

IPMA»

international
project
management
association



ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATIONS

IPMA Level A: Certified Portfolio Director

IPMA Level A: Certified Programme Director

IPMA Level A: Certified Project Director

IPMA Level A qualifications

The Association for Project Management (APM) is the UK certifying body for the International Project Management Association (IPMA) and is validated to deliver IPMA qualifications at Levels A to D. This document outlines the specifications for the assessment methods for each of the three domains.

- IPMA Level A: Certified Portfolio Director
- IPMA Level A: Certified Programme Director
- IPMA Level A: Certified Project Director

1. Context

All syllabuses for IPMA qualifications developed by APM are based on the *IPMA Individual Competence Baseline, version 4.0 (ICB4)*. The IPMA Level A qualifications require candidates to demonstrate the leadership of others in very complex projects, programmes or portfolios throughout the life cycle at a strategic level.

The ICB4 is made up of 28 competence elements for project management, to pass candidates must successfully evidence a minimum of 23 out of the 28. The report covers 16 competence elements and the interview covers 12 competence elements.

For programme and portfolio management, there are 29 competence elements, to pass candidates must successfully evidence a minimum of 24 out of the 29. The report covers 17 competence elements and the interview covers 12 competence elements.

Candidates are assessed against assessment criteria in the syllabus. Evidencing the assessment criteria demonstrates the candidate's ability to meet competence elements tested in each qualification. Candidates must demonstrate understanding of a minimum number of competence elements, specified in each qualification, to be successful.

2. Structure

If an applicant enters through an APM Accredited Provider, it is the provider's responsibility to carry out the eligibility check so that a decision on their suitability can be taken. If an applicant books on to a qualification directly with APM, the applicant will be asked to confirm they have completed the eligibility check, a decision on their suitability will be made by APM.



Candidates have 18 months to complete the qualification from the date of application being accepted. Candidates must pass each assessment stage before moving on to the next one. Once awarded, the IPMA certification period lasts for five years.

3. Assessment overview

	Report competence elements	Report minimum score	Interview competence elements	Cumulative number of competence elements needed to pass
IPMA Level A: Certified Portfolio Director	17	14	12	24/29
IPMA Level A: Certified Programme Director	17	14	12	24/29
IPMA Level A: Certified Project Director	16	13	12	23/28

4. Report specification

Below details the specification of the report for all three domains.

- The report will be based on the project(s) used by the candidate in their executive summary report.
- Maximum of 25 sides of A4.
- Font size 11.
- A maximum of 15 sides of A4 of supporting evidence as appendices.
- Each competence element passed will receive one mark.
- Minimum coverage is defined in the candidate guidance.
- Report to contain the following areas:
 - **Background:** a detailed description of the project, the candidate's role in context, key stakeholders and objectives, project organisation and the associated resources for which the candidate is responsible (maximum three sides of A4).
 - **Description of the management and leadership challenges:** this should include how these were addressed, results achieved and a reflection on these results and lessons learned (maximum three sides of A4).
 - **Competence assessment:** one side of A4 per competence element explaining how the candidate has demonstrated each of the following assessment criteria:

Assessment coverage for IPMA Level A:
Certified Portfolio Director report

Unit	Learning outcome	Assessment criteria (ICB competence element)
1	1	1.1, 1.2 (strategy)
1	1 (5)	1.3, 5.1 (governance structure and processes)
1	1	1.4, 1.5, 1.6 (compliance, standards and regulations)
1	3 (5)	3.1, 3.2, 5.2 (organisation and information)
1	4	4.1, 4.3 (resources)
1	4	4.2 (finance)
2	5	5.1, 5.2 (change and transformation)
3	1	1.1 (benefits)
3	1	1.2, 1.3 (stakeholders)
3	1	1.4, 1.5 (portfolio design)
3	2	2.1 (scope)
3	2	2.2, 2.4 (select and balance)
3	2	2.3 (time)
3	3	3.1 (procurement)
3	3	3.2 (quality)
3	3	3.3, 3.4, 3.5 (plan and control)
3	4	4.1, 4.2, 4.3 (risk and opportunity)

Assessment coverage for IPMA Level A:
Certified Programme Director report

Unit	Learning outcome	Assessment criteria (ICB competence element)
1	1	1.1, 1.2 (strategy)
1	1 (4) (5)	1.3, 4.1, 4.3, 5.1 (governance structure and processes)
1	1	1.4, 1.5, 1.6 (compliance, standards and regulations)
1	3 (5)	3.1, 3.2, 5.2 (organisation and information)
1	4	4.1, 4.4, 4.5 (resources)
1	4	4.2, 4.3 (finance)
2	5	5.1, 5.2 (change and transformation)
3	1	1.1, 1.8 (benefits and objectives)
3	1	1.2, 1.3 (stakeholders)
3	1	1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7 (programme design)
3	2	2.1, 2.2 (scope)
3	2	2.3, 3.3 (select and balance)
3	2	2.4, 2.5 (time)
3	3	3.1 (quality)
3	3 (5)	3.2, 3.3, 5.3, 5.4 (plan and control)
3	4	4.1, 4.2, 4.3 (risk and opportunity)
3	5	5.1, 5.2 (procurement and partnership)

**Assessment coverage for IPMA Level A:
Certified Project Director report**

Unit	Learning outcome	Assessment criteria (ICB competence element)
1	1	1.1, 1.2 (strategy)
1	1	1.3, 1.7 (governance structure and processes)
1	1	1.4, 1.5, 1.6 (compliance, standards and regulations)
1	3	3.1, 3.2, 3.3 (organisation and information)
1	4	4.1, 4.4, 4.5 (resources)
1	4	4.2, 4.3 (finance)
2	5	5.1, 5.2 (change and transformation)
3	1	1.1 (requirements and objectives)
3	1	1.2, 1.3 (stakeholders)
3	1	1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7 (project design)
3	2	2.1, 2.2 (scope)
3	2	2.3, 2.4, 2.5 (time)
3	3	3.1, 5.1, 5.2 (procurement)
3	3 (5)	3.2, 5.3 (quality)
3	3 (5)	3.3, 3.4, 5.4, 5.5 (plan and control)
3	4	4.1, 4.2, 4.3 (risk and opportunity)

5. Interview specification

Below details the specification of the interview for all three domains.

- The interview will be conducted either face to face or virtually via video link (in accordance with the IPMA regulations) and will last up to two hours.
- The interview will be conducted by two approved assessors.
- The interview will be based on the projects submitted in the report.
- Each competence element passed will receive one mark.
- The interview will be split into a 30-minute candidate presentation, based on the project(s) detailed in the report, followed by 10 minutes of questions and 80 minutes of professional discussion. Assessors will familiarise themselves with the context information in the report prior to the interview.
- The split between presentation and professional discussion is detailed in the following tables.
- Minimum coverage is defined in the candidate guidance.
- All candidates will be asked a final question: "Is there anything else that you wish to add to support your application?"
- Once the interview is complete and the applicant has departed, the assessors will reach an assessment recommendation of pass or not yet competent. This will be based on their assessment of the evidence presented in the interview when added to the competence elements satisfied in the exam and report.
- The following competence elements will be covered along with other competence elements that require further clarification from the report.

Assessment coverage for IPMA Level A:
Certified Portfolio Director interview

Unit	Learning outcome	Assessment criteria (ICB competence element)	Presentation or professional discussion
1	2	2.1, 2.2 (power and interest)	Presentation
1	2	2.3, 2.4 (culture and values)	Presentation
2	1	1.1, 1.2 (self-reflection and self-management)	Professional discussion
2	1	1.3, 1.4 (personal integrity and reliability)	Professional discussion
2	2	2.1, 2.2 (personal communication)	Professional discussion
2	2	2.3, 2.4 (relationships and engagement)	Professional discussion
2	3	3.1, 3.2, 3.3 (leadership)	Presentation
2	3	3.4, 3.5 (teamwork)	Presentation
2	3	3.6, 3.7 (resourcefulness)	Presentation
2	4	4.1, 4.2 (conflict and crisis)	Professional discussion
2	4	4.3, 4.4 (negotiation)	Professional discussion
2	4 (3)	4.5, 4.6, 3.8 (results orientation)	Presentation

Assessment coverage for IPMA Level A:
Certified Programme Director interview

Unit	Learning outcome	Assessment criteria (ICB competence element)	Presentation or professional discussion
1	2	2.1, 2.2 (power and interest)	Presentation
1	2	2.3, 2.4 (culture and values)	Presentation
2	1	1.1, 1.2 (self-reflection and self-management)	Professional discussion
2	1	1.3, 1.4 (personal integrity and reliability)	Professional discussion
2	2	2.1, 2.2 (personal communication)	Professional discussion
2	2	2.3, 2.4 (relationships and engagement)	Professional discussion
2	3	3.1, 3.2, 3.3 (leadership)	Presentation
2	3	3.4, 3.5 (teamwork)	Presentation
2	3	3.6, 3.7 (resourcefulness)	Presentation
2	4	4.1, 4.2 (conflict and crisis)	Professional discussion
2	4	4.3, 4.4 (negotiation)	Professional discussion
2	4 (3)	4.5, 4.6, 3.8 (results orientation)	Presentation

**Assessment coverage for IPMA Level A:
Certified Project Director interview**

Unit	Learning outcome	Assessment criteria (ICB competence element)	Presentation or professional discussion
1	2	2.1, 2.2 (power and interest)	Presentation
1	2	2.3, 2.4 (culture and values)	Presentation
2	1	1.1, 1.2 (self-reflection and self-management)	Professional discussion
2	1	1.3, 1.4 (personal integrity and reliability)	Professional discussion
2	2	2.1, 2.2 (personal communication)	Professional discussion
2	2	2.3, 2.4 (relationships and engagement)	Professional discussion
2	3	3.1, 3.2, 3.3 (leadership)	Presentation
2	3	3.4, 3.5 (teamwork)	Presentation
2	3	3.6, 3.7 (resourcefulness)	Presentation
2	4	4.1, 4.2 (conflict and crisis)	Professional discussion
2	4	4.3, 4.4 (negotiation)	Professional discussion
2	4 (3)	4.5, 4.6, 3.8 (results orientation)	Presentation

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