

# APM Project Management Qualification

Exam techniques



## Introduction

This will support you by providing insights into what to look for and techniques you can apply when sitting your exam.

The exam is made up of 16 short answer questions. There's a shortened exam of 10 questions if you've undertaken the PRINCE2® Practitioner qualification, to recognise your prior learning.

Short answer questions test your level of knowledge and understanding of a topic and contain command verbs such as 'explain' and 'describe'. A list of these command verbs and their definitions are explained in the syllabus, which can be found on our website.

Each question is worth 50 marks and is made up of two parts, part a) which is worth 20 marks and part b) which is worth 30 marks. Both parts need to be completed to gain the maximum possible marks. Each question targets one learning outcome from the syllabus and each part of the question targets one assessment criteria from the same learning outcome.

## Identifying and responding to a question's components

It's important for you to understand the various parts that make up a question.

You must recognise the command verb and understand its requirements (see the command verbs section of the syllabus)

You must also recognise the broad topic area or context and specific aspect of a question.

For example, consider the question 'Describe how motivation is used to improve the performance of a project team.' In this question the command verb is 'describe', the broad topic area or context is 'improve the performance of a project team', with the specific aspect being 'motivation'.

An answer that focuses on motivation as a general concept would receive very few marks, but an answer that places the use of motivation in the context of improving the performance of a project team has a greater chance of being awarded high marks.

## Using command verbs within short answer questions

All short answer questions will be formed using the relevant command verbs from the assessment criteria within the syllabus. Please note, some differentiate questions may be formed as 'explain the difference between...'

There's a definition for each command verb (shown within the syllabus) to support you in understanding the level of depth required when answering the questions.

For example, for assessment criteria 1.1 'differentiate between types of permanent and temporary organisation structures (including functional, matrix, and project)'.

You should differentiate between the subject, in the context of the question, and go further by providing detail on the reasons for these differences when answering the question targeting assessment criteria 1.1.

## Clarity within an answer

The way in which you respond to a question will influence the number of marks that are 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 need to be presented in a logical and easy to understand structure focusing on the exact question requirements. Markers need to be able to understand what it is you're saying so they can determine if you've provided a relevant response.

## Exam technique suggestions

The APM Project Management Qualification exam:

- Is three hours long with an additional 15-minute reading time at the start.
- Has been designed for you to answer 10 questions within three hours, which works out as 18 minutes per question, including reading time. This can be further broken down as seven minutes for part a) 20-mark questions and 11 minutes for part b) 30-mark questions.
- Contains 16 equally weighted questions, from which you must select 10 questions.

The APM Project Management Qualification for PRINCE2® exam:

- Is two hours long with an additional 10 minute reading time at the start.
- Has been designed for you to answer six questions within two hours, which works out as 20 minutes per question, including reading time. This can be further broken down as eight minutes for part a) 20-mark questions and 12 minutes for part b) 30-mark questions.
- Contains 10 equally weighted questions, from which you must select six questions.

One technique is to read through all the questions and make a note of those you're more confident in answering effectively and those where you're less confident in answering. You could use the red, amber, green (RAG) approach for this where:

- R for red indicating low confidence.
- A for amber indicating medium confidence.
- G for green indicating high confidence.

After the initial review of the questions, begin answering the green (G) questions, followed by amber (A) and then red (R). This'll give you the greatest chance of achieving the highest marks possible.

## Further reading

It is advisable for you to read the syllabus so you're aware of the areas in which you must demonstrate understanding. There's also a list of the command verbs used both within the assessment criteria and in the questions, with a definition of what they mean.

The candidate guidance provides an invaluable overview of the exam with regards to format, procedure, regulations and results.

The syllabus, candidate guidance and a sample exam paper can be found on our website at [apm.org.uk](http://apm.org.uk).

If you're taking this exam through an APM accredited provider, the following additional supporting materials are available from your trainer:

- Sample Answers Document
- Annotated Sample Answers Document
- Hints and Tips



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