

APM Project Management Qualification: Handbook

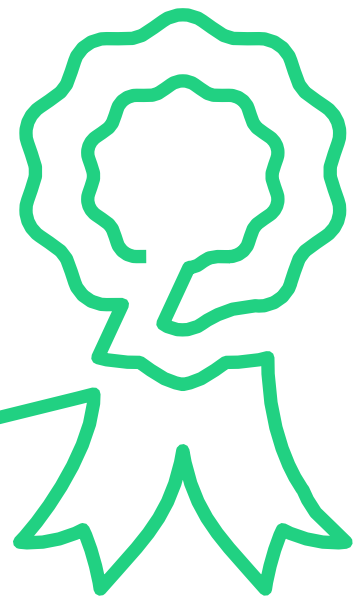


Table of Contents

1	Introduction	3
	a) Stakeholder input to the qualification	3
2	APM Project Management Qualification at a glance	3
3	What is a qualification handbook?	4
4	Why take the APM Project Management Qualification?	4
5	Qualification level and accreditation	4
6	Prior knowledge, understanding and experience	5
7	Studying for the qualification	5
	a) Study options	5
	b) Support materials	5
8	When can you study and sit the exam?	6
	a) Cancelling your exam	6
9	Learning hours	6
10	Ensuring equality, diversity and fairness	7
	a) Accessible exam model	7
	b) Reasonable adjustments	7
11	Qualification syllabus	8
	a) Introduction to the syllabus	8
	b) Relationship between the syllabus and the APM Competence Framework	8
	c) Relationship between the syllabus and the APM Body of Knowledge	9
	d) Qualification syllabus in detail	9
12	How is the qualification assessed?	14
	a) Exam format	14
	b) Language of the exam	15
	c) Exam coverage	15
	d) Question types	16
	e) Ensuring the validity of the exam	18
13	Completing your exam	18
	a) Preparing for the exam	18
	b) During the exam	18
	c) Navigating the exam	19
	d) Understanding questions in the exam	20
	e) Pilot questions	20
	f) Exam regulations	21
14	Award of the qualification	22
	a) Format and provision of results	22
	b) Assessment results enquiries and appeals	22
	c) Re-sitting the exam	22
	d) Setting the standard for the exam	23
15	Progression beyond this qualification	23

1 Introduction

The Association for Project Management (APM) is the only chartered membership organisation for the project profession in the world. Our activities raise the profile of the project profession, challenge the status quo where it matters and set the highest standards. In a complex world, we're helping the project profession deliver better. Because when projects succeed, society benefits.

Our range of project management qualifications are designed to support you throughout every stage of your career. The APM Project Management Qualification is the second step in our progressive suite of qualifications.

The APM Project Management Qualification is for project professionals who are looking to validate their knowledge or take a lead on bigger projects. It is designed to support you as you continue your project management career.

a) Stakeholder input to the qualification

We have developed this latest version of APM Project Management Qualification to incorporate feedback from our stakeholders. This includes input from:

- Past and present APM Project Management Qualification candidates.
- APM Corporate Partners.
- APM Accredited Training Providers.
- Project professionals.

2 APM Project Management Qualification at a glance

Prior experience	Candidates will likely have two to three years of experience as a project professional or be actively undertaking a project management apprenticeship or degree
Qualification level	SCQF Level 7 (equivalent to RQF Level 4)
Qualification structure	Aligns with the <i>APM Competence Framework</i>
Modes of study	Courses offered by APM Accredited Training Providers Self-study with open online exam
Total qualification time	Approximately 75 hours
Guided learning hours	Approximately 32 hours
Exam length	2.5 hours In two parts, with an optional break of up to 30 minutes in between
Exam model	The exam is completed online, in the Surpass platform The exam includes 40 questions, worth a total of 90 marks
Exam coverage	All learning objectives included in the APM Project Management Qualification syllabus
Question types	Multiple response (20 questions × 1 mark each) Select from list (5 questions × 2 marks each) Short response (5 questions × 2 marks each) Long response (10 questions × 5 marks each)
Availability	You may study for the qualification and complete your exam at any time of year, whenever you are ready
Assessment language	English
Recommended minimum standard of English	Equivalent to an International English Language Testing System score of 6.0 or higher

3 What is a qualification handbook?

This qualification handbook includes all the key information that you need to know about the APM Project Management Qualification. This includes time commitments, accreditations, prior knowledge and possible next steps.

The main components are the syllabus and logistical details for the qualification. Learning outcomes in the syllabus provide a high-level overview of the knowledge or skills that you are likely to possess once you have successfully completed the qualification.

The handbook also provides details of the exam that you will complete at the end of the qualification, and how you will be assessed within the exam. The exam is how you demonstrate that you have achieved the learning outcomes for the qualification.

4 Why take the APM Project Management Qualification?

Being the best project professional requires ongoing learning. Our qualifications enable you to do just that, with the opportunity for professional development taking your expertise to the next level. Completing one of our qualifications shows your commitment to becoming a better project professional and delivering better project outcomes.

The APM Project Management Qualification is designed for people who already have some knowledge, understanding or experience of project management and are looking to move deeper into a project management career.

The aims of the qualification are to support you in:

- Further developing your project management knowledge.
- Consolidating what you already know.

The qualification is intended to help you achieve a broad understanding of all areas of project management that will support you when you are involved in projects from individual assignments through to large capital projects. You'll learn how project management elements interact and how projects fit into a strategic and commercial environment.

5 Qualification level and accreditation

Our qualifications are recognised both nationally and internationally. The APM Project Management Qualification is recognised on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). This means that it's been externally validated by an independent body.

The level of a qualification shows how difficult the learning is. The APM Project Management Qualification is accredited at Level 7 on the SCQF. This is the first level for higher education qualifications on the framework. Job roles at SCQF Level 7 may involve responsibility for implementing or supervising complex services within a defined, familiar or supervised structure.

SCQF Level 7 is equivalent in difficulty to:

- Level 4 on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), which applies to England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- The lower end of Level 5 on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

6 Prior knowledge, understanding and experience

The APM Project Management Qualification is designed for people who already have some knowledge, understanding or experience of project management and are looking to move deeper into a project management career. If you're a practising project professional, have taken some project management qualifications, or just want to refine your understanding of project management then this qualification is right for you. It's also the ideal next step for anyone holding the APM Project Fundamentals Qualification.

There are no specific requirements for experience or other qualifications that you must have before studying for the APM Project Management Qualification. However, you will most likely:

- Be working in a project environment.
- Have two to three years of experience as a project professional or be actively undertaking a project management apprenticeship or degree.
- Be looking to progress your career and improve your employability.
- Be interested in learning about all areas of project management and not a particular methodology.

If you don't already have any of the experiences referred to above, you might want to take our APM Project Fundamentals Qualification before studying for the APM Project Management Qualification.

7 Studying for the qualification

a) Study options

There are two study options for the APM Project Management Qualification:

- Study with an APM Accredited Training Provider.
- Self-study with an open online exam.

Our Accredited Training Providers offer the qualification in many different formats including classroom, e-learning, distance learning, public and in-house courses. **Information on our website** will help you to find the training provider and course that is right for you.

The self-study option is known as the '**APM Project Management Qualification open online exam**'; it is an exam-only route. This option is perfect if you want to gain a broad understanding of the principles of the profession, but don't require training. It allows you to complete your studies independently and then complete the exam at any time and place that suits you. It is available all year round.

The self-study route is suitable if you:

- Already hold the APM Project Fundamentals Qualification.
- Are looking to re-take the exam.
- Are an international project management candidate, who is studying in a location where training may not be available.
- Want to self-study.
- Have some pre-existing project management knowledge.

b) Support materials

We have developed a study pack for the APM Project Management Qualification. This study pack will be particularly useful if you are following the self-study route. (Available in Summer 2024)

Other resources that will help to support your study for the qualification are:

- **The APM Competence Framework**, which is available in an interactive format on our website.
- **The APM Body of Knowledge**, which is available to purchase via our bookshop and is also available as a free PDF download for APM members.

If you're studying with an APM Accredited Training Provider, your course will be accompanied by study materials developed by your training provider. Your APM Accredited Training Provider will be able to advise if you would also benefit from accessing any of the other resources listed in this section.

8 When can you study and sit the exam?

The APM Project Management Qualification is available 24 hours a day, throughout the year.

If you'd like to study with an APM Accredited Training Provider, please see the **information on our website** for details of start dates for the different courses on offer. Your APM Accredited Training Provider will advise you of the date, venue/online platform and timing of your exam.

If you're following the self-study route, you will need to book your open online exam directly with us, for a time and place that suits you. Further details about the open online exam, including booking your exam, are available on **our website**.

a) Cancelling your exam

A fee will be charged if you cancel your examination or do not attend as scheduled.

Cancellations made fewer than five calendar days before the examination date will incur a cancellation fee.

Failure to attend the examination on the day, without prior notice (a "no-show"), will result in the full examination fee being charged.

If you are unable to attend your examination, you must notify your APM Accredited Training Provider immediately, as they are the only party authorised to cancel your booking.

If you are sitting an Open online examination, please contact APM directly.

Details of the cancellation fees are available from the **APM Qualifications Team**.

9 Learning hours

We've worked with our APM Accredited Training Providers to get an accurate understanding of the average amount of time that candidates will need to commit to completing the qualification:

- 75 hours is the average total time needed to study, revise for and complete the exam (also referred to as *Total Qualification Time*).
- 2.5 hours is the length of the exam. You can take an optional break of up to 30 minutes in the middle of your exam.
- 32 hours is the typical amount of tutor input on a taught course (also referred to as *Guided Learning Hours*). This is generally delivered via a 5-day workshop.
- If you're completing a taught course, you will need to complete some independent study in addition to the tutor-taught input.
- All candidates should spend some time preparing for the exam.

10 Ensuring equality, diversity and fairness

a) Accessible exam model

We work hard to ensure that our qualifications are as fair and as accessible as possible for **all** our candidates. The Equality Act 2010 sets out the principles by which our exams and associated question development activities are conducted.

We are committed to making sure that our exams:

- Use appropriate means to allow all candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of project management.
- Provide opportunities for all candidates to achieve, irrespective of gender, age, disability or special educational need, social, linguistic or cultural backgrounds.
- Assess content that is familiar to candidates whose studies have followed the APM Project Management Qualification syllabus and for which they are adequately prepared.
- Are free from stereotyping and discrimination in any form.

b) Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments can be made to the exam conditions in place for the APM Project Management Qualification. Reasonable adjustments are used to support you if you are experiencing a short- or long-term condition or are regarded as disabled in terms of the Equality Act 2010. All reasonable adjustments are made on an individual basis and will vary from person to person, according to each individual's specific needs.

Examples of reasonable adjustments include:

- i. Extra time and/or additional rest breaks.
- ii. Use of a text reader or screen reader.
- iii. Use of a scribe or reader.
- iv. Permission to submit handwritten exam scripts.
- v. Permission to use specialist equipment.

i) Application process

All reasonable adjustment requests must be submitted to the **Reasonable Adjustments Team** at least 12 working days before your exam date.

We will consider each request on an individual basis. We will confirm any agreed reasonable adjustments within five working days of receiving your application. However, it may take longer if you do not include the required supporting documentation with your application.

Each agreed adjustment will apply for a period of six months, unless otherwise specified.

ii) Supporting documentation

You must include current supporting documentation with any request for a reasonable adjustment.

An example of acceptable documentation is a full diagnostic assessment carried out by a psychologist with a practising certificate, or a specialist teacher holding an assessment practising certificate.

If you are applying on other grounds, please provide a letter or report from a qualified medical professional, such as a GP, or a psychiatrist. All documentation must be signed and dated. Documents should include details of the diagnosis given, the symptoms you experience and how these could impact upon your ability to undertake the assessment.

Supporting documentation should also include recommendations for reasonable adjustments for your exam, from both you and the medical professional. Evidence from an employer confirming usual ways of working should also be provided, if relevant.

For further information on acceptable documentation, or for any related queries, please contact the **APM Qualifications Team**.

11 Qualification syllabus

a) Introduction to the syllabus

This syllabus provides an overview of the content covered within the APM Project Management Qualification. Content is grouped into the four main areas within the **APM Competence Framework**:

- Setting up for success
- Preparing for change
- People and behaviours
- Planning, management and deployment

The order of these areas reflects the stages that you move through in the delivery of a project.

The syllabus includes the relevant competences from the **APM Competence Framework** for each of these four areas. There is a learning objective for each of these competences, which provides an overview of the learning associated with the competence. Learning outcomes provide a greater level of detail regarding the knowledge and understanding that you will have acquired once you have completed the qualification. The wording of each learning outcome indicates your expected proficiency level for this aspect of the competence.

The focus of this syllabus is on providing you with information on the areas of content that you will learn during your study for this qualification. Details of how this learning will be assessed are covered in the next section of this handbook.

b) Relationship between the syllabus and the *APM Competence Framework*

The **APM Competence Framework** provides information about the competences that are required for effective project, programme and portfolio management. It aims to reflect both current good practice and the future needs of the profession and provides a benchmark for all those engaged in change initiatives.

The framework consists of 29 competences, each based around outcomes that project professionals need to achieve. The APM Project Management Qualification covers the 24 competences that are most relevant to you in your role as a project manager. You can find more information about the [APM Competence Framework](#) on our website.

Syllabus content is ordered by competence, so that you can easily see how your learning for this qualification directly contributes to improving your level of performance across the **APM Competence Framework**. Learning outcomes for some of the competences are quite similar; in these instances we've combined learning outcomes for the related competences to help you better understand their interconnected nature.

Wording of each learning outcome in the syllabus indicates the level of proficiency that you are expected to have achieved once you have successfully completed the APM Project Management Qualification. However, we recognise that there's considerable variation in project management roles across different organisations. Both your study for the qualification and the practical experience that you gain from your role will influence your level of proficiency. Passing the exam doesn't require that you complete all questions correctly; it will be possible for you to demonstrate a lower level of proficiency for some competences than the levels indicated in the syllabus, and still pass the exam.

c) Relationship between the syllabus and the *APM Body of Knowledge*

The *APM Body of Knowledge* reflects the role of project-based working in achieving objectives for change at strategic and operational levels. It's intended for anyone who is interested in understanding more about achieving beneficial change through project-based working.

Key features include:

- An extended project life cycle structure.
- Topics covering iterative and linear life cycles, personal wellbeing, PMOs and other strategic functions.
- Recommended reading materials, including APM publications.
- A comprehensive glossary of key terminology.

The content of the **APM Competence Framework** aligns to the **APM Body of Knowledge**.

You should not use the *APM Body of Knowledge* as a study guide for the APM Project Management Qualification, as not everything in the APM Body of Knowledge will be covered in the qualification. Nevertheless, you will find it to be a useful reference tool, which you can use to support your study for the qualification. Questions in the exam will align with terminology and processes included within the *APM Body of Knowledge*.

d) Qualification syllabus in detail

The qualification syllabus is based on the *APM Competence Framework*. Learning objectives provide a high-level summary of the learning associated with the competence. Learning outcomes reflect the competence criteria that are relevant to APM Project Management Qualification. Learning objectives are numbered sequentially, rather than following the numbering in the *APM Competence Framework*.

Similar competence criteria from the *APM Competence Framework*, are combined within a single learning outcome in the syllabus. This approach is intended to make your study for the qualification more manageable. It'll also help you to appreciate the interconnectedness of the knowledge and understanding associated with the different competences.

Learning objective	Learning outcome
Setting up for success	
1) Life cycles Understand the distinct life cycle stages used to structure and organise a project.	a) Understand the distinctive features of linear, iterative and hybrid life cycles (including why projects are structured as phases in linear life cycles) and know when each is applicable.
	b) Knowledge of the differences between a project life cycle and an extended life cycle.
	c) Understand how the context and culture of an organisation, and the needs of a specific project, influence the choice of life cycle and any adaptations that may be needed to the life cycle.
	d) Knowledge of the strengths and limitations of different life cycles.

Learning objective	Learning outcome
<p>2) Governance arrangements Understand governance structures as a framework of authority and accountability for the delivery of a project, which align with organisational practice.</p>	<p>a) Knowledge of different types of permanent and temporary organisation structures and their features (including functional, matrix, and project). and Know that an organisation’s governance approach will inform the approach used for a project.</p>
	<p>b) Understand why there are distinct roles within project management and know the responsibilities of each role (including users, project team members, the project manager, the project steering group/board and the product owner). and Understand the differences in responsibilities of the project manager and project sponsor throughout the project.</p>
	<p>c) Understand why aspects of project management governance are required (such as the use of policies, regulations, functions, processes, procedures and delegated responsibilities). and Understand the impact of a project’s life cycle on its governance framework and the limits of financial authority.</p>
	<p>d) Understand the importance of linking projects to an organisation’s objectives.</p>
<p>3) Sustainability Understand sustainability as balancing the environmental, social, economic and administrative considerations that will impact a project.</p>	<p>a) Understand why sustainability responsibilities, principles and priorities are considered within a project and the impact they may have.</p>
	<p>b) Knowledge of how sustainability measures are monitored and reported on.</p>
<p>4) Business case Understand a business case as the justification for the initiation, investment and/or continuation of a project in terms of benefits, costs and risks.</p>	<p>a) Knowledge of the tools and techniques used to determine factors which influence and impact a project’s business case (including PESTLE, SWOT and VUCA).</p>
	<p>b) Understand the importance of regularly reviewing the impact of any changes in a project to the business case. and Know that the business case forms the baseline for the project.</p>
<p>Preparing for change</p>	
<p>5) Procurement Understand procurement as securing the provision of resources, choosing strategies for obtaining best value from supply chains.</p>	<p>a) Understand the purpose and importance of a procurement strategy. and Know the typical contents of a procurement strategy.</p>
	<p>b) Know the stages of a supplier selection process, including how to plan the procurement process and conduct negotiations (for example ZOPA, BATNA and ‘Win Win’).</p>
	<p>c) Know the features of different contractual relationships. and Understand why different methods of supplier reimbursement are used and when it is appropriate to use them (including fixed price, cost plus fee, per unit quantity and target cost).</p>

Learning objective	Learning outcome
<p>6) Reviews Understand reviews as a way of gathering information to provide an assessment on the status of a project and the ongoing viability of the work.</p>	<p>a) Understand the benefits of conducting reviews throughout the life cycle (including decision gates, benefits reviews and audits).</p> <p>b) Know the factors which would typically be reported on to help ensure successful project outcomes.</p> <p>c) Understand the importance of producing information and collecting data to inform decision making and communicate actions and decisions to stakeholders.</p> <p>d) Understand why activities may be re-planned after a review.</p>
<p>7) Assurance Understand assurance as the ability to provide confidence to the governance board that a project is on track to deliver objectives.</p>	<p>a) Know the purpose of assurance within a project; including awareness of the scope, priorities and strategic aims of assurance activities.</p>
<p>8) Transition management Understand transition management as integration of the outputs of a project into business-as-usual.</p>	<p>a) Know the basic requirements needed to support a successful transition, including considering business-as-usual throughout a project and planning for transition from the outset of the project.</p> <p>b) Understand the importance of knowledge transfer in the transition process; this includes learning from experience and continuous improvement.</p> <p>c) Understand how to engage stakeholders to agree a transition plan, including transfer of risks.</p>
<p>9) Benefits management Understand benefits management as monitoring of benefits realisation throughout a project.</p>	<p>a) Understand what is meant by benefits management (including identification, definition, planning, tracking and realisation).</p> <p>b) Understand the importance of aligning benefits with strategic objectives and ways in which the benefits of a project can be communicated to stakeholders.</p>
People and behaviours	
<p>10) Stakeholder engagement and communication management Understand stakeholder engagement and communication management as the ability to work with people internally and externally to achieve intended outcomes.</p>	<p>a) Understand the relationship between stakeholder analysis, influence and engagement.</p> <p>b) Understand the relationship between stakeholder analysis and an effective communication management plan.</p> <p>c) Understand the benefits to a project of a communication plan.</p> <p>d) Understand the importance of managing stakeholder expectations to the success of the project.</p> <p>e) Know the range of communication methods available and Understand the importance of tailoring messaging to meet stakeholder requirements.</p> <p>f) Know the factors which can positively or negatively affect communication.</p>
<p>11) Conflict resolution Understand conflict resolution as the ability to identify and address differences between individuals and/or interest groups.</p>	<p>a) Know the sources of conflict within a project.</p> <p>b) Understand that conflict can have both positive and negative impacts within a project.</p> <p>c) Know ways in which conflict can be addressed in different situations (such as Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument).</p>

Learning objective	Learning outcome
12) Leadership Understand leadership as ways to empower and inspire others to deliver successful projects.	a) Understand how leadership impacts on team performance and motivation (using models such as Maslow, Herzberg and McGregor).
	b) Understand why it may be necessary to change leadership styles depending upon the situation.
	c) Understand the importance of a coaching and mentoring style in leadership, and the role of emotional intelligence.
13) Team management Understand team management as the ability to work with team members to create and sustain teams.	a) Know the different stages in the development of a team, including creation, development, maintenance and leadership, and understand the factors which influence these stages. and Knowledge of the models that are used to understand team development (such as Belbin, Margerison McCann, Myers-Briggs, Hackman, Tuckman, Katzenbach and Smith).
	b) Know the characteristics and benefits of effective teams and teamwork.
	c) Understand why different leadership approaches are needed to support virtual and hybrid teams.
14) Diversity and inclusion Understand diversity and inclusion as the ability to build and maintain an inclusive environment that embraces a diverse culture.	a) Knowledge of diversity, including characteristics which may cause a person to be treated less favourably, such as: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
	b) Understand why incorporating diversity into all parts of a project, from team members to customers, is a factor in creating a positive working environment. and Understand the importance of embracing diverse thinking in teams as a means of generating innovative solutions.
	c) Understand how conscious and unconscious bias can affect actions. and Know how to treat people fairly, including adapting behaviours to support individuals' needs and facilitate their contributions.
15) Ethics, compliance and professionalism Understand ethics, compliance and professionalism as the ability to work consistently in a moral, legal and socially responsible manner.	a) Understand the importance of continuing professional development, which should cover both knowledge, skills and behaviours, and the individual's role in identifying and addressing their own competence gaps.
	b) Knowledge of the sources of specialist advice and standards that need to be adhered to.
	c) Understand the impact of the legal and regulatory landscape on projects (such as the impact on working conditions, risk management, governance and sustainability).
Planning and managing deployment	
16) Requirements management Understand requirements management as the ability to capture and monitor the requirements of a project.	a) Understand how to establish scope through requirements management processes (such as gather, analysis, justifying requirements and baseline needs).
	b) Understand how to manage scope through configuration management processes (such as planning, identification, control, status accounting and verification audit).

Learning objective	Learning outcome
17) Solutions development Understand solutions development as the ability to determine the optimal solution to satisfy agreed requirements.	a) Understand how to evaluate and prioritise requirements in order to deliver the optimal solution. and Understand the different approaches for different life cycle models, e.g. the use of MVP and MMP in iterative life cycles.
18) Quality management Understand quality management as the ability to ensure that outputs are delivered in accordance with requirements.	a) Understand what is meant by quality planning, including an understanding of quality indicators and how these relate to the business case.
	b) Knowledge of how quality control techniques are used to determine whether success criteria are met.
19) Integrated planning Understand integrated planning as the ability to incorporate multiple plans and processes into an integrated project management plan.	a) Know the format for an effective integrated project management plan and its typical contents.
	b) Understand the importance of producing an integrated project management plan.
20) Schedule management Understand schedule management as the ability to undertake time-based planning with an emphasis on activities and resource.	a) Know how to define scope in terms of outputs, outcomes and benefits (including use of product, work and cost breakdown structures).
	b) Understand there are links and dependencies between activities within a project and business-as-usual activities, for example business-as-usual activities, costs, quality, risks and scope can all impact the schedule for the project.
	c) Understand the reasons for and benefits of re-estimating, and schedule optimisation, throughout the project life cycle.
21) Resource management Understand resource management as the ability to identify and schedule the required internal and external resources.	a) Know how to determine the resources required and their availability to deliver activities within a project.
	b) Understand how an organisational breakdown structure is used to create a responsibility assignment matrix (RACI).
	c) Understand how resources are categorised and allocated to both linear and iterative life cycle schedules.
	d) Know the differences between resource smoothing and resource levelling.
22) Budgeting and cost control Understand budgeting and cost control as the ability to estimate costs, develop and agree budgets and monitor actual costs against forecast costs.	a) Know how to create a budget (including the use of a cost breakdown structure) and the different costs included in a budget (fixed, variable, direct, indirect etc.)
	b) Know how to forecast and refine budgets using cost control techniques e.g. earned value.
	c) Know how to monitor and report financial performance (including different types of financial reports).
	d) Know how to close down finances at the end of a project.

Learning objective	Learning outcome
23) Risk and issue management Understand risk and issue management as the ability to identify and monitor risks (threats and opportunities); plan responses to those risks and respond to issues.	a) Understand the benefits of risk and issue management and the role of contingency planning in projects.
	b) Understand the purpose and importance of each stage in a risk management process (such as identification, analysis, monitoring, escalation, response and closure) and an issue management process (such as logging and analysis, escalation, and assignment of actions). and Understand why these stages are different for linear and iterative life cycles.
	c) Know proactive and reactive responses to risks (such as avoid, reduce, transfer or accept and exploit, enhance, share or reject).
	d) Understand why governance is important in risk and issue management.
24) Change control Understand change control as the ability to manage variations and change requests in a controlled way.	a) Understand the purpose and importance of each stage of a typical change control process (such as request, initial evaluation, detailed evaluation, recommendation, update plans and implement). and Understand where these stages are different for linear and iterative life cycles.
	b) Know what should be captured and recorded in change requests.
	c) Know ways to assess options related to a proposed change and the high-level impact of the proposed change.
	d) Understand how to justify recommendations about whether to approve, reject or defer changes.
	e) Understand the importance of updating plans and schedules to reflect and communicate changes.

12 How is the qualification assessed?

a) Exam format

The exam is completed online in the Surpass platform. It has a time limit of 2.5 hours and is split into two parts. You can take a break of up to 30 minutes between parts, if you want to. The break time will be in addition to the 2.5 hour exam time.

The exam is in the following format:

- Introduction and instruction pages.
- Section 1: GPDR, employer and county selection.
- Section 2: Live examination – Part A.
- Section 3: Live examination – Part B.
- Section 4: Survey questions (if applicable).

There are 40 questions in the exam, worth a total of 90 marks.

You should attempt every question in the exam.

b) Language of the exam

Exams are delivered and assessed in English.

It's important that you have an appropriate level of English language skills, to be successful in the qualification.

If your English is at a standard equivalent to one of the following then you should be able to successfully engage with the qualification:

- An International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score of 6.0 or higher.
- A Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic) of 51 or higher.
- A Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) level B2 or higher.
- A Test of English as a Foreign Language Internet-Based Test (TOEFL iBT) score of 76 or higher.

c) Exam coverage

All the learning objectives in the syllabus for the APM Project Management Qualification will be assessed in your exam. Questions can assess all the learning outcomes for each learning objective, although there will not be a question on every learning outcome in each exam.

Some questions will assess your knowledge of different aspects of the syllabus. Other questions will include a simple scenario and you will be asked to demonstrate your understanding of how a certain aspect of the syllabus applies to the scenario. Questions for each competence area will include both knowledge questions and understanding questions.

This table indicates the amount of your exam that will focus on each competence area. Questions in the exam will be in a random order; they will not be ordered as shown here.

Competence area	Learning objective	Exam coverage
A. Setting up for success	1. Life cycles	15 – 20%
	2. Governance arrangements	
	3. Sustainability	
	4. Business case	
B. Preparing for change	5. Procurement	15 – 20%
	6. Reviews	
	7. Assurance	
	8. Transition management	
	9. Benefits management	
C. People and behaviours	10. Stakeholder engagement and communication management	25 – 35%
	11. Conflict resolution	
	12. Leadership	
	13. Team management	
	14. Diversity and inclusion	
	15. Ethics, compliance and professionalism	

Competence area	Learning objective	Exam coverage
D. Planning and managing deployment	16. Requirements management	30 – 40%
	17. Solutions development	
	18. Quality management	
	19. Integrated planning	
	20. Schedule management	
	21. Resource management	
	22. Budgeting and cost control	
	23. Risk and issue management	
	24. Change control	

d) Question types

Your exam will include these question types:

- **Multiple response:** for these questions you'll be presented with a list of possible answer options. Sometimes more than one option will be correct. Sometimes the question will tell you how many answer options to select and sometimes you'll need to work this out for yourself. You answer the question by clicking to select the correct combination of answer options. These questions are each worth 1 mark. There'll be 20 of these questions in your exam.

A pharmaceutical company is developing a life-saving new drug which requires a specific raw ingredient, how would a procurement strategy support the election of an appropriate supplier?

1. To manage the cost of the ingredient
2. To ensure bulk savings are achieved by using existing suppliers
3. To ensure the quality assurance of ingredient is defined
4. To ensure the project completes within the specified timeframe
5. To manage potential supply chain risks
6. To create a short term saving to the project

(1 mark)

Select **one** correct combination of the above statements:

- a. 1, 4, 6
- b. 2, 5, 6
- c. 1, 3, 5
- d. 3, 5, 6

- **Select from list:** for these questions you'll be shown a passage of text. Some words or phrases will be missing from the text. For each missing word or phrase, you'll need to click on a drop-down list to select the correct option to complete the text. These questions are each worth 2 marks. There'll be 5 of these questions in your exam.

An online retailer is redeveloping their website and are using a linear life cycle. During the project the retailer requests several improvements to the website which were not in the original specification. The project manager will require technical specifications for the change _____

- At the point of request
- During the detailed evaluation stage**
- During the decision-making stage
- During the recommendation stage

The Project Manager insists on all the improvements being logged as a change request to _____

- Ensure alignment to the project's scope**
- Encourage changes based on user feedback
- Inform stakeholders of project progress
- Redefine implementation timelines

(2 marks)

- **Short response:** For these questions you'll need to type your answer. Answers will be either a single word, phrase or sentence. These questions are each worth 2 marks. There'll be 5 of these questions in your exam.

You have received a change request during a project that you are managing. List two pieces of information that you would require during the detailed evaluation stage of the change control process.

- **Long response:** For these questions you'll need to type your answer. Answers will be a few sentences or a short paragraph. These questions are each worth 5 marks. There'll be 10 of these questions in your exam.

A software company is creating a new mobile application. They are exploring the options of using a linear life cycle versus an iterative life cycle.

What considerations should they give to how the risk management process in the identification stage will differ between these life cycles?

Your response should consider:

- The differences between the identification stages in iterative and linear life cycles
- The advantages and disadvantages of both approaches

How you respond to long response questions will influence the number of marks you're awarded. If your answer is not clear and/or its content is disjointed, it will be difficult for the marker to be confident that you've demonstrated appropriate knowledge and understanding.

Answers should be structured in an order that reflects the instructions in the question. Markers need to be able to understand what it is you're saying so they can determine if you have provided a relevant response.

To answer short response and long response questions, use the text box below the question. The text box has similar formatting to Microsoft Word, and you have the following options:

- Change font size.
- Change the font to: bold, italic, underline.
- Align the text to: left, centre, right.
- Indent the text.

Questions for each competence area may be assessed using any of these question types.

e) Ensuring the validity of the exam

We've developed a robust bank of questions from which the APM Project Management Qualification exams are selected. We regularly review the bank and develop new questions to ensure that the qualification continues to reflect advances in project management and incorporate any updates to the syllabus.

Before deciding on the final question types to include in the exam, we piloted a wider range of question types. We used statistical data on how the different question types performed, along with feedback from the people who completed the pilot exams, to help us make the final decision on the question types to be included in your exam.

All our question writers have been trained in how to write questions, for each of the question types in the exam, using materials developed by assessment experts at Cambridge University Press and Assessment. Once questions have been written they are reviewed by a panel of senior personnel before they are included in the question bank.

All APM Project Management Qualification exams are selected using a blueprint which specifies the number of questions to be selected from each competence area, the number of each question type, the number of knowledge-based questions and the number of questions set in context. The blueprint also controls the overall difficulty of each exam.

13 Completing your exam

a) Preparing for the exam

Before the day of the exam you should:

1. Familiarise yourself with the format of the exam.
 - Practise using the **sample exam** available on our website.
2. Be comfortable with all the arrangements for the exam.
 - Preparing in advance will allow your focus to remain on the exam and not the technology used to deliver the exam.
 - Make sure you know how to access the exam and how to enter your answers for the different question types.
3. Save the information with your link to the exam and login information to your computer desktop. This will help you to find them easily on the day of the exam. This information will be sent to you by your APM Accredited Training Provider or directly by us.

b) During the exam

The exam has a time limit of 2.5 hours, not including the break, and is split into two parts. You can take a break of up to 30 minutes between parts, if you want to. Please note that when you've completed the first part of the exam, you will not be able to go back and edit your answers from that part of the exam.

During your break it is okay to leave the room, for example to make a cup of coffee or use the toilet. You may leave the room for the entirety of the break. If you don't want a break, or don't need the full 30 minutes for your break, you may resume the exam as soon as you are ready. For classroom invigilated exams, you will have a compulsory 30 minute break for the whole cohort. This will be between each part of the exam.

During the exam you should:

- Follow the guidance provided by the invigilator or on screen.
- Perform a security check before the start of the exam, when you are asked to do so.
- Enter a keycode to start the exam. You will be provided with this at the start of the exam, either onscreen or by an invigilator.
- Not behave in a way that could distract or annoy other candidates, or the invigilator.
- Not navigate away from the exam delivery page or have any other application open.
- Not leave the proctor examination page if taking your examination remotely.

- Not copy any exam questions or your answers in any way.
- Return any notes to the invigilator at the end of the exam, if you are completing the exam in a classroom setting. If you are completing the exam online, please tear all notes up in front of the camera at the end of the exam, when the invigilator tells you to do so.

c) Navigating the exam

During the exam, your progress and time remaining for the exam are displayed in a progress chart at the top of the screen*. The timer will show the full duration of the exam, and not only the first or second part. You can take the break whenever you are ready to submit the 20 questions in the first section of the exam, but please note you cannot then return to those questions.

You may answer the question in each section, in any order using various methods.

- If you repeatedly click the next button, you will progress through the exam forwards from the beginning to the end of the current exam section, one question at a time. The back button is available for going in the other direction.
- If you highlight a question number tab on the left-hand side of the screen it will take you to that specific question.
- You can also use the section review tab at the bottom of the screen. A panel will pop-up on the screen, which you can lock to your screen by using the padlock icon, you can then filter by:
 - Unattempted
 - Attempted
 - Flagged
- You can **flag a question** if you wish to return to it at any point during the current section of the exam.
- You should refer to the 'Question types' section of this Handbook for details of how to enter your answers for the different question types.
- At the end of the first section, once you have answered all the questions and checked your answers, you should click the **Finish** button to submit your answers. If you haven't un-flagged some of the questions, you will be asked if you still wish to submit. You'll also be warned that you haven't answered all the questions. **Please note that when you submit the first section, and stop for the break, you cannot return to the questions in the first section.**
- At the end of the second section, once you have answered all the questions and checked your answers, you should click the **Finish** button to submit your answers. If you haven't un-flagged some of the questions, you will be asked if you still wish to submit. You'll also be warned that you haven't answered all the questions.
- At the end of your second section, your exam will automatically be submitted once you have confirmed you wish to finish. If your exam time allowance expires, your exam will automatically be submitted.

*If you've been awarded extra time, the additional time will show in the time remaining display.

d) Understanding questions in the exam

Questions in your exam will include a range of difficulties.

During your exam, take time to read each question carefully before you give your answer. If you rush, you may miss a key point in the question and answer incorrectly as a result.

Some of the questions in your exam will include **command verbs** within the question wording. These command verbs will help you to work out what you need to do to answer the question. A command verb is simply an instruction to do something.

This table includes examples of command verbs that may appear in your exam and explains how to respond to questions where they appear:

Question type	Verb(s)	How to respond in exam
Multiple response	Select / Choose	Select the answer option or combination of answer options that you think are correct.
Select from list	Select / Choose	Click on a 'select from list' symbol to open a list of options and then click your preferred option to select it.
Short response (word, phrase or sentence)	Give / List / State / Provide / Identify	These command verbs will typically indicate when you need to input a single word or phrase, or a list of words or phrases, to answer the question. If more than one word or phrase is required there will be a separate answer space for each.
Long response (short paragraph)		You will typically need to respond with a short paragraph addressing the points requested. The size of the answer space will indicate the length of answer that is expected.
	Differentiate	Your response should include details of how the areas in the question are different.
	Describe / Explain	Your response should include details of the key characteristics, qualities or events for the area in the question.
	Interpret	Your response should explain the meaning of the area in the question, in the given context.
	Outline	Your response should include the main points or characteristics for the area in the question.

e) Pilot questions

Sometimes we will pilot new questions in the exam to help us see if they are suitable for use in future exams. You won't know which questions are the pilot questions and you will not be awarded any marks for them. They won't count towards your final score.

f) Exam regulations

The following rules on conduct apply to **all** candidates attending an APM exam:

- You are required to provide photo evidence of your identity, immediately before the start of the exam.
- You are not permitted to be in the possession of any materials, such as mobile phones (except for remote invigilation where mobile phones are needed), tablets, smart watches, headphones, earphones, equipment, notes, books or other papers at any time during an exam.
- You are required to comply with all instructions that are given before and during the exam, either from the invigilator or on screen. If you don't, your examination could be voided.
- If applicable you are required to comply with decisions made by the invigilator/remote invigilator. They are required to report all cases of irregularity or improper conduct to APM. They are also empowered to end your exam if you are suspected of misconduct and to exclude you from the remainder of the exam.
- Behaviour that is considered inappropriate or abusive to the invigilator/remote invigilator is **not** permitted.
- The copying or reproduction of APM exam questions, your answers to questions or any exam materials anywhere or in any way is **not** permitted.
- Consulting any materials or people outside the room, during periods of authorised absence, while the exam is in progress is not permitted. This is not applicable during the defined break.
- You are not permitted to have any other webpages or applications open during your exam other than the exam delivery page, unless permission has been granted via a reasonable adjustment prior to the exam.
- You must not talk to, or attempt to communicate with, other candidates/individuals during the exam under any circumstances.

The following rules apply specifically if you are attending an APM exam in an **online setting**:

- Background music is not permitted during the exam.
- You are not permitted to have any other webpages or applications open during your exam other than the exam delivery page, unless permission has been granted via a reasonable adjustment prior to the exam.

The following rules apply specifically if you are attending an APM exam in a **classroom setting**:

- You need to arrive at the exam venue 30 minutes prior to the exam start time. Late arrivals will not be permitted entry into the exam room.
- You must not talk to, or attempt to communicate with, other candidates during the exam under any circumstances.
- Your classroom invigilator will confirm that the whole cohort will take a compulsory 30 minute break between each part of the exam.

Full **online exam rules and regulations** can be found on the APM website.

14 Award of the qualification

a) Format and provision of results

i) Examination scores

The pass mark for the APM Project Management Qualification will vary between exam versions to take account of slight differences in question difficulty between different exam versions.

The exam has a maximum score of 90 marks.

ii) Borderline results

If your overall score is a borderline fail (i.e. within 1 of the pass mark) it will automatically be re-marked.

The marker who re-marks your exam will check the marks awarded both for the questions that were originally marked by another marker and the questions that were automatically marked by the assessment system.

iii) Notification of results

You'll be advised of your results within eight weeks of completing your exam.

You'll be sent an email which confirms your result. If you're successful, you'll also be sent a PDF certificate and an email from our partner Credly to claim your digital badge.

If you studied with an APM Accredited Training Provider, they will also be notified of your result.

Please note that we cannot give out results over the telephone.

You will receive a breakdown of scores against the learning outcome. No additional feedback is provided.

b) Assessment results enquiries and appeals

By completing the assessment, you're confirming that you're fit to do so. We will not hear appeals about your well-being during the exam.

You can find further information on APM's Assessment Results Enquiry Process on the **APM website**.

c) Re-sitting the exam

If you need to re-sit the exam, you may:

- Re-sit through an APM Accredited Training Provider.
- Re-sit the online open exam.

To register for a re-sit you should:

- Contact your APM Accredited Training Provider.
- Contact qualifications@apm.org.uk, to register to complete the online open exam.

You can re-sit the exam at any time during the year.

All re-sits will use a different exam paper to your first APM Project Management Qualification exam.

d) Setting the standard for the exam

We use a modified Angoff method to set the standard for this qualification. This means that we work with a team of examiners and markers to set the pass mark for each exam paper.

Each exam paper we create includes different questions and may assess various parts of the syllabus. To ensure fairness, we avoid setting a consistent pass mark for all exams, as some versions may be a bit easier or more challenging than others. Therefore, you may see a different pass mark depending on which exam paper you sit.

During the standard setting process, a team of subject matter experts identify the minimal level of knowledge and understanding that they would expect to see in candidates who have successfully completed the APM Project Management Qualification.

Using well-established exam standard-setting processes, this minimal level of knowledge and understanding is compared with questions in the exam to convert it into the pass mark for the exam paper.

15 Progression beyond this qualification

Once you have successfully completed your APM Project Management Qualification, you may want to undertake further study, or find out more about some of the areas that you studied in the APM Project Management Qualification.

If you want to study project management at a higher level, the APM Project Professional Qualification might be the right qualification for you. Our [website](#) includes details of all our qualifications that we offer.

If you aren't already a member of APM, **becoming a member** is another next step to consider. We are the only chartered membership organisation for the project profession, and we have a community of more than 37,000 individual members and more than 450 corporate partnerships. All levels of membership include access to tools and resources that you can use to maintain and develop your understanding of project management.

Version control

Date	Version	Author	Reason for revision
June 2025	v1	Tracey Unwin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 b)i Reasonable adjustment email address updated • 13 b) Online classroom exam rules updated • 14 a)ii Borderline score updated • 14 a)iii Additional information added
April 2025	v2	Tracey Unwin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 d) Update to include 'gender assignment' in LO 14a Update to Body of Knowledge references to include 8th edition
January 2026	v3	Tracey Unwin	Update to clarify cancellation changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 6: 8) a)
April 2026	v4	Tracey Unwin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 a) Cancellation policy wording updated



**We are the only chartered membership
organisation for the project profession**

