IPMA

international project management association

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ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATIONS

IPMA Level C: Certified Project Manager

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The Association for Project Management (APM) is the UK certificating body for the International Project Management Association (IPMA) and is validated to deliver IPMA accreditations at Levels A to D. This document outlines the specifications for the assessment methods for the IPMA Level C: Certified Project Manager qualification.

1. Context

All syllabuses for IPMA qualifications developed by APM are based on the *IPMA Individual Competence Baseline, version 4.0 (ICB4)*. IPMA Level C: Certified Project Manager requires candidates to demonstrate their ability to manage others through a project of moderate complexity using the application of project management knowledge and theory across all relevant competences.

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 exam covers seven competence elements, the report covers 17 competence elements and the interview covers four 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 the qualification. Candidates must demonstrate understanding of a minimum number of competence elements, specified in each assessment method, to be successful.

In examinations, candidates are tested against the assessment criteria in the syllabus. Successfully evidenced assessment criteria count towards demonstrating competence elements. Only the competence elements that candidates have successfully met contribute to the overall qualification. In addition, candidates must achieve a minimum of 60 per cent of the marks available to pass the exam.

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.

| Eligibility check |
| Application form |
| CV for initial certification |
| Executive summary report |
| Referees |

→ IPMA Level C: Certified Project Manager report → IPMA Level C: Certified Project Manager exam → IPMA Level C: Certified Project Manager interview

Candidates have 18 months to complete the qualification from the date of acceptance of their application. 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

Following an initial application, assessment has three components.

1. **Report:** a report, based on recent projects the candidate has worked on, should cover 17 competence elements from the ICB4. Candidates must score a minimum of 12 out of 17 to pass this stage.

2. **Examination:** the examination is based on learning outcomes and assessment criteria specified in the IPMA Level C: Certified Project Manager syllabus. It lasts two hours, including time to read all questions, and contains 12 compulsory questions covering seven competence elements from the ICB4. Candidates must achieve 60 per cent to pass this paper and score at least one mark per question.

3. **Interview:** an interview lasts up to 90 minutes covering four competence elements from the ICB4, plus further clarification on competence elements from the report if required.

All 28 competence elements are assessed; seven through the examination, 17 in the report and four in the interview. Assessors will also use the interview to ask candidates about elements of the report that need further clarification. To achieve an overall pass, candidates must provide satisfactory evidence against at least 23 competence elements by the end of the interview.

4. Report specification

Candidates are required to produce a report based on a project or projects they have worked on. The report will be based on the project(s) used by the candidate in their executive summary report. Candidates must achieve 12 points to pass this stage.

Below details the specification of the report.

- Maximum of 25 sides of A4.
- Font size 11.
- A maximum of 15 sides of A4 of supporting evidence as appendices.
- 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 C:
Certified Project Manager report

Unit	Learning outcome	Assessment criteria (ICB competence element)
2	1	1.1 and 1.2 (self-reflection and self-management)
2	2	2.3 and 2.4 (relationships and engagement)
2	3	3.6 and 3.7 (resourcefulness)
2	4	4.1 and 4.2 (conflict and crisis)
2	4	4.3 and 4.4 (negotiation)
3	3	3.1, 3.2 and 5.1 (procurement)
3	3	3.4, 3.5, 3.6 and 5.3 (planning and control)
3	4	4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 (risk and opportunity)
3	1	1.1 (requirements and objectives and benefits)
3	1	1.1, 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	5	3.3, 5.2 (quality)
2	3	3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 (leadership)
2	3	3.4 and 3.5 (teamwork)
2	4	3.8, 4.5 and 4.6 (results orientation)

5. Assessment coverage for IPMA Level C: Certified Project Manager examination

The composition of an IPMA Level C: Certified Project Manager examination paper is based on its syllabus and summarised in the table below.

Unit	Learning outcome	Assessment criteria (ICB competence element)
1	1	1.1, 1.2 (strategy)
1	1	1.3, 1.7 (governance, structure and process)
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, 4.3 (governance, structure and processes)
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)

■ Questions in the examination are randomised.

■ All assessment criteria have equal weighting.

■ Each question stands alone and does not provide the answer to another question on the paper or rely on an answer from another examination question in the paper.

■ Each question will address the assessment criteria detailed in section four and is worth five marks. It is designed to be read and understood in two minutes, and answered in eight.

■ Minimum coverage is defined in the candidate guidance.

6. Interview specification

The interview stage of the assessment is in the form of a professional discussion.

- 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 90 minutes.

- 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.

- 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 areas will be covered by professional discussion questions, along with other competence elements that require further clarification from the report.

Unit	Learning outcome	Assessment criteria (ICB competence element)
1	2	2.1 and 2.2 (power and interest)
1	2	2.3 and 2.4 (culture and values)
2	1	1.3 and 1.4 (personal integrity and reliability)
2	2	2.1 and 2.2 (personal communications)

7. Pass mark

- To pass, candidates must achieve a score of 60 per cent (36 out of 60) in the examination AND score at least one mark in each question. This will contribute up to seven competence elements to the final mark.

- To pass the report, candidates need to pass a minimum of 12 competence elements.

- There is no separate 'pass' of the interview: applicants need to demonstrate satisfaction of at least 23 of the 28 competence elements through the exam, report and interview to pass at IPMA Level C.

- Once awarded, the certification period lasts for five years.

Association for Project Management

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