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PMP Certification Guide 2020



The Step-by-step PMP
Certification Guide for PMP
Aspirants in 2020 and beyond

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Introduction

Getting PMP Certified is doable!

Hi, my name is Edward Chung. I passed the PMP certification examination in the 1st attempt with 'Proficient' (the best grade) in Initiation, Planning, Executing, Monitoring & Controlling and 'Moderately Proficient' in Closing.

Early in my PMP Certification journey, I have the following questions in mind:

- Will the update of the PMP Exam syllabus to align with the new PMBOK Guide has any effect on my exam prep?
- Do you find it is hard to find the time for PMP Bootcamp while you are having a full-time demanding job as a project management professional?
- Preparing for the PMP Exam is very expensive?
- People say that the PMP Certification is very difficult and the passing rate is low?
- Taking a 4 hour exam would be impossible?

After spending hundreds of hours searching the internet and reading numerous documentations..... fortunately I have found the answers to the above questions to be a resounding NO. Getting PMP Certified is Much Easier Than You Think! In this e-book, I try to summarize my PMP Exam process with a view to easing the path to PMP Certification for fellow PMP aspirants. Time and cost saving tips will also be included to save you a fortune.

Wish you PMP success!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward Chung', with a stylized, cursive script.

Edward Chung, PMP, PMI-ACP

Step-by-step PMP Certification Guide 2020

~ All you need to know about the Project Management Professional (PMP) Certification of the Project Management Institute (PMI)

This Complete PMP Certification and Study Guide is dedicated to the many thousands of PMP aspirants visiting my blog in the search of the best way to achieve PMP success.

Your feedback and questions have prompted me to prepare this special PMP study guide to help all project managers aiming to gain the initials "PMP" after their titles easier.

It is my humble wish to provide all PMP aspirants with the most detailed online PMP certification guide to familiarize themselves with the PMP application and certification processes and procedures and how to prepare and study well for the actual Project Management Professional (PMP) exam by the Project Management Institute (PMI) **with the ultimate aim to get the Project Management Professional Certification credential.**

This PMP Guide is the fruit of many hours of labours — trying to condense huge amount of information into digestible bits.

It is my gift to all PMP Aspirants. *Wish you PMP success!*

Introduction to this PMP Guide

Learning all the stuff required for the PMP exam is already a daunting tasks, let alone understanding all the intricacies of the PMP certification process as well as handling all the administrative tasks such as the fearful PMP audit.

It is no wonder why PMP is often considered one of the most difficult professional certification to achieve.

But this also means that the PMP certification is one of the most valuable certification owing to the "rigidity" of the certification process.

The information presented by the **PMP Handbook** published by the PMI is clear and concise..... yet, reading the PMP Handbook alone would not lead you navigate easily through the various processes to PMP success. As an example, what can be counted as "contact hours" or "working experiences"?

Fear not, this PMP Guide attempts to answer all your questions during your PMP application and study.

This guide will try to answer all the PMP application and study related questions you might have to free you more time to concentrate on your exam study.

About the Author

This guide is written by Edward Chung, PMP, PMI-ACP, ITIL Foundation.

After going through the PMP certification process all alone *by googling and wasting dozens of hours.....* I couldn't help by thinking that if I could get PMP certified, the first thing I would do was to write a detailed account of my PMP experience to help fellow PMP aspirants to save more time to get to the real study.

This PMP guide is the second step to re-organize the PMP process in a more systematic way after answering hundreds of PMP aspirants with their queries.

Contents of this PMP Study Guide

1. The PMP Certification Process Overview
2. How Much Time, Effort and Money is Required for the PMP Credential?
3. How to Get the Required 35 Hours of PMP Training Cheap and Easy?
4. PMP Study Resources: PMBOK, PMP Guide plus Practice Exams
5. How to Correctly Fill the Online PMP Application Form?
6. How to Pass the PMP Audit Process Smoothly?
7. Schedule and Take the PMP Certification Exam
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9. What You should Know about PMP PDU?

These 9 sections are meant to help you navigate through first the PMP application process and then the PMP study and exam.

Reading them 1 by 1 and carrying out related actions in sequence will guide you through the PMP certification process with ease.

After communicating with hundreds of PMP aspirants, it is found that the most pressing questions they had is **not know where to begin the PMP certification process**. Is it to begin with a complete study of the PMBOK Guide? Or to get the 35 Contact Hours of Project Management? Or to fill in the online PMP application form?

The following outlines the the recommended sequence leading to PMP Certification:

1. Don't read the PMBOK on your own, get the **35 Contact Hours of Project Management** from a course that help you prepare for the PMP exam (usually called PMP prep course), there are lots of choice ranging from face-to-face classroom lecture, online courses and podcast courses.
2. Purchase/borrow all the required **PMP study materials** including the PMBOK Guide, at least one PMP reference book and some practice/mock exams
3. **Apply online for the PMP Certification Exam**. You will need to describe your working experience in PMI's terms and the PMP prep course you have taken will help you finish the application form easily.
4. **Fix a date for your PMP exam** after you have received confirmation from PMI or passed the audit, if applicable.
5. Study hard for the PMP exam with your PMP study materials. Working on as many as practice exams as possible.
6. Pass the PMP exam.
7. Begin earning PMP PDUs for your 3-year recertification cycle.

Following the above sequence will allow you to go through the PMP certification process in the most logical and easiest way.



The PMP Certification Process Overview

The **PMP Certification Process** and the requirements for becoming a PMP are quite complicated if you haven't taken any PMI exams (like CAPM) before. Reading the PMP Handbook alone will not help you much as you will still have some questions unanswered. We try to create an infographic here with a view to allow PMP aspirants to visualize and remember the route to PMP success easier. Studies have already found that humans remember and understand best with graphics rather than words.

The PMP Certification Process In Details

After going through the infographic on PMP Certification Process, you will now have a clearer mental picture of what is involved in the PMP certification. Below is a more detailed account of the process and requirements:

A) Fulfill PMP credential requirements:

1. Must have enough project management experience as stipulated by PMI
 - **For secondary degree holders** (e.g. high school diploma, associate's degree) : need to have at least **5 years** of project management experience and a minimum of **7,500 hours** leading and directing projects
 - **For four-year degree holders** (e.g. bachelor's degree) : need to have at least **3 years** of project management experience and a minimum of **4,500 hours** leading and directing projects
2. Have the required **35 Hours of Project Management Education**
 - Any education on project management offered by a formal education provider taken at any time before the PMP exam will satisfy this requirement, e.g. a course in your degree curriculum about project management with a length of more than 35 hours

- The course on project management is NOT required to be based on PMBOK Guide
- **BUT taking a course based on PMBOK Guide** will help you also in your PMP preparation (try to find a PMP exam prep course provided by a PMI Registered Education Provider (R.E.P.) that is accredited by PMI, more on that later)

What is project management experience as recognized by PMI?

- NO need to carry the job title '*project manager*' but must be assigned the responsibility of managing and taking care of projects.
- The experience is about **project management (as defined in the PMBOK Guide)** and not just carrying out project works managed by others.
- Must have experience in all the lifecycle phrases of projects (i.e. 5 process groups of the project management lifecycle, including: *initiating, planning, directing, monitoring & controlling and closing the project*). PMI does not require you to have experiences from the 5 process groups from every project. That means you can just involve in initiating in Project A, closing in Project B and all 3 others in Project C.
- You may consider the Certified Associate in Project Management Certification (CAPM) offered by the Project Management Institute (PMI) if you have not accumulated the required project management experience. The CAPM is also based on the PMBOK Guide (more on factual memorization) but there is no experience requirements.

B) Apply for the PMP certification online:

1. The most convenient way to **apply for the PMP exam** is through the **online system** at <http://certification.pmi.org>.
2. Sign up for an user account first. After which you can log in and begin filling in the PMP application form. The information entered on the PMP application form will be stored on PMI's web server for up to **90 days**. You will get an email reminder from PMI a few days before that period will expire and all the information be deleted.
3. Become a member of PMI. Though it is not required to become a paying member of PMI to take the PMP exam, being a member allow you to enjoy discounted PMP and other certification fee, a free downloadable copy of PMBOK Guide and many online PMP exam reference books. The PMI annual membership fee is US\$129 plus US\$10 of first time

registration fee. The **money you will save after becoming a member will be much more than the cost of the membership fee for the first year.**

4. After you have completed the online application form, submit it and wait for the approval to sit for the PMP exam from PMI (in the form of an email).
5. You can now pay for the PMP certification fee online (US\$405 for members and US\$555 for non-members). Remember to pay \$139 for the membership fee first if you haven't before paying the PMP certification fee, you will get an instant saving of US\$16.
6. If you are so fortunately to be chosen for an **audit by PMI**, you will get an notification email immediately after you have paid the exam fee. Act as fast as possible to send them all the required documents (e.g. academic certificates, 35 hours of project management education certificate, proof of working experience, etc.). Otherwise, you will be given an email authorizing you to schedule your PMP exam at Prometric website.

C) Schedule, attempt and pass the PMP exam:

1. Though you are given a 1-year validity period during which you can schedule the PMP exam at any time, it is advisable to schedule the PMP Exam at Prometric website as soon as possible. This arrangement has two benefits:
 - Exam places are limited, the faster to schedule, the more likely you can schedule the exam at a date and time you prefer;
 - Having scheduled the exam will give you a tangible target for you to prepare consistently for the PMP exam.
2. Prepare and study well for the PMP exam by making use of the PMBOK guide, a PMP study guide as well as numerous PMP practice exams.
3. On the date of the exam, arrive at the exam centre early. Relax and enjoy the exam.
4. You will be notified of the exam result immediately after the exam. The center staff will give you a printed proof of your exam achievement. If it is a pass, congratulations, you are immediately a PMP! If fail the first try, make plans to retake the exam. You can have up to 2 more chances to take the PMP exam within the 1-year validity period (though you must pay the re-exam fee separately).

D) Obtain PMP PDU for re-certification

1. The PMP certificate will be mailed to you within 6-8 weeks.
2. The first benefit of becoming a PMP is that you can request a PMP lapel pin free of charge (details will be emailed to you several days after you have passed).
3. If you pass the PMP exam, you are immediately a PMP and your 3-year PDU re-certification cycle begins. Collect at least 60 PDUs per 3-year cycle to allow you to renew your PMP credential.
4. You can make use of PMI's online system to report PDUs to PMI. When you have accumulated enough PDUs, PMI will send you a renewal notice. The renewal fee is US\$60 for members and US\$150 for non-members.



How Much Time, Effort and Money is Required for the PMP Credential?

Earning the PMP Certification involves a lot of money, time and efforts. It is imperative to estimate whether your budget and study time allow you to take on PMP as your next professional achievement. This article gives you some ballpark figures on the money, time and efforts required for the PMP exam.

Time and Study Effort Input

It is often said that the PMP exam is very hard and requires a lot of preparation. The actual length of study usually cannot be determined until you are half way in the study. Luckily, [a recent survey of 100 PMP who successfully passed the PMP exam](#) gives us some hints on the amount of time required. The survey shows that PMP aspirants may need as short as a week of study or as long as over 6 months of preparation to pass the PMP exam. The average time required is around 2 months with 3 hours of studies every day. **This equates to around 180 hours of studies.**

Money Input - PMP Certification Cost

The minimal payable items required for the PMP certification exam for most people is listed below:

1. **Becoming a PMI member (US\$139)**
2. **The PMP Certification Exam Fee (US\$405)**
3. **35 Hours Project Management Education (~US\$200, depending on courses)** - It is advisable to take one even if you have previous project management education as exam prep courses will help you to prepare and pass the PMP exam)
4. **PMP Exam Prep Study Guide (~US\$100)**

By adding up the above items, the minimum PMP Certification cost would be around **US\$1000**. You may optionally need to purchase PMP practice exams to help you further (around US\$100) or you may want to study in a classroom environment (around US\$1000).

PMP Re-certification Inputs

You have to bear in mind that passing the PMP exam and getting the PMP certificate is not the end. PMI requires PMP to obtain at least 60 PDUs in each 3-year re-certification cycle (1 PDU is equivalent to 1 hour of project management education/service). You will need to spare at least 65 hours each 3 years to collect, record and report the PDU you have gained during the re-certification cycle. Luckily, this is not a large amount of time.

Also, some PDUs may cost you money but yet there are numerous ways to obtain PDUs for free. Being a member of PMI, for example, you get you enough free PDU every 3 years (essentially this is NOT free as you will have to pay the membership fee US\$129 X 3 for each 3-year cycle, i.e. **US\$ 387**). Of course, if you would rather attend courses that are more tailored to your needs, the course fees have to be taken into account.



How to Get the Required 35 Hours of PMP Training Cheap and Easy?

The **PMP training** required for Project Management Certification is termed as "35 Contact Hours of Project Management Education" by PMI in the PMP Handbook. The term "**contact hours**" **creates a lot of confusions** as "contact" usually means direct contact, many PMP aspirants assume that the education must be obtained from a classroom. **The reality is that PMI does NOT stipulate that the PMP training must be obtained through fact-to-face classroom education, it allows the project management education to be taken in any form as long as the course involves an assessment at the end.**

Types and Benefits of PMP Training to Get the 35 Contact Hours

PMP project management training can be broadly divided into three types:

- Classroom Face-to-face Training
- Online Training (2 types)
 - Online Course
 - Downloadable PodCast Training

No matter which type of training you choose, you should find those offered by PMI R.E.P (Registered Education Providers) as their courseware has been accredited and approved by PMI. The contact hours obtained in such way are deemed to be pre-approved by PMI.

Benefits and downsides of the various types of training are listed below:

Classroom Face-to-face Training

Face-to-face exam prep course is the more traditional type of PMP training in which a instructor presents to a group of students and answers any questions the students may have.

Benefits

- The instructor can attend to the questions and queries of individual students.
- One may be able find a study partner from the course to co-study to PMP success.
- Some face-to-face training may be organized in a bootcamp type in which the class runs for 4 days in a row and the students will take the actual PMP exam on day 5. This arrangement allows the students to focus fully on the PMP exam.

Downsides

- Face-to-face PMP courses are very expensive, often around US\$1000 or above.
- If there is none PMP exam prep course available in your area, chances are that you will need to travel a long way to the classroom.
- Busy professionals may not be able to take several days off to attend the classroom training.

Online PMP Training

Online PMP training and downloadable podcast PMP training both offer flexibility not achieved by classroom training, students are able to watch the video lessons on their intelligent phones (e.g. iPhone, Andriod, Blackberry) and watch the lessons on the go.

Benefits

- Much cheaper than classroom training.
- Downloadable podcast lessons allow the students to study anywhere, anytime (even during commuting and driving) using an iPod or intelligent phone.
- Video lessons are also great for visual learners as there are lots of illustrations and charts.
- Unlike classroom training, online PMP training allows students to proceed at their own pace without affecting others.
- The best part is that one can repeat a lessons to further understand the

topic whenever needed.

- Allows busy professionals to obtain the required contact hours without causing disruptions to their lives.

Downsides

- The instructors may not be able to answer your questions immediately

Read here for the [recommended online PMP exam prep courses](#).

FAQ: Contact Hours vs PDU

The confusion between contact hours and professional development units (PDU) arises from the fact that the same PMP training course can allow different people to obtain either contact hours and PDU (but not simultaneously). But this not just confuses PMP aspirants but also PMP training providers. I have seen some advertise their PDU courses to PMP aspirants!

But it is not difficult to differentiate between the two. Just remember:

- If you **wish to obtain** the PMP credential, you need "Contact Hours" (i.e. 35 contact hours of project management education).
- If you **have obtained** the PMP credential, you need "PDU" (i.e. 60 PDU in 3 years).

So, if you are reading this PMP guide, you should aim to get **35 Contact Hours**.



PMP Study Resources: PMBOK, PMP Guide plus PMP Sample Exams

Many PMP aspirants got confused that the PMP exam is about the PMBOK Guide. The reality is reading the **PMBOK Guide alone is not enough** for the PMP exam. Yes, though the PMBOK Guide is published by the PMI and as its name suggests it covers the body of knowledge of project management, it is meant to be the framework of best practices in project management. The actual PMP exam is more than the PMBOK Guide.

According to the PMP Exam Content Outline:

*Although many of the domains, tasks, knowledge, and skills outlined by the PMP Examination Content Outline are also covered by the PMBOK Guide, there are some that are unique to the PMP Examination Content Outline. Candidates studying for the examination will certainly want to **include the current edition of the PMBOK Guide as one of their references, and would be well advised to read other current titles on project management.***

This expressly states that a PMP candidate cannot solely rely on the PMBOK Guide as their one and only source for study. The PMP exam covers way more than what are included in the PMBOK Guide. It was estimated by many PMP instructors that the PMBOK guide contains around 80% of the materials that would appear on the PMP exam paper. This means that the other 20% of the exam materials have to be found from "current titles on project management".

What are the "current titles"? I hear you ask. Unlike the **PMI-ACP Certification exam** which includes a booklist of reference titles, the PMP

exam does not come with such list. Read on and you will know more about how to tackle this nagging question. The answer lies in the "PMP reference books/study guides".

Below we will briefly discuss the PMP exam prep materials you will need and offer you some of the best suggestions.

1) The PMBOK Guide

The "A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge" (PMBOK Guide) is published by the Project Management Institute (PMI). The PMBOK Guide is currently in its 6th edition (if you are taking the exam before 26 March 2018 you will need to study the PMBOK Guide 5th edition). With each update in edition, the PMP exam will also be updated. The PMP exam is now based on the fifth edition of PMBOK Guide. The PMP Handbook suggests candidates to make use of the PMBOK Guide as one of their references and it is estimated that the PMBOK Guide contains around 80% of materials required for the PMP exam.

From a survey with 100 PMPs, it is found that over 95% of all PMP aspirants do read the PMBOK Guide for at least once during their exam preparation. Unless you are super confident of your project management knowledge, it is highly advised to read through the PMBOK Guide at least once during your exam study.

It is imperative to note that once you have become a PMI member, you can download the electronic copy of the **PMBOK Guide for FREE together with the Agile Practice Guide**. It is an encrypted and watermarked version that allows you only to read and print the pages but not copy and paste the text. You should exercise care not to distribute the file to others as it is watermarked with your name on every page. PMI takes intelligence properties infringement very seriously.

However, many of the PMP aspirants expressed that the PMBOK Guide was a difficult read. Some even thought of giving up the PMP certification as they could not make sense of the PMBOK Guide. There are two ways out:

- Hold on and read it through, don't focus on understanding
- Give up the PMBOK and make use of a [PMP Exam Prep Course](#) or PMP Study Guide (below)

2) PMP Exam Prep Books and Study Guide

There are two reasons you will need a PMP Exam Study Guide:

- To help you understand the PMBOK Guide
- To learn the remaining 10%+ of the knowledge required for the PMP exam as the PMBOK Guide only covers around 80% of the exam syllabus

A search for PMP Study Guide will give you hundreds of results. One could not help wonder: *which book is the best?* A better way to ask the question in a more relevant way is: *which book suits me most?*

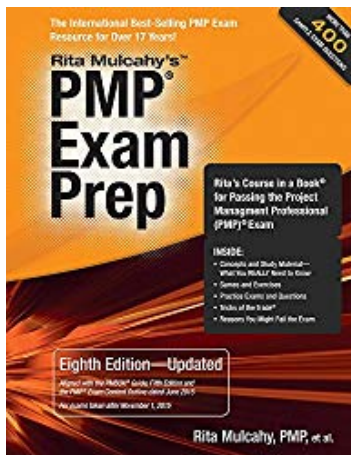
Most Popular PMP exam prep books

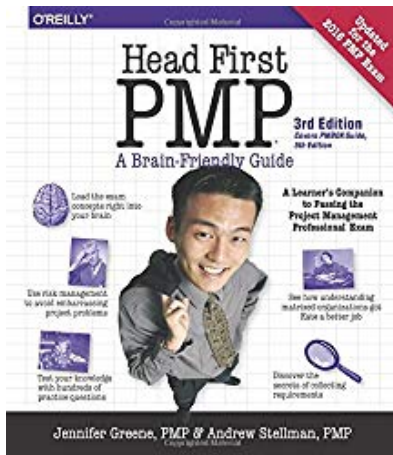
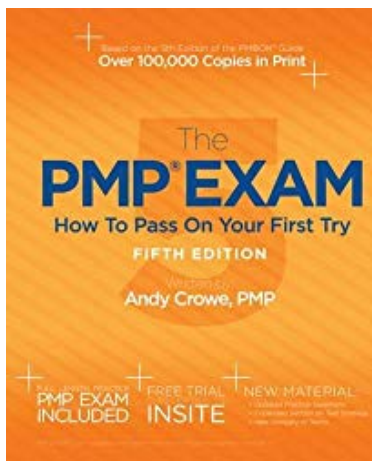
We will first introduce the most popular books available on the market, these include (according to popularity):

These are for the new PMP Exam on or after 26 March 2018

- Rita Mulcahy's PMP Exam Prep Book (will be shipped in Feb 2018)
- The PMP Exam - How to Pass On Your First Try by Andy Crowe (update pending)
- Head First PMP: A Brain-Friendly Guide (update pending)

These are for the PMP Exam before 26 March 2018





These are the most popular PMP study guides. Nearly every PMP lessons learned you would encounter would name one or more of these as their resources for PMP study. These three books varies widely in their approach to the PMP exam:

- **Rita's PMP Book** is most comprehensive (and most wordy) of all. It will give you a lot of extra information not necessary for the PMP exam. However, the tone of the author is a bit *condescending* (*you need to read a few pages to experience it*) and the book does not cover the ITTO (Inputs, Tools and Techniques and Outputs) of the PMBOK Guide very well.
- **Andy Crowe's PMP Book** (How to Pass On Your First Try) is exam oriented. It covers all that are necessary for the PMP exam and nothing more. The format is just like a pile of quick study notes. It does the job of helping you pass the exam well but may make less contribution to your daily job.
- **Head First PMP Book** is geared towards visual learners. It makes use of the latest findings from cognitive research by including a lot of illustrations, charts and games. It is fun to go through the book while studying for the PMP exam at the same time. However, some serious

readers would find the layout of the book too "chaotic".

You may click on the book covers above to try reading a few pages of the books at Amazon. I personally make use of [Andy Crowe's book](#) for my PMP exam and it takes only 4 hours to finish reading it once.

Which PMP Exam Study Guide Suits Me Most?

As a conclusion from the survey of 100 PMPs, the following two questions would help you identify your best PMP study companion.

Question 1: Does the PMBOK make sense to you? Do you 'leave no stone unturned' in your quest of knowledge?

1. Yes - [Rita's PMP Book](#)

2. Question 2: Are you a visual learner (learn best through illustrations rather than words)?

Yes - [Head First PMP Book](#)

No - [Andy Crowe PMP - How to Pass on Your First Try](#)

3) PMP Practice / Sample Exams (Mock Exams)

After all, taking an exam with 200 questions for 4 hours continuously requires not only full preparation but also your stamina and strategy. All PMP instructors would advise you to sit for a 200 questions PMP sample exam at least once. You need to know when you need a break to refresh and to go to the bathroom. But it is more advisable to take as many as PMP practice exams as you can practically make it. How to obtain as many practice exam as possible without breaking your bank is another pressing question. Luckily, many quality mock exams are available for free. You can find [a list of free PMP practice exams](#) here (most are still useful to the new PMP Exam 2018).

How do I Know if I am Well Prepared for the Real Exam?

Most PMP instructors would advise candidates to achieve around 75%-80% or above upon their **first attempt of a PMP sample exam**. You should note that:

- The PMP sample exam must have not been attempted before
- The exam is completed in one sitting within the 4 hour time limit
- The exam is attempted in an PMP sample exam simulator (i.e. similar to the actual computer-based conditions)

These will allow you to understand your readiness for the PMP exam. If you still haven't achieved 75% when the exam date is near, it is advisable to postpone the real PMP exam and practice more until you are ready. More on that later.



How to Correctly Fill the Online PMP Application Form?

Once you have registered an account on the [PMI website](#), you will be able to find the online application form for the PMP Certification under the myPMI section. Filling the online PMP application form is a project in itself. In addition to filling the personal particulars and details, PMI requires you to record your **Project Management Experiences** in details which requires you a lot of time and efforts. This article will spell out all the points you should note when filing your application.

When to Fill the PMP Application Form?

Some PMP aspirants will wait until they are fully prepared before filling the online PMP certification application form. While this may work for some people, it is more advisable to submit the PMP application earlier in your exam preparation. The benefits are listed below:

- After submitting the PMP application, you will be "forced" to attend the PMP exam within one year. This gives PMP aspirants a tangible target (or deadline) to work with and helps them remain focus during the exam preparation. I have heard a lot of aspirants lost focus amidst their hectic schedule and just postponed (and postponed again) the PMP certification. Some of them even postpone for over 2 years.
- You will have up to 90 days to begin your exam application. Once you begin filling in the details online, PMI would store your information for 90 days before deletion. This will give you another tangible target to work on and focus on this project of filing the online PMP application.
- **Filling the application form would take up much longer than you think** PMI requires you to record in details all the projects that you have handled during the required project experience period and each of them

should be documented separately. You need to calculate the time spent on the different project management process groups one by one and write up a "concise" description of your role in the project. You are also highly advised to seek consent from the supervisors for your documented projects on your role as well as your time in preparation for an audit.

- If you have made up the mind to get PMP certified and have already begun reviewing the reference titles for the PMP exam, don't wait until a new version of the PMP exam comes up and you will have to study from the ground up again.

Completing the Online PMP Application Form

General Advices

1. The most important rule is to **be honest**. This is expressly spelt out in the PMI conducts requirements. If PMI found out you had supplied misleading or wrong information on purpose, it would ban you from applying all of their certification forever.
2. **Double check** the information you have entered. As you are allowed to print out a copy of your application for your record, do take advantage of this function and ask other to help you to check your information in the printed copy.
3. Read the PMBOK Guide at least once or attend PMP exam prep courses before completing the PMP application form. This will help you understand what are the most important information from PMI's perspectives.
4. You will need agree to the Project Management Institute's Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct before the form can be submitted. Don't skip this step, do read the code and learn it by heart. (The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct will be tested on the PMP exam in the form of situational questions, i.e. asking what what you would do in a particular situation.)

Filling the PMP Project Management Experiences


1. The start date of the first project and the end date of the last project should at least cover a period 3 years (degree holders) or 5 years (secondary degree holders) as required by the PMI.
2. In order to well prepare for an audit, you are highly advised to contact your project supervisors and notify them on the hours you will claim for

each project. Their help is vital in case you are selected for an audit.

Some PMP aspirants failed the audit because they could not find their supervisors or their supervisors refused to sign the experience verification forms.

3. It is **not** required nor advised to each and every project you have handled. Include only enough number of projects to reach required minimum number of hours (i.e. 4,500 hours for degree holders / 7,500 hours for secondary degree holders). Include large projects first as this would save you considerable time in case of an audit.
4. When adding details of project management experiences to the application form, you will need to:
 - Give a **title** to each project (usually the project title)
 - Give your **project role (not your job title)** - you can use PMI terms like project leader, project manager, project coordinator, etc.
 - Insert your **supervisor's** name and contact methods (note that you need not fill in the name of the CEO of your company, but someone who work closely with you **and** you have gained the consent from)
 - Calculate and add the **time** (in number of hours) spent on each project management process groups (you might need to refer to the PMBOK Guide if you don't know what these exactly mean):
 - Initiating the Project
 - Planning the Project
 - Executing the Project
 - Controlling and Monitoring the Project
 - Closing the Project
 - PMI advocates work-life balance and will only allow 40 hours for each work week, don't fill in more than 40 hours for each week of work or PMI will ask you to amend.
 - Try to estimate your project hours offline (e.g. using Excel or a notebook) first and insert the hours once finalized. Though PMI has not mentioned it, to amend and save the project hours repeatedly on the web server might trigger the need for an audit.
 - Write the project description of the project (in around 500 characters) including the following:
 - **a brief description of the project**
 - **objectives**
 - **key deliverables**
 - **project outcome**

- your personal role
 - When composing the project descriptions for each project, make good use of PMI terms to demonstrate that you understand what project management is. Include terms found in the PMBOK Guide like project charter, sponsor, scope, project deliverables, stakeholders, schedule, acceptance of deliverables, quality management, etc. at least 5 times in your description. PMI has the right to require you to rewrite the project description should they find it inadequate.
5. The above steps have to be performed for each and every project you would submit. Below is a sample form for the project experience record:



Project Management Institute
Building Professionalism in project management. TM

Project Management Institute
Headquarters
14 Campus Blvd., Newtown Square, PA 19073-3299 USA
Tel: +610-356-4600, Fax: +610-356-4647
E-mail: pmihsq@pmi.org, Internet: www.pmi.org

Mobile Website Development: OVERVIEW

Started Dec 2011	Through Mar 2012
Project Role Project Leader	Primary Industry Education

Mobile Website Development: ORGANIZATION DETAILS

Job Title Design and Production Officer		
Organization Name [REDACTED]		
Address Line 1 [REDACTED]		
Address Line 2 [REDACTED]		
Address Line 3 [REDACTED]		
City [REDACTED]	State/Province/Territory [REDACTED]	Zip/Postal Code [REDACTED]
Country [REDACTED]		
Phone Number [REDACTED]		
Contact Name [REDACTED]		
Contact Relationship Manager/Director		
Contact E-mail [REDACTED]	Contact Phone Number [REDACTED]	

Mobile Website Development: PROJECT DETAILS

Initiating the Project	Planning the Project	Executing the Project	Controlling and Monitoring the Project	Closing the Project
10.00	120.00	200.00	80.00	40.00

Description
Objectives: to develop a mobile website for web presence on mobile devices
Deliverables: the mobile website and documentation

In response to the increasing traffic access from mobile devices, a project for mobile website was initiated by the senior management and I was appointed project leader. As this was a relatively new technology, a lot of time was spent on gathering stakeholder and technical requirements. QA and testing plan were also developed to ensure quality. The deliverables were accepted by the stakeholders in meetings.

Person: [REDACTED] / Application: #2112966
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Generated: 11 Oct 2013

Preparation for the PMP Audit

Follow the advices below while filling the PMP application form to help you well prepared for a PMP audit (as PMP audit is selected on a random basis, you don't know whether you will be selected before settling the PMP certification fee):

- Keep all supporting documents for your education, project management education as well as work experience in folders (supporting documents may include certificates, e-mails, project plans, meeting minutes or project charters). Do gather enough documents for each and every project you have submitted on your PMP application form.
- Contact and seek endorsement from your supervisor/manager on the number of hours to be reported for each and every project on the application form so as to avoid an disagreements during the audit process.

After You have Submitted the Application

You will need to wait for about 5 days as PMI carry out the "Application Completeness Review". Should your application form is considered complete, PMI will send you an approval email, asking you to pay for the PMP Certification fee. You can settle the fee online. In case you are not an native English speaker and your mother tongue is available as a language aid from PMI, you must specify the **a language aid** while you are confirming the payment. The language aid is provided **free of charge** and is often overlooked by many PMP aspirants. The translated question in the language you have chosen will appear on the same page as the original English question on each screen of the PMP exam, this feature is extremely useful when dealing with wordy questions.

Currently PMI provides the following language aid for the PMP exam:

- Chinese (Traditional)
- Chinese (Simplified)
- Arabic
- Japanese
- French
- Korean
- German
- Portuguese (Brazilian)
- Hebrew

- Spanish
- Italian
- Russian
- Turkish

After you have paid the PMP Certification fee, **check your email immediately**. You will be notified if a PMP audit is needed in an email from PMI.



How to Pass the PMP Audit Process Smoothly?

According to PMI, the **PMP audit process** is random based. Every PMP aspirant will have equal chance to be selected for an audit. PMI does not specify the percentage of candidates selected, but from various sources on the internet, it is estimated that around 5% - 25% of candidates from the United States and ~0.5% of candidates from all other countries would be required for an audit. A PMP candidate will not know whether they will be selected until they have settled the PMP Certification fee.

The requirement for audit is part of the quality assurance procedures established by PMI to maintain the quality and standing of the PMP certification. It is meant to help PMP aspirants rather than set up as a stumbling block. In case you are lucky enough to be among the few who are required for an PMP audit, keep calm and respond according to what PMI tells you. Passing the audit should be a breeze.

Required PMP Audit Package

In the PMP audit email sent out to you once you have settled the PMP certification fee, it is written clearly that the following three kinds of proofs / verifications are need. These need to be mailed back to PMI in the United States as currently PMI does not accept online submission.

1. **Academic education** - you will need to provide a photocopy of your degree/sub-degree certificate
2. **35 contact hours of Project Management Education** - if you attend a PMP exam prep course provided by a PMI R.E.P., you will just need to have a photocopy of the project management education certificate; if you receive the education as part of your degree course or if you attend course from providers other than PMI R.E.P, a photocopy of the course certificate/degree certificate **and** the course outline on the project management education component would be needed

3. Project Management Experience

- In the myPMI section of the PMI website, you will be able to find the audit package prepared by the PMI on your project experience as individual PDF files (i.e. PMI has reflowed the project management information you have submitted into individual PDF files, one PDF for each project).
- Print out all the **PDF files** and prepare an **envelope** for each distinct supervisors (i.e. different projects with the same supervisor can be grouped into the same envelope).
- Send the form together with the envelope by mail or in person to your **supervisors/managers for signing**. Your supervisors/managers will need to verify and sign on the experience record(s), put them into the envelope and sealed the envelope with one more signature.
- Ask the supervisors/managers to pass the sealed envelopes containing the record forms back to you. *Don't ask them to mail these back to PMI directly.*
- If several experience record forms are to be signed by the same supervisor/manager, the supervisor/manager will need only to sign and fill in the details on the first form only and write down his/her initials (e.g. E.C. for Edward Chung) on all the rest of the record forms to save him/her the hassles of having to repeat the same information on many forms. The original wording of PMI: *"If one person is verifying multiple projects for the same company, they can fill out one form and initial or highlight on the Experience Record the projects that they are verifying".*
- Each PDF file contains a total of 3 pages. The 1st page bears the details of the project while the 3rd has the contact methods of PMI. Posted below is the sample of the 2nd page of the project experience record form (the only page needs to be signed by the supervisor).



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Project Management Experience Audit Report

PMI ID Number

Reference Experience Number

Last Name, First Name

PMP(SM) Experience Verification Form

The PMI credentials are the most recognized credentials in project management. To maintain and enhance the high standard of these credentials PMI must ensure that project management practitioners who apply for the PMI credential examinations meet the predefined requirements for eligibility. One way in which PMI works to ensure that all educational and experiential requirements are met and the integrity of its credentials are maintained is to conduct candidate audits. The applicant who has presented you with this form has been randomly selected to participate in this audit. Please verify the accuracy of the candidate's experience presented on the Project Management Experience Report by providing your signature and contact information in the spaces below. Please place these forms in an envelope, seal and sign your name over the back flap and return it to the candidate. PMI appreciates your assistance in preserving the value of our credentials.

I hereby verify that the information provided is correct. Yes ☐ or No ☐

If NO, please provide the reason; if additional space is needed, continue on the back of this page:

Name:

Title:

Organization:

Address:

Phone Number: Email:

Signature

Candidate:

Page 2 of 3

Once you have got all the documents are ready, put these into a large envelope and mail the audit package back to PMI at:

PMI Global Operations Center

14 Campus Blvd., Newtown Square, PA 19073-3299 USA

It will take PMI 5 - 7 days upon the arrival of the audit package to review and process your case. Don't worry if you do not receive an acknowledge of receipt email from PMI in normal postage time. There may be a delay of several days in sending out the acknowledge email. Chances are that the

Schedule and Take the PMP Certification Exam

After you have successfully settled the PMP Certification fee or completed the PMP audit (if you have been selected), you will receive an approval email / audit verification confirmation email from PMI. The email contains the **PMI Eligibility ID** which enables you to schedule your PMP exam session at the Pearson VUE website. Do act fast to book your preferred exam session as exam seats are limited and confirmed on a first-come-first-served basis.

Fix a Date for Your PMP Exam at Prometric.com

Pearson VUE is a global provider of testing services and is considered one of the most trusted examination administration body. Only examinations that require the highest level of quality assurance and security would make use of Pearson VUE.

As said, you can find the **PMI Eligibility ID** in the email sent to you by PMI. This PMI Eligibility ID is also recorded on the myPMI section of PMI website in case you have lost the email. Do keep this PMI Eligibility ID in a safe place as it enables to book PMP exam session online without further payment (you have already paid the PMP Certification fee to PMI already). One strange thing is that you may not be able to find the URL to book for the PMP exam in the email from PMI.

On the Pearson VUE website, you will be able to search for an exam centre with seats available based on your preferred time and date. Do try to get to know the transportation arrangement to the exam center before choosing one. The term "Schedule an Appointment" is used on the website to mean schedule your PMP exam section. Follow the on-screen instructions. You will need to have your **PMI Eligibility ID** and the first four letters of your last name to verify your eligibility status. After you have selected and confirmed

a suitable exam slot, you will be presented with the examination confirmation details.

It is advisable, though not required, to print out the exam confirmation information for your PMP exam and bring it to the exam centre. Accidents do happen. I have once read that when one PMP exam candidate arrived at the exam centre, the centre staff told him that they did not received his booking.

In Case You Need to Reschedule the PMP Exam

Changes may be inevitable. In case you need to reschedule your confirmed PMP exam session, do it as soon as possible. You are allowed to reschedule your exam date up to 2 days before your actual exam (fees apply if it is within 30 days of the scheduled booking). You will just need to go to the Pearson VUE website to carry out appropriate action. The PMP exam reschedule fee is arranged as follows:

1. **Beyond 30 days** (not including the PMP exam date): free of charge
2. **Within 30 days and 2 days before the exam**(not including the exam date): US\$70
3. **Within 2 days**: no refund, all fees forfeited, you will have to pay the re-exam fee in full to schedule another exam session

Advices On the Scheduled Date of PMP Exam

1. Arrive early at the examination centre (better 30 minutes earlier), especially if you need to travel far to the examination centre as the traffic condition may not be predictable. If you were late for the exam, you may be refused to enter and have book another session by paying the re-exam fee. It is advised to book a hotel room near the exam centre to save you from the traffic jam and allow you to relax. Or you can visit the exam centre a day before the actual PMP exam to more accurately estimate the transportation time.
2. **Check on the Pearson VUE website again about your exam venue.** Some PMP aspirants have reported that **the exam venue was relocated after they have booked the exam session but the information has not been passed to the candidates.** Or you can phone the exam centre to confirm the correctness of the address.

3. In case you encounter any irregularities before or during your PMP exam (e.g. power outage, evacuation, etc.), stay calm. Contact PMI or Pearson VUE customer care for direction. Ask the centre staff to give you some sort of written proof of the situation. Don't leave the exam centre without it.

PMP Exam Taking Strategies

To attempt such a mind-wrecking 4 hours 200 questions exam as PMP, you will need to have a good exam taking strategy. The following outlines the most effective ways to tackle multiple choices questions. Choose ones that suit your style.

1. **Question First** - read the question in full, think of the correct answer before reading the answer choices, this allows you not to be confused by the answer choices
2. **Answers First** - this is the reverse of question first technique, suitable for wordy and lengthy questions. Read the answer choices first and then read the question. You will have a better knowledge of what keywords to look for when reading the questions.
3. **Eliminate** - according to the experience of PMP exam takers, out of the four choices for each question two answers are usually obviously wrong. Just cross out these two answers and focus on the difference between the remaining two answers and look for hints from the question.
4. **Look out for "Absolutes"** - absolutes in the answers are usually wrong, do look out for them. Absolutes include "always", "all", "never", "none", "only", etc.
5. **Read Through** - you read the question word by word from the beginning of the question to the end of the answer choices, this is what most candidates will do

And for the calculation questions:

1. **Calculate First** - read the question and choose the correct PMP formula, calculate your own answer before even reading the choices provided
2. **Calculate Back** - if you are not sure how to calculate, work backward by reading the answer choices first and try to fit the number provided into an appropriate PMP formula

Once You have Passed the PMP Exam ...

After you have submitted your answers in the PMP exam or 4 hours is up, you will not immediately get your exam results but a short survey about your exam experience. After you have submitted your survey answers, the PMP exam result will be shown. Hopefully, with all the hard works you have put into your PMP study, you will get a **congratulation message** on the computer screen.

You are a PMP immediately !

Congratulations, you are now a PMP. The center staff will print you a copy of the exam report (may include a signature and/or emboss). **Keep the exam report in a safe place.** As said, accidents do happen. If there are some technical errors and your results have not be recorded in PMI's system, this exam report will serve as the **only proof** that you have passed (this is the real experience of one of the candidates who have shared their PMP lessons learned). You are advised to *discard this exam report only after you have received your PMP certificate (in around 6-8 weeks)* but the exam report should double as a good souvenir of your PMP exam.

From the moment you have passed the PMP exam:

- You are allowed to use **PMP** after your name in your resume and on your website, etc. to indicate that you are PMP certified.
- You can download a soft copy of the PMP logo to include in your **personal namecard** (but remember you are not allowed to show the PMP logo on your website or company namecard).
- Your 3-year PMP re-certification cycle begins immediately and you can earn PDU from this very moment on (any project management activities before this moment cannot be used to claim PDU).
- Your name and details will be listed in the **PMP directory** within 48 hours.
- If you like, you can request a **PMP lapel pin** free of charge on the PMI

marketplace. (The label pin will arrive in a separate package from the PMP certificate package)



The PMP certificate will reach your address by mail in 6 - 8 weeks in a package which include:

- PMP credential certificate



- a congratulatory letter
- information on how to maintain the PMP credential



What You should Know about PMP PDU?

Once you have passed the PMP exam, your 3-year PMP re-certification cycle begins. You are required to accumulate at least 60 PMP PDU in order to successfully renew your PMP status. In general, 1 PDU equates 1 hour of PDU activity participation. But there are limits to certain kinds of PDU activities. This article will tell you all you need to know about PDU.

PMP PDU Requirements

All PMPs are required to get at least **60 Professional Development Units (PDU)** in each 3-year certification cycle in order to renew their PMP certificate. This is another quality assurance mechanisms to ensure PMPs keep up with the latest trends and best practices in the ever-evolving field of project management. The PDU is an education system to urge PMPs to learn and grow continuously.

In general, 1 PMP PDU equals 1 hour of participation in the PDU activity (though PMI has the ultimate authority to assess the number of PDU one can get with a certain kind of PDU activity).

From 1st December 2015, PMP® and PMI-ACP® Certification holders will need to categorise their education PDUs according to the PMI Talent Triangle with 3 key aspects:

- Technical Project Management: Knowledge, skills and behaviors related to specific domains of Project, Program and Portfolio Management
- Leadership: Knowledge, skills and behaviors specific to leadership-oriented, cross-cutting skills that help an organization achieve its business goals
- Strategic and Business Management: Knowledge of and expertise in the industry or organization that enhances performance and better delivers business outcomes

The minimum amount of PDU for PMP® in each skill area is 8 PDU while that for PMI-ACP® is 4 PDU. The PDU requirements for your certification are clearly indicated in your PMI.org certification dashboard. *You would see that I still need 0.5 Strategic & Business PDU in order to satisfy the minimum PDU in the PMI Talent Triangle skill areas.*

Don't worry PDU in excess of 60 in the 3-year cycle will be wasted as PMI allows you to carry forward a maximum of 20 PDU to the next PMP certification cycle. The only requirement is that the PDU must be earned in the 3rd year of the cycle.

On the other hand, if you are not able to accumulate 60 PMP PDU during your 3-year cycle, the PMP credential will be **suspended**. PMI gives you 1 extra year to earn the required PDU. But be *reminded that the next 3-year re-certification cycle will **still** be counted from your original credential end date.*

The Most Effective Way to Earn PDU

Earning PMP PDU is not difficult and expensive at all, some of the PDU can be obtained free of charge:

- The live/recorded webinars on the PMI website allows you to earn PDU (usually 1 PDU each) through the project-management.com website free of charge (you must be a PMI member first)

Initially, I tried to earn my PDU from these sources solely. But, on reflection, I ask myself: **why not make the best use of the PDU opportunity** to renew and broaden my project management knowledge instead of trying to accumulate PDU only? This is exactly the aim of the PDU requirement after all. I have heard that some PMP just left the PMI webinars running in the browser and got to sleep. This did nothing good for my career.

I then focus on finding useful and meaningful PDU opportunities. Below are some of the suggested ways to get the best from the PDU efforts I have been doing personally:

- **Agile project management** is a heated topic in project management these days and PMI is now offering the PMI-ACP Certification to provide project managers and practitioners to demonstrate their knowledge and experience in Agile projects. One of the PMI approved courseware, the

Agile PrepCast (as downloadable video lectures), will provide you with the required 21 contact hours for the PMI-ACP exam **AND** 37 PMP PDU (Category A) for your PMP re-certification. Even if you do not intend to take the PMI-ACP exam, gaining knowledge in Agile project management will benefit you as a project manager in the long run as you can understand the best of both worlds. Agile project management is now being practiced by projects in the area of software, web, pharmacy, manufacturing, product development, and so on. In fact, most startups make use of Agile.

- If you are into **blogging**, why not post your insights about project management online to **build up your reputation and earn PDU** (Cat. D) at the same time? You will just need to register for a domain, set up the hosting and blogging software and you can start blogging (**follow this beginner's guide to have all these done in under an hour**, only US\$4.99 per month for the hosting service). Your online reputation in project management expertise will open up a lot of opportunities for you!
- Or, if you are working in the IT Service industry, the **ITIL certification** will be your definite choice for further studies and earning PDU. **Preparing for the ITIL Foundation Certification** will earn you around **17-25 PDUs** for your PMP re-certification (depending on your education provider) as well as the ITIL Foundation credential.

How to Submit PDU?

PMI supplies you with an online "Continuing Certification Requirements System" to record your PDU. After you have attended PDU activities, you can submit the PDU activity details through the **Continuing Credential Requirements System (CCRS)**. If you participate in a real-time webinar by PMI, your PDU will be automatically recorded and there is no need to enter it manually.

After you have submitted the PDU request, PMI will take some time to review and approve the PDUs. You will receive an email and the PDU will be added to your account once PMI approve your request. Note that PMI reserves the right to change (usually reduce) the number of PDU you can get with a particular activity and PMI may require you to submit supporting documents with reference to the particular categories of PDU you are claiming within 5 days in order to evaluate your claim.

Renew Your PMP Credential

After you have collected enough PDUs in your PMP re-certification cycle, PMI will send you an electronic notification (in the form of an email) asking you to complete the form and pay for credential renewal. The PMP renewal fee is US\$60 for PMI members and US\$150 for non-members. The renewal application and payment process must be completed in 90 days after your credential end date in order for you to keep your PMP status. PMI will send the new PMP certificate to you within 6 to 8 weeks.

Occasionally, PDU audits may be requested by PMI at random before you are approved for PMP renewal. You will need to present proof/documentation for all the PDU claimed during the 3-year cycle to PMI for verification.

Important: Documentation for PDU

Just like the PMP Certification audit, you may be required to submit supporting documents for the PDU you have claimed or selected for an audit process of your claimed PDU by presenting documentation for verification after submitting your renewal request. PMI requests PMPs to keep the documentation at least 18 months after the 3-year cycle.

Documentation for the PDU can be one or more of the following:

- attendance certificate or letter of attendance
- registration confirmation letter
- written notes (handwritten or electronic) when attending seminars, webinars, self study or during discussion about project management
- authored books / presentation materials / podcasts / record of webinars
- blog posts
- transcript or grade report of academic courses



More PMP Resources...

If you would like to get more details on the PMP journey, or pointers to a bunch of free PMP resources, please feel free to visit my personal blog at the link below. I am currently updating the information for the new PMP Exam!

Wish you PMP success!

Go to Edward's PMP
Blog