Program Management Professional (PgMP)®

Examination Content Outline

Project Management Institute

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INTRODUCTION

The Project Management Institute (PMI®) offers a professional credential for program managers, known as the Program Management Professional (PgMP®). PMI's professional credentialing examination development processes stand apart from other project management certification examination development practices. PMI aligns its process with certification industry best practices, such as those found in the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*.

A key component of this process is that organizations wishing to offer valid and reliable professional credentialing examinations are directed to use a role delineation study (RDS) as the basis for the creation of the examination. This process utilizes knowledge and task driven guidelines to assess the practitioners' competence, and determine the level of salience, criticality, and frequency of each of the knowledge, tasks, and skills required to perform to the industry-wide standard in the role of a program manager.

The role delineation study ensures the validity of an examination. Validation assures the outcome of the exam is in fact measuring and evaluating appropriately the specific knowledge and skills required to function as a program management professional. Thus, the role delineation study guarantees that each examination validly measures all elements of the program management profession in terms of real settings.

PgMP credential holders can be confident that their professional credential has been developed according to best practices of test development and based upon input from the practitioners who establish those standards. Please see Appendix A for a detailed description of the process.

The PgMP examination is a vital part of the activities leading to earning a professional credential, thus it is imperative that the PgMP examination reflect accurately the practices of the program management professional. All the questions on the examination have been written and extensively reviewed by qualified PgMP credential holders and tracked to at least two academic references. These questions are mapped against the *PgMP Examination Content Outline* to ensure that an appropriate number of questions are in place for a valid examination.

PMI retained Professional Examination Service (PES) to develop the global *PgMP Examination Content Outline*. Since 1941, Professional Examination Service (PES) has provided a full range of assessment and advisory services to organizations across a broad range of professions, in support of professional licensure and certification, training, and continuing professional education. PES is dedicated to promoting the public welfare through credentialing as a mission-driven, not-for-profit organization.

Finally, while the *PgMP Examination Content Outline* and the *The Standard for Program Management* have commonalities, it is important to note that those involved in the study described previously were not bound by the *The Standard for Program Management*. They were

charged with defining the role of individuals leading and directing programs, and using their experience and pertinent resources to help in this task.

Many of the domains, tasks, knowledge, and skills outlined by the *PgMP Examination Content Outline* are new, revised, or reclassified in comparison to what is found in *The Standard for Program Management*. Candidates studying for the examination will certainly want to include the current edition of the *The Standard for Program Management* as one of their references, and would be well advised to read other current titles on program management.

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The task force developed a model that fundamentally restructured the then-existing delineation of program management practice. Accordingly, rather than mirroring the six life cycle domains utilized in the PMP model, the revised PgMP delineation comprises five domains of practice, including four new overarching domains and one domain incorporating life cycle tasks. The new framework provides a clear, concise, comprehensive, and contemporary description of program management practice and accurately reflects the higher-level business functions that are essential aspects of the program manager's job—regardless of size of organization, industry or business focus, and/or geographic location. The structure is organized as follows:

Domain 1: Strategic Program Management

Identifying opportunities and benefits that achieve the organization's strategic objectives through program implementation

Domain 2: Program Life Cycle

Activities related to:

- **Initiating.** Defining the program and constituent projects, and obtaining agreement from stakeholders

- **Planning.** Defining program scope and developing the program, including all constituent projects, and all activities that occur within the program

- **Executing.** Performing work necessary to achieve the program's objectives and deliver the program's benefits

- **Controlling.** Monitoring progress, updating program plans as required, managing change and risk

- **Closing.** Finalizing all program activities, including all constituent projects, executing transition plan, archiving, obtaining approvals, and reporting

Domain 3: Benefits Management

Defining, creating, maximizing, and sustaining the benefits provided by programs

Domain 4: Stakeholder Management

Capturing stakeholder needs and expectations, gaining and maintaining stakeholder support, and mitigating/channeling opposition

Domain 5: Governance

Establishing processes and procedures for maintaining proactive program management oversight and decision-making support for applicable policies and practices throughout the entire program life cycle

In addition to restructuring the domains, the task force revised existing tasks, developed new tasks, reviewed and restructured the knowledge and skills associated with each domain, and developed a core list of knowledge and skills applicable across all domains. The final model contains 72 tasks and 126 knowledge and skills.

EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE

The following table identifies the proportion of questions from each domain that will appear on the examination. These percentages are used to determine the number of questions related to each domain and task that should appear on the multiple-choice format examination.

Domain/Subdomain	% of Exam
I. Strategic Program Management (11 tasks)	15%
II. Program Life Cycle (35 tasks)	44%
• Initiating (6 tasks)	6%
• Planning (9 tasks)	11%
• Executing (9 tasks)	14%
• Controlling (6 tasks)	10%
• Closing (5 tasks)	3%
III. Benefits Management (8 tasks)	11%
IV. Stakeholder Management (7 tasks)	16%
V. Governance (11 tasks)	14%

The revised conceptual framework describing the work of program managers, including the four overarching domains of practice which impact the Program Life Cycle domain, was validated through this RDS. This new structure calls attention to the clear distinctions which exist between the jobs of PMP credential holders and PgMP credential holders, especially in the view of the critical importance to the profession of program management for the tasks associated with the new domains of Strategic Program Management, Benefits Management, Stakeholder Management, and Governance.

DOMAINS, TASKS, AND KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
OF PROGRAM MANAGERS

Domain I	Strategic Program Management
Task 1	Perform an initial program assessment by defining the program objectives, requirements, and risks in order to ensure program alignment with the organization's strategic plan, objectives, priorities, vision, and mission statement.
Task 2	Establish a high-level road map with milestones and preliminary estimates in order to obtain initial validation and approval from the executive sponsor.
Task 3	Define the high-level road map/framework in order to set a baseline for program definition, planning, and execution.
Task 4	Define the program mission statement by evaluating the stakeholders' concerns and expectations in order to establish program direction.
Task 5	Evaluate the organization's capability by consulting with organizational leaders in order to develop, validate, and assess the program objectives, priority, feasibility, readiness, and alignment to the organization's strategic plan.
Task 6	Identify organizational benefits for the potential program using research methods such as market analysis and high-level cost-benefit analysis in order to develop the preliminary program scope and define benefits realization plan.
Task 7	Estimate the high level financial and nonfinancial benefits of the program in order to obtain/maintain funding authorization and drive prioritization of projects within the program.
Task 8	Evaluate program objectives relative to regulatory and legal constraints, social impacts, sustainability, cultural considerations, political climate, and ethical concerns in order to ensure stakeholder alignment and program deliverability.
Task 9	Obtain organizational leadership approval for the program by presenting the program charter with its high-level costs, milestone schedule and benefits in order to receive authorization to initiate the program.
Task 10	Identify and evaluate integration opportunities and needs (for example, human capital and human resource requirements and skill sets, facilities, finance, assets, processes, and systems) within program activities and operational activities in order to align and integrate benefits within or across the organization.

Domain I	Strategic Program Management
Task 11	**Exploit strategic opportunities for change in order to maximize the realization of benefits for the organization.**
	Knowledge specific to Domain 1 *(*Indicates knowledge is found in one other domain, shown in parentheses)* • Business strategy • Business/organization objectives* (V) • Economic forecasting • Feasibility analysis • Financial measurement and management techniques • Funding models • Funding processes • Intellectual property laws and guidelines • Legal and regulatory requirements • Marketing • Portfolio management • Program and constituent project charter development* (II) • Program mission and vision • Public relations* (IV) • Requirement analysis techniques • Scenario analysis • Strategic planning and analysis* (II) • System implementation models and methodologies • Trend analysis

Domain II	Program Life Cycle
Initiating the Program	
Task 1	Develop program charter using input from all stakeholders, including sponsors, in order to initiate and design program and benefits.
Task 2	Translate strategic objectives into high-level program scope statements by negotiating with stakeholders, including sponsors, in order to create a program scope description.
Task 3	Develop a high-level milestone plan using the goals and objectives of the program, applicable historical information, and other available resources (for example, work breakdown structure (WBS), scope statements, benefits realization plan) in order to align the program with the expectations of stakeholders, including sponsors.
Task 4	Develop an accountability matrix by identifying and assigning program roles and responsibilities in order to build the core team and to differentiate between the program and project resources.
Task 5	Define standard measurement criteria for success for all constituent projects by analyzing stakeholder expectations and requirements across the constituent projects in order to monitor and control the program.
Task 6	Conduct program kick-off with key stakeholders by holding meetings in order to familiarize the organization with the program and obtain stakeholder buy-in.

Domain II	Program Life Cycle

Planning the Program	
Task 7	Develop a detailed program scope statement by incorporating program vision and all internal and external objectives, goals, influences, and variables in order to facilitate overall planning.
Task 8	Develop program WBS in order to determine, plan, and assign the program tasks and deliverables.
Task 9	Establish the program management plan and schedule by integrating plans for constituent projects and creating plans for supporting program functions (for example, quality, risk, communication, resources) in order to effectively forecast, monitor, and identify variances during program execution.
Task 10	Optimize the program management plan by identifying, reviewing, and leveling resource requirements (for example, human resources, materials, equipment, facilities, finance) in order to gain efficiencies and maximize productivity/synergies among constituent projects.
Task 11	Define project management information system (PMIS) by selecting tools and processes to share knowledge, intellectual property, and documentation across constituent projects in order to maximize synergies and savings in accordance with the governance model.
Task 12	Identify and manage unresolved project-level issues by establishing a monitoring and escalation mechanism and selecting a course of action consistent with program constraints and objectives in order to achieve program benefits.
Task 13	Develop the transition/integration/closure plan by defining exit criteria in order to ensure all administrative, commercial, and contractual obligations are met upon program completion.
Task 14	Develop key performance indicators (KPIs) by using decomposition/ mapping/ balanced score card (BSC) in order to implement scope and quality management system within program.
Task 15	Monitor key human resources for program and project roles, including subcontractors, and identify opportunities to improve team motivation (for example, develop compensation, incentive, and career alignment plans) and negotiate contracts in order to meet and/or exceed benefits realization objectives.

Domain II	Program Life Cycle

Executing the Program	
Task 16	Charter and initiate constituent projects by assigning project managers and allocating appropriate resources in order to achieve program objectives.
Task 17	Establish consistency by deploying uniform standards, resources, infrastructure, tools, and processes in order to enable informed program decision making.
Task 18	Establish a communication feedback process in order to capture lessons learned and the team's experiences throughout the program.
Task 19	Lead human resource functions by training, coaching, mentoring, and recognizing the team in order to improve team engagement and achieve commitment to the program's goals.
Task 20	Review project managers' performance in executing the project in accordance with the project plan in order to maximize their contribution to achieving program goals.
Task 21	Execute the appropriate program management plans (for example, quality, risk, communication, resourcing) using the tools identified in the planning phase and by auditing the results in order to ensure the program outcomes meet stakeholder expectations and standards.
Task 22	Consolidate project and program data using predefined program plan reporting tools and methods in order to monitor and control the program performance and communicate to stakeholders.
Task 23	Evaluate the program's status in order to monitor and control the program while maintaining current program information.
Task 24	Approve closure of constituent projects upon completion of defined deliverables in order to ensure scope is compliant with the functional overview.

Domain II	Program Life Cycle
Controlling the Program	
Task 25	Analyze variances and trends in costs, schedule, quality, and risks by comparing actual and forecast to planned values in order to identify corrective actions or opportunities.
Task 26	Update program plans by incorporating corrective actions to ensure program resources are employed effectively in order to meet program objectives.
Task 27	Manage program level issues (for example, human resource management, financial, technology, scheduling) by identifying and selecting a course of action consistent with program scope, constraints, and objectives in order to achieve program benefits.
Task 28	Manage changes in accordance with the change management plan in order to control scope, quality, schedule, cost, contracts, risks, and rewards.
Task 29	Conduct impact assessments for program changes and recommend decisions in order to obtain approval in accordance with the governance model.
Task 30	Manage risk in accordance with the risk management plan in order to ensure benefits realization.
Closing the Program	
Task 31	Complete a program performance analysis report by comparing final values to planned values for scope, quality, cost, schedule, and resource data in order to determine program performance.
Task 32	Obtain stakeholder approval for program closure in order to initiate close-out activities.
Task 33	Execute the transition and/or close-out of all program and constituent project plans (for example, perform administrative and PMIS program closure, archive program documents and lessons learned, and transfer ongoing activities to functional organization) in order to meet program objectives and/or ongoing operational sustainability.
Task 34	Conduct the post-review meeting by presenting the program performance report in order to obtain feedback and capture lessons learned.
Task 35	Report lessons learned and best practices observed and archive to the knowledge repository in order to support future programs and organizational improvement.

Domain II	Program Life Cycle

Knowledge Specific to Domain 2
(*Indicates knowledge is found in one other domain, shown in parentheses)

- Benchmarking
- Closeout plans, procedures, techniques and policies* (5)
- Decomposition techniques (for example, work breakdown structure (WBS))
- Financial closure processes* (V)
- Logistics management
- Performance and quality metrics* (III)
- Phase gate reviews* (V)
- Procurement management
- Product/service development phases
- Program and constituent project charter development* (I)
- Program and project change requests* (V)
- Program initiation plan
- Program management plans
- Quality control and management tools and techniques
- Resource estimation (human and material)
- Resource leveling techniques
- Root cause analysis
- Schedule management, techniques, and tools
- Scope management
- Service level agreements
- Statistical analysis* (V)
- Strategic planning and analysis* (I)
- SWOT analysis
- Talent evaluation
- Team competency assessment techniques
- Training methodologies* (IV)

Domain III	Benefits Management
Task 1	**Develop the benefits realization plan and its measurement criteria in order to set the baseline for the program and communicate to stakeholders, including sponsors.**
Task 2	**Identify and capture synergies and efficiencies identified throughout the program life cycle in order to update and communicate the benefits realization plan to stakeholders, including sponsors.**
Task 3	**Develop a sustainment plan that identifies the processes, measures, metrics, and tools necessary for management of benefits beyond the completion of the program in order to ensure the continued realization of intended benefits.**
Task 4	**Monitor the metrics (for example, by forecasting, analyzing variances, developing "what if" scenarios and simulations, and utilizing causal analysis) in order to take corrective actions in the program and maintain and/or potentially improve benefits realization.**
Task 5	**Verify that the close, transition, and integration of constituent projects and the program meet or exceed the benefit realization criteria in order to achieve program's strategic objectives.**
Task 6	**Maintain a benefit register and record program progress in order to report the benefit to stakeholders via the communications plan.**
Task 7	**Analyze and update the benefits realization and sustainment plans for uncertainty, risk identification, risk mitigation, and risk opportunity in order to determine if corrective actions are necessary and communicate to stakeholders.**
Task 8	**Develop a transition plan to operations in order to guarantee sustainment of products and benefits delivered by the program.**
	Knowledge Specific to Domain III *(*Indicates knowledge is found in one other domain, shown in parentheses)* • Benefit optimization • Business value measurement • Decision tree analysis • Maintenance and sustainment of program benefits post delivery • Performance and quality metrics* (II) • Program transition strategies

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Domain IV	Stakeholder Management
Task 1	**Identify stakeholders, including sponsors, and create the stakeholder matrix in order to document their position relative to the program.**
Task 2	**Perform stakeholder analysis through historical analysis, personal experience, interviews, knowledge base, review of formal agreements (for example, request for proposal (RFP), request for information (RFI), contracts), and input from other sources in order to create the stakeholder management plan.**
Task 3	**Negotiate the support of stakeholders, including sponsors, for the program while setting clear expectations and acceptance criteria (for example, KPIs) for the program benefits in order to achieve and maintain their alignment to the program objectives.**
Task 4	**Generate and maintain visibility for the program and confirm stakeholder support in order to achieve the program's strategic objectives.**
Task 5	**Define and maintain communications adapted to different stakeholders, including sponsors, in order to ensure their support for the program.**
Task 6	**Evaluate risks identified by stakeholders, including sponsors, and incorporate them in the program risk management plan, as necessary.**
Task 7	**Develop and foster relationships with stakeholders, including sponsors, in order to improve communication and enhance their support for the program.**
	Knowledge Specific to Domain IV (*Indicates knowledge is found in one other domain, shown in parentheses*) • Customer relationship management • Customer satisfaction measurement • Expectation management • Public relations* (I) • Training methodologies* (II)

Domain V	Governance
Task 1	Develop program and project management standards and structure (governance, tools, finance, and reporting) using industry best practices and organizational standards in order to drive efficiency and consistency among projects and deliver program objectives.
Task 2	Select a governance model structure including policies, procedures, and standards that conforms program practices with the organization's governance structure in order to deliver program objectives consistent with organizational governance requirements.
Task 3	Obtain authorization(s) and approval(s) through stage gate reviews by presenting the program status to governance authorities in order to proceed to the next phase of the program.
Task 4	Evaluate key performance indicators (for example, risks, financials, compliance, quality, safety, stakeholder satisfaction) in order to monitor benefits throughout the program life cycle.
Task 5	Develop and/or utilize the program management information system), and integrate different processes as needed, in order to manage program information and communicate status to stakeholders.
Task 6	Regularly evaluate new and existing risks that impact strategic objectives in order to present an updated risk management plan to the governance board for approval.
Task 7	Establish escalation policies and procedures in order to ensure risks are handled at the appropriate level.
Task 8	Develop and/or contribute to an information repository containing program-related lessons learned, processes, and documentation contributions in order to support organizational best practices.
Task 9	Identify and apply lessons learned in order to support and influence existing and future program or organizational improvement.
Task 10	Monitor the business environment, program functionality requirements, and benefits realization in order to ensure the program remains aligned with strategic objectives.
Task 11	Develop and support the program integration management plan in order to ensure operational alignment with program strategic objectives.

Domain V	Governance
	Knowledge Specific to Domain V (*Indicates knowledge is found in one other domain, shown in parentheses*) • Archiving tools and techniques • Business/organization objectives* (I) • Closeout plans, procedures, techniques and policies* (II) • Composition and responsibilities of the program management office (PMO) • Financial closure processes* (II) • Go/no-go decision criteria • Governance models • Governance processes and procedures • Metrics definition and measurement techniques • Performance analysis and reporting techniques (for example, earned value analysis (EVA)) • Phase gate reviews* (II) • Program and project change requests* (II) • Statistical analysis* (II)

CROSS-CUTTING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Core Knowledge (Required in Three or More Domains):

Three or More Domains	Core Knowledge
	• Benefits measurement and analysis techniques • Brainstorming techniques • Budget processes and procedures • Business environment • Business ethics • Business models, structure, and organization • Change management • Coaching and mentoring techniques • Collaboration tools and techniques • Communication tools and techniques • Conflict resolution techniques • Contingency planning • Contract negotiation/administration • Contract types • Cost-benefit techniques • Cost management • Cultural diversity/distinctions • Data analysis/data mining • Decision-making techniques • Emotional intelligence • Human resource management • Impact assessment techniques • Industry and market knowledge • Information privacy • Knowledge management • Leadership theories and techniques • Management techniques • Motivational techniques • Negotiation strategies and techniques • Organization strategic plan and vision • Performance management techniques (for example, cost and time, performance against objectives)

Three or More Domains	Core Knowledge
	- Planning theory, techniques, and procedures - PMI Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct - Presentation tools and techniques - Problem-solving tools and techniques - Project Management Information Systems (PMIS) - Reporting tools and techniques - Risk analysis techniques - Risk management - Risk mitigation and opportunities strategies - Safety standards and procedures - Social responsibility - Succession planning - Sustainability and environmental issues - Team development and dynamics

Core Skills (Required in All Domains)

All Domains	Core Skills
	- Active listening - Analytical thinking - Capacity planning - Communicating - Critical thinking - Customer centricity/client focus - Distilling and synthesizing requirements - Employee engagement - Executive-level presentation - Facilitation - Innovative thinking - Interpersonal interaction and relationship management - Interviewing - Leveraging opportunities - Managing expectations - Managing virtual/multicultural/remote/global teams - Maximizing resources/achieving synergies - Negotiating/persuading/influencing - Prioritizing - Problem solving - Stakeholder analysis and management - Time management - Vendor management

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APPENDIX A: ROLE DELINEATION STUDY (RDS) PROCESS

Defining the Responsibilities

The first step in developing a certification examination is to define the responsibilities of the recipients of the credential. It must be known what the individuals who lead and direct programs actually do on the job *before* a content-valid test can be developed. A valid examination draws questions from every important area of the profession and specifies that performance areas (domains) considered more important, critical, and relevant be represented by more questions on the examination. Defining the role of individuals leading and directing programs occurs in two major phases: one in which individuals currently in the role define the responsibilities, and another in which the identified responsibilities are validated on a global scale.

Beginning in 2009, PMI commissioned a global role delineation study (RDS) for the PgMP credential. The RDS process was led by a steering committee, representing PMI's Certification Governance structure. A project task force comprised of program managers was responsible for the conduct of work on the project, with oversight from the steering committee. The task force represented every geographic area of the globe and diversity in industry, job position, and experience. Several other groups contributed to the formation and shaping of the RDS process, including representatives from organizations that utilize program management for success, academic representatives, and Registered Education Providers (R.E.P.s). Program managers were also responsible for the independent reviews of the work of the task force and piloting the information before surveying a larger sample of program managers.

Study participants, working under the direction of the Professional Education Service (PES), reached consensus on the performance domains, a broad category of duties and responsibilities that define the role, as well as the tasks required for competence performance and the knowledge/skills needed to perform those tasks.

Validating the Responsibilities Identified by the Panelists

In order to ensure the validity of the study and content outline developed by the panels, a survey requesting feedback on the panel's work was sent to program management practitioners throughout the world. Surveys were distributed globally to thousands of program managers around the world. PMI received a robust set of responses to the survey, with participants from 79 countries and representing every major industry. This provided PMI with the statistical significance from which to draw conclusions about the criticality for competent performance and frequency of the tasks. Practitioners also rated the knowledge/skills on how essential they were to their work as program managers and when they were acquired.

Developing a Plan for the Test

Based on respondent ratings, an examination blueprint, clarifying exactly how many questions from each domain and task should be on the examination, was developed. Those domains and tasks that were rated as most important, critical, and relevant by survey respondents would have the most questions devoted to them on the examination.

Results of the study indicated that the 150 scorable questions on the test should be distributed among the domains as shown in the following table. The remaining 20 questions will be dispersed throughout the domains as pretest questions and will not count in the candidates' scores. The pretest items allow PMI to monitor the question performance better, prior to including the questions in the final databank of test questions.

Domain/Subdomain	% of Exam
I. Strategic Program Management (11 tasks)	15%
II. Program Life Cycle (35 tasks)	44%
● Initiating (6 tasks)	6%
● Planning (9 tasks)	11%
● Executing (9 tasks)	14%
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