Secrets of Passing the Project Management Professional (PMP®) Certification Exam the First Time
Based on PMBOK® Guide – 6th Edition

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What is the PMP® Certification?

The PMP® (Project Management Professional) certification is an international certification under the guidance of Project Management Institute (PMI®). It is an intensive test taken after meeting a stringent guideline of 4,500 hours of project management experience if one posses a college degree and 7,500 hours if one has no degree.

This credential is designed to allow project managers to demonstrate their expertise and understanding of project management methodology and processes through a comprehensive international exam. The PMP® is a certification obtained throughout the world and is viewed as a respected level of excellence in the project management field.

The PMP® certification verifies that a project manager has demonstrated comprehensive study and understanding of the various project management theories and models and their application within any organization or industry. By using these theories and models, project managers reduce the possibility the project will fail or run over budget and schedule.
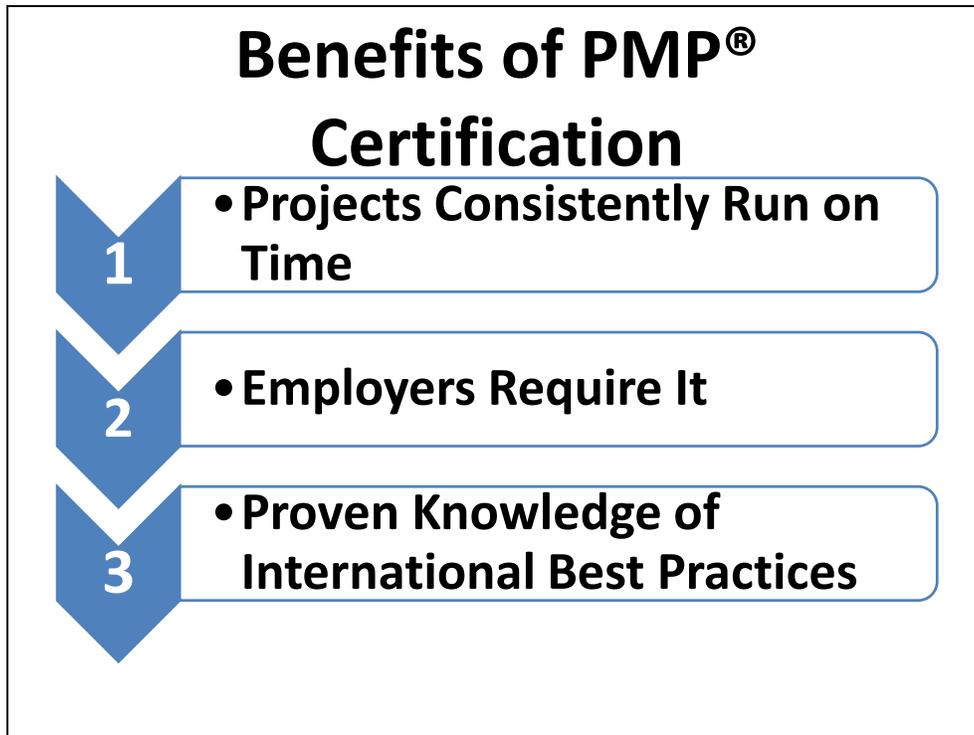
Today, many project managers are just now hearing about the PMP® certification; however, it is the #1 credential in North America and is in high demand by all industries. If one is considering a career in consulting or has a desire to run government projects, this certification will be the standard demanded by all industries and organizations.

This credential does not guarantee that a project will be 100% successful, but it does demonstrate that an individual understands the various techniques and international best practices to run a project and reduce its potential risk of failure.

The PMP® certification uses the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* (*Project Management Body of Knowledge*) as the standard in good practices for running projects. PMI® is the governing body overseeing the certification and is the driving force for aligning these processes and models to be more consistent and efficient than ever.

What Are the Benefits of Possessing the PMP® Certification?

The benefits of possessing the PMP® certification can range internally, externally, and monetarily for each participant.

Benefits of PMP® Certification

1. • Projects Consistently Run on Time

2. • Employers Require It

3. • Proven Knowledge of International Best Practices

1. Projects run consistently on time and budget

Projects which run late and over budget are frustrating to everyone involved. When individuals learn project management best practices, they have expert knowledge in ways to get a project back on track or in preventing problems from occurring in the first place.

Project management education helps everyone involved in the project—from top management to the front-line employee working on a project. A methodology like the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* allows everyone to know what should be happening in each process the project. This new knowledge creates a joint effort with the team and the project manager in pushing the project forward. For these reasons, it is essential to train everyone to understand project management methods.

2. Employers require their employees to possess this credential

It is common to find employers stating they prefer or require a PMP® certified project manager to apply for a job opening. This credential is still optional for some positions; however, within the next three years, one will discover that many of these same jobs will

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mandate that the project manager be PMP® certified. Many government agencies require employees to gain the PMP® certification within 12 months of being hired.

This certification can also influence an individual's income potential. PMP® certified project managers receive more money than those who are running projects with experience alone. In one of our seminars, a student told us he was applying for a job and was waiting to hear from the company. During a break, he received a call offering him the job. In the conversation, the new employer happened to ask what kind of training he was attending. When he told it was a PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camp, the employer informed the man that his salary would increase by $3,000 if he passed the PMP®. Just a few weeks ago, another client was pleased to tell us that he had been offered a $30,000 raise to come to work for another organization after only five weeks of possessing his PMP®. While these examples show the monetary value of possessing this credential, it in no way guarantees that a person will receive more money or get a raise. In some cases, the employer will not pay for the PMP® nor will the individual receive a raise.

3. Proven international best practices
The final benefit for the PMP® certification is that participants know they have measured up and passed an international certification exam. The PMP® certification exam is one of the hardest tests anyone will ever take. It is a comprehensive test focusing on the theories and models of project management, and it shows one's ability to demonstrate success in a testing environment. Knowing one has passed a comprehensive test and certified internationally can boost both the employee's confidence, and it shows an understanding of what should be taking place on a project to make it successful and to prevent a crisis.

No one can guarantee every project will be on time and on budget. However, having the PMP® certification proves one's exposure to best practices which have benefited projects internationally. These processes work in every type of industry and project with enormous amounts of success and positive feedback. In every case, the original deadline is achieved more consistently when following the good practices set out in the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition*.

What Are the Requirements for the PMP® Certification Exam?

The following chart shows the educational requirements, the levels of project management experience, and the project management education needed to qualify for this credential.
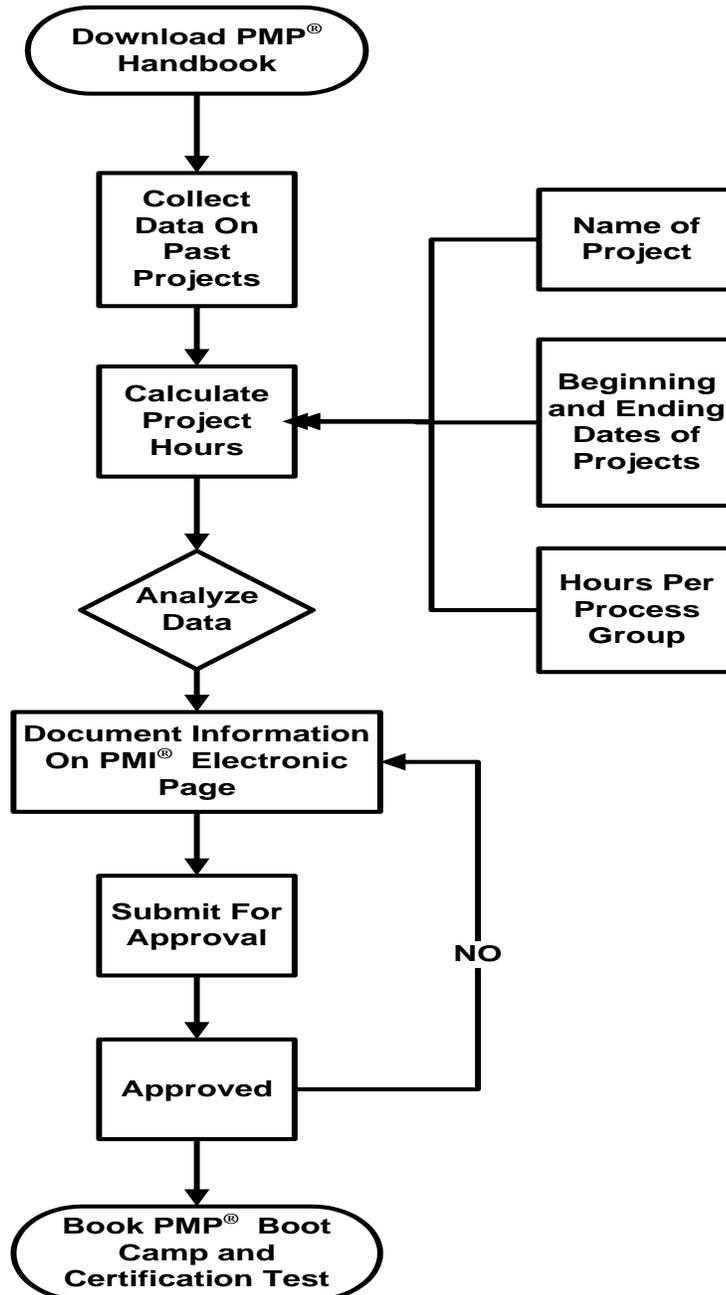
When preparing for eligibility, it is essential to make sure verifiable hours are documented due to the possibility of an audit. It is PMI®'s policy to conduct random audits to verify the information claimed by applicants.

	PMP ®
Full Name	Project Management Professional
Project Role	Leads and directs project teams
Eligibility Requirements	High school diploma/ global equivalent **5 years** project management experience **35 hours** project management education **OR** Bachelor's degree/global equivalent **3 years** project management experience **35 hours** project management education
Steps to Obtaining Credential	application process + multiple-choice exam
Exam Information	4 hours; 200 questions
Fees	US$405 PMI member (US$555 non-member)
Credential Maintenance Cycles and Requirements	3 years; 60 PDUs

www.pmi.org

The following flowchart will walk through everything that should take place in preparation of the PMP® certification.

Passing The PMP

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One of the first things to help the candidate is to download the *PMP® Credential Handbook* from www.PMI.org. This book will give detailed information on the PMP® certification process and how to document qualifying hours and experience.

It is now time to begin collecting data on all projects from the past three to six years. Also, document the exact roles, responsibilities, and number of hours served in each of the five process groups (Initiating, Planning, Executing, Monitoring and Controlling, and Closeout) for the given project. Everyone needs this information when filling out the electronic documentation. Collecting all of this ahead of time will speed up the process and give a more detailed and complete history of experience and education for submittal.

Calculate the project hours to make sure one possesses the minimum number of hours needed to qualify for the credential. Go back through all documentation notes and verify the data one is submitting.

Sample Chart for Collection of Project Data

Project Name	Dates of Project	Initiating	Planning	Executing	Monitoring and Controlling	Closing

Take all the information collected and document it on the pages provided on PMI®'s website. This is a tedious process, so it is essential to make sure all records are accurate and thoroughly documented before submission. Often, people overlook their calculations and try to submit two projects for the same dates or time periods. Double submissions or using the same dates should be prevented to reduce PMI®'s system from catching the discrepancy and disqualifying the application.
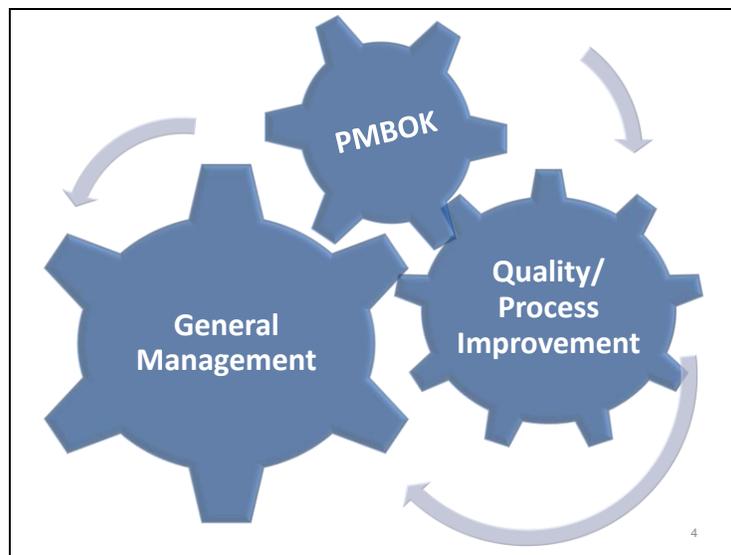
Once the electronic documentation is completed, submit everything to PMI® for evaluation and feedback. The evaluation process usually takes five to seven business days; however, there are times when PMI® may ask for additional information or clarification. When this happens, it is advantageous to make sure the requested information is gathered as quickly as possible so as not to delay the approval process.

If one has completed a PMP® exam prep course, it is advantageous to take the test as soon as possible afterward. In most cases, the longer participants wait to take their test after a prep course or an intensive study, the more questions they tend to miss, which reduces the chance of passing the PMP®.

What Can One Expect on the PMP® Exam?

The PMP® certification exam will cost $405.00 if one is a PMI® member or $525.00 if not. All fees will go to PMI®. Once one has been approved, PMI® will notify the candidate by email and provide a link of approved testing sites in the area.

The PMP® certification exam consists of 200 multiple-choice questions given in a four-hour timed atmosphere. The electronic system will grade only 175 questions and will discard 25 pre-selected ones. The test focuses on the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* as its foundational information for 60% of the content. The remaining 40% of the content brings in outside material beyond the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* such as quality, process improvement, and general management of people and teams.

The testing center for PMI® certifications is Prometric, and there is usually one in each local community. This type of test can be very intimidating if one has not taken a test in this environment. Many individuals are nervous due to the atmosphere and the amount of pressure to pass this test the first time. All testing sites will have numerous security cameras focused on each person to prevent any chance of cheating. The site is also a "no talking" environment. Each test taker receives a pencil, two pieces of paper, and a calculator. Participants are asked to empty their pockets and place all items in a locker until the test has been completed. The test itself is computerized.

Test questions may be short or as long as half a page. 80% of the test will be scenario questions which ask the tester to act as if they are a project manager. The challenges of scenario questions are a limited amount of information, time, and having to draw a conclusion based on what one would do. Almost every scenario question has two correct answers, and the tester must analyze both to determine the **best** answer for the question based upon the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* philosophy.

The system is set up to only score 175 of the 200 questions – the other 25 questions are being considered for future test banks or are just junk questions dropped from the test. There is no singular passing rate. Each test can have different levels of difficulty and require a different number of correctly answered questions to pass.

Many project managers with years of experience have failed the test thinking it will ask them questions based on their experience. The PMP® exam questions do not focus on the project manager's experience but on knowing the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition*.

The following chart is a general rule of thumb on the number of questions which will come out of each section. Remember, though, that PMI® changes things periodically and these figures might be different than the test received. However, it will give an idea of the number of questions in each group.

Process Group	Potential Number of Questions
Initiating	19 questions
Planning	40 questions
Executing	47 questions
Monitoring and Controlling	37 questions
Closing	16 questions
Professional and Social Responsibility	16 questions

Make sure study materials used are up-to-date and align with the current PMP® exam. Be careful with free tests downloaded from the internet. Some sites are still using testing material which is over 9 years old. Because of exam updates every few years and the release of a new *PMBOK® Guide*, it is imperative the material be updated as well. We have seen participants come in with the wrong edition of the *PMBOK® Guide*, which causes confusion and increases the chance of failing the test due to wrong preparation. The current PMP® exam is over *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition as of March 2018*.

Lastly, every tester will find out whether they have passed the exam before leaving the testing site. This knowledge brings the excitement of knowing that the work is over or the opportunity to produce a plan for retaking the test. Participants can only take the test three times unsuccessfully within 12 months of their application being approved, and then one is penalized and must wait 12 months before filling out a new application and retaking the test.

10 Avoidable Reasons Why People Fail the PMP® Certification Exam

Many people do not want to hear that they might fail a certification such as this, but it happens every day. The reasons below will give potential testers an idea of what must be overcome to pass the PMP® certification exam.

1. Participants did not take the test seriously

The PMP® certification exam is tough and challenging. Most participants consider it to be one of the hardest tests they have ever taken. Even though they are informed about its difficulty in boot camps, there are always those who think that this must be an overstatement of the test. Make sure each person does adequate preparation before taking the PMP® certification exam.

2. Organizations do not use PMI® processes in real life

Using the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* and PMI® processes in the workplace gives the tester an advantage in understanding how projects should run effectively. When organizations follow *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* processes, testers already have 20-30% of the knowledge needed to answer many of the questions which will be on the test.

Not using the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* in the workplace does not mean that a person cannot learn those processes even though the organization is not using them daily. We have students in training every day who gain exposure to PMI® processes for the first time and have completed and passed their exam on the first attempt. What this means is that an individual must take the necessary time and effort to understand and become an expert in PMI® processes and the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition*. There must be a warning before we leave this section. If testers answer all of the test questions from the viewpoint of what they would do in their real job, they will fail this test.

3. Inadequate preparation

Participants who have been extremely fortunate in academic circles will struggle with the PMP® certification exam. Many will try to take the test assuming they will be able to distinguish the correct answer since it is a multiple-choice test. What they do not understand is that this multiple-choice test typically has two possible answers. PMI® desires for their certified project managers to know the difference in those answers and pick the **better** of the two. Do not expect to choose the correct answer unless in-depth preparation and analysis of PMI® processes and the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* is conducted.

4. Not reading the question in detail or understanding the real meaning

Taking a multiple-choice test is different from other testing methods. This test will give a scenario and ask for a response. In order to get this question correct, each participant must fully understand what the question is asking before responding. One of the best ways to handle this is to read the question three times before answering it. Each time the tester must

ask, "What do they want to know?" Do not make assumptions or speed through the questions.

The need to read the question in detail is critical due to the length of some questions. As one begins reading these larger scenario questions, it is essential not to get sidetracked by all the ancillary information and data. One of the best suggestions for scenario questions is to read the last two or three sentences of the question first. This way the specific keyword or data to look for is known. The ability to quickly digest scenario questions is an easy technique to learn with a little practice.

5. *Not prepared for the testing environment*
The testing environment surrounding the PMP® certification exam can be very intimidating to those who have not attempted other certifications. The testing site will have 15 to 20 people taking a test at the same time. One will sign in and show identification. While the test is being taken, video cameras are watching every move. If unprepared for this, it can be incredibly intimidating. Some participants have even said they felt so much pressure due to the environment that they got nervous and missed several questions.

6. *Participants fail to be in the test-taking mindset*
Being prepared for the test and knowing the material is extremely important. Also, each participant needs preparation for an intense experience during the certification exam. Preparation means that one has read the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* multiple times and has utilized flashcards and practice tests. Testers must walk into the testing center with a positive mindset thinking they can pass and are planning to give 110% toward that goal. Unless a participant walks in thinking that they can pass the test and they have done proper preparation, this will be a wasted effort.

Participants must be prepared to change from topic to topic in a brief period, as well as to move from definitions to applying the material to a particular situation. The test will not ask straightforward questions, but it wants testers to apply PMI® processes and the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* in various situations.

7. *Participants did not create a progressive study plan*
Preparing for the PMP® certification requires making sure to study only correct material. Most individuals have indicated that a study plan connected to varied topics and definitions is helpful. Also, the study plan should include practice tests that are similar to the PMP® exam. Unless one is willing to take practice tests in association with studying the required topics, preparation on test day is unlikely.

Conditions during study time and conditions at the testing site will be vastly different. It is common to be more nervous and have more anxiety on test day. One should be scoring in the range of 85% or higher on all practice tests. If someone is scoring 60-70% on the practice tests, he or she is not ready to take the PMP® certification exam. When an individual scores 85% or higher on all practice tests, assuming those tests align with the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition,* he or she will not be too surprised with any questions asked.

An aggressive study plan will allow one to learn the five process groups and be able to recall each of them, which is imperative. Participants must be able to recall all this information, as well as the 10 knowledge areas, to have any chance of passing the PMP® certification exam.

8. Participants study the wrong material

There is a great deal of material floating around about how to pass the PMP® exam. Some websites will give 200 questions for free and many handouts to assist in studying. The only problem is that some of that material is wrong. Some questions, which are still on the websites, are from older versions of the *PMBOK® Guide*. Also, some of the advice given is contrary to what PMI® discloses about the certification or what is happening on the PMP® exam. An example of this is the calculations for the forward and backward pass and how it should be calculated using day one rather than zero-day. Some books prepare testers using a zero-day in the calculation which is the opposite of what happens on the PMP® exam.

9. Waiting too long between a boot camp and taking the exam

One needs to be ready to take the exam as soon as possible after completing a PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camp. The optimum time to take the test is on day 5 or 6 after the boot camp. Taking the PMP® exam within 15 days of a boot camp increases one's probability of passing. After running hundreds of participants through PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camps each year, it is evident the highest retention of the exam material is within the first 15 days, and then participants begin losing most of the concepts. The only way to prevent this is for each participant to run through the material, definitions, inputs, outputs, and formulas daily. This type of review is burdensome to keep up for an extended period.

10. Allowing anxiety and nervousness to control and dominate

It is understandable to be nervous when taking an international certification exam like the PMP®. Anxiety is customary to everyone; however, it is important not to allow one's nerves to become uncontrollable. While taking the exam, some will be nervous at their stomach throughout the four-hour endeavor. One must be able to control one's nerves, or he or she will not be able to think correctly and answer the questions accordingly.

Becoming overly frustrated due to experiencing unknown questions may cause one to switch answers unnecessarily. Our suggestion is to answer the question, mark the ones to be double checked for review, and return to them later after the frustration has passed.

12 Test Taking Strategies

Test-taking strategies vary depending on the individual and how much experience and exposure he or she has to standardized tests. The PMP® certification is an international test, which can be intimidating due to its formality and security. The following strategies can be used to assist in scoring a higher percentage when taking the certification test.

Strategy #1 – Make sure there is sufficient time to study to be well prepared for the exam.
Studying for the PMP® certification exam and being fully prepared before taking it is of utmost importance. This certification exam should not be taken lightly with the idea one can pull answers off the top of his or her head. This test requires current information from the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition*. If one has studied other *PMBOK® Guide* editions, understand that definitions and processes change. Studying earlier editions might cause one to miss many test questions because the newest edition positions some topics differently. The questions are intricate with many topics and actions so novice project managers, and those with limited knowledge of *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition,* struggle.

If one is not going to attend a prep course, these individuals need to spend several weeks preparing to get familiar with the processes, terms, and all knowledge areas. Recalling *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* information instantly must occur, or one is not ready for the test. Later in this report, specific focus areas are detailed for special preparation.

Strategy #2 – Eat lightly before the test which provides energy and helps one focus.
Eat a light snack before entering the testing site. The PMP® exam will take four hours, and many individuals will notice a drop in his or her blood sugar during that time. Testers are not able to bring food or drink into the testing area. Therefore, it is particularly important that one is not preoccupied with hunger and can think clearly. One word of caution about eating before the test – make sure it is a snack-sized portion and not a large, heavy meal. After eating a heavy meal, people tend to become sleepy and sluggish which will reduce the chance of passing.

Strategy #3 – Before answering question #1, transfer all formulas and relevant information to the provided blank paper.
As part of the preparation for the PMP® exam, everyone should memorize formulas for earned value, communication, PERT, TYPE, and other calculations which may appear on the test. One of the simplest things to do is transfer all formulas from one's memory to the paper provided by the testing site. Documenting the formulas will allow them to be used as needed, as well preventing confusion during the test.

Also, if one can create a mind map of all the processes while studying, and can draw it out from memory, he or she will have a clear picture of the processes. Any information which is difficult to remember for a long time can be transferred to paper at the beginning of the test. Transferring hard to remember information is one of the most helpful things to reduce the possibility of becoming confused.

Strategy #4 – Monitor the clock to create a better pace.
Monitoring the clock can be important for people who are slow in their test-taking skills. One person may spend a great deal of time on a question because of the enormous amount of reading or calculations. If a question looks as if it is going to take longer than expected pick an answer, but mark it to review at the end of the test when there more time. In this test, one must finish within the four hours, and every question must have an answer. All questions not answered are counted as incorrect. It would be better to guess an answer than to leave it blank.

Strategy # 5 – Keep a positive attitude throughout the test and stay relaxed; take a few deep breaths if feeling nervous.
Because standardized tests can be intimidating, it is easy to get discouraged when coming across a series of challenging questions. During the test, make sure to think positively. Do not decide the fate of the test based on one's perception or mindset during the test. Fight for every question and do not assume one is failing or passing based on the current questions. Some testers have left the test early because they stated they knew they were failing. No one knows whether he or she is passing or failing until after the scoring of the test. ***DON'T GIVE UP!***

Strategy # 6 – Always read the whole question; do not make assumptions about what the question might be asking.
Research shows that one problem test takers have during multiple-choice tests is they do not read the entire question before answering it. In many cases, the test taker assumes what the question is asking, and answers based upon that assumption. With multiple-choice tests, one should determine what the question is actually asking.

In addition to figuring out what the question wants to know, it is essential to understand the full content of each scenario question. There are times during the exam when one will read one-fourth to one-half a page of text and then answer a question based on that scenario. At times, the question asked is straightforward compared to the amount of detail given. Sometimes the test purposely asks something opposite of what is anticipated. Unless the question is read in its entirety, something important may be overlooked.

Strategy # 7 – Look for keywords in each question.
One of the most common mistakes when taking the PMP® exam is overlooking keywords which are essential to understanding the question. Keywords can be a variety of things such as definitions, process types, or even a particular emphasis on one part of the question over another. Unless the keyword can be spotted, an answer which is not in line with *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* will be chosen.

One of the best ways to pick out keywords is to read the entire question and then go back over it to pick out those words which have the strongest meaning. Then read the question once again emphasizing the areas which are the most important. Keywords allow one to get the primary emphasis of the question.

Multiple-choice tests examine one's ability to read carefully and thoroughly as much as they test the ability to recall information. Watch for words which redirect the question such as "all", "always", "never", "none", "few", "many", "some", and "sometimes." These words appear in many questions and change its meaning.

Strategy # 8 – If the answer is unknown guess but mark it for review. Go on with the rest of the test and come back to it later.
Gaining information as one takes a multiple-choice test is vital for areas that might be unclear. As each question is read, one will discover an emphasis in all the areas of *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition*. Sometimes testers will pick up definitions or processes that will help with previous questions. If the tester is unsure about an answer, remove the answers which are incorrect and make the best guess, but do not leave it blank. Mark it for review and return later to see if this is still the best answer based on what is known. The computerized certification test can return to those questions marked for review. As the tester proceeds through the test and learns additional information, one can return to the marked questions and make a more calculated answer.

Strategy # 9 – Produce the answer internally before looking at the given choices; this way the possibilities given on the test will not trick anyone.
One of the best techniques for making sure one answers the question correctly is to think of an answer before reading the given possibilities. It does occur that someone reads all four answers only to have each of them sound correct. If one already has an answer in mind, and that answer is given as a choice, he or she can be confident with that response.

Strategy # 10 – Read all the choices before choosing the answer.
If an answer doesn't immediately come to mind, reading all the choices increases the chance that one of the possibilities will jump out. In standardized tests, it is normal to notice one answer appearing to be different from the others. For example, one might be listing theories and notice that one of the answers is not a theory but a process.

Strategy #11 – Scenario questions need to be examined differently.
Scenario questions are some of the most difficult to answer. Here are some guidelines which will help in gaining the best understanding of the situation:

Read the last two sentences of the scenario question first. By reading these, one will find out the main content of the question and what it is asking.

Make sure to understand what the question is asking. The scenario may give an enormous amount of narrative which means nothing to the question. Long sections of detailed information are given only to confuse and throw the tester off. Eat the fish and spit out the bones. There are many bones placed in scenario questions.

Strategy #12 – When one is finished and has time left, look over the test. Only change an answer if the question was misread or misinterpreted.
One of the most vulnerable times of the entire exam is when one is finished. Test takers make a big mistake by rereading every question. Many will second-guess themselves and

change an excellent answer to a bad one. Do not change an answer unless it is 100% wrong. The best answer is usually the first response.

A safe way to handle this is to only return to those questions which are known to be a 100% guess. To change an answer on those is okay. Holding back from changing an answer will be one of the hardest things a tester will do.

In conclusion, it is critical to make sure each of the testing strategies is understood and followed. As testers follow these strategies in detail, it is possible to increase the potential of passing by as much as 20%. Those who have failed their PMP® exam admitted they violated at least one of these strategies and changed as many as 40-50 answers. Solid preparation helps fight this urge.

Memorization

Memorization helps in the test, but it helps more for the tester to be very familiar with the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* as part of their test preparation. Areas such as formulas and processes need memorization so one can answer precise questions about each. However, do not think that one must memorize every section of the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* for testing purposes. It is much better when the tester has a solid working knowledge of it so he or she can handle situation questions correctly.

Reading Comprehension

Many participants are surprised at how much reading is required for some of the questions. The technique below will assist in giving a better understanding of what is asked by the test question. Reading techniques require practice to be able to use them at will.

REDW Strategy
- Read
- Examine
- Decide
- Write

- ***Read*** the entire paragraph to determine the subject of the paragraph. One may find it helpful to whisper the words as reading or to form a picture in one's mind. Once a general idea is understood, go on to the next step.

- ***Examine*** each sentence to identify the critical words that tell what the emphasis is in the paragraph. Ignore the words that do not pertain to the solution of the question. Many of the questions possess ancillary information and data which has nothing to do with the answer but is there to overload one with facts.

- ***Decide*** which sentence holds the words that best describe the main idea of the paragraph. The sentence that contains these words is the topic sentence. The other words are supporting details for the main idea.

- ***Writing*** will constitute making the final choice on the computer. After deciding which answer fits all the requirements of the question, choose that answer.

Focus Areas to Study

As one prepares for the PMP® certification, a great deal of time spent on the knowledge transfer is required. The amount of preparation depends on how well one knows the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* and how carefully one runs projects to that standard. The PMP® certification exam has a database of between 7,000 and 9,000 questions that are used to test an individual's knowledge of project management.

Because of this extensive database of questions, it is possible for two people to take the test at the same time, yet their tests be very different. It is also possible one test will emphasize something differently than another test. Participants become frustrated because they spend so much time studying only to have one or two questions come from a focus area. We will recommend some focus areas included in 80% of the certification exams. These areas might not be on every test, but a thorough knowledge of them will increase the chance of success. If the tester does not know this foundational information, he or she will not be able to understand the questions and how they pertain to project management in real life.

Definitions
Definitions and identifying their usage in context are crucial for the PMP® exam. Definitions located in the back of the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* are used to make sure that the participant understands precisely what the definition means and its usage within a project. Participants must be familiar with definitions from the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* vantage point, not their internal culture.

5 Process Groups
Testers will need to understand the five process groups of initiating, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling, and closing and what takes place during each. Some confuse the five process groups with the 10 knowledge areas.

Inputs, outputs, processes, tools, and techniques
Many questions will include concrete information on the inputs, outputs, processes, tools, and techniques of a particular knowledge area. Studying each of these allows one to gain an excellent understanding of how the project management processes appear in the PMP® exam.

Understanding these processes in a detailed manner is imperative. Some individuals will haphazardly read the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* and think that the questions will be straightforward and answerable with a general understanding of each knowledge area. However, this is not enough to pass the test. Testers must possess an expert knowledge of each and be able to distinguish one from another to select the correct answer.

Experts in quality management and their writings
Quality is a concern for any project and is essential for project managers to understand. Details on quality processes from experts such as Deming, Crosby, and Juran will help in

many of the quality questions. Most of these questions revolve around quality processes, quality improvement, and continuous quality. While the emphasis of these areas might be different in the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition*, they are significant for understanding the background of quality.

Types of organizations
In today's environment, organizations are making changes to accommodate projects and allow the project manager to have more control. The *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* has excellent writing in the early chapters detailing the distinct types of organizations and how they can influence the project. Understanding the difference between each type of organization will be a key in interpreting some of the test questions. For example, if one does not grasp the difference between a projectized organization compared to a matrix model organization, it is going to be extremely hard to answer the question. One must be able to distinguish between the various models with only a few descriptions.

Each of the 10 knowledge areas
There are 10 knowledge areas in the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition*. If page 25 of the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* can be reproduced, one will gain an understanding of all of the knowledge areas and how they work together in an integrated fashion.

Each knowledge area has detailed inputs, outputs, tools, and techniques. It is imperative to recall each of these in the specific knowledge areas and be able to distinguish them from one another. Since 60% of test questions will come from the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition*, it is essential to be able to identify the difference between each of the knowledge areas and process groups.

Ethical responsibility
Ethical responsibility has become important in the last several years as we have seen corporations act in questionable ways. PMI® has placed a great deal of emphasis in this area about projects. One will encounter many questions revolving around what is ethical and the responsibility that project managers have in being ethical at all times. It would be good to read all the ethical and social responsibility sections in the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition*, as well as to go to www.PMI.org and download any of their amended components. The ethical scenario questions can include both projects in North America as well as the world. PMI® is asking project managers to give strong ethical leadership, which is a good role model to follow.

Although we have emphasized several areas in which to focus, it in no way guarantees that they will be on every test. As explained earlier, due to the enormous size of the question database, these focus areas will give some direction in being able to pass the PMP® exam.

Why Attend a PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camp?

Since most people have no exposure to an international certification exam with this level of intensity, it is easy to think this test cannot be as hard as everyone says, and the person decides to try it on his or her own. For those individuals who are not good at taking tests or who are intimidated when placed in a stressful situation, it might be good to consider taking a PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camp to assist in reducing some of this anxietty.

The following benefits will help determine which boot camp best fits the learning style and training goals of an individual.

Concentrated knowledge exchange
A PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camp allows each participant the means to have a concentrated effort at understanding all the processes, models, and theories associated with the exam. Instructors have the capability of giving tips, techniques, and focus areas to prepare for the questions one will experience. If retaining information is a struggle, this concentrated boot camp allows each person to experience coaching through all material, teaching techniques, flashcards, and practice tests to increase understanding and the ability to recall this information.

Verbal update of tips and techniques in each class
Gaining insights into the PMP® certification exam through individuals who have previously taken it is extremely helpful. Boot camps will not give the actual test questions but will provide similar styles of questions to give an idea how they will be asked and phrased. Also, the boot camp will equip attendees with skills to regurgitate the information when needed during the test. Remember, one is giving back information based on the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition*, not based on the actual work environment.

Specialized discussions take place during the boot camp
Discussions during the boot camp assist each participant in fully understanding the processes presented by the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition*. These discussions allow one to understand the sequencing of the process flow, as well as to hear others discuss how they keep all the knowledge areas straight.

Practice tests allow an accurate measurement of the participant's current skills
Practice tests are remarkably useful in preparing people mentally for the PMP® exam. Some organizations will give participants a barrage of multiple-choice tests to prepare. Each organization has their philosophy based on what has worked for them.
At The Mathis Group, we have discovered a technique that uses both right-brain and left-brain learning which increases the recall factor during the test. Using both sides of the brain allows participants to store the information for when they need it.

Scenario questions allow the participant to answer questions based on actual situations

Scenario questions are incredibly useful for demonstrating analysis and understanding of all the project management processes. One mistake people make in preparing for the PMP® exam is they assume the questions are clear with one right answer. The surprise is that every question can have two correct answers. Remember, to pick the **most** correct answer according to the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition*. Scenario questions can be as long as a fourth- to half-page in length and will ask what a project manager should do in a specific situation. The exam goes beyond conventional definitions and processes. PMI® wants to make sure that a project manager can analyze a situation and determine the appropriate steps of action to fix a problem or prevent a crisis from getting worse.

Scenario questions must be planned for because it requires a high degree of reading comprehension and time since each question takes longer to answer. Many people miss these questions due to moving at a fast pace. A key when answering scenario questions is to read the last two sentences before reading the entire paragraph. This gives the opportunity to predict what the question is asking before analyzing the information given.

Choosing the Right PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camp

Choosing the right PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camp can be exceedingly difficult in a day when hundreds of organizations are claiming to be the best in preparing for the PMP® certification exam.

When searching for a provider, don't be surprised to find a variety of formats that will provide this information. Some local PMI® chapters will assist in preparation, generally at a very reasonable fee. The positive side of using a local chapter is learning from people who love project management and are committed to the *PMBOK® Guide* way. The negative side is they may struggle in teaching the material. Since they do not run hundreds of people through the exam each year, they might not pick up on the subtleties which cause a tester to miss needless questions; and, often, do not offer any guarantee.

It becomes challenging to distinguish which organization one should use and trust. The following list of questions will help when selecting a PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camp.

Does the organization teach other PMI® registered courses on project management?
The reason to look at organizations who teach more than just the PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camp is to find one who is committed to project management models and theories. When finding an organization that only provides a boot camp, it is possible they teach one course solely for monetary reasons. It is likely they are not trying to educate people on the topic of project management, nor are they expanding the use of its principles. Only teaching one course can be a problem when responding to questions which are beyond the scope of the boot camp and *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition*. Reputable firms will have seasoned professionals teaching their boot camps and can answer questions which revolve around the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition*, but also give information from years of experience. The Mathis Group provides over 45 different project management courses which are all registered with PMI®.

Is the organization used by other reputable organizations to conduct project management training and PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camps?
Conducting research of the organization offering a PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camp, as well as other project management courses, will allow one to see the depth of their reputation. For example, if one researches The Mathis Group, he or she will discover we have done training for many government agencies such as FAA, FCC, USDA, Department of Defense, State of Missouri, and the United Nations. Further research will show that The Mathis Group has had a GSA contract since 2002 and a contract with the State of Kansas since 2008. We have also done training for PPL (Pennsylvania Power and Light) for their technology and power plants, as well as many other financial and construction organizations. We have been running public and onsite seminars for 25 years using the PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camp and over 45 other individual project management courses.

We are an organization committed to training and educating others in project management and have spent years building a reputation anchored to this topic. Make sure that whoever is used as a provider will do more than simply take money.

How long has the organization been in business?

The PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camp is in demand today with tens of thousands of people desiring the PMP® certification. Organizations who have been in business for years understand the industry and the development of the *PMBOK® Guide*. The length of time in business focuses on whether the organization is committed to building a long-term educational impact. Some organizations are short-term focused and only do boot camps for profit. The Mathis Group has been providing training on project management since 1993 for various industries and project types.

How many trainers do they have with project management experience?

The size of the organization is not always significant; however, one should ensure that it can provide project management training for the workers in a reasonable amount of time. Many organizations providing training might only be a one-person shop. One can see strict time limits when facing the need to educate a large work staff of several thousand. The Mathis Group has highly experienced trainers who have been hand selected to provide training to any of our customers. Experienced trainers allow us the capability of efficiency and quickness in providing training as the customer needs it.

Do the guarantees focus on passing or just giving the money back?

When picking a boot camp, look for an organization that is going to teach a broad view of the *PMBOK® Guide – 6th edition* and make sure all the content included is specified in the PMP® Exam Outline found on PMI®'s website. Some participants who attended our PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camp have told stories of attending other boot camps where the instructor told them to look up any questions or areas of confusion on their own. Some told how they talked about project management and how each company runs projects in real life. These kinds of courses will not help a person pass the PMP® exam.

Does the PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camp provider pay for the second and third exam?

It is essential to see what the provider will do if an individual does not pass the exam the first time. Many providers will allow an individual to attend another boot camp for free; however, they do not pay for any other tests. At The Mathis Group, we guarantee that if an individual does not pass the PMP® exam the first time, we will pay for the ***second test***. If the individual does not pass the second time, we will pay for the ***third test***.

If a participant fails the third attempt, PMI® requires him or her to wait for 12 months from the date of the last failed attempt before reapplying. After the 12 months, the participant can reapply and begin the process over with three new attempts. If a person fails three times with us, we will wait the 12 months with the participant and he or she ***will attend our boot camp again for free, and The Mathis Group will pay for all 3 attempts. No one in North America will match or exceed this guarantee***.

Do we coach people before they have failed three times? Yes! Do we let people return to a boot camp before they fail three times? Absolutely! We do all of the above as well, but we want there to be no mistake that we believe we will help each person pass the PMP® exam. ***If a participant finds a guarantee better than this, that company should be used***. If organizations are looking for a guarantee that monetarily holds the provider accountable and requires them to stand behind their boot camps with real passing rates, our guarantee will not be beaten. Guarantees should do more than allow a struggling participant to attend another boot camp; guarantees should prove the company expects participants to pass. ***The Mathis Group not only guarantees the face-to-face PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camp but is one of the few companies in the world who will also pay retake fees for a live, instructor-led, virtual course***.

What is the organization's first-time passing rate?
The percentage of passing the PMP® exam the first time is crucial because it tells the success factor of that provider. It is common for most providers to state 90% of students have passed with their training. The question we should be asking is whether this is a percentage based on the first time a person took the test. Look for an organization that has a high passing percentage the first time through, rather than the third time. Most companies will have a high 90% passing rate out of three attempts.

The Mathis Group has an 82% first-time passing rate and 99.7% overall success rate. Very seldom do we have anyone who even needs the third test, let alone fails it.

How are the daily activities structured?
The structure of the day makes a difference to learning and learning styles. For example, how many practice tests will it take to get participants ready for the PMP® exam? What is the teaching environment and what about breaks? In four days, individuals will take 25+ practice tests in our PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camp. The last test taken will be one which covers all knowledge areas. Also, we give participants practice tests through our online "AfterCare Program," so they can stay prepared after the boot camp before taking the actual PMP® exam.

Do they demonstrate quality by their teaching techniques and classroom interactions?
The last question to consider when looking for someone to teach the PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camp is if they demonstrate quality by their teaching techniques during class interactions. Class interactions is how the facilitator treats the participants during the boot camp. Many may think this does not matter, however, in the adult learning model it is essential that participants experience respect and dignity with an atmosphere of encouragement.

Some individuals come into the boot camp intimidated due to the teaching style of the instructor. For example, one method which is very intimidating for the adult learner is the Socratic Method of teaching. The Socratic Method focuses on putting people on the spot by asking a series of questions of why a situation happens a particular way. This method, though useful in some situations, can be very intimidating. ***The Socratic Method is not a***

style The Mathis Group uses. No person will be in an uncomfortable situation in our class.

The type of atmosphere which works best is one where everyone can ask questions and interact within a safe environment. Comfort and support means allowing individuals to talk about what they do and do not know without feeling inferior. During the practice activities, encouragement must be present for what is not known. If there are areas someone is struggling with, he or she is instantly paired with another class member or instructor to teach that technique. The goal is for the participant to learn the material in a safe environment and pass the certification exam.

In conclusion, it is critical to pick the proper provider for a PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camp. The above guidelines are only a means of trying to evaluate and expand one's understanding of an educational provider. As the search begins for qualified providers, one will discover many who care deeply about the students and whether they pass the PMP® certification exam. Many will be exciting in their presentation of the material and will provide substantial guarantees so that all participants will feel comfortable using them.

Thanks so much for reading this report and considering the PMP® credential. If anyone has questions about our PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camp or any of our other registered project management courses, please contact us.

<center>PMP, PMI, and PMBOK are registered marks of the Project Management Institute, Inc.</center>

Keith Mathis, Ph.D., PMP, PMI-ACP

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Specialist in Project Management,
Organizational Behavior, and Development
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www.pmexpertlive.com

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PMI® Registered Global Education Provider #2022

Meet Your Instructor

Dr. Keith Mathis has emerged as one of the most effective business trainers in the field traveling throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, Ecuador, and South America. His provocative, informative, humorous presentations on a variety of organizational development topics are demanded by progressive companies. An animated and often electrifying platform speaker, Keith never merely talks to an audience, but also seeks to involve them in his presentations through high content and numerous illustrations. Intellectually demanding of himself, Keith demands no less of his audiences!

As a consultant who specializes in project management, organizational behavior, and development, he comes with thousands of presentations to every kind of organization. He is flexible by teaching in full-day formats, multi-day conferences, or one-hour keynotes for conventions.

He is co-founder of The Mathis Group, Inc., based in Springfield, Missouri. His work includes teaching corporate America skills on topics such as: team building, leadership, motivation, conflict resolution, project management, supervision, performance appraisals, goal setting, and numerous other organizational proficiencies. His problem solving expertise provides him with the ability to help companies solve the most complex difficulties.

Keith has authored numerous training programs as well as magazine and newspaper articles.

His book *Dinosaur Tracks: Modern Leadership Strategies for Changing Employee Performance and Behavior* was published by Equippers Press International. His latest book *21 Deadly Project Management Mistake and How to Avoid Them for Project Success* was published by Equippers Press International.

Keith holds a B.A. in Behavioral Science, a M.S. in Management, and a Ph.D. in Administration Management. He is certified as a PMP (Project Management Professional), PMI-ACP (Agile Certified Professional), and a COI (Certified Online Instructor).

Dr. Mathis is also founding pastor of Eden Community Church in Eureka Missouri, which began in 2002. He resigned in November of 2014 to spend more time with the grandkids.

PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camp Onsite – 4 or 5 Day

You pass, or we pay for the 2nd & 3rd attempt!

Contact Hours – 35

<u>***PMI's Talent Triangle Breakdown***</u>
Technical - 30.25
Leadership - 3.75
Strategic - 1.00

<u>***PMI's Certification Breakdown***</u>
PMP - 35.00
PMI-ACP - 4.75
PMI-SP - 4.75
PMI-RMP - 6.75
PfMP - 5.00
PMI-PBA - 4.75

Course Description: This fast-paced boot camp prepares each participant with all the core competencies to pass the PMP® exam the first time. We teach you the terms, processes, and skills to pass the course with minimal post course study. Students will also learn methodologies for taking national tests. Choose from the four- or five-day format to best meet the needs of your employees. This course will follow Project Management Institute's knowledge areas of the *PMBOK® Guide*.

Method of teaching: Students will use discussion, cases, and group activities to facilitate the course.

The Mathis Group PMP® Exam Guarantee: In the unlikely event you do not pass the PMP® exam the first time, The Mathis Group will pay for your second attempt within 30 days. If you do not pass the PMP® exam the second time, we will pay for the third attempt within 30 days. If you do not pass the PMP® exam on your third attempt, The Mathis Group will allow you to return to one of our PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camps at no charge and will pay for future PMP® exams. Remember that PMI®'s eligibility states that you have 3 testing attempts within 12 months. *Note: The Mathis Group will pay the retake fee amount that is applied to PMI® members. The Mathis Group will not pay for any rescheduling fees assessed by PMI®.

PMP® Exam Prep Course Content: The course content focuses on *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide) - 6th Edition.*

Examine the process groups:
Initiating   Planning
Executing   Monitoring and Controlling
Closing

Examine the knowledge areas:
Project Integration Management
Project Scope Management
Project Time Management
Project Cost Management
Project Quality Management
Project Human Resource Management
Project Communications Management
Project Risk Management
Project Procurement Management

Project Stakeholder Management
Professional and Social Responsibility
Test-taking strategies and techniques
Project Management definitions, process charts and formulas

Practice exams, scenarios and activities

Aftercare and Coaching Services

Following the completion of the PMP Exam Prep Boot Camp, each student will be given the opportunity to use The Mathis Group's Aftercare and Coaching Services. In the time between finishing the boot camp and waiting to take the certification exam, we want our students to stay focused and continue to review the information learned in the class. The Aftercare and Coaching Services can be used as much or as little as needed by each individual student. These services are included in the price of the class, and it is our hope that they be used as needed to prepare for the exam.

First, each student will be given access to our online version of the PMP Exam Prep class to use for extra review and clarification. By email, each will receive the course link, a user name, and password. They are encouraged to review the sections they found difficult. They may also take additional practice exams online; there are 28 new exams in the online version.

Second, each student has access to The Mathis Group's staff for any questions or concerns that may arise during the review time. Coaching will be available by phone and/or email until the student has passed the certification exam. It is not uncommon for questions to arise about the exam or its content, and we want to make sure answers are provided.

We suggest the students schedule and take their exams within 30 days of the class (the week following the class is the best time). After taking the exam, we ask that the students call our 800# and report their pass/fail results within 24 hours. If the student fails the exam, we will continue to offer coaching by phone/email and provide guidance in preparing for the second try.

What You Receive

- *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide) - 6th Edition*
- *PMP® Study Guide 9th Edition* by Kim Heldman
- Course workbook
- Flash cards
- 30+ in class practice tests
- 60+ Free online simulation tests
- Post-course coaching and mentoring

PMP® Exam Prep Boot Camp Live, Instructor-Led, Virtual – 4 Day

You pass, or we pay for the 2nd & 3rd attempt!

Contact Hours – 35

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Strategic - 1.00

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PMI-SP - 4.75
PMI-RMP - 6.75
PfMP - 5.00
PMI-PBA - 4.75

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- *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide) - 6th Edition*
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- Flash cards
- 30+ in class practice tests
- 60+ Free online simulation tests
- Post-course coaching and mentoring

PMI-ACP® Exam Prep Boot Camp Onsite – 3 Day

Contact Hours - 21

PMI's Talent Triangle Breakdown	*PMI's Certification Breakdown*
Technical - 15.75	PMP/PgMP - 21.00
Leadership - 5.25	PMI-ACP - 21.00
	PMI-SP - 6.00
	PMI-RMP - 6.25
	PfMP - 5.50
	PMI-PBA - 5.25

Course Description: This three-day, fast-paced boot camp prepares each participant with all the core competencies to pass the PMI-ACP® the first time. We teach you the terms, processes, and skills to pass the course with minimal post course study. In addition, this course is based upon the PMI®-recommended reference materials on Agile, Scrum, XP, Lean, and other Agile approaches.

Method of teaching: Students will use discussion, cases, and group activities to facilitate the course.

The Mathis Group PMI-ACP® Exam Guarantee: In the unlikely event, you do not pass the PMI-ACP® exam the first time, The Mathis Group will pay for your second attempt within 30 days. If you do not pass the PMI-ACP® exam the second time, we will pay for the third attempt within 30 days. If you do not pass the PMI-ACP® exam after three attempts, we will refund the balance of the seminar price to you! *Note: The Mathis Group will pay the retake fee amount that is applied to PMI® members. The Mathis Group will not pay for any rescheduling fees assessed by PMI®.

Examine Agile Tools, Skills, and Domains:

- The Tools and Techniques and Knowledge and Skills areas to pass the exam
- The Tasks of Agile Principles and Mindset
- The Tasks of Value-driven Delivery
- The Tasks of Stakeholder Engagement
- The Tasks of Team Performance
- The Tasks of Adaptive Planning
- The Tasks of Problem Detection and Resolution
- The Tasks of Continuous Improvement

Examine Agile Methodologies and Processes:

- The foundation of Agile, the Agile Manifesto and Principles
- Scrum roles, meetings, tools, techniques and artifacts
- XP (eXtreme Programming) roles and practices
- Comparing Scrum and XP roles and practices
- Lean development practices in Agile Project Management
- Agile estimation techniques
- Agile team dynamics, soft skills, negotiation, and coaching
- How Epics and User Stories are created
- Daily stand-ups, information radiators, team spaces, retrospectives, and osmotic communications
- Agile metrics, including velocity, escaped defects
- Comparing adaptive planning and traditional project management
- Value-driven delivery and Value Stream Analysis
- Product backlog grooming
- Problem detection and resolution

What You Receive

- *PMI-ACP® Exam Prep 2ⁿᵈ Edition* by Mike Griffiths
- In-Depth Course Workbook
- Flash cards
- Hundreds of practice test questions

PMI-ACP® Exam Prep Boot Camp Live, Instructor-Led, Virtual – 3 Day

Contact Hours - 21

PMI's Talent Triangle Breakdown
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- Agile estimation techniques
- Agile team dynamics, soft skills, negotiation, and coaching
- How Epics and User Stories are created
- Daily stand-ups, information radiators, team spaces, retrospectives, and osmotic communications
- Agile metrics, including velocity, escaped defects
- Comparing adaptive planning and traditional project management
- Value-driven delivery and Value Stream Analysis
- Product backlog grooming
- Problem detection and resolution

What You Receive

- *PMI-ACP® Exam Prep 2nd Edition* by Mike Griffiths
- In-Depth Course Workbook
- Flash cards
- Hundreds of practice test questions