



## [Content Options for RPM Training and Capacity-Building Services](#)

In 2013, Prof. P. Alison Paprica (see Appendix) founded Research Project Management (RPM) to build project management and leadership capacity in the research sector.

RPM helps research teams adapt and apply light-touch versions of project management tools and processes through one-on-one or small-group coaching sessions, webinars, and workshops for up to ~30 people, which include breakout groups and interactive activities.

Alison's light-touch project management approach focuses on establishing a shared understanding of research scope at a high level. With as few as three pages of documentation, it helps clarify in-scope deliverables, timelines, roles, and responsibilities so research team members can work effectively together.

Box 1 present the contents of RPM's most popular training, "Three-Page Project Management". Alternatively, research teams and host organizations can work with Alison to develop customized workshops or webinars drawing on more than 35 hours of existing RPM training content (see Table 1).

Email [info@researchpm.com](mailto:info@researchpm.com) to arrange a complementary 25-minute consultation with Alison.

### Box 1: Three-Page Project Management (1.5-hour Webinar or 3-hour Workshop)

1. The work breakdown structure (WBS)– a one-page tool to establish a common high-level understanding of research scope expressed in terms of deliverables (workshops include a breakout group activity to create a WBS)
2. The deliverable-based Gantt chart – a one-page tool to describe when and how the deliverables of the research will come together (workshops include a breakout group activity to begin creating a deliverable-based Gantt chart)
3. The deliverable-based tracking sheet – a one-page tool to identify emerging risks and drive progress at a more granular level during the implementation phase of the research
4. Time for questions and answers with participants

*Table 1: Existing Training Content and Interactive Activities*

Seminar Topic	Optional Interactive Activity
1. Distinguishing projects from operations	Large group activity: distinguishing examples of projects from operations with live polling.
2. Context: why project management and leadership must be tailored for research	
3. The project management mindset: DEFINE, then DELIVER	
4. Scope and the work breakdown structure (WBS)	Breakout groups of 2-3 people develop a WBS for a real or fictional project or program. Optional independent work: create a WBS for a real project or program.
5. Deliverable-based Gantt chart schedule	Breakout groups of 2-3 people use the WBS to develop a high-level deliverable-based Gantt chart, working backwards from the completion date. Optional independent work: create a deliverable-based Gantt chart for a real project.
6. Deliverable-based budget	
7. The triple constraint of scope, time, and cost	
8. Using project management tools and processes to strengthen grant applications	
9. Risk identification and risk management	One to 3 hours (depending on the total length of training) interactive exercise where small groups brainstorm negative risks, large group votes to identify the most important negative risks, and small groups develop possible risk responses. Optional independent work: prepare a table with 4-7 negative risks for a research project and, for each risk, estimate the likelihood and impact, and identify possible risk responses.
10. Partner and stakeholder engagement and communications	Large or small group brainstorming to identify key partners and stakeholders, with possible breakout groups for participants to identify the interests/needs of specific partners and stakeholders and ways to address those needs.
11. Transitioning from planning to implementation	Large group brainstorming about what might change between when a research proposal is developed/ submitted and when it is funded.

Seminar Topic	Optional Interactive Activity
12. Project implementation roles and responsibilities	Optional independent work: (i) add the Lead's initials to each workstream and deliverable on a WBS and/or (ii) create a RACI for an actual project/program.
13. Light-touch project monitoring and control with a tracking sheet	
14. Status reports	
15. Project and program governance and decision-making	
16. Research meetings	Entertaining, two-part simulated meeting exercise to help people learn how to set an agenda and chair meetings, including when disruptive participants are present.
17. Closing projects and lessons learned	Individual brainstorming followed by a large group discussion about participants' personal key takeaways from the training.
18. "Planning for Sustainability": using project management tools and processes to take research study findings and prototypes all the way to sustainable implementation	
19. Different skills and approaches for applying project management in the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors	
20. Beyond tools and processes – interpersonal skills for project managers and research leaders	Group discussion of possible responses to challenging leadership and management scenarios that require strong interpersonal skills.
21. A 20,000-foot overview of tools and processes to manage and lead research projects	
Host organizations may choose to devote a portion of the training time for their staff or senior leaders to present examples of successful internal project/program management practices and/or host organization strategic priorities and/or tools, processes and supports for project/program management and leadership.	

## Appendix

### P. Alison Paprica, PhD, PMP, Highlights of Qualifications and Experience

- Principal, Research Project Management (RPM) – a sole proprietorship founded in 2013 that provides training, strategic advice, consulting, and facilitation services focused on the leadership and management of research and evaluation projects and programs.
- Author of [\*Research Project Management and Leadership: A Handbook for Everyone\*](#) (University of Toronto Press, 2024).
- Early adopter of project management, among the first 3% of the 1.4 million people who hold Project Management Professional (PMP) certification globally.
- Developed and delivered courses, workshops, and webinars focused on the leadership and management of research to over 1,700 learners at the University of Toronto and for Canadian federally funded research initiatives (e.g., CIHR Health System Impact Fellows, SSHRC Partnership Grant Start-up meeting and NSERC-funded CREATE programs), among others.
- Former Director, Planning, Research and Analysis Branch, Ontario Ministry of Health (2010-2013) responsible for up to \$60 million of annual research funding and extensive knowledge translation and exchange activities to bring research evidence into policy and practice.
- Thirteen years of employment within the Ontario Public Service focused on research funding, innovation policy, and evidence-informed policy.
- Seven years of experience working in international pharmaceutical R&D, including six months at Astra Pharma's R&D headquarters in Sweden.
- Co-investigator, Principal Applicant, or Co-Applicant on 13 awarded Canadian federal research grants totaling over \$180 million.
- Thirty-three (33) peer-reviewed journal articles, first or last on author on 14 publications.
- Peer reviewer for leading scientific journals including PLOS, Nature, Science, British Medical Journal, and the Journal of the Canadian Medical Association.
- Member of the CIHR College of Reviewers, the Strategic Advisory Council of the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario, and a member of review committees for multiple provincial, national, and international research funding competitions.
- Academic appointment as Professor (Adjunct) and Senior Fellow at the Institute for Health Policy, Management and Evaluation at the University of Toronto with cross-appointment to the Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathobiology in the Faculty of Medicine.