



Certified Project Master (CPM)  
Assessment Guide





A **Certified Project Master (CPM)** is a project leader and innovator. They have been independently assessed against a broad range of project management competencies, and can apply a suite of specialised technical and managerial skills to initiate, plan, execute and evaluate their own project work and the work of others.

**In order to demonstrate your competence as a Project Master, you are required to evidence the following:**

- 🌀 **Knowledge:** Successfully complete and be assessed on 30 hours of project management education
- 🌀 **Experience:** Demonstrate the full-time equivalent of three (3) years' complex project, program or portfolio leadership experience, and
- 🌀 **Skills:** Critically reflect upon one or more projects, programs or portfolios of work you recently led.

## A1: 30 hours' project management education

In order to demonstrate your **knowledge** as a Project Master, you are required to submit evidence with your application that you have successfully completed and been assessed on 30 hours of project management education. Your evidence must include:

- 🌀 A detailed description of the training program completed, including a link to a relevant webpage; <sup>1</sup> AND
- 🌀 An academic transcript / certificate / statement from a project management training provider that clearly states:
  - Your full name
  - The title of the course completed
  - The total hours studied
  - Your assessed grade (for example: pass, competent, distinction)
  - The date of assessment
  - The institutional name of the training provider and their logo

The Institute of Project Management may directly contact your course provider to clarify details of the course and/or confirm your successful completion.

You are **not required** to submit evidence of 30 hours' project management education if you have:

- 🌀 Been admitted to the Institute of Project Management as a Certified Project Officer (CPO);  
OR
- 🌀 Successfully completed in your own name all the online quizzes in [OPEN](#), the Institute of Project Management's open project education network

If you have changed your name since completing this requirement and wish to be admitted under your new name, you must provide legal evidence of your name change (for example: a marriage certificate).

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<sup>1</sup> The course must explicitly educate on an aspect or all of 'project management'. Academic completion of a workplace or industry project and/or general management studies are **not** eligible.

## A2: Three (3) years' leading project teams

In order to demonstrate your **experience** as a Project Master, you are required to submit evidence with your application that you have at least three (3) years' full-time experience leading projects, programs and/or portfolios of work.

In order to meet the minimum threshold of complexity, the projects, programs or portfolios of work you have led must involve:

- ☞ a full-time equivalent delivery team of three (3) or more people (including yourself as the project/program/portfolio manager)
- ☞ detailed project documentation at all stages
- ☞ formal governance structure (for example: a sponsor and/or governance group), and
- ☞ multiple, complex and dynamic stakeholder relationships.

Years of experience may be accumulated non-consecutively (for example, over six calendar years).

For each project/program/portfolio you list, you must nominate a **reference**.

A reference is an appropriately qualified person not related to you who is willing to testify to your competence. References are typically past or present workplace managers or executives with line authority over you and your projects.

You must nominate a minimum three different (3) references. If you only list one project that lasted three years, or if the same reference oversaw all your projects, you must still nominate three references.

We will contact and receive a report from at least one of the three references you nominate with your application.

## A3: Critical reflection

In order to demonstrate your **skill** as a Project Master, you are required to critically reflect upon the following, in the context of one or more projects, programs or portfolios of work you have recently led:

- ☞ project, program or portfolio assets, including (but not limited to):
  - ☞ initiation documentation (for example: stakeholder registers, communications plans, business cases and charters)
  - ☞ planning documentation (for example: work breakdown structures, schedules, budgets; procurement assets and risk registers)
  - ☞ delivery documentation (for example: status reports, change requests, issues register, lessons log, contracts and collateral), and
  - ☞ close documentation (for example: handover checklists, acquittals, closure reports and evaluations), and
- ☞ project, program or portfolio performance, including (but not limited to):
  - ☞ planned versus actual performance to scope, schedule and budget
  - ☞ stakeholder identification and engagement
  - ☞ business case development
  - ☞ scope definition and management
  - ☞ schedule development and control

- ☰ cost estimating and control
- ☰ procurement and contract management
- ☰ risk identification, prioritisation and treatment
- ☰ project team management and performance
- ☰ project governance and change control
- ☰ project delivery and handover, and
- ☰ other lessons learned.

In order to meet the requisite standard, you must:

- ☰ demonstrate the application of situationally appropriate best-practices in leading people, processes and change in complex and dynamic environments, and
- ☰ identify opportunities and contribute to personal, professional and organisational improvement.

### Interview guide

Your oral assessment will be conducted as a **45-60 minute interview** via videoconference and recorded to provide evidence of your competence. You may refer to notes; however, you cannot read from a script. We retain the audio records of these assessments as per our regulatory obligations and privacy policy.

To successfully complete this interview, you are encouraged to read widely to develop critical, practical responses to each question posed. You will need to be familiar with larger issues, such as project management frameworks, theories and best practice; more importantly, you need to have a deep understanding of the projects/programs/portfolios you are reflecting upon and the major issues encountered.

It may also help to have important materials for easy reference in the course of your interview; these may include key documents, stakeholder interview notes, and the like.

Typical questions that may be asked include (but are not limited to):

- ☰ In no more than five (5) minutes, tell us a little about your background – what have been your career highlights?
- ☰ How do you and the team...
  - ...test project concepts with stakeholders?
  - ...plan projects?
  - ...manage change during project delivery?
  - ...capture and communicate lessons learned?
- ☰ What works well? What could you do better?
- ☰ What is your personal leadership style and how does that impact on your interactions with others?
- ☰ Using examples, describe how you influence stakeholders, especially those that are senior to you.
- ☰ Give an example of how you once managed a stakeholder conflict.
- ☰ How do you manage project team underperformance?
- ☰ How do you recognize and reward good performance?
- ☰ What are you looking for when engaging contractors or consultants for your projects?
- ☰ What has been your greatest achievement in the project management?
- ☰ Where did you misstep? What would you do differently if you had your time again and how has that knowledge made you the project manager you are today?

- 🌀 In your experience, what are the main reasons projects underperform or fail?
- 🌀 If someone was stepping into project leadership for the first time, what are the three (3) key pieces of advice you would give them?
- 🌀 What are your three (3) biggest strengths / gaps? How will you continue your professional development?
- 🌀 Where do you want to go next in your career?

You should always use examples in your responses where possible.

As you will see from the assessment rubric (below), your interview is evaluated in terms of content and clarity, as well as style. Don't speak too fast and don't overly rely on notes. Be prepared to clarify or elaborate on your assumptions, theoretical positions, methods, and conclusions. Often an examiner plays the devil's advocate to see how well you can think on your feet and justify yourself.

During the interview, don't rush your answers. It is perfectly acceptable to think for a couple of seconds or ask if you are on the right track. If you are not clear about the question you are entitled to ask for clarification.

Try to be concise and to the point, but at the same time demonstrate that you have a good grasp of the complex issues involved. In other words, do not give superficial answers, but at the same time, do not try and present an entire PhD-level theory of project management in each response.

Importantly, you should put up a good defence of your findings without being defensive. A good defence means that you can provide strong logical arguments and empirically support or defend your position or recommendations.

However, don't become hostile if the examiner is critical of your viewpoint. If they are able to constructively establish some real flaws or weaknesses in your reflection, accept their criticisms with humility, and indicate how you might learn from this for the future.

This is an essential real-world skill and may be directly assessed!

#### What if I 'fail' my assessment interview?

If you have the requisite knowledge, experience and references, and are adequately prepared for your assessment interview, the process should be fairly straight forward.

That said, nerves or just the fact you are not at your best on the day may result in you not interviewing to the standard you know you are capable of.

If you are unsuccessful in your first interview attempt, we will make some recommendations as to how you might do better next time and give you an opportunity to be reassessed at no cost.

If you are not yet proficient after a second interview, your assessor (at their discretion) may elect to assess you at a different level and admit you to the Institute of Project Management as a Certified Project Professional.

## Assessment Rubric

A rubric for assessment, usually in the form of a matrix or grid, is a tool used to interpret and grade candidates' work against criteria and standards. Rubrics are sometimes called "criteria sheets", "grading schemes", or "scoring guides".

A rubric makes explicit a range of assessment criteria and expected performance standards. Assessors evaluate a candidate's performance against all of these, rather than assigning a single subjective score. A rubric is intended to:

- ☞ make candidates aware of all expectations related to the assessment task, and helps them evaluate their own work as it progresses, and
- ☞ help assessors apply consistent standards when assessing qualitative tasks and promote consistency in shared marking.

The rubric shown on the following page is applied in assessing your interview.

In order to achieve this Certification, you need to be assessed as proficient (at a minimum) in **ALL** the listed criteria. Note that proficiency is generally considered to be a higher standard than a 50% passing grade.

<b>Interview</b>	<b>Mastered</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Basic</b>
<b>Communication</b>	Enthusiastically speaks to their projects and beyond by providing clear and insightful answers to questions; discussion was superior, accurate, and engaging.	Competently speaks to their projects and beyond by providing clear and insightful answers to questions.	Adequately expands upon findings by providing appropriate answers to questions.	Answers questions, but often with little insight; frequently shows a need for deeper reflection on certain points.	Does not adequately address findings; does not answer key questions; displayed poor grasp of material.
<b>Application of project management knowledge</b>	Connects complex concepts, theory and evidence from practice to the issues under examination.	Applies the critical elements of a project methodology or framework to inform discussion.	Demonstrates understanding of key project management concepts and principles.	Misapplies project management principles and good practice in a way that noticeably detracts from the discussion.	Limited understanding of the relevant issues.
<b>Lessons learned</b>	Uses experience and information to generate a variety of high-quality lessons for him/herself and the performing organisation.	Views and reframes problems or issues from multiple perspectives to better identify lessons learned.	Identifies a range of lessons accurately using standard processes, techniques and tools.	Supports diagnosis and opinions with few reasons and little evidence; argument is one-sided and not objective.	Fails to adequately identify and/or respond to potential lessons.
<b>Recommendations and action plan</b>	Frames solutions and recommendations that are both nuanced and actionable, while remaining sensitive to a variety of contextual factors.	Decisively chooses the most effective, actionable solutions after evaluating available responses to the issues.	Makes actionable recommendations that are clearly linked to a critical analysis of the findings.	Investigates and identifies a limited range of possible solutions for effectively addressing issues.	Insufficient, invalid or irrelevant recommendations.
<b>Professionalism</b>	Thoroughly professional and engaging in all correspondence throughout the application process, including the interview itself, demonstrating initiative when appropriate.	Thoroughly professional and engaging in all correspondence throughout the application process, including the interview itself.	Professional in manner and appearance throughout the interview.	Occasionally casual in manner and appearance and/or overfamiliar during the interview process.	Failed to meet the standards of professionalism expected of a Certified Project Master.