PASS ON THE FIRST TRY (PMP® & CAPM®)

PMBOK® Guide 6th Edition

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Preparing for the PMP® or CAPM® exam can be a grueling experience, which is why it is important to pass on your first attempt. Our team passed both exams on the first try, and we get feedback from lots of others who do, too. These are, from our perspective, the most effective study tips.

TIP #1: PICK A SPECIFIC DATE TO TAKE THE EXAM

Deadlines motivate us to work harder and finish sooner!

- Select a specific exam date on the calendar using the guide below.
- Then, share that date with a friend. This helps with accountability!
- If your date is too far in the future, you will lose focus and drive.

Pick an exam date based on the amount of time you can study each day:

- ➤ 120 mins/day = study for 30 days
- ➤ 60 mins/day = study for 60 days
- ➤ 40 mins/day = study for 90 days

TIP #2: BUILD A DAILY STUDY HABIT

Consistent study is key. Cramming will NOT work!

- It's like exercising – you build muscles by lifting on a regular basis.
- So, study at the same time each day. Don't let anything interfere!
- Consult with your family about the best time. You need their support!
- Avoid distractions. Turn off other music/TV and exit other apps.
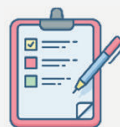
TIP #3: OBTAIN THE RIGHT STUDY TOOLS

Videos

Invest in a training course that offers the needed "contact hours." Then, watch videos each day.

Cheat Sheets

Take them everywhere and study whenever you have a free minute. We have some of these in our free *Prep Pack*.

Practice Tests

Take several full-length practice tests, and review your missed questions. There is one in our free *Prep Pack*.

Each day, after reviewing underline new material, refresh on underline previously-studied material.

TIP #4: PRACTICE LOTS OF QUESTIONS

Without question, this is the most important tip!

- You need to practice lots and lots of questions to be prepared.
- **Here are few things to remember as you go through questions:**

Practice 30-40 questions each day.

- Build this into your daily study routine!
- After a couple weeks, you will be surprised at how far you've come.

Understand why you missed a question.

- Simply practicing questions is not enough.
- If you miss a question, you have to know why!
- You want to avoid the mistake in the future.

Utilize questions from a variety of training providers.

- No training company has access to the actual PMI testing banks.
- And no one practice test is a perfect representation of the actual exam.
- So it's important to use practice tests from a variety of sources.
- (We should diversify questions – like we diversify our financial portfolio.)

Complete several full practice tests in a simulated environment.

- This is extremely important.
- You have to simulate the actual exam experience.
- This will help you build stamina. (200 questions is a lot!)
- We recommend using an online exam simulator. (A good investment!)
- (We provide our students with access to a simulator in our courses.)

Learn the best way to read an exam question.

- First, read the last sentence of the question.
- Second, read the answers. (Some might note even make sense!)
- Third, skim the whole question and the answers.
- (This pattern helps you focus on the question itself and not the "fluff"!)

Understand common question types and formats.

- Most exam takers say that lots of questions on the exam are situational.
- For example, based on a given situation, what should a PM do?
- Or, based on another scenario, what document should a PM reference?

Consider these other tips for answering questions:

- Always try to eliminate the 1 or 2 answers that don't make sense.
- Remember to answer with the *best practice* rather than *common practice*.
- On the exam, you can "mark" questions and return to them later.

TIP #5: MASTER THE PROCESSES & ITTOs

There are 49 processes. Each has inputs, tools, techniques, outputs (ITTOs).

- The processes and ITTOs are the "recipes" of project management.
- It's *what we do*... and *what we need* to do them!
- We need to know these well in order to succeed on the exam.

However, note that this tip says "master" rather than "memorize".

- It is nearly impossible to memorize all the ITTOs.
- It is more important is to understand what happens during a process...
- And how a process is connected to other processes.
- We should understand the purpose of the ITTOs. ("Why do I need this?")

Here are our tips for mastering the ITTOs:

- **Know their purpose.** As you study, ask: "What is this? Why do I need it?"
- **Write them down.** Writing often helps us learn and remember.
- **Master 2 processes a day.** This gives you time to absorb the ITTOs.
- **Understand the ITTO patterns.** *Those patterns are listed below.*

Here are the ITTO patterns, which are referenced above:

- Outputs of one process often become inputs to later processes.
- Inputs/outputs are often documents. Tools/techniques are often actions.
- The *Project Management Plan* is an input to nearly every process.
- *Org. Process Assets* and *Enterprise Env. Factors* are inputs to most processes.
- *Expert Judgment*, *Data Analysis*, and *Meetings* are tools on many processes.
- *Project Documents Updates* and *PMP Updates* are outputs of many processes.
- Anything that includes "updates" will always be an output (not an input).
- Anything that includes "system" will always be a tool (not an input/output).
- Plans (e.g. *Risk Mgmt. Plan*) are almost always an output of "Plan ..." processes.
- *Work Perf. Data* is an input on monitoring processes. Except in integration.
- *Changes Requests* are outputs on monitoring processes. Except in integration.
- *Work Perf. Info.* is an output on monitoring processes. Except in integration.

Here are tips to remember which process group each process belongs to:

- *Initiating* - Only two processes. (Develop Proj. Charter, Identify Stakeholders)
- *Planning* - Usually includes *plan*, *estimate*, or *define*. (Define Activities)
- *Executing* - Usually includes *manage*, *conduct*, *acquire*. (Conduct Procurements)
- *Monitor & Controlling* – Includes *monitor*, *control*, or *validate*. (Control Costs)
- *Closing* - Only one process. (Close Project or Phase)

We have lots of freebies in our free Prep Pack to help with mastery:

Process Reference   ITTO Spreadsheet   ITTO Notecards   ITTO Blank Sheets   Video Overviews

We also recommend reviewing Ricardo Vargas' process overview video.

- Many exam takers find his video extremely helpful.
- It helps you understand the processes and how they fit together.
- Here is the link to the **video** – https://bit.ly/vargas_video
- Here is the link the supporting **PDFs** – https://bit.ly/vargas_pdf

TIP #6: RELAX BEFORE AND DURING THE EXAM

Everyone is nervous before the exam. Here are ideas to calm your nerves:

Day before the exam:

- Only do a light review, if any. (Rest your brain!)
- Get some popcorn and watch a good movie. (*The Princess Bride?*)
- Go to bed early.

Day of the exam:

- Take the day off work. (Let the exam be your focus.)
- Allow plenty of time to get ready, eat, and travel. (Don't be rushed.)
- Eat light foods. (Consider salads rather than hamburgers.)
- Plan a fun activity for after the exam. (Something to look forward to!)

During the exam:

- Get comfortable. Bring a sweater in case it gets cold. Take your shoes off.
- Use the 10-minute break to go to the bathroom and stretch.
- Don't panic! Most exam takers doubt themselves in the middle.
- This is normal. Just hang in there and keep charging forward!

TIP #7: DOWNLOAD OUR FREE PREP MATERIALS

We have lots of FREE study tools:

- Exam Cheat Sheet
- Process Reference
- Practice Tests
- PM Job Tips
- Lots More!

Download at projectprep.org