Frequently Asked Questions

(September 21, 2023)

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What is PMI?

PMI = Project Management Institute.

The leading not-for-profit professional membership association for the Project Management profession. PMI offers globally-accepted certifications. It was founded in 1969, consists of 652,000+ members across 213 countries, and is based in the United States.

[Source: PMI About Us https://www.pmi.org/about; PMI Annual Report 2020 https://www.pmi.org/pmi-annual-report-2020/]

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What is a project?

It is a temporary endeavor that has a unique output (i.e., product, service, or result).

[Source: PMBOK Guide, 7th Edition]

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What is project management?

Project management is the use of specific knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to deliver something of value to people.

[Source: What is Project Management? https://www.pmi.org/about/learn-about-pmi/what-is-project-management]

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What is Project Management Professional (PMP)?

Project Management Professional (PMP) is the world's leading project management certification. It covers everything needed to prove your knowledge and skill in managing time, cost and scope for predictive, agile and hybrid project management approaches.

[Source: Project Management Professional (PMP) https://www.pmi.org/certifications/project-management-pmp]

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What is the *basic* application process to earn the PMP?

1. Meet eligibility requirements.
2. Obtain 35 hours of project management training.
3. Fill out the certification application (to include your education level, where you obtained your training, and summaries of your project management experiences project-by-project).
4. Schedule the exam.
5. Study.
6. Pass the exam.

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What is the *detailed* application process to earn the PMP?

1. Review the Project Management Institute (PMI) PMP web page (https://www.pmi.org/certifications/types/project-management-pmp). The site provides an overview of what the PMP certification is, why the certification is important, and requirements to get the certification.

2. Determine your eligibility to apply for a PMP certification:

    a. If you have a high school diploma or a 2-year college degree you need 60-months experience leading projects.
    b. If you have a 4-year college degree you need 36-months experience leading projects.

    c. If you have a Bachelor's or post-graduate degree from a GAC accredited program, you need 24-months experience leading projects. You can look up your educational institution at https://www.pmi.org/global-accreditation-center to see if your school and degree program qualifies.

    In all three cases listed above, your months of experience must be from the last eight years. If you don't have the education or months of experience at this point, I recommend focusing on obtaining them before moving forward.

3. Collect and record your experience leading projects. Part of the application process will be to record that experience in detail. You don't need to have this step complete before moving down the list, but you do need to have it done before making your application for the PMP certification. I can help you out with templates and examples.

4. Consider joining PMI. The cost of membership is $139. The cost of the PMP exam is $405 for PMI members, or $555 for non-PMI members. If you join PMI and take the exam, you'll pay $544, vice paying $555 as a non-member. Aside from the small financial savings there are plenty of resource and networking benefits, too.

5. Review two PMI resources.

a. The PMP Examination Content Outline (January 2021). It provides details about the exam itself: what to expect, what is included and how it is structured. (https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/pmp-examination-content-outline.pdf)

b. The PMI Certifications Handbook (December 2020). It focuses on requirements, the application process, and general timeline. (https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/project-management-professional-handbook.pdf)

6. Obtain 35 contact hours of formal education. This is not summarily satisfied by having a college degree. This means that the education must be a minimum of 35 hours long, must be measured in "hours of instruction", must be formal training (i.e. not a YouTube video) and must be focused on Project Management. The Exam Content Outline states "One hour of classroom instruction equals one contact hour. If you have completed a university or college course on project management that met for three hours per week for 15 weeks, you would record 45 contact hours. If only a portion of a course dealt with project management, only the hours spent on project management can be applied toward the total."

   As a Veteran you can make use of the FREE Onward to Opportunity (O2O) program

   (https://ivmf.syracuse.edu/programs/career-training/o2o-admission/). If for whatever reason O2O isn't an option you don't pursue, I can provide options for commercial training solutions.

7. Study the material from the most recent edition of the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK). I strongly recommend you consider also obtaining a copy of one of the many exam preparation resources out there. The reason being that while the PMBOK is a collection of knowledge and processes, it is not necessarily reader friendly. Reading the PMBOK is like

   reading an encyclopedia—you can read it and learn facts, but it doesn't give enough context to help with overall understanding. An exam preparation resource can greatly help you to learn the material contained within the PMBOK. There are plenty of good (and bad) resources out there that will work for your individual learning style.

8. Go to the PMI site and complete your application to obtain your PMP certification. Once you've received word that your application was approved (or if you've received one of the random audits, once you've completed you audit) you will have one-year in which to schedule and pass your exam. You may take the exam up to three times in that year. If you fail the examination three times within your one-year eligibility period, you must wait one year from the date of the last examination you took to reapply for the certification.

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What PMP preparation options are available to me as an Active Duty service member or a Veteran?

1. Option #1

   If you're on active duty and approaching your EAOS in the next year or so then I recommend you consider Onward to Opportunity (O2O). O2O is my first recommendation because the program is free, and when you successfully complete their training they'll pay for one exam. When you're within 9 months of your EAOS you can sign up for their program, and when you're within

   6 months of your EAOS you can actively participate. I have personally participated in the O2O program to obtain my PMP certification, and I routinely support them in educating active duty, veterans, National Guard, reservists, and military spouses about the path to and about the value of a project management certification. You can check out the O2O program at https://ivmf.syracuse.edu/programs/career-training/o2o-locations/hampton-roads/.

2. Option #2

   If you want to get PMP training well before you approach your EOAS, then I can recommend some commercial training providers.

   - The first commercial training provider is International Institute for Learning (IIL). You can check them out at https://www.iil.com/. IIL is a training partner with PMI Hampton Roads.
   - The second commercial training provider is Blue Summit Consulting Group. You can check them out at https://www.bluesummitcg.com/. Blue Summit is another training partner with PMI Hampton Roads.
   - The third commercial training provider is Project Management Academy. You can check them out at https://projectmanagementacademy.net/pmp-certification. PMIHR is not affiliated with them in any way, but they have a track record of providing quality training.

   If you're going to pay for the training from authorized training providers who specialize in PMP training, then I recommend that these businesses be three of the places you look at to see if any of them is a good resource for you. If you choose to go this route, don't forget to look into using your military education benefits to pay for it.

3. Option #3

   If you're looking for a broader list of PMI Authorized Training Partners (ATPs), go to https://www.pmi.org/learning/training-development/authorized-training-partners/find. Use the check boxes and the up/down arrows next to each criteria selection on the left to filter for what you're looking for. I recommend the following search criteria:

   - Location > North America > United States > VA > Norfolk.
   - Adjust the date slider just below the locations to identify course offerings that align with your calendar.
   - Specialty > PMP Exam Prep.
   - Language > English.

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Are there any PMP study groups to help with my learning?

PMIHR currently offers weekly study sessions in a virtual format. Since the group schedule and delivery format (e.g., Teams, Zoom, etc.) is based on the volunteers who facilitate the group, please reach out to PMIHR's Vice President of Education at vpeducation@pmihr.org to get the most up to date long-on information and schedule.

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Do my 35 contact hours expire?

No, the 35 contact hours do not expire.

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Can I obtain my 35 contact hours from college classes?

Yes. One hour of classroom instruction equals one contact hour. If you have completed a university or college course on project management that met for three hours per week for 15 weeks, you would record 45 contact hours. If only a portion of a course dealt with project management, only the hours spent on project management can be applied toward the total.

[Source: PMP Examination Content Outline https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/pmp-examination-content-outline.pdf]

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Is it necessary to become a PMI member before signing up for the PMP Examination?

No. However, the exam costs more for non-members. PMP exam cost is $405 for PMI members, or $555 for non-PMI members. First year membership fee is $139, and yearly renewal fee is $129.

[Source: PMI Certifications Handbook https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/project-management-professional-handbook.pdf]

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What are the benefits of PMI Membership?

Discounted exam fee, discounted certification renewal fees, a free copy of the PMBOK, discounted resources, networking opportunities, and free PDU resources.

[Source: Become a Member https://www.pmi.org/membership/join]

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Does my project experience on the application have to be from paid work?

No.

[Source: PMP Examination Content Outline https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/pmp-examination-content-outline.pdf]

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Does my project experience on the application have to be from a professional setting?

Yes, however school projects or personal events do not qualify.

[Source: PMP Examination Content Outline https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/pmp-examination-content-outline.pdf]

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Do I list my project experiences on the application all together over a period of time, or individually?

Individually.

[Source: PMP Examination Content Outline https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/pmp-examination-content-outline.pdf]

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Can I list more than one project per month on my PMP application?

While you can list more than one project per month, *only one project will be counted per month*.

[Source: PMP Examination Content Outline https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/pmp-examination-content-outline.pdf]

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What is the percentage of PMP certification applications that get audited by the PMI?

Roughly 10% of all applications receive a random audit.

[Source: PMI Certifications Handbook https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/project-management-professional-handbook.pdf]

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What do I need to provide if my application is selected for an audit?

- Copies of your diploma/global equivalent
- Signatures from your supervisor(s) or manager(s) from the project(s) recorded in the experience verification section of the application
- Copies of certificates and/or letters from the training institute(s) for each course recorded on the application to meet the required contact hours of professional education

[Source: PMI Certifications Handbook https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/project-management-professional-handbook.pdf]

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How long should an audit take?

5-7 business days.

[Source: PMI Certifications Handbook https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/project-management-professional-handbook.pdf]

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How can I avoid a PMI audit for the PMP certification?

Ensure your application is filled out correctly, and that you have supervisor information for all your project experiences

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What will happen if I fail in an audit of my application?

- If you fail due to an administrative issue that is not your fault, you can reapply once the issue is resolved.
- If you receive an audit and chose to no go through with it, you must wait one year before you can reapply.
- If you fail an audit due to false information, you will be banned for life.

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When should I schedule my exam?

Give yourself time to study all the material. Don't necessarily complete your required hours of certification training and then schedule the test for the next day. Critically assess your personal learning style and allot time to master the materials.

Develop a routine that includes "full" practice exams. Practice with no breaks…condition yourself for the marathon of the full exam over several hours, not just the sprint of a smaller practice exam for a shorter time (e.g., 30 minutes to an hour). A 4 hour PMP exam can be mentally and physically demanding. I recommend that you develop the 'mental muscle' required to perform your best.

Plan for "life" events. Build in routine time off in your calendar for your mental wellbeing, and build in time off for "life" events (e.g., pending birth of a child, planned move to a new house, wedding, etc.). Only you can decide what warrants budgeting time in to your study schedule. "Plan for the worst, hope for the best."

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Can I reschedule or cancel my PMP certification exam appointment?

Yes. You can reschedule or cancel your online proctored exam or center-based exam at any time, up to 48 hours before your scheduled exam appointment. However, because of limited seating capacity (both physical and virtual), late rescheduling and cancellations will result in a fee. It is recommended that you reschedule or cancel your exam as soon as you know you won't be able to make the appointment.

[Source: PMI Certifications Handbook https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/project-management-professional-handbook.pdf]

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Do I have to pay extra money to reschedule or cancel my PMP certification exam appointment?

- Prior to 30 days of your exam: no fee.
- 30 days prior to 48 hours prior: $70.
- Within 48 hours: entire exam fee.

[Source: PMI Certifications Handbook https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/project-management-professional-handbook.pdf]

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What is the PMP Exam Fee Refund Policy of PMI?

You may request a refund within 30 days from the date of purchase provided you do not schedule and take the certification exam within that timeframe. After the refund is processed, the application will be closed, and the eligibility period will no longer be valid. If a scheduled exam is canceled and rescheduled outside of 30 days from the date of purchase, up to 48 hours prior to the scheduled testing date, there is a rescheduling fee applied. Within 48 hours of the scheduled testing date, all fees and the ability to reschedule are forfeit.

[Source: PMI Certifications Handbook https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/project-management-professional-handbook.pdf]

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What is the PMBOK?

PMBOK = Project Management Body of Knowledge. It is a community-based collection of processes, best practices, terms, and guidelines. Reflects the full range of development approaches. Focuses on project outcomes in addition to deliverables.

[Source: PMBOK https://www.pmi.org/pmbok-guide-standards/foundational/pmbok]

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Can I download the PMBOK Guide in PDF format free of cost after joining PMI?

Yes.

[Source: PMBOK https://www.pmi.org/pmbok-guide-standards/foundational/pmbok]

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Is the PMBOK Guide Enough to Pass the PMP Certification Exam?

No. While the PMBOK will give you the "lion's share" of required information, the PMP exam is not written according to any single text or singularly supported by any particular reference. This is because the certification is reflective of the variety of Project Management approaches used today. Exam questions were written and reviewed by subject matter experts holding PMP cert. Questions are tracked to at least two references. Questions focus on your ability to evaluate a scenario and make the best decision based on your comprehensive knowledge.

You'll find the structure of the questions is mapped out in the PMP Examination Content Outline. Here you'll find the domains for the scenarios on which you'll be tested. You can anticipate that about half of the examination will represent predictive Project Management approaches and the other half will represent agile or hybrid approaches. You can go to PMI's website for the list of references.

[Source: PMP Exam Reference List https://www.pmi.org/certifications/project-management-pmp/earn-the-pmp/pmp-exam-preparation/pmp-reference-list]

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How did the release of the PMBOK 7th edition impact the PMP exam?

The PMBOK 6th edition came out in September 2017. The most recent PMP exam came out in January 2021. The PMBOK 7th edition came out in August 2021.

PMI used the PMBOK 6th edition as one of several references for the new PMP exam. The exam had been planned for some time and was not related to the release of the PMBOK 7th edition.

PMI updates exam items throughout the year as part of their continuous improvement and examination maintenance process. Once the PMBOK 7th edition was released, it replaced the PMBOK 6th edition as a reference to validate test content.

The take away for you is that while the test was written based on the PMBOK 6th edition, test questions have been updated as appropriate to reflect the new content of the PMBOK 7th edition.

[Source: PMP Exam Reference List Updated January 2021 https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/pmbok-standards/pmbok-guide-public-faqs-30-oct-2020.pdf, Questions #5 & 6]

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What is the format of the PMP examination?

Questions can be multiple-choice, matching columns (drag and drop), hot spot, and limited fill in the blank.

Roughly half the questions will be about Agile (i.e. iterative project management) and hybrid approaches.

The test covers three domains:

1. Processes (50%)
2. People (42%)
3. Business Environment (8%).

Within each domain there is emphasis on tasks and enablers.

- A task is an underlying responsibility the PM may have within the domain.
- An enabler is work associated with a task.

[Source: PMP Examination Content Outline https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/pmp-examination-content-outline.pdf]

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What is the passing score for the PMP examination?

PMI does not specify how many questions must be answered correctly to pass the exam. Results show the level for each domain:

- Above Target
- (at) Target
- Below Target
- Needs Improvement.

You must attain an overall Above Target or (at) Target for the exam.

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How much time is allotted for PMP certification exam?

15 minutes for test software familiarization, and 230 minutes for the test. The 15 minutes don't count towards your 230 minutes of test time.

[Source: PMP Examination Content Outline https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/pmp-examination-content-outline.pdf]

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Can I take break during my PMP certification exam?

Yes. The test is 230 minutes with two student-managed 10-minute breaks.

[Source: PMP Examination Content Outline https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/pmp-examination-content-outline.pdf]

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Can I Use a Calculator During My PMP Certification Exam?

You may not bring in a calculator (but one is built in to the test).

[Source: PMI Certifications Handbook https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/project-management-professional-handbook.pdf]

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Can I Complete My PMP Certification Exam Before Four Hours?

Yes.

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What if I fail in my first attempt for the PMP certification exam?

You can take the exam up to three times within one year of your application approval.

[Source: PMI Certifications Handbook https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/project-management-professional-handbook.pdf]

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When Will I Know the Test Result of My PMP Certification Exam?

PMI introduced enhanced data forensics on September 25, 2023. At the end of the exam, candidates will be notified that their responses have been sent to PMI, and they will get an email from PMI with exam results within five (5) business days[1]. You can also access your exam report on the online certification system no later than 10 business days after your examination date. You will receive an email notifying you when your exam report is available online[2].

[Source[1]: FAQs On Enhanced Exam Security for Project Management Professional (PMP) Exam https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/pmi-faq-security-enhancements-partners.pdf]
[Source[2]: PMI Certifications Handbook https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/project-management-professional-handbook.pdf]

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What happens in the event that PMI determines test-taker misconduct?

PMI introduced enhanced data forensics on September 25, 2023. If misconduct is found, the exam is considered a security failure. The candidate will receive an email notification that their score has been canceled and will not be provided.

[Source: FAQs On Enhanced Exam Security for Project Management Professional (PMP) Exam https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/pmi-faq-security-enhancements-partners.pdf]

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If I have a "security-based failure" on the exam can I retake the test?

PMI introduced enhanced data forensics on September 25, 2023. Candidates who receive a security failure can only retake the exam in person (CBT) and at their own cost. Security failures will count towards the candidate's three PMP exam attempts allowed in a single eligibility period.

[Source: FAQs On Enhanced Exam Security for Project Management Professional (PMP) Exam https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/pmi-faq-security-enhancements-partners.pdf]

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If I have a "security-based failure" who is this communicated to?

PMI introduced enhanced data forensics on September 25, 2023. All scoring matters are confidential and will be shared directly with the affected parties. PMI will not publish a list of affected candidates or share exam data with third parties.

[Source: FAQs On Enhanced Exam Security for Project Management Professional (PMP) Exam https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/pmi-faq-security-enhancements-partners.pdf]

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If I have a "security-based failure" may I retake the exam online?

To safeguard the integrity of the exam, candidates who receive an exam security failure will not be permitted to take the PMP online and must retake the test in person. This ensures that additional security protocols can be followed and that all candidates are taking the exam for themselves and are not leveraging proxy testing services.

[Source: FAQs On Enhanced Exam Security for Project Management Professional (PMP) Exam https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/pmi-faq-security-enhancements-partners.pdf]

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If I have a "security-based failure" what financial considerations are there?

PMI is not currently offering any grants or special discounts to candidates who received an exam security failure and wish for a reexamination. Due to accreditation rules centered on principles of fairness, we treat candidates with a security failure the same way as we do those who failed the exam by not scoring sufficient points, except for restricting the modality they are allowed to use for retesting.

[Source: FAQs On Enhanced Exam Security for Project Management Professional (PMP) Exam https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/pmi-faq-security-enhancements-partners.pdf]

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Will PMI members (either chapter or global) be in jeopardy of losing their membership if flagged for exam misconduct?

Unfortunately, some candidates whose scores have been canceled and are in exam security failure may be members of PMI and/or PMI chapters. We don't currently have plans to revoke membership for affected parties. However, PMI reserves the right to take additional action against misconduct, up to and including revocation of membership for individuals who breach our ethics and professional conduct agreements.

[Source: FAQs On Enhanced Exam Security for Project Management Professional (PMP) Exam https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/pmi-faq-security-enhancements-partners.pdf]

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Is There Any Penalty for Selecting Wrong Answer in the PMP Certification Exam?

No.

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How Much Time Should I Spend Studying for My PMP Certification Exam Preparation?

Work on sample questions/exams until you can answer at least 85 percent of them correctly.

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What is a PDU?

PDU = Professional Development Unit. 1-hour block of time spent learning, teaching, or volunteering.

[Source: What are PDUs? https://www.pmi.org/certifications/certification-resources/maintain/pdu]

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What is the significance of a PDU?

You must earn 60 PDUs in three years to renew your PMP certification. Failure to do so means your certification expires.

[Source: How Many PDUs Do I Need to Maintain My Certification? https://www.pmi.org/certifications/certification-resources/maintain/requirements]

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What is PMIs Talent Triangle?

PMI's "Talent Triangle" encompasses the ideal sets of skills project professionals must develop and hone to be successful and work smarter in the today's evolving world of project management. The Talent Triangle is made up of three categories:

- Ways of Working (formerly Technical Project Management)
- Power Skills (formerly Leadership)
- Business Acumen (formerly Strategic and Business Management)

[Source: PMI Talent Triangle Update https://www.pmi.org/certifications/certification-resources/maintain/pmi-talent-triangle-update]

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How do PDUs relate to PMI's Talent Triangle?

PDUs ensure you get exposure to the skillsets that make up PMI's "Talent Triangle"

[Source: PMI Talent Triangle Update https://www.pmi.org/certifications/certification-resources/maintain/pmi-talent-triangle-update]

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Can You Explain the PDU Categories for PMPs?

PDUs are broken into two categories — Education and Giving Back to the Profession.

Education includes taking courses or receiving training, joining in global events, attending local meetings, participating in online or digital media, reading, and informal learning.

Giving back includes working as a practitioner of project management, creating content such as articles, blogs, or videos, giving presentations, sharing knowledge, volunteering.

[Source: How Many PDUs Do I Need to Maintain My Certification? https://www.pmi.org/certifications/certification-resources/maintain/requirements]

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How long is the PMP certification good for?

The PMP certification is good for three years. At the end of these three years, certified holders will have to renew their credentials to benefit from this certification.

If you do not meet the requirements for renewal, then your certification will be in suspension status. Suspension status lasts for one year or until the certification holder can fulfill the renewal requirements or earn the PDUs they lacked. You cannot act as a PMP certification holder during the suspension period or use the PMP designation.

If you still have not met the requirements for renewal at the end of the one-year suspension period, you will enter expired status. To reinstate your PMP certification from expired status, you will have to reapply by completing a new application, submitting the associated fees and retaking the examination, as mentioned in PMI's CCR Handbook.

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Do I have to retake the exam to renew my PMP certification?

No, if you have earned the required 60 PDUs and maintained your certification current. If your certification expires, then you'll have to retake the exam to re-earn your certification.

[Source: How Do I Renew My Certification? https://www.pmi.org/certifications/certification-resources/maintain/renew]

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Do I need to join a PMI chapter?

No.

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Do I need to join PMI before I join a chapter?

Yes. You most first join PMI (Global) before you can be a member of any of the local chapters, including PMI Hampton Roads. This is a rule set by PMI and part of our By-Laws as a chapter. However, once you join PMI global and BEFORE you join the local chapter, please let us know and we can offer you a complimentary year membership with the PMI Hampton Roads Chapter.

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Are there discounts to join a chapter?

Yes. PMI's Chapter Guest Pass program allows PMI members who have not yet joined their local chapter to try out chapter membership for free. Global Headquarters provides unique promo codes to chapter leadership at the end of the year, which the chapter distributes to potential chapter members to cover the cost of chapter membership. The Chapter Guest Pass is valid for one-time use from the point of initiation through the end of the member's current PMI membership cycle.

[Source: Chapter Guest Pass Program https://www.pmi.org/chapter-guest-pass-program]

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