



PMO International Knowledge Class

PMP[®] Examination Preparation
Study Guide

Focusing on How to Study for the PMP[®] Exam

[*PMBOK[®] Guide* – 4th Edition]

[ANSI / PMI 99-001-2000]

[ISO / IEC 17024]





THE PMP[®] EXAM





Preface

This paper serves as a free reference and outlines a successful method of how to study for the PMP exam and how you can determine when you are ready to take the exam. A complete condensed Student Manual is handed out with other class material when you sign up for PMO International's "PMP 4th Edition Exam Preparation Knowledge Class. Click on: <http://www.PMOInternational.com>

PMO International provides a full 35-hour PMP Exam Preparation course which serves as a basic reference for anyone interested in the profession of project management and follows the methodology defined in the PMBOK® Guide. As a basic reference, this course is neither comprehensive nor all-inclusive and is intended to serve along with classroom instruction as an aid to gain the level of understanding needed to pass the Project Management Professional PMP® certification exam. Those people who intend to take the PMP® certification exam and those who wish to take the most from this course should have several years of PM experience managing projects and hopefully project teams. This course will also benefit people who wish to break into the field of project management or further their knowledge by providing professional knowledge and alignment to the profession. Those people who have earned their PMP® and wish to take a refresher course and earn PDU credits are welcome.

This material undergoes a continuous improvement plan; therefore, future versions will contain additional noteworthy subject information. Suggestions for inclusions, clarifications, or improvements to this material are always welcomed.

PMO's Comprehensive Guarantee

Taking this course does not guarantee passing your PMP® certification exam; PMO International will extend every opportunity possible within reason to ready you to pass the exam. This includes an additional sitting for the class with no fee within 6 months of your first scheduled class starting date. If you do not pass the exam after three tries within a year of taking this training course, 100% of your course tuition will be refunded.

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PMP® Exam Preparation & What to look for

1 The Insights and Tips to Taking the PMP® exam

Everyone has a tip or two on the exam, many of the tips were quite helpful for me when I took the exam. I will pass as many worthwhile tips as possible to you in the study class, not all of them will be written here. Remember that the exam is just that, an exam, and you, and only “you” are responsible for passing through the gauntlet successfully. The tips are there as observations about the road conditions on the journey through.

Anatomy of the PMP® Exam

2 How Do You Know: When Am I Ready To Take It?

For the new *PMBOK® Guide* 4th Edition PMP® exam, the exam is a pass / fail situation, I can't say what the margin is right now since that bar has moved a few times, historically it has been a bit more than 60% of the 200 questions need to be answered correctly. However, if that's your current percentage you need to study some more because your margin is like thin ice.

How long did I study for the exam? (or) “When did I know I was ready to take it?” Short answer: Until I scored ~80% or better on the PMI 200 exam 3 times consecutively.

I was reading and reading yet I could not say if I was ready, it was not like college, or high school where you studied all night, went in to class, and did your best, I actually had an equivalent test that I could practice with! With enough reading under my belt to blur my eyes, and to start to confuse the issues, I decided measuring my comprehension was clearly the next step. Next day my concentration was on measuring my actual comprehension level and my focus went to test taking and reviewing my wrong answers. I asked myself which area didn't I read well enough (for instance Human Resources, or Procurement, or Professional Responsibilities), I read the chapters in the “Barnes & Noble PMP® study Guide book of the day” (if the chapter was covered there) and the *PMBOK® Guide* chapter after that to get both renderings of the information.

So, really, the next important question after “when I am ready to take the exam” is “how much do I know about each of the study areas and is it enough?” The answer to that is to measure your comprehension level!

Truthfully, taking the PMI 200 Exam wound up being the “meat & potatoes” of my studies from then on, you know where “the rubber meets the road”! I took the full 200 questions (yes 4 hours) 4 times in a 2-3 week period and I compared all the exam answers on each exam together. I was amazed at how many times I got the same question wrong each time and, curiously, I had also given the same wrong answer. Gee, I must have thought I knew that piece of the methodology. I researched each one of those questions and found out what my misunderstandings where and after saying lot of “oh, I see what they mean” to myself my score naturally went up.

Remember to wear your “PMI Hat”, some of their answers may differ some from your experience in the real PM world. After studying the corresponding chapters in both the “B&N Study Guide” and *PMBOK® Guide* in say 2 areas, I took the PMI 200 exam again and compared my wrong answers with my last the wrong answers on my last exam.



A good deal of the issues I discovered up front was that I was not reading the question properly. After some angst, I had to commend them. PMI is masterful in writing complex questions with a twist; you cannot fly through the question and pick an answer because the exam is designed to fail you if you do that. Read every word and understand why that word was selected; the wordsmithing was done by experts. That will take care of about 30-50% of your wrong answers. The lesson here is you do not want to fly through a project requirement like that in real life either!

When you get through the practice exam the second time you will have many of the exact same questions wrong again also. That is exactly how you can pin point your weakness or misunderstanding at the MICRO level. You don't have to take the PMI 200 in 4 hours either for the first few times you take the full exam. You can do 100 (or 75) in a sitting and do the remainder the next night (don't stretch the time out too far, try to do it in two days). However, you must try to do at least 3 straight 4-hour full exam simulations and preferably 4 with comparisons of the wrong answers before the actual PMP® exam that is the **pure simulation**; this will test your ability to measure an approximated finish time for yourself before you take the actual PMP® exam. This actually does great for your anxiety level too before going into the exam.

The key is doing a comparison with your with previous simulated PMI test results. My method of correlation is simple:

I have a notepad, I put a date on the top of the page, and put 1 to 100 answer slots on each page, the second 100 go on page two. I put a "?" after my answer if I wasn't quite sure and followed it by writing down the alternate answer if I thought it could be another answer. If I was dead certain I was right, I put a big dot after the letter [meaning I thought I absolutely knew that one and that it was an easy one for me], the rest of the answers I left just the letter.

Example:

- 1) A? (B)
- 2) C
- 3) D? (C)
- 4) B ?

It is true that many times you can immediately rule out two answers and are left with two choices right away; so keep track of BOTH of the possible answers. Funny how many times the second answer I tracked was true. Even more, not so funny [I was shocked] were the number of that I got wrong that had a big dot after the letter. Those were questions that I was dead certain I knew.

Here's a short but sweet tip. If it is a long complicated question, read the last sentence or two of the question first. There are questions on the exam where you will start doing all the analysis, and the real question is the last sentence and it is only asking you something simple that doesn't need any analysis. The lesson there is to get all the information before you start your work. You can bet there will be a few like that one.



The next time I took the full exam, I did the exact same thing again. You must compare the two tests and look for the trend of the same answer wrong twice in a row and find out WHY (?) then learn your weaknesses and misunderstandings and correct them, which will be a big confidence builder! You must do that, otherwise, you will never know when you are ready! That is what everyone wants to know!

Some absolute "MUST HAVES":

You must know how to calculate all EV formulas: Variances -CV\$ and CV%, PV\$ and PV% and indices (CPI, SPI). You must know how to find the ETC and EAC, and the variations of EAC because you don't know which variation of the "4" they will throw at you: 1.) No Variance, 2.) Original estimate was Flawed, 3.) Variances are atypical, and 4.) Variances are typical. If you have all those down cold, you are in good shape.

Fill out the "Project Hours" spreadsheet, provided for you in class materials, before you do the online application and enter the data you came up with on the online application. That is an asset to getting your 4,500 or 7,500 hours figured out. You can start the application, and save the application online partially filled out go all the way until it asks you to "pay by credit card". That way you can go back to the same application repeatedly until you have it completed with everything needed.

I applied over the PMI website, paid by credit card, and got my "OK to sit" letter by email in two days! I know another person where it took two months and he had to keep calling PMI to see what happened to it. I don't think that's typical. The letter is good for 1 year so get it in your hand sooner rather than later. That way you can pull the trigger at any time (getting a testing center was easy for me, I can qualify that aspect for others). When I checked the exam centers near me (PMI said it could take two months for that) however, the testing centers had a ton of openings and only wanted a two-day notice before the exam. Since that was the case I went into full core study mode for about a week. I took the PMI 200 question exam 3 times in the next week to 1 ½ weeks when I scored ~160 three consecutive times I scheduled the exam for 3 days later.

Remember... You can always take the exam again; it's not like high school or college where you only get one shot at it (that's tough). The actual exam is quite similar to the PMI exam simulation questions I used, so after you feel you have read sufficiently, concentrate your time on taking a practice exam once a week, to monitor your understandings and to mark your progress. Remember you don't have to get every question correct, the exam is now a "PASS / FAIL" exam. You just have to "PASS the exam", and you never have to take it again! So don't stress so much about it. Keep saying, "I can do this", march right in the exam center door, and do not look back!

EXAM DAY! PUT ON YOUR PMI HAT! When you first sit down at the computer station, before you log in and start the exam do this little trick. Use the scrap paper you brought, and one of the two #2 pencils you brought [you are allowed a calculator thank Heaven]. Take 5 minutes and write down all of the formulas and all of that same that kind of memory information that you can think of right away on the scrap paper for reference, which will instantly relieve some pressure for you. The clock does not start until you click the "Start" button on the computer screen, which is what keeps the time for you, not when you first walk into the room.



When you take the exam CONCENTRATE don't rush, DO measure your time against the amount of questions you have completed, and the time it took you to complete them, with the number of questions you have left [both are shown on the screen, thank Heaven!]. When you see you are ahead of the time, RELAX a little more and concentrate some more on the wording of the questions. If the question is hard, take the time to think it through, many times it is not what you first thought it was asking, don't rush the answer and you'll feel better about the answer and won't have to go back to it! Other ones are very easy and you can just click them and move on leaving more time for the hard ones. Answer all of the questions in order as they came, leave NONE unanswered.

IMPORTANT TIP! Mark them with the check box on the computer for review if you want to come back to the question, then on the scrap paper jot down the question number and the letters indicating the two possible best answers. Make two lists of the question numbers: the ones you want to revisit first in one list, and the hard ones you want to visit last in another list.

I finished in 3 hours and spent the remaining hour reviewing the marked answers. If there is ANY exam time left, more than 2 minutes, USE IT. DO NOT finish early, go on until there are only a few minutes left and USE YOUR TIME TO REVIEW, there are no kudos for finishing early! When you click "FINISHED" the exam automatically scores and puts up a screen that you passed (and you will). The proctor will give you a paper verifying your success when you leave. That's everything!

Everything except... the load off your back and the great feeling you get when you pass the exam and you can put "PMP" after your name. Oh yes... and that big smile you have on your face when you walk out that door.

In this job environment, I see a great deal of focus on the creation of Project Management Offices and companies wanting an assurance that the Project Manager knows his/her stuff. There are many people in the business that profess that they are project managers, having the PMP[®] credential distinguishes you in the crowd of PMs, and clearly shows that you do know your stuff. These days project \$dollar costs have become a major business focus and it then becomes extremely important to everyone involved (Not as much so in the old days). You will also see "PMP[®] Certification required" on the top job requirements (I have run a Job search with just "PMP[®]" in the search requirements; it finds a ton of them).

If you take the full PMI exam at least 3 times or maybe 4 consecutively in a four-hour time block and score 75% or better, take the exam within the next week and get it done with, you're ready, IT'S TIME!

Best of Luck to all who Venture Down the Road!

Joseph Pignato PMP





Addendum

The Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility

The Ethics and Responsibility, Simply Put

Previously PMI had separate different ethics standards for members and for credentialed individuals who were held to higher ethical standards. Currently with the changes to the *PMBOK® Guide – Third Edition v1.3* everyone is held to the same high standard. This includes members and non-members of PMI, certification holders, and individuals who have applied for or received a credential from PMI regardless of their membership in PMI, and non-members who serve in a volunteer capacity.

This area is NOT referenced in the "*PMBOK® Guide*", IT IS ON THE Exam. As much as 10% of your exam directly or indirectly references this material. PMI has a PDF which is downloadable from their website which contains the material for this subject area. There is a copy of the text with your class materials.

The code is divided into sections that contain standards of conduct which are aligned with the four values that were identified as most important to the project management community.

The 4 values:

- Responsibility
- Respect
- Fairness
- Honesty

The code affirms these four values as its foundation.

The philosophy which governs the Professional Responsibility of a Project Manager simply put:

- Be a leader
- Deal with issues in a direct manner
- Act ethically and legally
- Should be open and up front

The PMP® is expected to be professional, this means following the processes in the *PMBOK® Guide*. The code of ethics will be covered in full by referencing the PMI text as the study Guide.





Anatomy of a Project Manager

Profile of the Consummate Project Manager

1 Focus, Persistence and constant Honing of Skills

2 Experience managing similar types of projects.

While project management as a discipline is universal, how we deliver specific types of projects is the key differentiator. The PM Experiences in the business and technical areas is a key differentiator.

3 Comfort dealing with ambiguity

One of the greatest challenges in any project is the fundamental role that uncertainty plays. At the start of the project, everything is on the table and certainty may be a far away proposition. Effective project managers need to demonstrate sufficient tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty, and a process to manage gradually toward creating certainty.

4 Communication skills

Most of project management is about managing expectations. Expectations don't get managed except through communicating. Project managers need to be able to comfortably communicate and interact with every position and level of the organization they will be expected to be in contact with.

5 A bias toward urgency; and focus on results

Projects are about getting stuff done, and getting it done well. This requires ensuring that issues are addressed, questions are answered and decisions are made in a proactive manner. Projects can't afford to wait until someone "gets around" to making a decision, and project managers need to be willing to step in and willingly steward an issue to ensure it gets resolved. Candidate project managers need to be able to demonstrate the ability to recognize issues, know who owns their resolution and ensure they get resolved quickly and efficiently.

6 Leadership and people skills

The ability to lead effectively is a subtle one, and not easy to test or screen for. Frequently, the best leadership skills live in those who are the most modest about them. Effective project managers need to balance empathy, support, enthusiasm and determination. They need to be able to adapt their style and approach to those around them, and recognize what the team is missing and how best to fill that void. They should be able to demonstrate an ability to step out of their comfort zone in order to respond to a need of the team.

7 Fit within the organization

Lastly, project managers need to be able to fit into the organization, and in doing so to challenge but not threaten. More and more projects are in some way focussed on changing the organization, which requires an understanding of culture and an ability to shape it. All too often, I've seen project managers with the "right skills" bring a process and approach that is so alien to the culture they are working in that success was never possible. The successful project manager must be able to demonstrate the ability to adapt their approach to the needs of the culture around them.







Overview of PM Knowledge Areas & PM Processes

Chapters 4 - 12

Project Management

4. Project Integration Management

- 4.1 Develop Project Charter
- 4.2 Develop PM Plan
- 4.3 Direct & Manage Project Execution
- 4.4 Monitor & Control Project Work
- 4.6 Perform Integrated Change Control
- 4.7 Close Project or Phase

5. Project Scope Management

- 5.1 Collect Requirements
- 5.2 Define Scope
- 5.3 Create WBS
- 5.4 Verify Scope
- 5.5 Control Scope

6. Project Time Management

- 6.1 Define Activities
- 6.2 Sequence Activities
- 6.3 Estimate Activity Resources
- 6.4 Estimate Activity Durations
- 6.5 Develop Schedule
- 6.6 Control Schedule

7. Project Cost Management

- 7.1 Estimate Cost
- 7.2 Determine Budget
- 7.3 Control Costs

8. Project Quality Management

- 8.1 Plan Quality
- 8.2 Perform Quality Assurance
- 8.3 Perform Quality Control

9. Project Human Resource Management

- 9.1 Develop Human Resource Plan
- 9.2 Acquire Project Team
- 9.3 Develop Project Team
- 9.4 Manage Project Team

10. Project Communication Management

- 10.1 Identify Stakeholders
- 10.2 Plan Communications
- 10.3 Distribute Information
- 10.4 Manage Stakeholder Expectations
- 10.5 Report Performance

11. Project Risk Management

- 11.1 Plan Risk Management
- 11.2 Identify Risks
- 11.3 Perform Qualitative Risk Analysis
- 11.4 Perform Quantitative Risk Analysis
- 11.5 Plan Risk Responses
- 11.6 Monitor & Control Risks

12. Project Procurement Management

- 12.1 Plan Procurements
- 12.2 Conduct Procurements
- 12.3 Administer Procurements
- 12.4 Close Procurements





Project Managers Authority in different organizations:

Organizational Structure Project Characteristics	Functional Organization	Matrix Organization			"Projectized"
		Weak Matrix	Balanced Matrix	Strong Matrix	
PM's Authority	Little or None	Limited	Low to Moderate	Moderate to High	High to Almost Total
Resource Availability	Little or None	Limited	Low to Moderate	Moderate to High	High to Almost Total
Who Controls the Budget	Functional Manager	Functional Manager	Mixed	Project Manager	Project Manager
PM's Role in the Project	Part-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Full-Time	Full-Time
PM's Administrative Staff	Part-Time	Part-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Full-Time





Notes:



Notes 2: