

From Programme Manager to PMO Lead: How the Career Simulator Turns Ambition into a Plan

A case study on the Career Simulator in the CPD Development Platform

The challenge

Most project professionals know where they want to go next. Far fewer know exactly what stands between them and that role. A Programme Manager eyeing a PMO Lead or Portfolio Manager position might ask: Which competencies do I already evidence? Where are my gaps? What should my CPD actually focus on this year?

Without clear answers, development tends to be scattered: a webinar here, a course there, with no line of sight to the role you want.

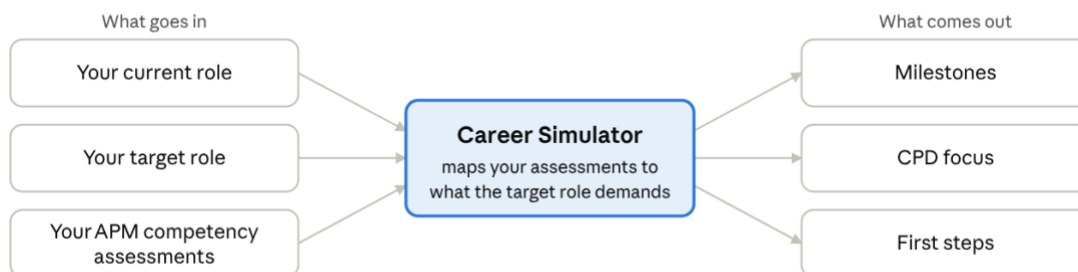
The Career Simulator in the CPD Development Platform was built to close that gap.

What the Career Simulator is

The Career Simulator is a planning tool inside the CPD Development Platform. You choose your current role and your target role, and the simulator maps your APM competency assessments against what the target role demands. It then generates a realistic, AI-built development plan with milestones, CPD focus areas and practical first steps.

In short, it turns "I want to be a PMO Lead" into "here is how I get there."

Three inputs become a personalised development plan



simulator inputs and outputs

You supply two roles, and the simulator combines them with your competency assessments.

How it works

The process takes only a few moments:

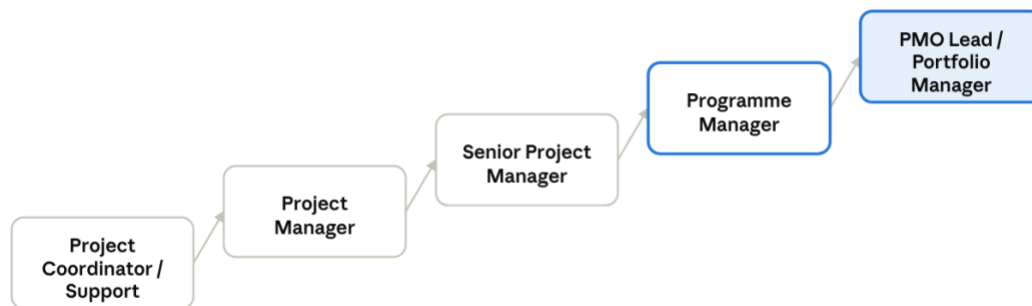
1. **Open the Career Simulator.** You will see the *Choose your transition* panel.
2. **Select your current role.** For example, *Programme Manager*.

3. **Select your target role.** For example, *PMO Lead / Portfolio Manager*.
4. **Tap Run simulation.** The simulator compares your competency assessments with the demands of the target role.
5. **Review your plan.** You receive a development plan with milestones, a CPD focus and first steps you can act on straight away.

The roles you can choose

Both dropdowns offer the same five roles, which together form a typical project career ladder: Project Coordinator / Support, Project Manager, Senior Project Manager, Programme Manager and PMO Lead / Portfolio Manager. You can pick any current role and any target role, so the simulator works for a first step up as well as for a move into portfolio leadership.

A typical project career path runs through five roles



Highlighted: the transition used in this case study

career ladder · 5 roles

The ladder runs from Project Coordinator / Support up to PMO Lead / Portfolio Manager.

An illustrative scenario

The following is an illustrative example to show how the tool might be used.

Imagine an experienced Programme Manager who has led multi-project change for several years. She is strong in stakeholder engagement, delivery governance and leadership, and wants to move into a PMO Lead role overseeing a wider portfolio.

She selects Programme Manager as her current role and PMO Lead / Portfolio Manager as her target, then runs the simulation. Rather than a generic list of advice, she gets a plan grounded in her own competency assessments: where she is already well placed, where the step up asks for more, and what to do first.

Her plan might point her towards areas such as portfolio prioritisation, benefits and performance reporting, and standards and governance across projects. It would break the journey into milestones, suggest CPD activities that target those areas, and give her a few small first steps to start that week.

The result is that her CPD hours stop being a box-ticking exercise and become a deliberate route to promotion.

The benefits

- **Clarity.** See the distance between your current role and your goal, based on your own assessments rather than guesswork.
- **Focused CPD.** Spend time and budget on learning that moves you towards your target role.
- **A realistic path.** Milestones break a big career move into manageable stages.
- **Immediate momentum.** First steps mean you can act today instead of postponing a plan.
- **Better career conversations.** A structured plan gives you evidence to bring to appraisals, mentors and line managers.
- **Safe exploration.** Try different transitions and compare routes before committing to one.

Who it is for

The Career Simulator suits anyone using the CPD Development Platform who is thinking about their next step, whether you are planning a promotion, considering a move into portfolio or PMO work, or simply want your CPD to have a clear purpose.

Getting started

Open the CPD Development Platform, head to the Career Simulator, pick your current and target roles, and run your first simulation. It takes less than a minute, and it could shape the next year of your development.