



Practitioner Qualification (IPMA Level C)

Candidate Guidance

APM Practitioner Qualification

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Who is the APM Practitioner Qualification for?

The APM Practitioner Qualification is for individuals who want to show that they can effectively manage a non-complex project across its whole lifecycle. The APM Practitioner Qualification is appropriate for individuals who have at least 3 years' experience in responsible leadership functions of non-complex projects or have been a team member of a more complex project. Candidates wishing to take the Practitioner Qualification must also satisfy one of the following criteria for project management knowledge:

Either;

Passed the APM Project Management Qualification

Can demonstrate good familiarity with the APM Body of Knowledge and have passed an equivalent qualification such as PMP, ISEB Certificate in Project Management, Open University Project Management Module M815

Can demonstrate that they have good foundation knowledge of project management supported by evidence of relevant CPD.

Note: Approved centres will be responsible for ensuring that all candidates put forward for assessment for this qualification can demonstrate the required foundation knowledge.

What is assessed during the APM Practitioner Qualification?

The certification assesses a candidate's capability to manage a non-complex project across all aspects of the project lifecycle. The Practitioner Qualification is not designed to assess overall competence as a project manager as this is not possible out of context of the project environment. It is an assessment at a given moment in time in a specific, but generally realistic environment.

The assessment of the candidates' capabilities takes place within the boundaries of a case study and is made against 30 assessment criteria (Appendix B), with particular emphasis on the criteria written in bold.

Assessors are also looking for objective evidence of the desired behavioural characteristics of a project management professional, as defined in the *APM Body of Knowledge (Version 6)*. Although these behaviours are not scored in the same way as other criteria, if the assessors believe that a candidate displays a serious and systematic deficiency in one or more behaviours, the candidate will fail the assessment. The characteristics are:

Open, positive attitude	Inventiveness
Common sense	Prudent risk taker
Open mindedness	Fairness
Adaptability	Commitment

All the areas of the *APM Body of Knowledge (Version 6)* addressed by the case study material and assessment criteria are outlined in Appendix A.

Assessors will collect evidence of a candidate's project management capabilities through the group activities and exercises as well as through the written examination. Candidates will be observed discussing and solving problems relating to the project case study. In addition, all candidates will be interviewed by their assessor on an individual basis during the assessment session.

How is the APM Practitioner Qualification Assessed?

The assessment process fundamentally relies on all candidates attending each session on time. Lateness, for any reason, compromises the assessment process. For this reason, the assessment session is designed to be a residential event.

The assessment will comprise of:

Individual work – candidates will provide written answers in examination conditions to questions based upon the given case study. Candidates must ensure that their written scripts and other work submitted are legible. The assessors or facilitators may decide not to mark the scripts or other work judged to be illegible.

Group work (observed) – candidates will carry out group exercises in order to discuss and solve problems related to the case study.

Interviews – all candidates will be interviewed on an individual basis. The first part of the interview is an opportunity for the candidate to tell the assessor about their experience and capability as a project manager using examples from their experience to illustrate their views. This should be done via a presentation from the candidate that should last a minimum of 5 minutes and a maximum of 10 minutes. Each candidate should inform the assessor of the length of their presentation before they begin. Candidates may use a flipchart during this presentation but should not use pre-prepared visual aids. For the remainder of the interview, the assessor will engage the candidate in a dialogue by asking relevant questions that are case study bounded.

Candidates will be allowed to refer to the *APM Body of Knowledge (Version 6)* Definitions document throughout the assessment but not during the written work in Session 7. Assessors are responsible for the assessment of the candidate's performance and facilitators are responsible for marking written work. Facilitators are also required to share their findings with the assessors whilst determining evidence of the candidate's capability against the assessment criteria.

Candidates are allowed to use a calculator during the PQ assessment but they must provide their own. APM will not provide calculators. Candidates are reminded that they will not be allowed to use their mobile phones during the PQ assessment.

For more information on how the PQ is assessed please see the *PQ Scoring* (Appendix C).

International Registration

Successful candidates will be registered with the International Project Management Association (IPMA) Level C qualification. In line with the stipulations of the Level C qualification, the APM Practitioner Qualification is valid for a period of five years. After five years, a candidate's certification must be re-certified by providing evidence of their Continuing Professional Development in project management.

How to apply for the APM Practitioner Qualification

Candidates who have met the pre-entry requirements of project management experience and knowledge will need to register with an APM approved assessment centre. The registration documents required, that should be completed and emailed to the candidates chosen approved assessment centre, are:-

1. One copy of the completed and signed APM Practitioner Qualification application form
2. One copy of the completed APM self-assessment form
3. One copy of a project based CV outlining the candidate's experience in project management, with details of their responsibilities and involvement across the project life cycle.

Using these documents for reference, approved assessment centres are responsible for accepting applications on behalf of APM. If the candidate does not agree with the centre's assessment, the application will be referred to APM head office for arbitration.

Candidates with Special Dispensation

APM will do its utmost to accommodate candidates with medical dispensation. Candidates should notify the approved assessment centre at the time of application in order to ensure that all appropriate considerations are given. A dispensation may be allowed for candidates with a medical or physical problem supported by a medical certificate from your GP or other medical practitioner only if prior notice is given to APM in writing.

Rules and Regulations

Candidates are not permitted to take ANY paperwork into the PQ syndicate rooms. APM recommend that candidates bring a pen, pencil and calculator ONLY to the PQ event. If candidates take handbags and laptop bags etc. into the syndicate room they must be placed into the corner of the syndicate room as directed by the Facilitator and not touch during the Assessment.

Candidates are NOT permitted to take any paperwork from the PQ syndicate rooms. Failure to comply with this regulation will result in instant dismissal from the PQ event.

Enquiries, Complaints and Appeals

By attending the assessment, candidates are confirming that they are fit to do so; no appeals will be heard concerning a candidate's wellbeing prior to the commencement of the assessment. If there are extenuating circumstances candidates' feel would impair their performance they must speak to their Approved Assessment Centre to rebook.



Enquiries can be made regarding assessment conditions and re-marking of assessments. The assessment conditions enquiry will only be accepted if the issue has been declared at the time of the assessment or via the post assessment survey. There may be a charge for the re-marking of assessments.

Complaints can be made regarding dis-satisfaction with the standard of service from APM or their Approved Assessment Centre.

Appeals will only be heard on the grounds that procedures and processes have not been applied consistently or fairly. There is a charge for all appeals which is refunded if the appeal is upheld. No appeal can be heard on grounds of technical judgement. All appeals must be heard by the Appeals Panel whose decision is final.

An enquiry, complaint or appeal must be made in writing to the APM Qualifications Department and be received no later than 30 days after the dispatch of your results.

To help you provide the necessary information concerning an appeal, the appropriate form may be obtained from the APM Qualifications Department. Please email qualifications@apm.org.uk to request one or call 0845 458 1944.

Emergency Procedures

Candidates are expected to familiarise themselves with the safety and fire procedures at the Practitioner Qualification venue.

Advice and Guidance

Advice, support and guidance are available from any APM approved assessment centre or from the APM Professional Standards Department.

Association for Project Management Professional Standards Department
Ibis House
Regent Park
Summerleys Road
Princes Risborough
HP27 9LE

Tel: 01844 271860
Email: qualifications@apm.org.uk
Web: www.apm.org.uk

Appendix A

Areas of the *APM Body of Knowledge 6th edition* addressed by case study material and **Assessment criteria**

Section 1 Context	Project management Life cycle Sponsorship Environment / Context
Section 2 People	Communication Conflict management Delegation (Reporting and Issue management) Leadership Negotiation Teamwork
Section 3 Delivery	Business case Control (Tracking performance and taking corrective action) Information management Organisation (Structure and Roles) Planning Stakeholder management Scope management Benefits management Change control Configuration management Requirements management Schedule management Budgeting and cost control Investment appraisal Risk management Quality management Reviews Procurement Provider selection and management
Section 4 Interfaces	Law

Appendix B

Practitioner Qualification Assessment Criteria

1. Determine stakeholders and their influence and interests
2. Design the optimal project organisation
3. Analyse and understand project success criteria and business benefits
4. Analyse and understand project constraints
5. Identify project risks
6. Identify project issues
- 7. Demonstrate an understanding of project context and the overall business case**
8. Define project scope
- 9. Demonstrate a comprehensive application of project management planning**
- 10. Apply a risk management process competently to the project**
11. Apply a quality management process competently to the project
12. Demonstrate an ability to incorporate best value approaches
13. Demonstrate an awareness of generic legal and contractual issues
14. Prepare for a negotiation with a supplier of critical services for the project
15. Analyse conflict situations and apply an appropriate style to resolve the issue
16. Objectively reflect on the performance of self and other team members
17. Present information clearly and factually
18. Answer questions relevantly and succinctly
- 19. Optimise project plans to respond to a major change**
20. Apply effective change control and configuration management
21. Balance conflicting stakeholder expectations
- 22. Demonstrate an ability to monitor project progress and take suitable controlling action**
- 23. Plan and conduct a suitable post project evaluation review**
24. Objectively identify lessons to be learned separating causes from effects
25. Communicate succinctly in writing

26. Lead and influence a small team

27. Work effectively as a team member

28. Communicate verbally in an appropriate way (including listening)

29. Obtain information through use of appropriate questions

30. Present compelling recommendations to project sponsor (board/steering group)

Appendix C

PQ Scoring

The feedback sheet shows the 30 assessment criteria and the evidence observed and areas for improvement for each.

There are 7 essential (shown on the attached in bold) criteria, which are numbers 7, 9, 10, 19, 22, 23 and 27 - whereby a candidate must achieve at least a mark 2 to pass the whole assessment. A mark of 1 for one of these bold criteria would mean an automatic Fail.

In addition to this; to Pass the assessment a candidate's average mark must be greater than 2.75 unless:

- the candidate fails a bold AC, in which case s/he will fail.
- the candidate has demonstrated behavior which is clearly incompatible with membership of the APM as described previously eg sexist, racist, homophobic behavior etc.
- the candidate has demonstrated substantial and sustained deficiency in one or more of the following behavioural traits:
 - Being open, positive attitude
 - Inventiveness
 - Common sense
 - Being a prudent risk taker
 - Open mindedness
 - Adaptability
 - Commitment
 - Fairness

Assessors judge the assessment evidence provided by candidates against the 30 ACs. The evidence required for each mark (1-4), is outlined below:

Mark of 1	Mark of 2	Mark of 3	Mark of 4
Little or no evidence of capability	Basic or partial evidence of capability	Good or proficient evidence of capability	Extensive evidence of capability

The final mark is calculated by using the individual scores for each of the 30 assessment criteria which are added together and divided by 30 to give an overall average for the candidate.

To ensure the robustness of the process the Facilitator for the event assesses each of the candidate's final feedback documentation to ensure that the feedback is both balanced and evidential. The facilitator will not accept any feedback sheets that contain errors, inconsistencies or lack of evidence.

In deciding on the rating for each of the assessment criteria, the assessor focuses on the quantity and quality of the collected evidence. To award a mark of 3; the Assessor must be able to give a number of specific examples of good evidence of capability. Assessors take into account both positive and negative evidence when marking. There is continuous feedback to the facilitator throughout the event. Any marks of 1 and 4 are discussed at the time between the Assessor and Facilitator.