

Project Manager Assessment

ASSESSMENT INSTRUCTIONS

Position: Project Manager

Start Date: Monday, July 21, 2025, 1:00 PM IST

Submission Deadline: Wednesday, July 23, 2025, 1:00 PM IST

STRICT 48-HOUR DEADLINE - NO EXTENSIONS GRANTED

Submission Requirements:

- **Format: Word document (.docx)**
- **File Name: PM_Assessment_[Your_Name]_July2025**
- **Length: 3-5 pages maximum**
- **Email to: career@purplemerit.com with subject "PM Assessment Submission - [Your Name]"**

Assessment Overview

This comprehensive assessment evaluates project management candidates through realistic dual-product scenarios involving AI-driven solutions for banking and education sectors. Candidates will demonstrate their ability to manage distributed teams across India while handling complex stakeholder requirements, resource constraints, and technical challenges.

Scenario Context

You are managing two concurrent AI products with distributed teams:

- **Banking AI Product:** Loan Default Risk Prediction Tool (Week 3 of 8)
- **Education AI Product:** Adaptive Learning Platform with personalized learning flows (just kicked off)

Your Remote Team Distribution & Availability

Role	Location	Project Assignment	Availability
Backend Developer	Bengaluru	Banking (60%), Education (40%)	Full-time
Frontend Developer	Pune	Education (80%), Banking (20%)	Part-time
AI/ML Engineer	Hyderabad	Shared across projects	Full-time
Data Analyst Intern	Bhopal	Education (60%), Banking (40%)	Part-time
UI/UX Designer	Kolkata	Education only	Part-time
QA Engineer	Ahmedabad	Banking (70%), Education (30%)	Full-time
Tech Mentor	Delhi NCR	Shared	2 hours/week
Education Advisor	Chennai	EdTech only	1 hour/week
Client Liaison	Mumbai	Banking only	M/W/F syncs

PART 1: Project Initiation & Strategic Planning

Question 1.1: Decision-Making With Limited Information: (100-150 words)

You've just been hired as PM at PurpleMerit and will start Monday morning. You receive ambiguous briefs for both AI products with high stakeholder expectations but limited clarity. You need to create a structure immediately.

What would your first 3 actions be as the new PM starting next Monday?

Question 1.2: Project Initiation Strategy: (150-200 words)

How would you clarify project objectives and define success metrics for both AI products?

Question 1.3: Documentation Framework: (200-300 words)

Which team members would you involve in requirements gathering, and how would you coordinate across different time zones and availability constraints? What initial documentation would you create in your first week?

(Consider: project charter, stakeholder register, RACI matrix, risk register)

PART 2: Methodology Selection & Planning

Question 2.1: Methodology Selection: (200-250 words)

Choose between Agile, Waterfall, Kanban, or a hybrid approach for managing both AI products simultaneously. Justify your selection considering:

- Distributed team structure across multiple cities
- Mixed availability (full-time, part-time, limited hours)
- Different project phases (Banking in Week 3, Education just starting)
- Client expectations and demo requirements

Question 2.2: Planning Structure: (250-300 words)

Structure your 5-week plan using appropriate planning tools. Address:

- Sprint planning structure for mixed-availability teams
- Daily standup coordination across time zones
- Task breakdown methodology
- User story mapping process
- Bi-weekly demo planning
- Key metrics (KPIs) you would track

PART 3: Crisis Management & Problem Solving

Crisis Scenario Setup

Midway through projects, multiple challenges emerge simultaneously:

- Your AI/ML Engineer (Hyderabad, full-time) resigns unexpectedly
- Education project client demands timeline acceleration for demo purposes.
- Banking client requests adding new fraud detection features (scope change)
- AI model integration faces unexpected technical difficulties
- Client demo scheduled for week 4 is at risk

Question 3.1: Resource Reallocation Crisis: (100-150 words)

How would you address the departure of the AI/ML engineer while managing the accelerated timeline request?

Question 3.2: Technical Blocker Management: (150-200 words)

One week in, AI/ML engineers report integration difficulties with the sentiment analysis model. The Backend Developer cannot proceed without their deliverables, and the client demo is in 3 weeks. What concrete steps would you take to address these blockers while maintaining transparency and managing project risk?

Question 3.3: Change Request Impact: (150-200 words)

When the banking client insists on adding fraud detection features not in the original scope, describe your action points. When users suggest important changes halfway through the project that could affect deadlines, describe your structured approach to:

- Change request impact analysis
- Updated timeline communication
- Backlog prioritization update
- Stakeholder communication strategy

Question 3.4: Stakeholder Conflict Resolution: (200-250 words)

New Scenario:

The Banking client (via Mumbai Client Liaison) insists on adding new fraud detection features that weren't in the original scope. Meanwhile, the Education client wants to remove the personalized learning algorithm to meet their accelerated timeline. Both changes significantly impact the shared AI/ML resources and the Backend Developer's allocation.

The Tech Mentor (2 hours/week) supports the Banking client's technical requirements, while the Education Advisor (1 hour/week) strongly opposes any feature removal. Internal stakeholders at Purple Merit are divided on priorities.

How would you handle this multi-stakeholder conflict while maintaining project momentum?

Address specifically:

- Stakeholder alignment strategy
- Resource reallocation decisions
- Communication approach with conflicting parties
- Risk mitigation for both projects
- Timeline impact management

PART 4: Team Leadership & Execution

Question 4.1: Remote Team Collaboration: (200-250 words)

How would you restore team engagement and create a collaborative remote culture across multiple cities with varying availability constraints?

Question 4.3: Performance Metrics: (200-250 words)

What KPIs would you track to gauge project health and team productivity across both products?

PART 5: Change Management

Week 4: Change Request Simulation

Challenge: Both clients request significant changes affecting timelines and resource allocation:

- Banking client wants to integrate with 3 additional data sources
- Education client requests mobile app development alongside web platform
- Your part-time Frontend Developer (Pune) requests to reduce hours further
- QA Engineer (Ahmedabad) reports critical bugs in the Banking product

Question 5.2: Comprehensive Crisis Management: (250-300 words)

Provide a structured approach to manage this complex situation while maintaining stakeholder relationships and project viability. Include your risk mitigation strategy and communication plan.

PART 6– Budgeting And Financial Management

Assessment Scenario

You are a Project Manager at Purple Merit, a fast-growing AI startup passionate about innovation, impactful technology, and fostering a transparent, collaborative remote culture. Your small, cross-functional team is tasked with developing an AI-driven HRMS feature to launch within four months.

The team includes:

- 2 AI/ML Engineers
- 1 Full Stack Developer
- 1 UI/UX Designer (part-time)
- Product Manager (mentor)

Purple Merit faces typical challenges: limited cash flow, need for prioritization, frequent scope changes, and the imperative to uphold company values such as integrity, creativity, and open communication. You have a **strict budget of ₹10 lakhs** for this project. Key costs include salaries, cloud infrastructure, third-party APIs, and minimal marketing for a beta launch.

Midway, a core engineer, requests additional paid hours due to increased complexity, and your Product Manager suggests integrating an experimental API that has a promising impact but involves unpredictable costs. Leadership emphasizes responsible budgeting aligned with Purple Merit's values.

Assessment Questions

You are responsible for managing the project budget.

Given the scenario above, address the following:

6.1. Budget Breakdown & Decision-Making: (250-300 words)

- *How would you allocate the ₹10 lakhs budget across key categories (team compensation, tools/cloud, third-party APIs, and marketing)? Present your rationale.*
- *What steps would you take to ensure the budget supports high-impact work without compromising on Purple Merit's core values of innovation, transparency, and inclusiveness?*

6.2. Handling Unforeseen Expenses: (200-250 words)

- The request for extra engineering hours and the opportunity to integrate the experimental API could exceed your budget.
 - *How would you evaluate these expenses?*
 - *What process would you follow to decide whether to approve, delay, or deny these additions?*
 - *How would you communicate your decision transparently to your team?*

6.3. Startup-Specific Financial Management: (200-250 words)

- *Identify two financial management practices especially important for startups like Purple Merit facing uncertainty and fast change.*
- *Explain how you'd implement these practices within your team to create a culture of financial discipline and creativity.*

Submission Checklist

Before submitting your assessment, ensure you:

- Answer all questions within word count guidelines
- Provide specific examples and actionable steps
- Consider the distributed team structure and availability constraints
- Address the stakeholder management and communication strategies
- Include methodology justification and planning frameworks
- Save file as: PM_Assessment_[Your_Name]_July2025.docx
- Submit before deadline: Wednesday, July 23, 2025, 1:00 PM IST

Instructions

- Support every answer with practical reasoning, referencing Purple Merit's values, startup realities, and your project management knowledge.
- Use a combination of narrative and, if helpful, a simple table for budget breakdown.
- Keep your response concise and structured for evaluation purposes

FINAL REMINDER: Submission Deadline is Wednesday, July 23, 2025, 1:00 PM IST - Exactly 48 hours from start time. Late submissions will not be considered.

Good luck! We look forward to reviewing your comprehensive project management approach.