Everything you need to know about **ITIL**

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Over the last few decades, Information Technology has come to define the world of business. IT-enabled products and services make up not just the offerings of almost every successful organization out there, but also their internal working structures and day today operations. In other words, solid IT management is essential for both helping organizations to make money and keeping them operating efficiently.

The importance of effective IT service management has led to the creation of several 'ITSM' frameworks. These standards offer guidance and best practices aimed at managing IT in a way that maximizes efficiency, agility, collaboration and ROIs. Each takes a different approach, though most offer insight which can be applied to IT operations in virtually any organization, regardless of factors like industry, location or sector.

By far the most popular ITSM framework out there is 'ITIL'. With the recent release of ITIL 4, it continues to define the industry with world-renowned guidance, along with certifications which can empower users as they advance through their careers.

In this guide, we will cover what the ITIL framework is and how it works, the many benefits of ITIL implementation for organizations, why an ITIL certification could help your career, the certification paths and some frequently asked questions.

These days, it goes without saying that the worlds of business and technology are inextricably linked. In order to stay competitive, a company needs to be able to evolve both its corporate objectives and IT capabilities, no matter how painful or awkward this process may be.

SO WHAT IS **ITIL?**

Naturally, this kind of change cannot start with a blank canvas. The development of IT services should be driven by an awareness of current processes and management practices within an organization. Without this, an IT Service Management (ITSM) process will inevitably waste time, money and effort, giving competitors a chance to lure customers away with more efficient offerings.

ITIL, previously known as the 'Information Technology Infrastructure Library', is a set of best practices for effective ITSM. It is designed to improve how IT supports, manages and delivers IT-powered products and services while also creating cultures of continual improvement. This is absolutely essential in the ever-evolving worlds of business and IT, and the demonstrable success of ITIL has made it into the world's most widely used ITSM framework.

The ITIL framework offers a number of unique features. For one, it has a customizable certification path. This enables students and organizations to focus on the modules which are most relevant to them. The framework itself is also highly flexible, allowing organizations to only take on as many best practices as necessary. The current version of ITIL was also designed to be compatible with other existing frameworks, such as TOGAF, PMP, PRINCE2 and DevOps, making it easier for companies to adopt ITIL without having to restructure their existing practices.

Like most other well-established frameworks, ITIL also has the advantage of offering ever-evolving content. The most recent version of the framework, ITIL 4, was developed alongside hundreds of ITSM practitioners. This has ensured that the advice offered by the framework fully reflects the modern IT landscape. There is even a community of ITIL practitioners poised to offer ongoing advice to users as both the framework and ITSM in general continue to develop.

All of this has helped to make ITIL a highly relevant framework for ITSM professionals, including project managers, CIOs, service and support staff, and so on. As such, while it is common for organizations to invest in ITIL training for staff , many students also pursue ITIL certifi cations as individuals for the sake of developing their careers.

HOW CAN **ITIL BENEFIT...**

Organizations

With IT playing such a crucial role across the world of business, ITIL has a great deal to offer. Indeed, the framework can be applied regardless of factors such as a business's location, size, sector or industry.

It is worth pointing out at this point that one of the biggest benefits of ITIL is its demonstrable effectiveness. It has been applied by companies all over the world, and is based on practical insight from ITSM specialists. As such, an organization can usually invest in ITIL with confidence.

That is not to say that ITIL is all an organization needs. Rather, it is a tool designed to make sure that IT is not only fully aligned with business goals and strategies, but also supporting them as much as possible. For example, the framework offers actionable insight on how IT can support different elements of a business, such as marketing and customer service. It can also provide clarity regarding the profitability of IT assets. This can make it easy for decision-makers to allocate additional resources if necessary, or even cut out under-performing elements with confidence.

Another huge advantage of investing in ITIL training is the framework's recently modernized relationship with ITSM. ITIL was often criticized for being out of touch with newer ITSM practices and frameworks, and so this was one of the biggest targets for improvement during the development of ITIL 4. AXELOS even has a new community of ITIL practitioners set to offer ongoing advice to users as the framework continues to evolve.

The cutting-edge nature of ITIL 4 can also help organizations to bring their offerings in line with modern expectations. By using ITIL to enable higherquality services and reduce the downtime caused by errors, organizations can quickly start to enjoy organic growth, as well as repeat business, customer referrals and greater profits. The ITIL framework also enables greater collaboration between practitioners. Using consistent terminology and well-established practices, ITIL-certified practitioners find it far easier to work together, even across different levels of seniority, departments and organizations.

Individuals

The numerous benefits of utilizing the ITIL framework have encouraged thousands of organizations to invest in employee training. That being said, there are also plenty of reasons for individuals to take an interest.

For one, ITIL's widespread usage and popularity has made ITIL certifications highly lucrative. A candidate with demonstrable experience in successfully applying the framework can earn between $60K and $180K on average, with ITIL-certified CIOs often earning over $250K.

The framework is also used widely across multiple industries, sectors and locations, ensuring that qualified candidates often have little trouble finding new positions to apply for.

The framework's certification path offers a variety of different modules which students can pick and choose as they please.

ITIL 2011:

- *ITIL Service Strategy (SS)*
- *ITIL Service Design (SD)*
- *ITIL Service Transition (ST)*
- *ITIL Service Operation (SO)*
- *ITIL Continual Service Improvement (CSI)*
- *ITIL Planning, Protection & Optimization (PPO)*
- *ITIL Service Offerings & Agreements (SOA)*
- *ITIL Release, Control & Validation (RCV)*
- *ITIL Operational Support & Analysis (OSA)*
- *ITIL Managing Across the Lifecycle (MALC)*

ITIL 4:

- *ITIL Specialist – Create, Deliver & Support*
- *ITIL Specialist – Drive Stakeholder Value*
- *ITIL Specialist – High Velocity IT*
- *ITIL Strategist – Direct, Plan & Improve*
- *ITIL Leader – Digital & IT Strategy*

Students often choose modules which can enhance their daily tasks with actionable advice.
Of course, to reach the level of 'ITIL Expert' or above, students must complete a large number of modules, but this can be done over a long period of time if necessary. ITIL certifications also do not have expiry dates.

FAQ

What is 'IT service management (ITSM)'?

'IT service management' is a practice that has become fundamental in the Digital Age. It refers to the design, creation, delivery, support and management of services across the 'IT service lifecycle'. There are numerous elements that go into even basic ITSM, which is why an increasing number of organizations now rely on proven ITSM frameworks.

What kind of organizations can use ITIL?

These days, virtually every organization on the planet utilizes IT in some form or another. The ITIL framework is largely agnostic, allowing any organization with IT-driven services to benefit from it, regardless of elements such as industry, location, size or sector.

How necessary is ITIL?

Solid IT management is about far more than simply being computer-savvy. Dozens if not hundreds of factors can have an impact on IT service management. Effective managers must not only be aware of this, but also competent and knowledgeable enough to ensure that IT can support business goals wherever possible.

As such, frameworks like ITIL have become a lot more 'necessary' in recent years. Utilizing a proven framework can not only train employees about effective IT management, but also make key processes far more efficient. While ITIL may not be strictly 'necessary', it can help organizations achieve exemplary ITSM.

What is the ITIL certification path like?

While there are no prerequisites for studying ITIL, taking the exams is another matter. All students begin with the ITIL Foundation examination, after which they can take any exams in:

• The ITIL Lifecycle Stream (ITIL V3)
• The ITIL Capability Stream (ITIL V3)
• ITIL Managing Professional (ITIL 4)
• ITIL Strategic Leader (ITIL 4)

For ITIL 2011, every exam that students pass earns them 'ITIL Credits'. Once they collect at least 17, they can take the ITIL Managing Across the Lifecycle (MALC) examination. On passing this, they will reach the level of 'ITIL Expert'. They can then begin preparing for the 'ITIL Master' certification.

In ITIL 4, students must pass all of the exams for the modules in the Managing Professional and Strategic Leader schemes to reach the level of 'ITIL Master'.

If a student has reached the level of ITIL Expert or ITIL Master in 2011, they can also take the 'Managing Professional (MP) Transition' module in ITIL 4 in order to update their certification without having to sit earlier ITIL 4 modules.

How do you become an 'ITIL Master'?

The path to becoming an 'ITIL Master' depends on which version of the framework you are currently using. With ITIL 2011, you must first reach the level of 'ITIL Expert' and build up at least five years of experience working in IT service management in managerial, leadership or high-level advisory roles. You will also need to explain and justify how you have applied the framework in order to complete assignments and achieve corporate targets. For ITIL 4, candidates need to pass all of the modules listed in the ITIL Managing Professional (MP) and ITIL Strategic Leader (SL) streams. AXELOS is set to release more information on achieving this certification in late 2019.

What updates were introduced with ITIL 4?

ITIL 4 is the latest version of the ITIL framework. While ITIL remains mostly the same, version 4 also introduced a number of updates, including:

- *Greater focus on collaboration between departments*
- *Easier integration with other ITSM frameworks, including Lean, Agile and DevOps*
- *A more modern and holistic approach towards ITSM*
- *A new certification path*
- *Greater involvement from the ITIL practitioner community*

Will previous ITIL certifications still be valid?

If you studied V3/2011 to gain an ITIL certification, you do not need to worry about it going out of date.

Those currently studying 2011 can also continue to do so and the best-practices covered in the earlier framework are still highly valid and applicable. That said, it will still be a good idea for certified practitioners to consider transitioning to ITIL 4 at some point in the future in order to take full advantage of the updates to the framework.

Can ITIL 4 incorporate other frameworks?

A lack of compatibility with other ITSM standards and frameworks was one of the biggest problems that practitioners had with ITIL 2011. AXELOS responded to this by specifying early on that ITIL 4 would be fully compatible with a number of popular frameworks, including Agile, DevOps and Lean.

ITIL® 4 **FOUNDATION CERTIFICATION**

This ITIL 4 Foundation course provides an excellent introduction to the newest iteration of the ITIL framework. A number of new ITSM tools and methodologies have been introduced, including the ITIL Service Value System (SVS), which offers a holistic perspective of how IT can contribute towards business goals. ITIL 4 also incorporates concepts from other leading frameworks, such as Lean, DevOps and Agile.

The course is ideal for anyone looking to begin a career in ITSM, or build on their knowledge using one ofthe world's most highly recognized ITSM standards. Students who have earned a certification in ITIL v3 Foundation or above can also take the course to transfer over to ITIL 4.
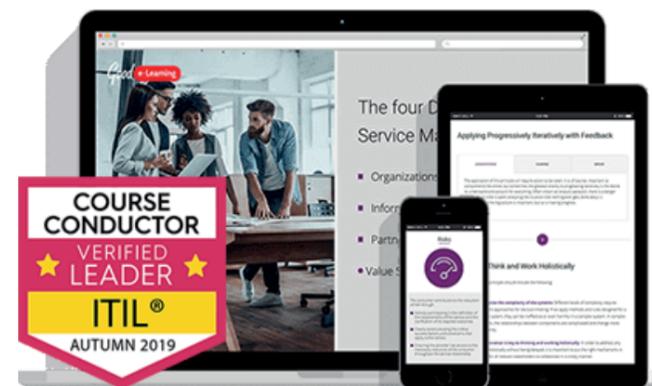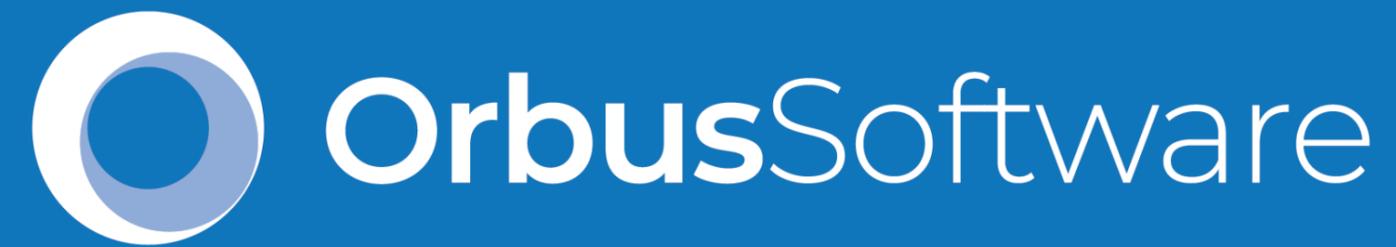
Accredited by PeopleCert
FREE exam voucher included
14+ hours of course material
6 months instant access
Exam simulator & revision modules
Expert tutor support

Students who take this course will learn:

An overview of the tools and methodologies, purpose and components of ITIL 4, including the ITIL Service Lifecycle and the Service Value System

- *The key concepts and value of IT service management to IT service providers and their customers*
- *How the ITIL guiding principles can help organizations adopt and adapt service management*
- *The activities of the service value chain, and how they interconnect*
- *The purpose and key terms of 18 ITIL practices and the 7 essential practices*
- *How the ITIL best practice framework is used to boost the efficiency, effectiveness and overall quality of IT-related services, regardless of an organization's size, structure or industry*
- *Everything needed to pass the official ITIL 4 Foundation exam*

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