

PgMP[®]



Program Management Professional (PgMP)[®]
Handbook



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How to Use the PgMP® Certification Handbook

This handbook contains information on how you can apply for the globally recognized, highly valued PgMP certification.

PMI requires that all PgMP certification applicants read this entire handbook. The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with important information about the policies and procedures for obtaining and maintaining the PgMP certification.

PMI CONTACT INFORMATION

For general information about the Certification Program, contact the Customer Care Service Center in your region. Find this information at <https://www.pmi.org/about/contact>

Use the Online Certification system to apply:
<https://www.pmi.org/certifications/program-management-pgmp>

Use the Online Continuing Certification Requirements (CCR) system for certification maintenance:
<https://ccrs.pmi.org/>

PgMP® Certification Handbook last updated 11 March 2024

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Revised: 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2024

“PMI”, the PMI logo, “Making project management indispensable for business results”, “PMBOK”, “CAPM”, “Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM)”, “PMP”, “Project Management Professional (PMP)”, “Project Management Professional”, the PMP logo, “PgMP”, “Program Management Professional (PgMP)”, “PMI-RMP”, “PMI Risk Management Professional (PMI-RMP)”, “PMI-SP”, “PMI Scheduling Professional (PMI-SP)”, “PMI-ACP”, “PMI Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP)”, “PfMP” and “Portfolio Management Professional (PfMP)” are marks of Project Management Institute, Inc.

For a comprehensive list of PMI marks, contact the PMI Legal Department.

About PMI's Certification Program

PMI offers a comprehensive certification program for practitioners with different levels of education and experience. The certifications are developed and maintained through a vigorous process.

The certification program includes:

- Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM)[®]
- PMI Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP)[®]
- PMI Risk Management Professional (PMI-RMP)[®]
- PMI Scheduling Professional (PMI-SP)[®]
- Portfolio Management Professional (PfMP)[®]
- Program Management Professional (PgMP)[®]
- Project Management Professional (PMP)[®]
- PMI Professional in Business Analysis (PMI-PBA)[®]

PMI's certifications are distinguished by their global development and application, which makes them transferable across industries and geographic borders. The strength of PMI's certifications is that they are portable and not tied to any single method, standard or organization.

PMI's certification program is designed to ensure that all certification holders have demonstrated their competence through fair and valid measures. Steps are taken to ensure only the most reliable testing measures are used in the assessment of candidates. For example, interviews can be influenced by how difficult the interviewer tends to be, how well the candidate is performing that day, and even how many questions the interviewer asks along the same line of questioning.

PMI certifications are also developed by project management practitioners *for* practitioners. The certification program is driven by the thousands of certification holders who volunteer to spend time constructing and refining the exam questions used by PMI. These volunteers represent the diversity of PMI's market, coming from every region of the world, industry, job level and experience level.

The exam questions are monitored through industry-standard statistical procedures, also overseen by volunteers.

PMI understands the importance of impartiality in carrying out its certification activities, manages conflict of interest and ensures the objectivity of its certification activities.

A candidate is assessed by examining his or her competence using:

- ✓ **Education and Experience** – A combination of education and/or experience in project management is required for each certification. For example, the PMP requires both training specifically in project management and experience in the role of a project manager by leading and directing project teams, while delivering project results.
- ✓ **Testing Competence** – The candidate is required to apply project management concepts and experience to potential on-the-job situations through a series of scenario-based questions.
- ✓ **Ongoing Development** – Maintenance of a PMI certification requires the accumulation of ongoing professional development and education or, in some cases, recertification.

PMI Certification Department Mission

Initiate, establish, evaluate, maintain and administer a professional certification program to promote and support project management practitioners and the profession.

About the PgMP Certification

The PgMP certification recognizes advanced experience, skill and performance in the oversight of multiple, related projects and their resources aligned with an organizational objective. PgMP certification holders oversee the success of a program — a way to group multiple, related projects to achieve benefits that may not be realized if the projects were managed in a stand-alone fashion.

As project managers advance in their careers, the experience they gain in managing multiple, related projects and making decisions that advance strategic and business objectives demonstrates this competence. As employers demand program managers who can support the strategic objectives of the organization, PgMP certification holders will gain a distinct advantage in employment and promotional opportunities over their peers.

PgMP Certifying Process Overview

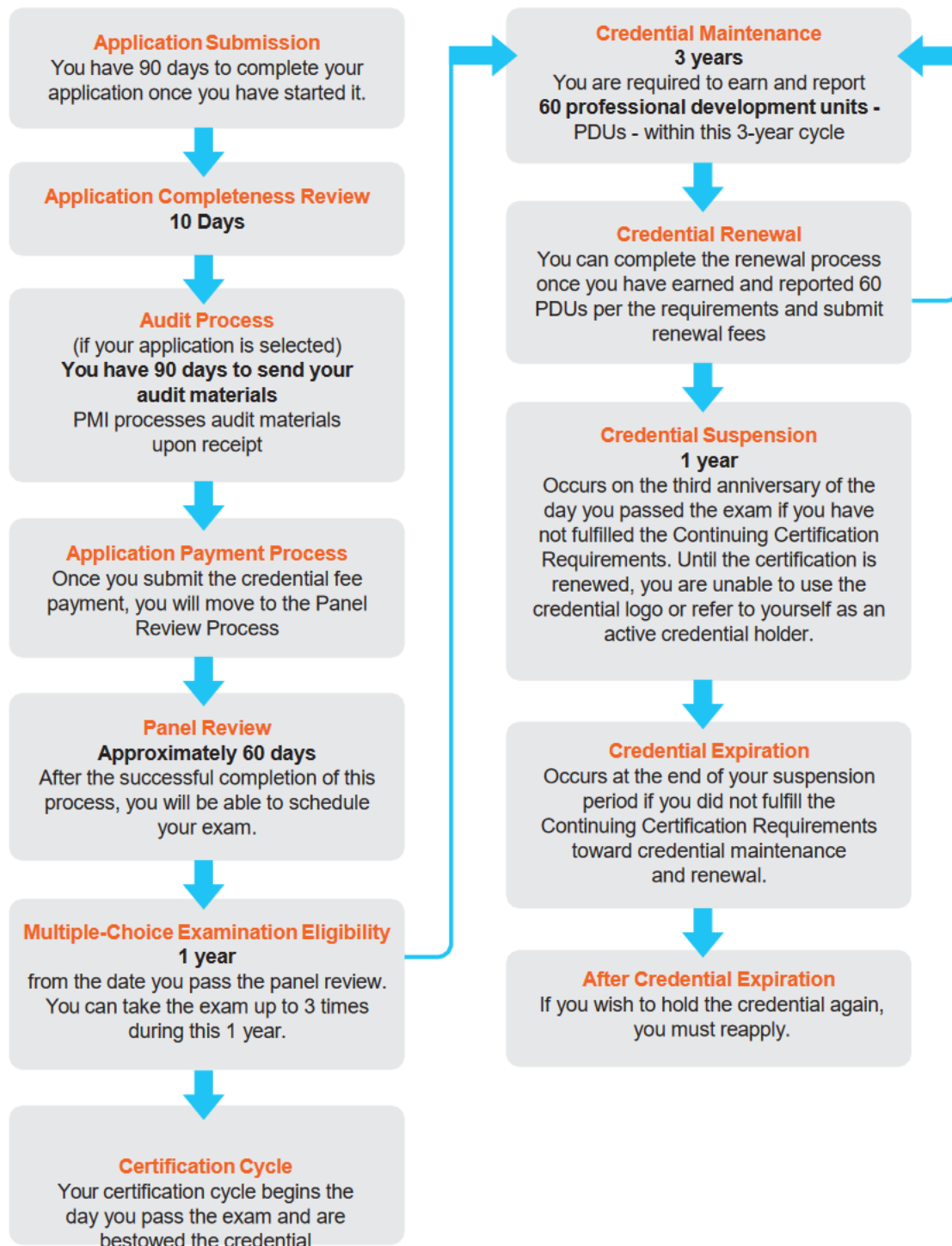
You must pass two evaluations to obtain the PgMP certification. This process takes approximately 60 days to complete.

Evaluation 1—Panel Review: The initial evaluation occurs through an extensive application review during which a panel of certified program managers will assess your professional experience based on your responses to the Program Management Experience Summaries provided on the application. If you fail the panel review once, you will receive the opportunity to update your experience summary responses based on the information provided to you by the reviewers and resubmit your application. If you do not pass the Panel Review upon your second submission, your application will be closed, and your exam fee will be refunded. You must pass this review before being able to sit for the exam.

Evaluation 2—Multiple-Choice Examination: The next step occurs with the multiple-choice examination in which you will be called upon to demonstrate your competence in both situational and scenario-based questions.

More information about the Examination and the Panel Review process, including tips for answering your experiences summaries, are found later in this Handbook.

Timeline of the PgMP Certification Process



PgMP Role Delineation (Job Analysis)

PMI conducts Role Delineation Studies for each certification every five to seven years. A third party, independent of PMI, conducts the study, which includes volunteer program management professionals from around the world. These individuals discuss the specific roles associated with each certification and the tasks and responsibilities that are expected to be performed within that role. In other words, a Role Delineation is a job analysis. It also provides a blueprint for the exam and links the exam questions to the role.

The PgMP Role Delineation states that candidates for the PgMP certification:

- Under minimal supervision, program managers are responsible and accountable for the coordinated management of multiple, related projects directed toward strategic business and organizational objectives. These programs contain complex activities that may span functions, organizations, geographic regions and cultures. Program managers build credibility, establish rapport and maintain communication with stakeholders at multiple levels, including those external to the organization.
- Program managers define and initiate projects and assign project managers to manage the cost, schedule, and performance of component projects while working to ensure the ultimate success and acceptance of the program. Program managers maintain continuous alignment of program scope with strategic business objectives and make recommendations to modify the program to enhance effectiveness toward the business result or strategic intent. Program managers are responsible for determining and coordinating the sharing of resources among their constituent projects for the overall benefit of the program.
- Program managers possess the knowledge and skills needed to be effective in the project, business, and/or government environments, and to make decisions that accomplish strategic objectives. In addition, the program manager should have advanced skills in finance, cross-cultural awareness, leadership, communication, influence, negotiation, and conflict resolution.

PgMP Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for the PgMP certification, you must meet certain educational and professional experience requirements. All project and program management experience must have been accrued over the last 15 consecutive years.

Educational Background	Project Management Experience	Program Management Experience
Secondary diploma (high school diploma, associate degree or global equivalent)	Minimum 48 months of unique non-overlapping professional project management experience or PMP	Minimum 84 months of unique non-overlapping professional program management experience
OR		
Educational Background	Project Management Experience	Program Management Experience
Four-year degree (bachelor's degree, global equivalent or higher degree)	Minimum 48 months of unique non-overlapping professional project management experience or PMP	Minimum 48 months of unique non-overlapping professional program management experience
OR		
Educational Background	Project Management Experience	Program Management Experience
Bachelor's or postgraduate degree from a GAC accredited program (bachelor's or master's degree or global equivalent)	Minimum 36 months of unique non-overlapping professional project management experience or PMP	Minimum 36 months of unique non-overlapping professional program management experience

How to Fill Out Your Application

Overview

To apply for the PgMP, you must have a minimum of 4 years' experience managing projects **and** a minimum of 48 months (with a 4-year degree or equivalent) or 84 months (without a 4-year degree or equivalent) managing programs. The first page of the online application requires your input on your post high-school education, and it will automatically determine if you need 4 years or 7 years of program management experience. The experience does not necessarily have to be paid work, but it does need to be in a professional setting. Activities such as school projects or planning personal events would not qualify.

If you currently have an active PMP, you will not need to record the 4-years of project management experience and the application will automatically skip to the Program Experience section. If you do not have your PMP, you will need to record information regarding projects you directly led in the application; this must equal 4 years or more of leading non-overlapping projects.

All applicants need to record their program management experience; depending upon your education, you will need to detail 4 – 7 years of program management experience. The application asks for basic information regarding the program(s) you worked on, along with an open text box where you will need to enter the objective of the program(s), your role and responsibilities in the program(s), and the benefits achieved by the program(s). Further details are listed below in the "Program Experience" section. After each program is listed, you must then enter brief information regarding the projects that were a part of that program.

Details on Recording Your Experience

Number of Months of Project and Program Management Experience

Months of professional experience are calculated based on the start and end dates you provide for each program you record as your program management experience and each project you record as your project management experience.

Project Management Experience (for those without the PMP)

You will have to record 48 months of project management experience to meet the four-year eligibility requirement. For each month in which you worked on multiple, overlapping projects, only the time spent on ONE of those projects will qualify toward fulfilling your eligibility requirements. However, projects may not be component projects of the program claimed under your program management experience.

Using this example below, the time spent working on Project 1 from January–April would count as four months toward the eligibility requirement, while the time spent working on Project 2 during May–June would count as two months toward the eligibility requirement. You can enter Project 2 as starting in February, but only the non-overlapping months of May–June will qualify.

You cannot count the time working on both projects during February–April twice. Therefore, Project 1 and Project 2 equal six months (January–June) of project management experience toward your eligibility requirement.



NOTE: Any professional experience that began more than 15 years before the application submission but ended less than 15 years before the application submission may qualify. However, the portion of that experience that exceeds 15 years is not considered qualified and will not count toward fulfilling the eligibility requirement.

Program Management Experience

You will have to record 48–84 months of program management experience to meet the four to seven-year eligibility requirement for program management experience.

For each month in which you worked on multiple, overlapping programs, only the time spent on ONE of those programs will qualify toward fulfilling your eligibility requirements.

Using this example below, the time spent working on Program 1 from January–April would count as four months toward the eligibility requirement, while the time spent working on Program 2 during May–June would count as two months toward the eligibility requirement. You can enter Program 2 as starting in February, but only the non-overlapping months of May–June will qualify.

You cannot count the time working on both projects during February–April twice. Therefore, Program 1 and Program 2 equal six months (January–June) of program management experience toward your eligibility requirement.



To satisfy your professional program management experience requirement, you are asked to record the organizational benefits of your program. Your response should include:

- a high-level summary of the program objective, from an organizational strategic point of view.
- your role as the program manager, including your responsibilities and deliverables.
- the benefits received by either your organization or the customer by running the program (should include tangible, measurable benefits).

If you are entering the experience of more than one program, each “Program Benefits” summary should be unique to that program. Applicants should ensure they are answering all the above criteria in their response, with a focus on the work they did as a program manager. In-depth information on the individual projects should not be included in the Program Benefits Summary.

Under each program you enter, you will need to supply brief information on the projects that are a part of your program. The information collected includes the name, budget, and timeline of each project in the program. These projects should not be the projects listed in the Project Experience section of your application.

Program Management Experience Summaries – First Evaluation

On the PgMP application, you will be required to record detailed descriptions regarding your professional program management experience in the Program Management Experience Summaries. Your responses will be reviewed by certified program managers who will assess, according to your responses, if you have, under limited supervision, been responsible for the coordinated management of multiple, related components projects, directed towards a common organizational objective with benefits realized.

As of March 2024, the Experience Summary prompts applicants must answer have changed. Applicants will respond to prompts based on **their experience** with Program Strategy, Program Governance, and Program Leadership.

Responses to each prompt should contain details that describe the program-level specifics of your experience as a Program Manager. This includes details such as names of projects, objectives, stakeholder groups, barriers, expectations, criteria, risks, and escalations. Successful responses include details of specific methods and strategies used as well as quantified goals and results for the program.

Your response should help the reviewers clearly see the specifics of how you used program-level management skills applied to the program that you identified.

Tips for Completing the Experience Summaries

- Answers should be clear and concise and should use proper English.
- Use a word processing application to write/type out your responses and then copy and paste your experience summaries into your application.
- Be sure to address all elements of the option you select for each experience summary. For example, if the Experience Summary Option requires you to describe how you identified and evaluated risks, be sure to **give examples** of how **you identified AND evaluated** the risks.
- Responses that adequately address all elements of the experience summaries will likely be 350+ words. The maximum allowance is 700 words.
- Program background information provided in the work experience section of your application will be provided to reviewers. You do not need to repeat the program description in your responses.
- Respond in the first person. We are interested in examples of **your** personal and individual contribution to the program.

Correct: I developed (or led the development of) the program governance model by...

Incorrect: The program team/We developed the program governance model by...

- Do not describe program management activities performed by others.

Correct: I ensured the program maintained alignment with the organization's objectives by...

Incorrect: The program sponsor ensured the program maintained alignment with the organization's objectives by...

- Describe how **you applied** program management practices; avoid theoretical responses.
- Do not respond with "textbook" definitions of program management terms. Instead, **provide specific examples from your personal experience** as a program manager. While not every sentence in your response will contain specific details and metrics, your response must include specific examples.

Examples of acceptable and lacking sufficient detail statements, as guidance, are as follows:

Example 1

Detailed example: *To increase the number of customers to at least 6% in a year, I targeted 750 new retail customers and 1500 upgrades every month.*

Lacks sufficient details: *I evaluated the data, prioritized by risk to the customer, risk to the organization, and cost.*

Example 2

Detailed example: *I recommended to the Sponsoring committee to waive the installation charges of the Copper Network to pull more customers into the Fiber Network.*

Lacks sufficient details: *I developed clear expectations that began with understanding requirements and managing expectations.*

Example 3

Detailed example: *Field Quality inspections were made for 30% of the customers; at least 250 field inspections per month were accomplished and the corresponding reports were presented to the Governance board.*

Lacks sufficient details: *Analysis was presented to applicable stakeholders and the consensus was built among all for establishing a path forward.*

Re-read your responses before submission to ensure that they are correct and complete. For each prompt you answered ask yourself:

- Does your response answer the entire question?
- Did you provide specific examples demonstrating the work you did as a Program Manager?
- Does your response sound like a project manager who oversaw multiple projects instead of a program manager?
- Did you focus only on the tools and techniques and omit your rationale and strategy behind your response?
- Was your response tactical or textbook in nature, omitting key information on what you did as a Program Manager?

Your answers should be unique to you – nobody else should write your responses, as this goes against PMI Ethics.

Once you submit your application and pay for your exam, your application will go automatically into Evaluation 1 – Panel Review. If the reviewers find your Summary Experience Prompts unsatisfactory, you will receive an email with the reasons for the failure and you will have one opportunity to amend your statements, based on the feedback. Upon resubmission, panelists will review again. If you pass the review based on your amended statements, you will be eligible to take the exam. If you fail the panel review for the second time, your application will be closed, and you will be refunded the exam fee.

Details on Evaluation 1—Panel Review

The panel review process begins once the audit is completed (if your application is selected) and the certification payment is received.

A panel of volunteer PgMP-certified program managers will assess your professional experience based on your responses to the Program Management Experience Summaries on the PgMP application.

This review panel consists of individuals from around the world who, through an application process, have been identified as subject matter experts in program management and have been trained and calibrated to assess your answers to the Program Management Experience Summaries. To protect against any potential review bias, PMI will ensure that your identity will not be known to the panel reviewers.

The review will verify that you, under very limited supervision, have been responsible for the coordinated management of multiple, related component projects and directed toward a common organizational objective.

If you fail the panel review, you will receive an email with guidance on how to amend your application and resubmit. It is not possible to continue to the examination without passing this review.

Once you pass the panel review, you will be eligible to take the examination.

This process takes approximately 60 days to complete.

Details on Evaluation 2—Examination

The PgMP examination consists of 170 multiple-choice questions. Of the 170 questions, 20 are considered pretest questions. Pretest questions do not affect the score but are used in examinations as an effective and legitimate way to test the validity of future examination questions. All questions are randomly placed throughout the examination.

No. of Scored Questions	No. of Pretest (Unscored) Questions	Total Examination Questions
150	20	170

Center-based testing (CBT) is the standard method of administration for PMI

examinations. The allotted time to complete the center-based examination is four hours.

Allotted Examination Time
240 Minutes

It may take some candidates less than the allotted four hours to complete the examination.

There are **no scheduled breaks** during the exam although you are allowed to take a break if needed. If you take a break during the exam, your exam clock continues to count down.

The examination is **preceded by a tutorial and followed by a survey**, both of which are optional and both of which can take up to 15 minutes to complete. The time used to complete the tutorial and survey is not included in the examination time of four hours.

Item Development

PgMP examination questions:

- are developed and independently validated by global groups of program management content experts.
- are referenced to current program and project management titles, which include but are not limited to PMI’s global standards.
- are monitored through psychometric analysis; and
- satisfy the test specifications of the *PgMP Examination Content Outline*.

Examination Blueprint

The PgMP examination is developed based on the PgMP examination blueprint contained in the *PgMP Examination Content Outline*. The examination blueprint details the percentage of questions contained in each performance domain. The following represents the percentage of questions in each of the five performance domains that are included in the examination.

PgMP Exam Blueprint	
Domain/Sub-domain	Percentage of Questions
Domain 1--Strategic Program Management	15%
Domain 2--Program Life Cycle	44%
Domain 3--Benefits Management	11%
Domain 4--Stakeholder Management	16%
Domain 5--Governance	14%
TOTAL	100%

NOTE: The PgMP examination is administered in English only. Language aids for the PgMP examination are not currently available.

Examination Eligibility

Once you pass Evaluation 1—the panel review of your application, you will be eligible to take the examination. PMI will send you an email notification with your PMI eligibility ID, which you will utilize for scheduling a test appointment.

NOTE: If your application was selected for audit, your eligibility period begins the day you successfully completed the audit.

The **exam eligibility period** (the period of time during which you are able to test) **is one year**. You may take the examination up to three times within this one-year eligibility period should you not pass on the first attempt.

PMI cannot guarantee seating at the testing centers and recommends that you schedule the examination as soon as you select a date on which you want to take it and at least three months before the expiration of your eligibility period.

NOTE: You must retain the unique PMI Eligibility ID located on your scheduling notification. This code will be required to register for the examination.

Please save all examination scheduling verifications and correspondence received for your records.

Additional Information

For information regarding Application Payment, Testing Accommodations, Scheduling/Rescheduling your Exam, PMI Audit, PMI Security and Ethics Policy, Re-examination, the CCR (Continuing Certification Requirements), or any general questions regarding PMI policy and certification, please see the [PMI Certification Handbook](#).