

The Association of Change Management Professionals™



Statement of

Change Management

Scope, Knowledge Areas,
and Process Groups

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Introduction

The Association of Change Management Professionals (ACMP®) is a global membership organization whose purpose is to advance the discipline of change management. ACMP provides:

1. A structured environment to facilitate change management as a professional discipline.
2. A professional recognition and certification program for change management practitioners.
3. Opportunities for professional growth, networking, and learning.
4. A globally recognized standard of generally accepted and effective change management norms, practices, and processes.
5. Identification of new trends, needs and opportunities to advance the field.

In order to fulfill its purposes, ACMP developed and promotes a common definition and understanding of the discipline of change management. This includes a common lexicon; the knowledge, skills, and abilities expected of a professional change management practitioner; and the processes and practices that apply to most change management engagements.

This document provides the boundary conditions for ACMP's Change Management Certification programs and serves as a guiding framework for the development of a Change Management standard. ACMP recognizes Change Management as a professional discipline and will provide standards and certification to support professionals in this field.

Change management definition

ACMP defines change management to be the application of knowledge, skills, abilities, methodologies, processes, tools, and techniques to transition an individual or group from a current state to a desired future state, such that the desired outcomes and/or business objectives are achieved. Change management processes, when properly applied, ensure individuals within an organization efficiently and effectively transition through change such that the organization's goals are realized. Change management is an integral part of the overall change process and ideally begins at the onset of change. ACMP's definition assumes that the organization has agreed upon the need for change and has identified the nature of the change.

Scope and boundaries

ACMP recognizes that the knowledge and skills required by change management professionals in the course of applying change management processes and tools will include complimentary knowledge and skills beyond the field of change management. For example, effective change agents will need strong leadership skills, interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence and excellent verbal and written communication skills. They will need to navigate complex political environments, geographic and organization cultures, work at multiple levels within an organization and engage many different types of personalities in the workplace.

As a “person,” change management professionals need a broad set of knowledge and skills to enable them to be effective change managers and change consultants. However, any attempt to create a standard and certification program that addressed all of these knowledge and skills areas would be problematic in scope, and subjective in its implementation. Therefore ACMP will create an objective and measurable standard for the application of change management as a professional discipline standard, but will not certify the relative effectiveness of a “person” as a change manager or change consultant. This distinction enables the creation of a change management standard and certification program that has the following characteristics:

1. ACMP’s change management standard will have defined boundaries.
2. ACMP’s change management standard will not overlap with other professional disciplines, which may have their own standards and certification.
3. ACMP’s change management standard will have objective and measureable performance criteria.

The net result of this distinction between certifying a person as an “effective change manager” versus certifying in the practice of change management is that some knowledge and skill areas of an effective change manager will be out of scope for ACMP’s certification and standards process, at least for the initial development of Level 1 and Level 2 certifications. For example, ACMP will not develop standards and certification for general leadership competencies, cross cultural competencies, interpersonal skills, or consultative skills. ACMP may examine these broader knowledge and skill areas in terms of their impact on effective change management at a future time.

ACMP also recognizes that change management is a complimentary discipline to other professional disciplines that work together to bring about change. For example, changes in organizations may impact employees’ work processes, software applications, systems, tools, organizational structures, job descriptions, work locations or overall work environment. Each type of change requires different professional disciplines to develop the technical element of the change, including hardware development, software development, organizational structure design, job role design, strategy development, process and workflow design, just to name a few.

These professional disciplines that create the technical elements of the change are necessary and complimentary disciplines to change management, but are out of scope for ACMP standards and certification work. For example, ACMP will not develop standards and certification for vision and strategy development, new product/service offerings, process design and improvement, organizational design, job role design, hardware/software/equipment development, or system testing, to name a few. Similarly, the structured management of the resources, deliverables and schedule for the change process, often referred to as Project Management, is also a complimentary discipline to change management. ACMP will not be developing standards and certification for Project Management.

ACMP recognizes that knowledge, skills, and abilities shown in *Table 1* are unique and critical to the discipline of change management and are therefore are within the scope of its recognition and certification programs.

Table 1 – ACMP Knowledge and Skill Areas

Knowledge and skill areas in scope for ACMP Standards and Certification	Description and Examples
The process of change	Change drivers, the change process, overall context for how change happens in organizations, change leadership and project governance, mechanisms for creating the “content” of the change, patterns of change success and failures, emotional components of the change process for individuals
Change management vocabulary	Terms and definitions, general framework and context
Change management methodologies and tools	Processes and tools for change management
Relationship and integration of change management with other disciplines	Integration with project management, integration with other business improvement methodologies such as Six Sigma, Lean
Change management strategy, architecture and planning	Change management architecture, strategy development, change management planning, impact and risk assessments
Change management team structures	Leadership alignment, roles/responsibilities, budget, resources, team preparation, governance, subject matter expertise
Change leader/sponsor development	Change leader/sponsor education, sponsor skill and willingness, sponsor effectiveness assessments, sponsor coalition analysis, creating alignment among sponsors and senior leaders, change leadership/sponsor coaching, reporting and updates for sponsors, change risk analysis
Organizational and cultural assessments	Cultural assessments, change impact assessments, change readiness assessments, change saturation assessments, organization and change history assessments, resistance assessments, employee readiness assessments
Stakeholder engagement	Stakeholder analysis, planning, implementation, and sustainability as needed to support a change
Communications in support of the change process	Communication strategy, planning and communication activities as needed to support a change
Training in support of the change process	Training strategy, requirements, planning and training activities as needed to support a change
Leading employees through change	Coaching of employees through change by supervisors and managers to enable successful individual transitions
Employee engagement	Feedback, performance measurement and compliance with new job roles, responsibilities, systems and processes
Resistance management	Resistance identification and management techniques to support a change, building commitment and acceptance, risk mitigation
Organizational change competency	Developing organizational competencies and capacity to change, continuous improvement of the change process, cultural shifts toward change capability
Change performance measurement	Success measures, monitoring progress, sustaining the change

Change Management Processes and Process Groups

A process is a set of interrelated actions and activities performed to achieve a specific product, result, or outcome. Processes have suppliers, inputs, activities or tasks, outputs, and customers. Change management processes, when properly applied, ensure individuals and organizations effectively transition to a future state in order to achieve desired results. Change management is necessary because at an individual level, change is a choice, and employees need information, leadership support, training, coaching, rewards and reinforcement, and time to effectively engage in change.

This transition from the current to future state is achieved by effectively applying change management processes such that employees are engaged before, during and after the change process. Effective change management results when the potential negative impacts of the change are minimized, and the overall desired outcomes or objectives are achieved within the budget and schedule for the change.

Change management processes apply globally and across industry groups and application areas. However, change management practitioners must scale and customize change management processes to meet the unique needs of the impacted organization and the unique elements of the change itself.

Process groups are assemblies of similar or related processes that serve as guides for the application of change management knowledge, skills, and abilities during a change management engagement. They are linked in the sense that the output or result of one process becomes the input of another process. Processes within each group are iterative, sometimes simultaneous, and may be applied multiple times throughout the phases of a change management effort. The process groups listed in *Table 2* are recognized by ACMP as processes addressed by change management practitioners. They are unique and critical to the discipline of change management and are therefore within the scope of its recognition and certification programs.

Table 2 – Change Management Process Groups

Evaluating Change Impact and Organizational Readiness	The processes in this group are designed to assess, evaluate, and anticipate an individual's and organization's readiness, ability and capacity to undergo a transition from the current state to a future state. The processes also include an assessment of the change itself, and the impact the change will have on the individual and the organization. History, culture and value systems play a key role in these evaluations. The result of these processes will provide change managers with information to more effectively calibrate leader expectations, scale and customize change management plans and activities.
Formulating Change Management Strategy	The processes in this group are designed to develop the high-level approach for change management with sponsors, change leaders, content developers, program managers and others on the project including governance, risks, resources, budget and reporting. These processes enable the integration of change management into the overall change process. Applying sound project management discipline, the change strategy will include: the incorporation, integration and alignment of change management plans, activities, tasks, and milestones into the other activities and operations of an individual or organization at the onset of a change (timing and sequence). Stakeholder engagement is included in this process group.
Developing Change Management Plans	The processes in this group are designed to develop detailed and specific plans to implement the change management strategy. Change management methodologies and tools are used to develop these plans including communications, training, change leadership and coaching of employees through change, reward and reinforcement programs, performance measurement, risk management and resistance management. Ongoing integration with project management is included in this process group.
Executing Change Management Plans	The processes in this group accomplish the actual work in the detailed change management plans that are required to achieve the desired results of the change management engagement.
Completing the Change Management Effort	The processes in this group reinforce the work in the change management plans, determine the effectiveness of the work, and identify corrective and remedial work necessary to achieve the desired individual and organizational results. These processes include measurement of the desired outcomes or business objectives. These processes also include the continuous improvement activities that come from the project post-mortem analysis and lessons learned such that organizations build change capability.

Frequently Ask Questions

Does this mean that ACMP is only certifying in the knowledge and processes for change management?

No. ACMP's certification program will require specific levels of achievement in three areas: education and training, experience and knowledge (based on an examination). These elements together will comprise ACMP's different levels of certification.

Will ACMP's certification be an endorsement of the effectiveness of a change professional?

While a desired end-state is that we, as a community, can determine a practitioner's ability to produce demonstrated results, this ultimate goal must be balanced against the ability to implement an objective and measureable criteria for certification that is feasible and practical to implement globally. Level 1 and Level 2 certifications will focus only on the three dimensions of education, experience and knowledge. In the future, ACMP may pursue a Change Leadership Certification in which demonstrated effectiveness is a component.