

PMP ASAP!

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If you have considered getting PMP-certified but have been putting it off, the time to act is now. The clock is ticking down the final moments for the old exam based on the PMBOK 2000 Edition, and PMI has just announced some significant changes to the application and testing process that will make these certifications harder to get after September 30 of this year.

Probably the most radical change PMI has made to the certification program is to raise the passing score for the PMP exam from 69% (137 out of 200) to 82% (143 of 175). You will still take a 200-question exam, but 25 questions are included as “pre-test” questions. These will not be included in the pass/fail determination, but will provide data to PMI necessary to understand the efficacy of the questions before they are included on a real exam.



The new exam will be based on the PMBOK Third Edition published late last year, so the 200 exam questions will cover more tools and techniques that reflect the wealth of new information in the new edition. The percentages of questions from each process area will change to place more importance on initiation activities. Fewer questions in the Professional Responsibility category will come from the PMP Code of Professional Conduct. These were some of the easiest questions on the exam, so this reduction will mean more questions in the process areas that may make the exam more difficult overall.

The application process will involve a new and improved online application form, collection of contact information for past projects, instant notification if you get selected for audit, and a more stringent review by PMI to verify the experience and education of applicants. This may mean more waiting time between application submission and the approval letter required to schedule your exam appointment.

August 29 is the final day to submit your application to take the existing exam. You must test by September 24. Anyone failing the exam at that time will have one year to retake and pass the exam in the old format. All others taking the exam for the first time after September 30 will experience the new test.

As project managers, we always have other things to do. Existing projects can't be abandoned, new projects have to get started and critical issues requiring your attention happen everywhere in between. Manage your certification like any other project. Plan the work, work the plan and finish before September 24. Find a PMP prep course, form a study group and just get it done. You – and your organization - will be glad you did.

Follow a simple T-minus countdown plan to get you there before the new test is implemented.

Start	Activity	Tips
T-60d	Select an exam date	Stick to it – there will always be something more exciting to do
T-60d	Decide on a study method and schedule time away from work to study	Consider your learning style, test experience and content knowledge
T-30d	Submit PMP or CAPM Application online	www.pmi.org – don't do paper – it's a pain and takes longer for PMI to review

T-30d	Register for a prep class, buy books or join study group	Ask PMPs for advice
T-30d	Begin preparing for the exam	Plan to spend 40hrs minimum preparing for the exam
T-14d	Schedule exam appointment	www.2test.com
T-3	Take final practice test to assess preparedness	Use % coverage by process area to make decisions
T-0	Pass the PMP or CAPM exam	If you don't pass, don't give up. \$400 retest fee and a new study method can work

To choose the right study method for you, consider your personal learning style. If you have at least three of the following characteristics, then you probably need someone to push you toward the finish line:

- q Test anxiety
- q You're an "old dog" who needs to learn new tricks (PMBOK tricks, specifically)
- q Little to no formal, PMBOK-aligned, project management training
- q PMBOK methods not in use in your organization
- q Don't retain written material well
- q Procrastinator
- q Not a good test-taker
- q The needs of your projects will always take precedence over your personal development

Sign up for a PMP prep course or join a disciplined study group. It will cost you, but it's worth it to have someone who knows the test guide and support you, as well as provide motivation when you need it most.

If you have most of the following characteristics, then you might be able to go it alone with the purchase of a good study guide:

- q Successful experiences with computerized testing
- q Lots of formal, PMBOK-aligned, project management training
- q PMBOK methods in use in your organization
- q Retain written materials well
- q Good at sticking to a study schedule
- q Good test-taker

There are many paths to PMP – just get organized and get going!

To apply for PMP or CAPM certification online, visit <https://certificationapp.pmi.org/>. For a copy of this article and your own Certification Preparation Checklist designed to help you organize your study efforts and test before September 24, go to www.praxisln.com.