



# PROFESSIONAL

## **APM Project Professional Qualification** **Guide for candidates**

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**Special arrangements**

APM is committed to promoting a positive attitude towards people with special learning and physical needs. It has a great deal of experience in facilitating individual requirements and tailoring adjustments with the aim of removing any unfair disadvantage that the individual may encounter as a consequence of his or her medical condition.

Please see page 12 for further details.

### Introduction

The APM Project Professional Qualification (PPQ) is a developmental, exam based qualification that sits on the route to becoming a Registered Project Professional. It's based on the APM Competence Framework 2nd Edition, and is a natural progression for candidates who have achieved the Project Management Qualification.

It's a progressive qualification that tests not just candidate knowledge but their application of that knowledge across a number of core competences that are required for project professionals to successfully deliver projects. It's relevant to a wide range of project professionals as it allows candidates to test their application of knowledge against the key competences for project, programme and portfolio management.

In order to achieve the PPQ qualification candidates are required to sit and pass four individual modules: three core modules and one elective module. These qualification modules are based upon the learning outcomes and assessment criteria specified in the APM Project Qualification syllabus documentation.

The qualification is made up of:

Three core modules, which must be completed by all candidates:

- ◆ Professionalism and managing others
- ◆ Planning and control
- ◆ Governance

Three elective, role specific modules, of which one is selected to achieve the full qualification:

- ◆ Project management
- ◆ Programme management
- ◆ Portfolio management

It is possible to sit the examination modules in any order either individually or as part of the overall qualification and passes from any of the examination papers will count towards the total qualification for a period of three years from the dates of their awards. On passing an individual module candidates will receive a record of achievement, and on the successful completion of the four modules APM will award candidates with their Project Professional Qualification certificate. Once awarded, the qualification does not expire.

It is possible to sit all six modules; however candidates will receive only one certificate.

Please take the time to read and understand these guidance notes. They outline the examination regulations and will help you apply for and take the examination.

## Applying for the qualification

Many candidates take the APM Project Professional Qualification through an APM Accredited Provider who will advise of the date, venue and timing of the individual module examinations. Candidates taking the examination through an APM Accredited Provider will not be required to submit an individual application form. APM request that the training provider submits your name and individual email address. Further information required will be requested at a later date.

Some candidates prefer to take their individual examinations module at an APM open examination centre. Please refer to the APM's website for further information on open examinations. APM Qualifications Department confirm the date and venue of your examination.

### Who should consider this qualification?

As this qualification assesses both knowledge and the application of knowledge it is targeted at project professionals who have a mix of the following experience, or aspirations and who are looking for a progressive and developmental qualification to support their career development:

- ◆ 3-5 years' experience as a project professional, particularly practitioners who have already successfully delivered projects
- ◆ Project professionals who have already successfully achieved the APM Project Fundamentals and /or APM Project Management qualifications, although this is not a pre-requisite
- ◆ Project, programme and portfolio managers who have been mapped to the intermediate levels on the Competence Framework Role Profiles
- ◆ Individuals who are looking to become full members (MAPM)
- ◆ Individuals who are looking to become Registered Project Professionals

## How is the Project Professional Qualification assessed?

Candidates are required to pass 4 individual modules in order to pass the APM Project Professional Qualification. The format for each module is the same and is summarised below:

- ◆ Each examination is three hours duration.
- ◆ Candidates will be provided with a copy of a scenario that the examination questions are based on, 30 minutes before the examination starts. This will enable candidates to read and familiarise themselves with the relevant scenario before the time starts for the examination.
- ◆ Each examination consists of four questions, of equal value (25 marks each), related to the scenario particular to that examination. Additional information is provided within each question and candidates should consider and review this along with the information provided in the initial scenario when providing their answers. All four questions must be answered in full.
- ◆ Each examination is classified as "open notes" and candidates are permitted to bring up to five sides of pre-prepared A4 notes into the examination with them. If these are typed the font size must be a minimum of 10 point. Any notes taken into the examination must be attached to the final answer papers at the end and cannot be removed from the examination room.
- ◆ Each examination has been designed so candidates have sufficient time to read the questions at the start of the examination and review their answers at the end, in addition to the 30 minutes to read the scenario prior the examination starting. For guidance, this is a total of 20 minutes within the total three hours, allowing candidates around 40 minutes to answer each question.
- ◆ Each examination is based on the learning outcomes and assessment criteria that can be found in each module syllabus. These are based on the APM Competence Framework, 2nd edition and the relevant role profiles.

When preparing their answers candidates should ensure that they make reference to the scenario and not provide knowledge based answers only. They should demonstrate application of knowledge to the scenario provided.

As this qualification is testing more than just knowledge candidates should avoid providing purely theoretical answers. It is important for candidates to ensure that they provide additional detail on the practical application of the knowledge in their answers providing evidence, rationale and justification, and relating their answers back to the scenario presented.

Any experiential learning that is included must be used and applied to the scenario only. No extra credit will be granted for reference to experience only without application to the scenario.

Candidates should ensure that they answer the questions in the core modules from the perspective of a project manager and from the perspective of a project, programme or portfolio manager in the respective elective papers.

Please note that not all the learning outcomes or assessment criteria will be assessed in each question, and that it may be only part of an assessment criteria that is assessed (e.g. a question focusing on the topic area 'Risks, Issues and problems' may just focus on issues).

The topic area that is being assessed will be detailed for each sub-question.

Candidates are advised to answer the questions in sequence and base their answers on the information available. Candidates should only answer the question using the information provided for that question, including any pre-amble, and the scenario, and not from any information provided for future questions. Sub-parts of questions may be linked and candidates are advised to answer sub-questions in sequence as a result (e.g. information from question 3a may be required to answer 3b).

If assumptions are made these must be highlighted within candidate answers, with clear explanation around the decision to make any assumption.

**Reference materials**

- ◆ Syllabuses containing relevant information from the APM Competence Framework 2nd edition and relevant role profiles.
- ◆ The Body of Knowledge provides a good reference point that candidates may find useful in preparing your notes, but is not essential.
- ◆ Candidates should consider checking for any recent reports or publications from the relevant APM Specific Interest Groups, but it is not essential.
- ◆ The following APM guides , available as publications, may provide useful background information:
  - Guide to Governance in Project Management 2nd Edition.
  - Planning, Scheduling, Monitoring and Control Guide.

## Examination advice

### Do

#### Before examination day

- ✓ Inform the APM qualifications department of any special requirements (e.g. mobility, medical, learning difficulty) at least 5 days prior to the examination date (10 working days for overseas examinations).
- ✓ Locate the photo evidence that you will need to provide at the examination centre, e.g. driving licence, passport, work or student ID.
- ✓ Have a selection of black or blue ink/ biro pens ready to take to the examination.

#### On examination day

- ✓ Arrive at the venue 60 minutes before the examination is due to start.
- ✓ You will be provided with a copy of the scenario 30 minutes before the start of the examination.
- ✓ Provide photo evidence of your identity.
- ✓ Bring a bottle of water.
- ✓ Bring a selection of black or blue ink/ biro pens to write with.
- ✓ If you require a calculator please bring one with you.
- ✓ Familiarise yourself with the 'Rules of Conduct' in the examination room.
- ✓ Remain in the room for at least the first 30 minutes from the start of the examination, following the reading time.
- ✓ Only leave the room in an emergency or if you have been excused or directed to leave by the invigilator.
- ✓ Conduct yourself in a way which will make it possible for the examination to be carried out without hindrance or annoyance to the other candidates or to the invigilator.
- ✓ Return all examination paperwork to the invigilator before leaving the room.

### Don't

- ✗ Arrive late. Late arrivals will not be permitted entry to the examination room.
- ✗ Communicate with other candidates or persons present in the room, except the invigilator, during the examination.
- ✗ Eat (unless expressly permitted for health reasons).
- ✗ Bring any communication devices into the examination room; all bags, mobile phones, or other communication devices and other objects should be left where the invigilator directs.

## Examination materials

In preparation for taking each examination, you may take with you:

- ◆ up to 5 pages of pre-prepared notes. Note these must be left with your answer papers and cannot be removed at the end of the examination.
- ◆ coloured pens
- ◆ a non-programmable calculator, particularly relevant for the Planning and Control module.
- ◆ a translation dictionary (with prior permission from APM Qualifications Department). See contact details at the back of these guidance notes.

*Dictionaries and calculators will be checked by the invigilator before the examination commences.*

## Examination process

1. Candidates will receive a card with their test code and candidate number. The candidate number must be entered onto the module examination paper and each answer sheet submitted, together with the question number and page number.
2. The examination duration is 3 hours, with an additional 30 minutes before the examination for candidates to read the scenario. Candidates who arrive late for the scenario reading will not be permitted to enter the examination room until the start of the examination.
3. The scenario upon which the questions are based will be provided 30 minutes prior to the examination to allow reading time and familiarisation. Candidates are permitted to take notes on the scenario which may be retained and referred to during the examination.
4. Candidates will be given up to an additional 5 minutes at the end of the examination to collate their papers, including any notes taken into the examination.
5. Each module will contain 4 questions, of equal value, and candidates are required to answer all questions.
6. Each complete question carries 25 marks (being single or multi-part questions) and it is assumed equal time will be spent on each question.
7. Candidates must only write answers on one side of the paper provided.
8. Use a pen (black or blue ink), not a pencil.
9. All candidate markings on the question paper will be disregarded.
10. Candidates should put a clear line through any material/workings that they do not wish to be marked.
11. At the end of the examination, candidates should collate their answers into question order number (1-4) and together with the examination booklet, scenario paper and any pre-prepared notes, secure with the treasury tag provided.

*Please note: Candidate answer sheets will NOT be marked if their examination question paper is not returned and therefore will automatically fail.*

## Question formats

Candidates should:

- ◆ start each question, and sub question, on a new sheet of paper
- ◆ write the question number clearly at the top of each page
- ◆ write their candidate number clearly at the top of each page
- ◆ only write on one side of each sheet
- ◆ show formulae and workings clearly
- ◆ put a line through any notes that are not to be marked

*Any notes on the examination paper itself will not be marked.*



## Marking conventions

It is important that candidates have analysed and understood the context of the question fully before they answer, including the topic area that is being assessed.

There are 4 questions and each question (which may be made up of a number of sub-questions) carries a maximum of 25 marks.

Each question is marked on a scale of 0-5 (or factor of 5). A breakdown of terms and marking criteria is provided below. Feedback will be provided for any question you fail.

The pass mark is 60% of the total available marks\*.

*\*this may be changed on the recommendation of the Examinations Technical Assurance Group during the lifetime of the qualification.*

Any words used in examination questions use the standard dictionary definition and are not linked to marks allocated.

### Unsatisfactory/very limited/fail (0-1 marks)

The answer demonstrates a very limited understanding of the material with minimal interpretation of its relevance in context. Provides minimal, incorrect or incoherent discussion of the implications covering very few of the expected issues, observations or recommendations.

### Borderline/limited/marginal fail (2 marks)

The answer demonstrates a limited understanding of the material with a superficial or incomplete interpretation of its relevance in context. Provides little critical discussion of the implications covering some of the expected issues, observations or recommendations.

### Threshold/satisfactory/pass (3 marks)

The answer demonstrates a correct grasp of the material with adequate interpretation of its relevance in context. Provides some critical discussion of the implications covering many of the expected issues, observations, or recommendations.

### Commendable/good/merit (4 marks)

The answer demonstrates an appreciation of the material with an informed interpretation of its relevance in context. Provides an appropriately critical discussion of the implications covering most of the expected issues, observations or recommendations.


### Outstanding/excellent/distinction (5 marks)

The answer demonstrates a developed understanding of the material with an insightful interpretation of its relevance in context. Provides a thorough and comprehensive discussion of the implications covering all of the expected issues, observations or recommendations.

## Completing your examination booklet

Please see below a working example of how to complete your examination booklet.

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**General notes**

Time allowed **3 hours**

You must also enter your candidate number and test code on your examination script.

**Answer all 4 questions**

There are 4 questions, each question carries equal marks. **Use ink**, not pencil, to answer all questions.

**On completion of the examination**

- please collate your answer sheets into **question number order**
- complete the table to your right and secure this question paper and your answers with the tag provided

APM Project Professional Qualification					
<b>Professionalism and managing others</b>					
Examination module 1 <span style="float: right; font-size: 0.8em;">EXPRGL01</span>					
Candidate number					
Exam date					
Exam location					
Test code					
Reference					

Question number	Number of pages	Office use only	Question number	Number of pages	Office use only
1a			3a		
1b					
2a					
2b					

You will find this on the front of your examination card

Insert the number of pages per question here

**Do not open this paper until instructed by the invigilator.**  
**Please note: This question paper must not be removed from the examination room.**

ALL CANDIDATES MUST COMPLETE THIS SECTION

Please enter the name of your current employer here:

APM will supply relevant details about your examination, including results, to your training provider and employer where applicable.

APM may contact you from time to time with information from APM or selected third parties.

Please indicate which level of information you wish to receive

}

Please send me information from APM  
 Please send me information from APM and selected third parties  
 Please do not send me any information

UNREGISTERED CANDIDATES MUST ALSO COMPLETE THIS SECTION

*First name		*Last name	
*Email address			

\*All are mandatory fields in order to process your examination script and issue your results

## Notification of results

Candidates will be advised of their results within a maximum ten weeks of completing each individual module. Candidates will be sent an email confirming their result. If candidates successfully pass an individual examination they will be sent an electronic "record of achievement" for the particular module passed. On successful completion of four required modules candidates will be asked to provide a postal address to enable a full qualification certificate to be sent.

Accredited Providers will also be notified of the results.

Candidates will receive notification of their final mark and the score achieved for each question. Candidates will be given feedback for any questions they have failed.

All four modules must be completed within a three year period to achieve the full qualification. If this time period is exceeded any modules which were passed outside the three year window will need to be retaken to obtain the full qualification. In the event of an expired module, candidates will need to re-take the expired module only.

There is no requirement for recertification once the full qualification (4 modules) has been obtained.

*Please note: APM cannot give results over the telephone.*

### Borderline results

If your overall score is borderline fail it will automatically be sent to a moderator for a final judgement.

### Re-taking of modules

In the event of a failed module, we recommend that you allow a suitable interval for revision before re-sitting the examination. Please note that in order to achieve the full qualification the 4 required modules must be completed within a 3 year window.

Candidates may either re-sit through an APM Accredited Provider or register to attend one of the quarterly open examinations. For more details visit our website on [www.apm.org.uk/openexaminations](http://www.apm.org.uk/openexaminations)

## Enquiries, Complaints and Appeals

By sitting the examination candidates are confirming that they are fit to do so; no appeals will be heard concerning a candidate's wellbeing during the examination. If there are extenuating circumstances you feel would impair your performance please speak to your Accredited Provider, or APM direct for open examinations, to rebook.

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

Complaints can be made regarding dis-satisfaction with the standard of service from APM or your Accredited Provider.

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 judgment. 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 must be obtained from the APM Qualifications Department. Please email [qualifications@apm.org.uk](mailto:qualifications@apm.org.uk) to request one or call 0845 458 1944.

## Special arrangements

### Illness

If you are unable to attend your examination due to illness you must inform the APM Qualifications Department immediately. See contact details at the back of these guidance notes. This should be done either through your organisation, Accredited Provider or directly to APM. A medical certificate signed by a doctor must be provided within 5 working days of the examination date.

### Cancellations

If you withdraw from the examination up to 5 working days before its scheduled date (10 working days for overseas examinations), a cancellation fee will apply. Details of the cancellation fee are available from the APM Qualifications Department. If a candidate fails to attend the examination, the examination fee is payable in full.

### Medical and mobility

APM is committed to promoting a positive attitude towards people with special learning and physical needs. It has a great deal of experience in facilitating individual requirements and tailoring adjustments with the aim of removing any unfair disadvantage that an individual may encounter as a consequence of their medical condition.

Access to the facilities or arrangements described here can be granted to candidates with disabilities/learning difficulties who apply to the APM Qualifications Department. A dispensation may be allowed for candidates with a medical or physical condition that prevents them from completing the examination within the normal regulations.

All requests must be supported by a medical certificate or other relevant medical documentation from your GP or other medical professional. This must be stated at the time of application. All medical evidence must be received by midday, at least, 5 working days before the examination. Failure to do so will result in the dispensation not being granted.

**Extra time:** Extra time is available if you have dyslexia or a medical requirement. The normal additional time is 15 minutes per hour of examination.

**Scribe:** A scribe is someone to whom examination candidates can dictate their answers during the examination. Scribes can be made available to candidates who have dyslexia or difficulty writing. Candidates will sit their examinations in a separate room with their scribe who will also act as their invigilator. The scribe will be a representative of APM and will not have knowledge in the field of project management. Extra time is available in instances when a scribe is used.

### Other aids/equipment available

Large print papers may be produced for partially sighted candidates or dyslexic candidates with prior arrangement with the APM Qualifications Department. Requests for large print papers must be received by midday at least 10 working days before the examination date.

Candidates may bring cushions, special seats and any other resting aids by prior arrangement with the APM Qualifications Department.

For assistance with any of the above, or for any other requirements, please contact the APM Qualifications Department.

**Notes**

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