 and related courses from leading accredited training organisations can be booked at:

www.focusprojects.co.uk/itsm

Focus on Training is an active member of the IT Service Management Forum which plays a central role in updating and disseminating the ITIL framework through its international network of 6,000 organisations and 70,000 IT professionals.

Rex Gibson leads the IT Service Management team at Focus. He has successfully executed major business change and IT projects, and has managed international engineering companies with significant IT dependency.

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