

## 1 • CREDENTIAL

**MSPM**

## 2 • FULL TITLE

**Master of Science in Project Management**

## 3 • ISSUING BODY

**Various universities**

## 4 • LAST VERIFIED

**AUG 22, 2026**

## 5 • STATUS

**Maintained**

A master's in project management is the long route and the expensive one. Two years and tuition against a few weeks and an exam at \$425 for a PMI member, \$675 without, and it doesn't come with a salary figure attached the way the PMP does. What it buys is the theory under the practice, standing with an academic employer or a large organization that prices degrees, and a real shortcut on the PMP's experience gate later. Paying out of pocket it's hard to justify against the exam fee. With Post-9/11 entitlement still on the table the arithmetic changes completely, and working that arithmetic properly is most of what this guide is for.

**CHANGE NOTICE • AUGUST 1, 2026**

The Post-9/11 GI Bill's annual ceiling for private and foreign schools rose to \$30,908.34 on August 1, 2026, up from \$29,920.95. That figure caps the tuition a private university can draw, and Yellow Ribbon is what covers the gap above it. The bigger change came earlier in the year, and it's the one to check if you thought you were out of road: following *Rudisill v. McDonough* and the Perkins decision after it, veterans eligible for both the Post-9/11 and Montgomery programs can reach the 48-month aggregate rather than stopping at 36, and in February 2026 VA started reviewing affected cases without waiting to be asked. Read what those extra months are before you budget with them. They are Montgomery months, which pay you a flat monthly rate of \$2,518 at full time rather than paying tuition to the school, and they carry no Yellow Ribbon. So 48 months is not 48 months of Chapter 33, and against a private tuition bill the last twelve behave like a different benefit, because they are one.

Headlines in early 2026 reported that the Defense Department had ended tuition assistance at 34 universities. What actually happened on February 6, 2026 was a directive telling the services to review graduate programs at Ivy League and comparable institutions, with one reported cutoff at Harvard for students starting in fall 2026. The list of 34 was an internal assessment rather than a published eligibility rule, and George Washington was reported to be on it. Two things follow. Confirm tuition assistance with your education office rather than a news article. And note that none of this touches the GI Bill: tuition assistance is for people still serving and the GI Bill is not, so they're different money under different rules and a change to one says nothing about the other.

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## **1 What counts from your service**

Admission doesn't ask what you did in the service. GW wants an accredited bachelor's degree, a résumé, a statement of purpose under 500 words and one reference, and it asks for neither the GRE nor any project management experience. So the translation question here isn't whether your record qualifies you. It's what your service pays for, and what it saves you later.

### **WORK THAT QUALIFIES**

#### **Post-9/11 GI Bill entitlement**

Graduate study is covered. The standard entitlement is 36 months at the 100% level, charged only while you're certified as enrolled and in 30-day months, so breaks between terms cost nothing (VA, checked August 22, 2026). A fall and spring year runs about eight charged months, which makes 36 months roughly four academic years of full-time study rather than two, and a 30-credit master's about 16 of them. What decides whether you can afford a private program is your benefit percentage, not the size of that bank.

#### **Yellow Ribbon, where the school offers it**

At a private school the GI Bill stops at the annual ceiling. Yellow Ribbon is a voluntary school contribution that VA matches dollar for dollar above it. GW contributes up to \$17,750 for graduate students for 2026 to 2027 with VA matching the same amount, which takes the ceiling to \$66,408.34 for the year. You have to be at the 100% benefit level to qualify, and non-degree and visiting students are excluded.

#### **In-state tuition at a public school**

At a public school Chapter 33 pays net in-state tuition and mandatory fees rather than applying the private ceiling, which is why a public program is usually the cheap route rather than the compromise. It does not pay out-of-state rates because you're a veteran. The Veterans Choice Act is what gets many veterans in-state treatment, and it has conditions worth reading before you rely on it.

#### **Tuition assistance, while you're still serving**

\$250 per semester hour and \$4,500 per fiscal year for fiscal 2026, on an October to September year. The Army authorizes it for one master's, capped at 39 graduate semester hours or the degree, whichever comes first. It pays tuition only, not housing or books, and it stops at separation. Service rules differ, so this is an education office question rather than an internet one.

#### **The PMP's experience gate, later**

A postgraduate degree from a GAC-accredited program puts you on PMI's 24-month experience route rather than the 36-month one, and accredited university coursework covers the 35 hours of project management training every route requires. A GAC-accredited master's is therefore worth a documented year on a PMP application, which is a saving most people costing out a degree never put in the column.

#### **VR&E, Chapter 31**

If you have a service-connected disability and an employment handicap, Chapter 31 can fund graduate study and doesn't spend Post-9/11 entitlement. What it covers is decided case by case by a counselor, so this is a conversation to have rather than a figure to plan around.

### **WORK THAT DOESN'T**

- Your Joint Services Transcript, for graduate credit. ACE credit recommendations are overwhelmingly undergraduate, and graduate programs rarely apply military training toward a master's. Ask for a written evaluation before you enroll rather than after.
- Tuition assistance once you've separated. It's a benefit of serving rather than of having served, and the GI Bill is the answer on the other side of that line.
- Out-of-state tuition, on the assumption that being a veteran fixes it. Chapter 33 pays the in-state rate at a public school, and the difference is yours unless the school grants you residency.

### PROVING IT

Get four things in writing before you commit money. That the specific program is VA-approved, because approval sits with the program rather than the university. That the school runs Yellow Ribbon for graduate students, what it contributes, and what its cap on participant numbers is, because a school can run out of places partway through a year. Your remaining entitlement in months, from VA rather than from memory. And any credit evaluation, because a verbal maybe from an admissions officer is not a transcript. None of these are hard to obtain, and all four are painful to discover after a deposit.

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## 2 Eligibility

### An accredited bachelor's degree

In any subject. GW names no required major and no course prerequisites for the MSPM.

### No GRE or GMAT

Neither is required at GW. You may submit scores if you think they strengthen the application, which in practice means most applicants don't.

### No project management experience, at some programs

GW publishes no minimum. That is not universal, and it's the single biggest difference between programs: some won't admit you until you've been a project manager first, precisely because the cohort discussion is the product. Western Carolina's MPM asks for two years of it. Check the program rather than the category.

### The application package

Transcripts from every institution you've attended, a current résumé, a statement of purpose of no more than 500 words, one professional or academic reference, the online application and a non-refundable fee.

### GAC accreditation, which is the thing worth checking

PMI's Global Accreditation Center accredits project management degrees specifically, and GW's MSPM has held it since May 2019. It matters twice over: it's a quality signal in a field with a lot of programs that don't hold it, and it's what puts you on PMI's 24-month PMP route afterwards.

### VA approval for that exact program

Approval attaches to the program rather than to the university, so a school being VA-approved in general tells you nothing about your degree. Check it in VA's comparison tool before you apply, not after you're admitted.

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## 3 The route

### 1 Find your benefit percentage first

Ask VA for your Post-9/11 percentage and your remaining months, in that order. The percentage is the cliff, because Yellow Ribbon requires the full 100% and nothing below it qualifies. Months matter less than most people expect, and the next few steps depend on the percentage rather than on them.

### 2 Decide public or private

They're funded by different rules rather than different amounts. Public means net in-state tuition and fees paid in full. Private means an annual ceiling plus Yellow Ribbon if the school offers it. Shortlisting across both at once is how people end up comparing numbers that were never comparable.

### 3 Shortlist GAC-accredited programs

PMI publishes the directory. It's a short list, which makes this the fastest filter available, and it's the one that pays off again at PMP time.

### 4 Confirm the money in writing

Yellow Ribbon participation for graduate students, the contribution amount, the cap on how many students receive it, and the program's VA approval. All four, in writing, before any deposit.

### 5 Apply

Transcripts, résumé, 500 words and one reference. GW takes fall and spring entry. Writing a tight case for yourself to a panel is a skill you already have.

### 6 Do the credits

30 at GW, two years full-time or two and a half part-time, in person in Washington or online. Studying fully online changes your housing allowance, so check that rate before treating the two formats as equivalent.

### 7 Then sit the PMP, a year early

The GAC-accredited master's puts you on the 24-month experience route instead of 36 and covers the 35 training hours. If you were always going to do both, this is the order that costs less.

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## 4 What it costs

|                             |                                        |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Tuition per credit, GW MSPM | \$2,076 for fall 2026                  |
| The full 30 credits         | \$62,280                               |
| Fees, GW                    | \$1,649 in year one, \$122 in year two |

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|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Post-9/11 ceiling, private school   | \$30,908.34 for 2026 to 2027                  |
| Yellow Ribbon, GW graduate          | Up to \$17,750, matched by VA                 |
| A public comparison, WCU online MPM | \$329.82 a semester hour · \$11,873.52 for 36 |

Out of pocket, GW's 30 credits are \$62,280 plus \$1,771 in fees, against \$425 for the PMP exam at PMI member price on the store this guide cites and \$675 without membership (checked August 22, 2026). Sit with that gap before anything else on this page. Three things change it. A public school in your own state is a different order of cost and Chapter 33 pays it in full. GW discounts its online cohort automatically, up to 30% off tuition for fall 2026 entry, which takes the same 30 credits to \$43,596 before any benefit is applied. And if a whole degree is the wrong size, GW's graduate certificate in project management holds GAC accreditation too, though PMI's July 2026 outline says in terms that GAC accreditation does not by itself change the degree level required for eligibility, so a certificate does not put you on the 24-month PMP route the way the master's does. One caveat on that \$425 and one disclosure. PMI publishes no exam fee in any current document, so \$425 is Pearson VUE's store price for the member voucher and several training partners put it at \$405 instead. Either way the gap against tuition is the point. A co-host of this show owns a company that trains for the PMP and the CAPM. Note that Western Carolina's program is an MPM rather than an MSPM, which is the same kind of degree under a different name, and it's where this show's co-host teaches.

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## 5 Getting it paid for

- Work the GW numbers, because they're the clearest case. GW's 2026-27 cost sheet puts a 30-credit MSPM at \$40,482 of tuition in year one and \$21,798 in year two, plus \$1,649 and \$122 in fees. The Post-9/11 ceiling plus GW's matched Yellow Ribbon reaches \$66,408.34 in a single academic year, so a veteran at the 100% level covers even the heavier year outright. That is not what most people assume when they see the sticker price.
- Months are not the binding constraint, whatever you've been told. Entitlement is charged only while you're certified as enrolled, in 30-day months, so a 30-credit master's spends about 16 of the 36 and the breaks between terms cost nothing (VA, checked August 22, 2026). What empties that bank is a bachelor's degree rather than a master's, which is why the veteran who genuinely runs short is usually the one who already spent it.
- Dollars are the constraint at a private school, and the cliff is your benefit percentage rather than the ceiling. Yellow Ribbon needs the full 100%. At 90% you draw 90% of the ceiling, \$27,817.51 for 2026 to 2027, and no Yellow Ribbon at all, which against GW's published first year of \$40,482 leaves \$12,664.49 to find. At 100% the same year is covered outright.
- Schools can cap Yellow Ribbon by number of students. GW's published graduate figures don't state a cap, which means asking rather than assuming, and asking before you accept a place.
- A public school in your own state is the route nobody markets to you. Chapter 33 pays net in-state tuition and fees in full, so the ceiling and Yellow Ribbon never enter the calculation. Western Carolina's online MPM is GAC-accredited and bills at North Carolina's distance graduate business rate of \$329.82 a semester hour, about \$11,874 for the 36 hours (WCU, checked August 22, 2026). Say the obvious thing about that: it's where this show's co-host teaches.

- The degree pays twice, and the second payment is the one people miss. A GAC-accredited postgraduate degree moves you to PMI's 24-month PMP route and covers the 35 required training hours.
- Take the counter-argument seriously, because it comes from this show's own co-host in episode 001: certifications have salary figures attached to them and degrees don't. If your goal is a number on a job posting in the next 18 months, the PMP is the cheaper and faster instrument, and this guide isn't an argument against that.
- The honest case for the degree is different in kind. A certification asks whether you know the menu. A degree makes you cook, and the room full of experienced project managers arguing about what actually works is the part no exam replicates.
- Studying fully online changes your monthly housing allowance, and it's a large enough difference to affect whether you can study without working. Check the current rate for your situation rather than assuming parity with in-person study.
- A degree doesn't expire. There are no PDUs and no renewal fee, which is a real difference from the PMP's 60 PDUs every three years and belongs in any honest comparison of lifetime cost.
- If you're still serving, tuition assistance and the GI Bill are separate instruments and you don't have to choose one forever. Spending TA now preserves entitlement for later, which is the sequence most education offices will recommend and most people work out too late.
- Don't enroll to paper over a gap in your record. The degree is two years of your life, and an admissions office that will take you without project experience is not the same as a job market that will.

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## How current this is

Everything above was checked against published material from the universities that award it on August 22, 2026. Requirements, fees and course content all move, and they are not always announced loudly. Check the sources below before you spend money on the back of anything here.

This guide was written independently: the universities that award it had no part in it and did not endorse it. Where this page names a training provider or a school, assume we may have a commercial interest in it and judge the guide on whether the facts check out against the references below.

This is a guide, not advice. We're not the universities that award it, the VA, DoD, your security manager or your education office, and the funding rules in particular change by service and by year. Anything here that costs money, or that may be restricted in any way in your own work, is worth confirming with the people who own it before you act on it.

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## **R** References

- **MS in Project Management, program requirements (GW Bulletin)** (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/business/management/project-management-ms/>) Credit total, admission requirements and the GRE and GMAT position come from here.

- **MS in Project Management, program page (GW School of Business)** (<https://business.gwu.edu/academics/programs/masters/ms-in-project-management>) Format, program length and entry terms. Also GW's own statement that acceptance to the ONLINE MSPM for fall 2026 carries an automatic scholarship of up to 30% off tuition.
- **Academic and living costs, spring 2026 admission (GW School of Business)** (<https://business.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs5326/files/2025-09/Spring%202026%20-%20Academic%20&%20Living%20Costs.pdf>) The fee figures, and GW's own 19.5 then 10.5 credit split of the 30. GW reissues this PDF each term, so check the current one rather than these figures if you are budgeting.
- **Yellow Ribbon Program (GW Military and Veteran Services)** (<https://military.gwu.edu/yellow-ribbon-program>) The 2026 to 2027 ceiling, GW's graduate contribution and the exclusions. It does not publish a cap on participant numbers, which is why this guide says to ask.
- **Global Accreditation Center directory (PMI)** (<https://www.pmi.org/global-accreditation-center/>) Which programs hold GAC accreditation, and GW's May 2019 date.
- **PMP Examination Content Outline, July 2026 (PMI)** (<https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/microsites/announcements/pmp-examination-content-outline-2026.pdf>) The 24-month route for a GAC-accredited postgraduate degree, the 35-hour training requirement, and the line saying GAC accreditation does not by itself change the degree level required.
- **Pearson VUE government store, PMP exam vouchers** (<https://govstore.pearsonvue.com/p/PMI-PMP-MBR>) The \$425 member exam fee this guide measures a degree against, read August 22, 2026. The non-member voucher on the same store is \$675. PMI publishes no exam fee in any of its own handbooks, which is why \$425 is the better-supported figure rather than a confirmed one: training partners reporting PMI's August 6, 2026 increase put the member fee at \$405. The pmp chassis carries that dispute in full.
- **Post-9/11 GI Bill rates (VA)** (<https://www.va.gov/education/benefit-rates/post-9-11-gi-bill-rates/>) The annual ceiling, which VA resets every August 1, and the housing allowance rules.
- **Yellow Ribbon Program information for schools (VA)** ([https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/yellow\\_ribbon/yellow\\_ribbon\\_info\\_schools.asp](https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/yellow_ribbon/yellow_ribbon_info_schools.asp)) How the match works, and that schools set both a contribution and a maximum number of participants.
- **GI Bill Comparison Tool (VA)** (<https://www.va.gov/education/gi-bill-comparison-tool/>) Whether a specific program is VA-approved, and what a school actually pays.
- **Distance learning tuition and fees, fall 2026 and spring 2027 (Western Carolina University)** (<https://www.wcu.edu/appl/tuition-and-fees/fall-spring-distance-learning-tuition-and-fees/index.aspx>) The in-state distance graduate business rate used as the public comparison, fall 2026: \$303.78 tuition plus \$26.04 fees, \$329.82 a semester hour. The residential rate is a different number and the wrong one for an online program.
- **Master of Project Management program brochure (Western Carolina University)** ([https://www.wcu.edu/\\_files/learn/Master-of-Project-Management-Program-Brochure.pdf](https://www.wcu.edu/_files/learn/Master-of-Project-Management-Program-Brochure.pdf)) That the MPM is fully online, 36 credit hours, GAC-accredited, and asks for two years of project management experience. It also sends applicants to the graduate business rate.
- **Understanding your award letter (VA)** (<https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/understandingyourawardletter.asp>) How entitlement is charged: by training time during certified enrollment, so four months of full-time study costs four months. This is the arithmetic the rest of the page depends on.
- **Montgomery GI Bill Active Duty rates (VA)** (<https://www.va.gov/education/benefit-rates/montgomery-active-duty-rates/>) The flat monthly rate the extra twelve months pay, \$2,518 at full time from October 1, 2025. It goes to you rather than to the school, and it carries no Yellow Ribbon.