

APM Chartered Project Professional Pilot – Sample Questions

Q&A Sample Questions

Please note that you should be prepared to answer questions on all of the projects referenced in your presentation, as the APM facilitator of the Q&A will select the project for each question.

For more information, please see the Evaluation Standards.

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Sample Question 1

Learning outcome	Criterion
A – Personal Accountability & Authority	A1 – Accountability for Outcomes The candidate demonstrates personal accountability for project, programme, or portfolio outcomes.

Question:

For one of the projects in your presentation, what actions did you take to implement a key decision?

(2 marks)

Mark scheme:

Evidenced – 2 marks

- Full accountability demonstrated for planning and co-ordinating the implementation of a decision. For example:
 - “I updated the project plan with the actions required and then co-ordinated the implementation of actions by the project team.”
 - “I logged the decision and met with the workstream leads to discuss how to structure the implementation. Once agreed, I then co-ordinated the actions to ensure they were complete.”

Partially Evidenced – 1 mark

- Some accountability demonstrated for the implementation of a decision, but limited involvement / oversight.
- Candidate may have only been responsible for planning or updating documentation. For example:
 - “I updated the project plan with the actions required to implement the decision.”
 - “I logged the decision and related actions in the RAID Log.”
- Candidate may have been directly involved in implementing the decision but the accountability sitting elsewhere. For example:
 - “I carried out the implementation actions, as directed by the project sponsor.”

Not Evidenced – 0 marks

- Limited or no accountability demonstrated for the implementation of a decision, either in planning or co-ordination.
- Candidate may have escalated the management of the implementation to someone more senior. For example:
 - “I updated the programme manager who then included the implementation actions in the plan.”
 - “I notified the project director so that they could let the team know what actions they were responsible for.”
- Candidate may have been sidelined from the implementation by other project professionals or team members. For example:
 - “The workstream leads decided the work involved to implement the decision.”
- Candidate may have allocated the implementation to another team / project professional and not retained oversight. For example:
 - “I notified the project manager of the decision, and they took the implementation forward.”

Sample Question 2

Learning outcome	Criterion
B – Management of Conflicting Objectives	B2 – Trade-off and Prioritisation The candidate applied sound professional judgement to balance and resolve conflicting objectives in complex situations.

Question:

For one of the projects in your presentation, what specific criteria did you use to balance the conflicting or competing objectives?

(2 marks)

Mark scheme:

Evidenced – 2 marks

- Criteria stated are clearly linked to the overall success factors specific to the project and explicitly balance the achievement of the conflicting objectives in line with those factors. For example:
 - “I balanced the competing objectives, by assessing what would best allow us to deliver the organisation’s strategy, including meeting the corporate KPIs; what would deliver the project vision; and ultimately what would best allow us to realise the anticipated benefits.”
 - “I used a set of criteria based on the user requirements, the customer needs, and the stakeholder expectations to establish where trade-offs could be made between the competing objectives and where there were non-negotiables.”

Partially Evidenced – 1 mark

- Criteria stated are only partially linked to the overall success factors specific to the project, or only one criterion is stated.
- The criteria are linked more to the project team’s requirements than those of the users or stakeholders. For example:
 - “I worked with the project team to identify what we could deliver within the time and budget allocated, and then prioritised what was achievable with the resources we had.”
- Only one criterion is used, without any need for prioritisation or trade-offs. For example:
 - “When the objectives were in conflict, I prioritised actions that would allow us to deliver the project on time.”

Not Evidenced – 0 marks

- Criteria stated are not linked to the overall success factors specific to the project, or no criteria are stated.
- The criteria are only stated to be time, cost and quality, without any specific reference to the project context. For example:
 - “I used time, cost and quality as the criteria to resolve any conflict with the objectives.”
- Decision on how to resolve the conflict / competition between objectives is either escalated or allocated to another person, with no mention of specific criteria. For example:
 - “I escalated to the project sponsor, who decided what objective should be prioritised.”

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Written Exam Sample Questions

For more information on the written exam, please see the ChPP Pilot Handbook.

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Sample Question 3

Competence	Assessment criteria
6 – Risk and Issue Management	TK1.4 – Critically evaluate techniques to improve issue management through continuous improvement

Question:

A project has experienced a recurring pattern of operational issues during delivery, including repeated rework, delayed decision-making, and unclear ownership. Although individual issues are usually resolved, similar types of issues continue to reappear across work packages.

The project manager wants to achieve measurable and sustained improvement in issue management performance, including reduced recurrence and improved resolution efficiency.

Which **two** of the following techniques are **most** likely to support the project manager in improving issue management within this context?

(2 marks)

Answer options:

- A. Conducting root cause analysis on a sample of closed and recurring issues, and integrating identified process improvements into issue management practice.
- B. Increasing the detail and frequency of issue reporting to senior stakeholders to improve transparency and accountability.
- C. Facilitating a cross-functional workshop to review how issues are currently managed and to agree practical improvements to roles, workflows and escalation thresholds.
- D. Centralising issue decision-making under a senior project representative to improve consistency of judgement and efficiency in issue resolution.
- E. Reviewing issue data periodically to identify trends, recurring categories, and systemic contributors, and using these insights to refine procedures.
- F. Introducing a new digital issue management tool to replace the existing platform, with training provided to the team, to better track recurrence and enhance efficiency.
- G. Strengthening escalation criteria to ensure issues are progressed more rapidly in situations where resolution exceeds agreed timeframes.
- H. Providing additional guidance to team members on the effective completion of issue records to support more efficient tracking of recurring issues.

Mark scheme:

- 2 marks – Both correct responses selected (A and E).
- 1 mark – One correct response selected (either A or E).
- 0 marks – No correct responses selected, or selection of only incorrect responses.

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Sample Question 4

Competence	Assessment criteria
7 – Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Management	TK1.3 Critically analyse the content of a typical communication plan.

Question:

Communication plan

Stakeholder / Audience	Channel	Message	Owner	Approved by	When / Frequency	Why / Objective	Power / Interest Level
Senior Leadership Team	Daily email	“Detailed defect list, architecture changes, and confirmation that sprint overruns have increased by 12%.”	Lead Developer	—	Daily	“Ensure technical transparency.”	High power / Low interest
Regulatory Body	Compliance report	“System testing scheduled for 15 May. Full audit pack will be shared once complete.”	Compliance Lead	Project Manager	Monthly	“Reduce audit workload by pre-informing regulator.”	High power / Low interest
External Supplier A	Contract amendment form	“Agree to absorb overruns caused by cross-team dependencies and accept backlog items 22–36.”	Project Accountant	Commercial Director	Weekly	“Secure supplier alignment and financial commitment.”	Medium power / Medium interest

Stakeholder / Audience	Channel	Message	Owner	Approved by	When / Frequency	Why / Objective	Power / Interest Level
All Internal Staff	Posters in break areas	“Read updated organisational values booklet and complete mandatory system-change training by Friday.”	Change Manager	HR Director	Quarterly	“Boost morale and prepare for the new system changes.”	Low power / High interest
Customer Operations Team	MS Teams ad-hoc chat	“Go-live date TBC. Begin planning 18-month shift and workforce schedule now. Formal instructions to follow later.”	Operations Manager	Sponsor	Ad-hoc	“Be ready for upcoming migration activities.”	High power / High interest

When comparing the above communication plan’s content against what a typical communication plan **should** contain, which **two** of the following statements are correct?

(2 marks)

Answer options:

- A. A communication plan may not always need formal feedback mechanisms at programme level, as some teams gather input through informal discussions and ongoing operational touchpoints instead.
- B. The daily email of defect and architecture detail to senior leaders is well placed because it guarantees transparency and supports executive decision-making.
- C. Allocating decisions on supplier communication to the Project Accountant ensures accountability sits with subject-matter owners and is therefore appropriate.
- D. Some parts of the plan do not fully reflect what different groups need from the project, as the level of detail and type of information are not always matched to their power and interest.

E. Compliance reports for a regulator and using posters for organisation-wide behavioural change is appropriate because they are scalable and low-effort.

F. The plan does not consistently show a way for audiences to respond or check details when messages ask them to do something.

G. For simple, low-risk updates, using a standard template can reduce the need for a named approver, but the plan should still record who is accountable for signing off the message.

H. Using ad-hoc frequency for Customer Operations while the go-live date is still TBC shows flexibility; setting a fixed schedule is unnecessary and could create problems.

Mark scheme:

- 2 marks – Both correct responses selected (D and F).
- 1 mark – One correct response selected (either D or F).
- 0 marks – No correct responses selected, or selection of only incorrect responses.

Sample Question 5

Competence	Assessment criteria
6 – Risk and Issue Management	TK1.5 Critically evaluate the need for ongoing ownership of risks.

Question:

A major organisational transformation programme is preparing to move from design into delivery. Two suppliers have been recently contracted to support the delivery, and work in partnership with both your organisation and a design consultancy.

The Programme Director has raised concerns that although risks were identified and analysed at the start of the design phase, some risks on the Risk Register haven't been updated for several months and no new risks have been added. In addition, several high-impact risks have been reviewed, but the response actions appear stalled or unmonitored.

Although each risk has been allocated an owner, it's unclear whether the risk response actions have been implemented – and several risks are still allocated to a senior stakeholder who left the business last month.

The Programme Director has asked you, as the newly appointed Risk Lead, to explain to the team why effective ownership of risks is essential throughout the programme lifecycle.

Your explanation should include:

- What effective ownership of risks involves in practice.
- The consequences of ineffective ownership of risks.

(10 marks)

Mark scheme:

Level	Mark range	Technical knowledge	Evaluation	Response strategy and coverage
Level 3 (High)	8-10	<p>Demonstrates accurate understanding that risk ownership must be ongoing, not one-off, because risks are dynamic, requiring iterative monitoring and review throughout the lifecycle.</p> <p>Correctly highlights the difference between risk owner and action owner. References continual accountability, clarity of ownership, oversight of responses, and monitoring of probability/impact changes.</p> <p>Specifies selecting owners with relevant control/expertise; owners tracking risk trends, reviewing effectiveness of risk responses; identifying when risks move “out of tolerance”; and ensuring risks are not “left without an owner”; managing handovers.</p>	<p>Provides justified, cause-effect reasoning about why ongoing ownership matters (e.g., avoiding stalled risk responses, preventing risks crystallising into issues, and ensuring escalation at the right time).</p> <p>Evaluates what good ownership looks like in multi-interface programmes (e.g., supplier boundaries, complex dependencies).</p> <p>Assesses consequences of unclear/static ownership using scenario-appropriate logic.</p>	<p>Addresses all three required elements clearly and concisely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for ongoing ownership • What effective ownership looks like • Consequences of ineffective ownership

Level	Mark range	Technical knowledge	Evaluation	Response strategy and coverage
Level 2 (Medium)	4-7	<p>Shows a sound understanding that risk ownership involves regular review, monitoring of changes and progressing response actions, though the answer may not fully explain the dynamic nature of risks across the lifecycle.</p> <p>Correctly highlights the difference between risk owner and action owner, and recognises that ownership includes checking progress, updating ratings and raising concerns.</p> <p>May reference the need for selecting owners with appropriate influence or control but not always with a justification.</p>	<p>Provides some reasoning about <i>why</i> ongoing ownership matters — e.g., to keep information current, prevent stalled risk responses, or avoid escalation delays — but may not fully explore consequences in complex, multi-supplier environments.</p> <p>Analysis may be uneven: the candidate might explain implications (e.g., “actions may drift” or “risks can become outdated”) but not link them explicitly to programme-level outcomes.</p> <p>May mention governance rhythms, escalation triggers, or handover processes, but with gaps or limited clarity.</p>	<p>Addresses most required elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for ongoing ownership • What effective ownership looks like • Consequences of ineffective ownership <p>Explanation is generally clear but lacks full integration or depth.</p> <p>Response may rely on straightforward descriptions rather than demonstrating sustained reasoning.</p>

Level	Mark range	Technical knowledge	Evaluation	Response strategy and coverage
Level 1 (Low)	0-3	<p>Demonstrates basic understanding of risk ownership; may treat ownership as simply assigning a name in the register.</p> <p>Shows limited awareness that risks need updating, monitoring, or progressing actions.</p> <p>May confuse ownership with general team responsibility, or risk with issue, or reference updates only as administrative tasks (e.g., “adding notes”).</p> <p>Little or no reference to lifecycle changes, escalation, or the purpose of risk reviews.</p>	<p>Response is mostly descriptive, with minimal explanation of <i>why</i> ongoing ownership matters.</p> <p>May provide loose statements such as “we need to check risks often” without linking these actions to outcomes or consequences.</p> <p>Reasoning, if present, is simplistic (e.g., “so we know what’s going on”), without causal connections to risk response effectiveness, supplier interfaces, or programme delivery impacts.</p>	<p>Covers only some elements of the brief — often omits either the “why ongoing ownership matters,” “what effective ownership involves,” or “consequences of ineffective ownership.”</p> <p>Lacks detail, clarity and structure; may present general observations instead of addressing the scenario’s issues (e.g., outdated risks, unclear ownership, new team members).</p> <p>Responses fall short of demonstrating understanding of how risk ownership supports timely decision-making or coordinated delivery.</p>

Sample Question 6

Competence	Assessment criteria
7 – Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Management	TK1.5 Critically evaluate the range of methods and media available for project communications.

Question:

A major infrastructure project to build a new railway bridge is approaching a critical decision point requiring sponsor approval, regulatory alignment, and operational readiness planning.

Communications to date have been criticised for being ineffective: technical language has been used without explanation (prompting a late-stage glossary), key project information has been stored in hard-to-find intranet locations, and a weekly newsletter is issued that provides activity descriptions but no clear progress narrative, outcomes, or decision-relevant insight. These issues have contributed to confusion, disengagement, complaints from local residents, and project team fatigue.

Key stakeholder groups at this stage include:

- Senior sponsors concerned with public reputation.
- Operational teams who are already feeling under pressure to deliver quicker than planned.
- External regulators with statutory oversight who are concerned about non-compliance.
- Local residents likely to experience service disruptions, who have limited understanding of the purpose of the project.

You have recently taken over as project manager.

Recommend and justify the communication methods and media you would use for **three** of the above stakeholder groups at this stage of the project.

In your answer, you should:

- Evaluate the trade-offs involved in your recommendation.

(10 marks)

Mark scheme:

Level	Mark range	Technical knowledge	Evaluation	Response strategy and coverage
<p>Level 3 (High)</p>	<p>8-10</p>	<p>Recommends methods/media with explanations that refer to principles such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information richness (e.g., F2F enables dialogue and emotional tone; email is low richness). • One-way vs two-way channels (e.g., newsletters are one-way and unhelpful for sense-checking). • Synchronous vs asynchronous communication. • Suitability for complex, sensitive, or emotive messages. • Resource implications (e.g., videos expensive to produce). <p>Explicitly links these concepts to the stakeholder needs in the scenario, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For senior stakeholders, prioritise high-richness synchronous two-way communication, such as face-to-face meetings, as appropriate for their high level of power, interest and current concerns about the project. 	<p>Clear, structured comparison of methods/media with justified trade-offs.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluates why one channel is chosen over another (e.g., “videos improve clarity but are time-intensive; email is fast but increases fatigue”). • Compares impacts on clarity, reach, risk sensitivity, stakeholder fatigue, suitability for technical content, accessibility, and timing. <p>Analyses existing weaknesses in the scenario (hidden intranet content, overly technical language, generic newsletter) and evaluates how chosen methods resolve them.</p>	<p>Coherent and structured response, with full explanations of methods/media for three of the stakeholder groups, and clear justification based on their power, interests, or context, including evaluation of trade-offs.</p>

Level	Mark range	Technical knowledge	Evaluation	Response strategy and coverage
Level 2 (Medium)	4-7	<p>Demonstrates some knowledge of communication methods/media.</p> <p>Limited reference to the principles of information richness, one way vs two way, synchronous vs asynchronous, suitability for complexity, sensitivity or emotive messages, and resource implications.</p> <p>Only partial or vague links made between these principles and stakeholder needs.</p> <p>May mix up concepts or provide generic descriptions. For example "Meetings allow discussion and emails share information quickly."</p>	<p>Some trade-offs identified, but analysis is limited or generic, e.g., "face-to-face meetings are more time intensive."</p> <p>Evaluates methods/media in general rather than in context of the project.</p> <p>Weak or missing links to communication weaknesses in the scenario. For example "Emails are fast but can overwhelm people."</p>	<p>Explanations of methods/media for three of the stakeholder groups generally clear but lack depth in the justification, not fully taking into account stakeholder power, interests, or context, or evaluating trade-offs in full.</p> <p>Full explanation with clear justification – but only for two stakeholder groups.</p>
Level 1 (Low)	0-3	<p>Minimal understanding of methods/media, may be listed or described, but not related directly to the scenario.</p> <p>No reference to the specific needs of stakeholders, or incorrect methods/media recommended for the scenario.</p>	<p>Little to no discussion of trade-offs of the selected methods/media.</p> <p>Statements are assertions, not analysis.</p> <p>No links to the communication weaknesses in the scenario.</p>	<p>May name three stakeholder groups and their needs but without recommending methods/media or may state methods/media without linking to a specific stakeholder group.</p> <p>May provide explanation and justification but only for one stakeholder group.</p>

Document control

Version history

Version	Date	Author	Reason for change
v.1	13/03/2026	APM	Issued to pilot candidates

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