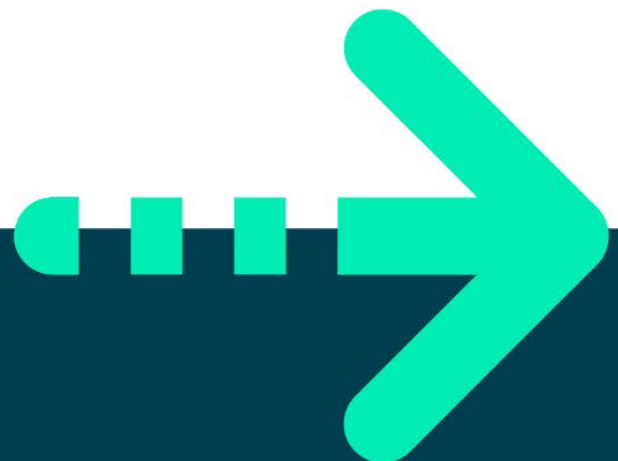




Project Management Qualification – PMQ (APMP-5 / 3)

Learner Guide

Date of Issue: v7 November 2023



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Note: APM periodically updates its website and this may affect some of the links you have been provided with in this document. If this occurs, search the APM website in the first instance. If you still cannot find the resource you are looking for, please ask your contact at QA for assistance – we’re happy to help.

Introduction

Welcome! The Pre-Course Learning will help to set the context for your APM Project Management Qualification (PMQ) course. Your time spent completing each activity will ensure that the course content can be related to project delivery within your organisation and help prepare you for the PMQ exam.

APM is proud of the credibility of the PMQ exam. Rather than being an introductory qualification, it is targeted at candidates with a minimum of two years' experience in managing projects. The academic level is set at SCQF Level 7 which equates to Higher National Certificate (HNC) or first-year degree level study. APM has produced a short video that introduces the qualification, and you can access this from their website.

APM suggests that the total study-time for the PMQ will be in the region of 56 hours prior to attempting the exam – your personal study-time will depend on your current level of project management experience and familiarity with the course content.

We recognise the commitment you're making in your efforts to achieve one of the UK's most respected project management qualifications and we aim to support you fully on each step of your learning journey.



Pre-course learning
20 hours



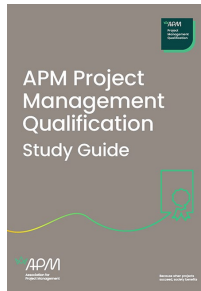
"Live" classroom
31 hours
(4 x 7hrs) + (1 x 3hrs)



Exam prep; evening
6 hours
(4 x 1.5hrs)

In total, the activities below should take around 18-20 hours – helping you obtain maximum benefit from your studies and the actual course.

Course resources



Approximately 10 days before your course starts, you'll receive instructions on how to set up a "vital-source bookshelf" account in order to access your personal digital copy of the official APM PMQ Study Guide.

This is the primary study material for the course.

To help you gain maximum benefit from your studies, a number of additional resources are available across the following platforms.

My QA	Mimeo	APM PMQ Website
Pre-course learning	Course assets	Supporting resources
PMQBOK7 Learner Guide	PMQBOK7 Exercise Workbook	Syllabus
PMQBOK7 Crib Sheets	PMQBOK7 Learner Slides	Exam techniques
PMQBOK7 Sample Exam Answers		Candidate guidance notes
		Sample paper
		Sample question
		Link to: APM PMQ Website

Please ensure that you download the 'pre-course learning' documents and APM's 'supporting resources' before your course and place them in a personal folder.

You'll be granted access to the Mimeo course assets approximately five days before your course starts. Contact your QA account manager if you have difficulty accessing any material.

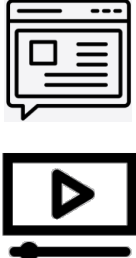


PMQ study checklist

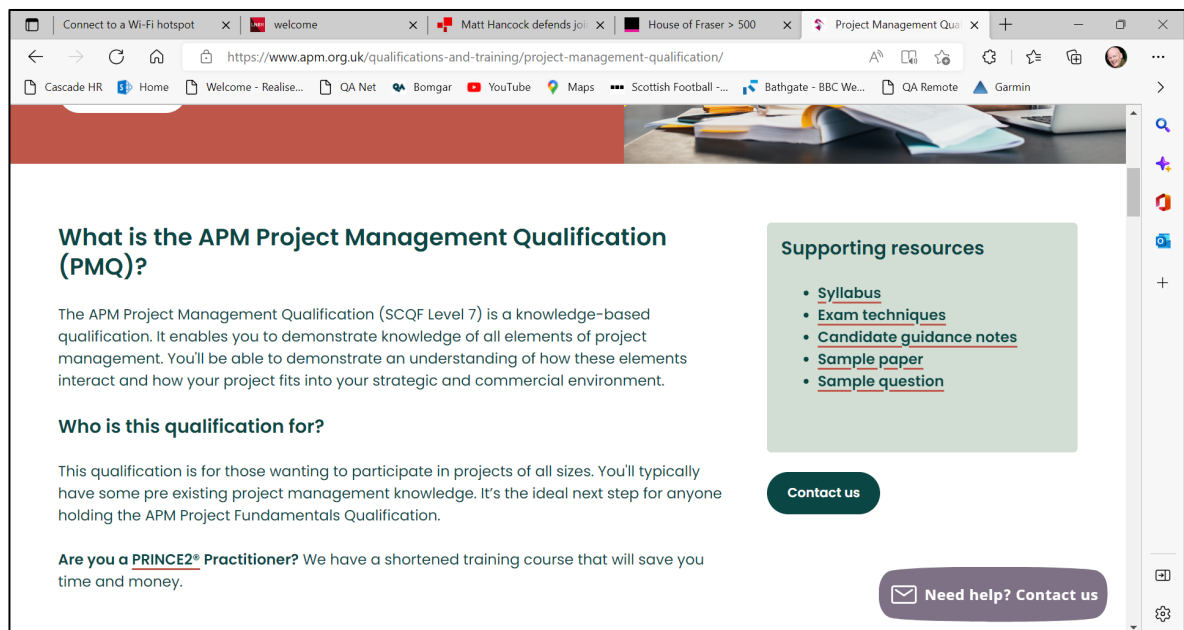
	Activity	Complete?	Comments
1	APM PMQ introduction and watch video (30min) Download all five supporting resources		
2	APM PMQ Candidate Guidance (30min)		
3	(Re)attempt the Introductory PFQ Sample Exam (90min)		
4	'PMQ Study Hints 'n Tips' (60min)		
5	APM webpage and watch the two videos - 'Introduction to Project Management' (30min)		
6	Watch video and consider reasons why projects might fail within your organisation (30min)		
7	Watch video and consider the benefits of project management for your organisation (30min)		
8	Watch video and list the key differences between linear (traditional) and iterative (agile) project delivery (30min)		
9	Review the PMQ Syllabus (120min)		
10	PMQ Exam Technique (60min)		
11	PMQ sample exam answers document (30min)		
12	Attempt the PMQ exam-style questions (180min)		
13	PMQ Study Guide (450min)		
14	APM guidelines on what to expect for online exams (30min)		

1. APM PMQ overview (30min)

Read the short introduction to the PMQ. The same webpage also has a short video (1min 51sec) that describes the PMQ qualification.

	https://www.apm.org.uk/qualifications-and-training/project-management-qualification/
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The 'Supporting Resources' that can be accessed from this webpage are used during your course. It's essential that you place each of the PDF documents in a personal folder so that you can access them when needed.



What is the APM Project Management Qualification (PMQ)?

The APM Project Management Qualification (SCQF Level 7) is a knowledge-based qualification. It enables you to demonstrate knowledge of all elements of project management. You'll be able to demonstrate an understanding of how these elements interact and how your project fits into your strategic and commercial environment.

Who is this qualification for?

This qualification is for those wanting to participate in projects of all sizes. You'll typically have some pre existing project management knowledge. It's the ideal next step for anyone holding the APM Project Fundamentals Qualification.

Are you a PRINCE2® Practitioner? We have a shortened training course that will save you time and money.

Supporting resources

- [Syllabus](#)
- [Exam techniques](#)
- [Candidate guidance notes](#)
- [Sample paper](#)
- [Sample question](#)

[Contact us](#)

[Need help? Contact us](#)

APM Glossary

APM also offers online access to a 'Glossary of Project Management Terms' that some learners find useful to refer to during their studies. *'Eh...? What exactly is analogous estimating?!'*

	https://www.apm.org.uk/resources/glossary/
---	---

2. Candidate guidance notes (30min)



The 'Candidate Guidance Notes' document that you downloaded in Activity-1 must be read fully before your course. It contains useful information concerning:

- Applying for the exam
- Examination details
- Format of the exam
- Exam regulations
- Results procedure
- Reasonable adjustments

Initial questions relating to the exam format and regulations (e.g., what to do if 'reasonable adjustments' are required) can be addressed by your QA booking contact in plenty of time before your course starts.



3. Project Fundamentals Qualification – Sample Exam Paper (90min)

APM
Association for Project Management

APM Project Fundamentals Qualification – Examination paper

Candidate number: _____
Exam date: _____
Exam location: _____
Test code: _____
Reference: _____ Sample paper

General notes
Time allowed 1 hour.
Answer all 60 multiple choice questions.
Use the proforma answer sheet provided.

Completing the proforma answer sheet

- The pro-forma answer sheet must be completed using a HB pencil.
- Provide only one answer per question.
- Each entry is to be made with a HORIZONTAL line in the spaces indicated.
- Errors must be removed using a good quality eraser.
- Enter the Test code and your Candidate number (which can be found on your examination card) onto your answer sheet following the example set out below.

Answer sheet

Test code	Candidate number
01	01010101
02	02020202
03	03030303
04	04040404
05	05050505
06	06060606
07	07070707
08	08080808
09	09090909
10	10101010
11	11111111
12	12121212
13	13131313
14	14141414
15	15151515
16	16161616
17	17171717
18	18181818
19	19191919
20	20202020
21	21212121
22	22222222
23	23232323
24	24242424
25	25252525
26	26262626
27	27272727
28	28282828
29	29292929
30	30303030
31	31313131
32	32323232
33	33333333
34	34343434
35	35353535
36	36363636
37	37373737
38	38383838
39	39393939
40	40404040
41	41414141
42	42424242
43	43434343
44	44444444
45	45454545
46	46464646
47	47474747
48	48484848
49	49494949
50	50505050
51	51515151
52	52525252
53	53535353
54	54545454
55	55555555
56	56565656
57	57575757
58	58585858
59	59595959
60	60606060

Marking instructions:

- Use a HB pencil
- Fill in your answer thoroughly
- Fill in your answers like this NOT like this or like this
- Mark one and only one box for each question row.

Do not open this paper until instructed by the invigilator.
This question paper must not be removed from the examination room.

© 2022 Association for Project Management

Even though the PMQ exam is not multiple-choice, it's still useful to assess your present understanding of project management basics, APM terminology etc.

[project-fundamentals-qualification-sample-exam-paper.pdf \(apm.org.uk\)](https://apm.org.uk/project-fundamentals-qualification-sample-exam-paper.pdf)

Download the APM PFQ sample paper from the APM PFQ website and have a go at APM's Project Fundamentals examination.

- 60 questions
- 60 minutes
- 60% pass mark

You'll find the answers to the exam at the back of the question paper. Any initial questions relating to APM terminology can be answered by checking the APM Glossary that we previously mentioned or by reading the relevant section in your PMQ Study Guide.

All of the topics questioned in the PFQ also form part of the PMQ syllabus and the terminology is consistent across both qualifications.

You might find it useful to assess your knowledge before reviewing any of the PMQ and also after you've completed the PMQ pre-course learning.

PFQ score – attempt 1		
PFQ score – attempt 2		

4. PMQ study 'Hints 'n Tips' (60min)

4.1 APM PMQ exam study

There is little doubt that examinations can be stressful, irrespective of whether you have been successful or not on previous exams. This guide should help you:

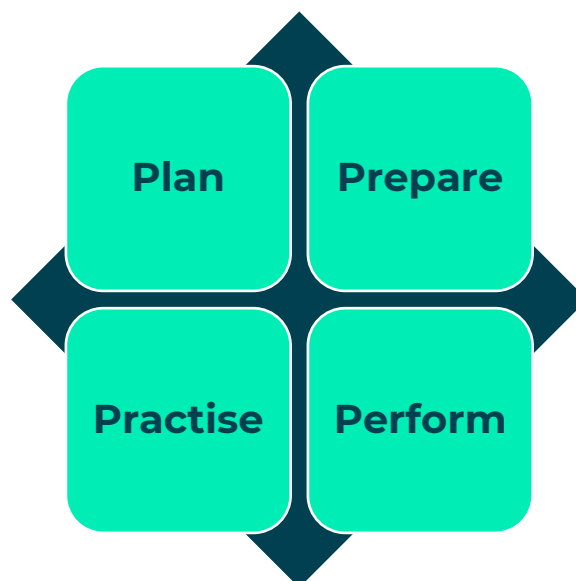
- understand the reasons for exams.
- build awareness of common exam issues - and how you can overcome these.
- develop a structured plan for revising and preparing for the APM PMQ exam.
- identify strategies for use on the actual exam.
- consider how you can manage and reduce stress before and during the exam.

The APM Project Management Qualification is aimed at those wishing to achieve a broad level of project management knowledge sufficient to participate in projects from individual assignments through to large capital projects.

A+

4.2 Preparing for the PMQ Exam

Throughout your learning we emphasise the importance of adequate preparation for examinations. The exam provides an opportunity to consolidate your learning so far and address any areas of weakness that may still exist.



Revising for exams

Revision typically involves the selection of topics that you are going to revise. It is acceptable for you to focus on the theories and models that are most relevant for your day-to-day work, and these will be the easiest for you to explain.

For example, if you work as an engineer in a large manufacturing company, it is likely that you will be familiar with the concepts of quality management.

Conversely, earned value management is very widely used but may not be a technique that has been adopted in your organisation and is unlikely to be implemented in the near future.

The selection process will then focus on the range of possible questions that you might be asked on a specific learning outcome.

Learners often make similar mistakes when revising for exams. These pitfalls may include some of the following.



1. **Leaving revision until the final minute.** Consider the importance of creating a realistic study plan and more importantly, adhering to it!
2. **Passively reading textbooks and notes.** Revision must be an active process and your study should include a combination of making notes, creating flashcards and mnemonics, drawing spray-diagrams, practising exam questions, etc.
3. **Trying to learn full answers off-by-heart.** Not only would this activity take too much time, but it's likely to be pointless as the exact same question is unlikely to be asked in your exam. Better to learn, and understand, the key models and have some flexibility in your ability to answer these. You will be provided with a key-model 'crib-sheet' on this learning event.
4. **I don't have enough time.** H. Jackson Brown Jr. stated that 'you have exactly the same number of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Pasteur, Michelangelo, Mother Teresa, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein.' Make the best use of short spells of time - for example tea-breaks, lunchtime, commuting on public transport etc. Block out periods of time with your colleagues and co-learners and you are more likely to stick to these commitments.

Try to be realistic about the amount of time you can devote to revising. This will depend on a number of factors.

- Your personal work, family, and leisure commitments.
- Whether you study best in concentrated blocks or short bursts.
- What you want to get out of your learning.

Revision techniques

Revising for an examination should be an active undertaking. Note taking is a learning strategy and is useful for a number of reasons.

- Focuses on the key points and ideas.
- Helps to process information.
- Aids structured writing.
- Develops understanding of course content.
- Serves as a memory aid - helping exam revision.

Mnemonics

Mnemonics are also a useful way to memorise key concepts and models as long as you understand the topic in the first place. The most common method of creating mnemonics is to use the first letter of each key word and create a real or fictional word (e.g., PESTLE).

Topic	Mnemonic	Key words
Resolving conflict	CACAC	<i>Compete, Avoid, Compromise, Accommodate, Collaborate</i>
Project Context	PESTLE	<i>Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legislative, Environmental</i>

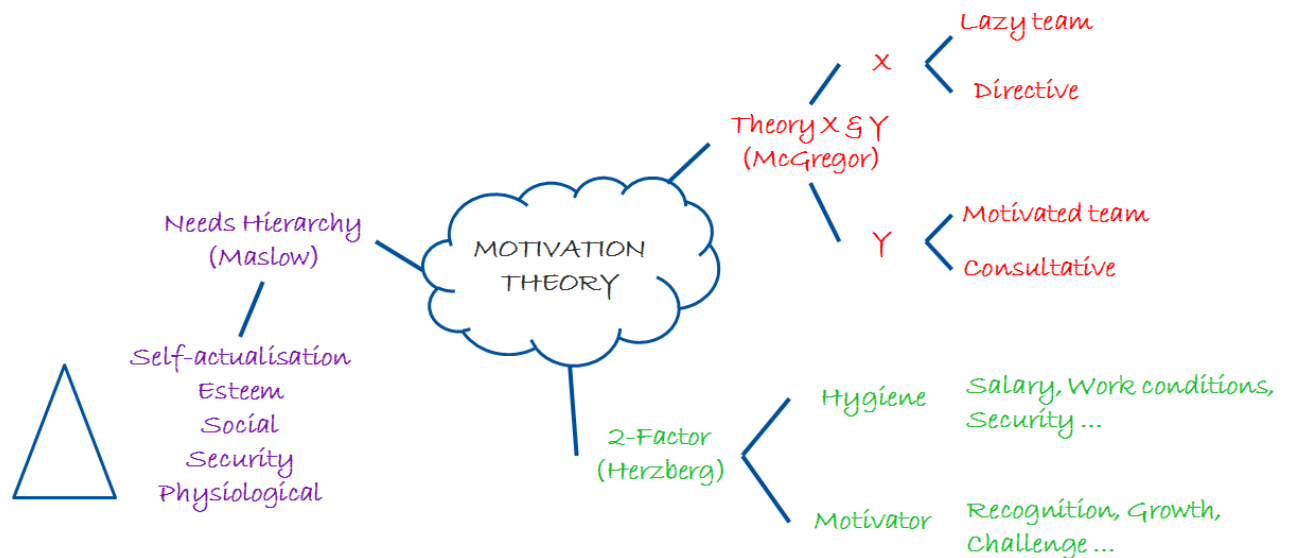
Personal preference will dictate the best technique for taking notes. Some people prefer a linear strategy - for example flashcards, tables, numbered and/or indented lists. Other may prefer a more visual non-linear strategy.

Spray Diagrams

Spray diagrams (similar to mind-maps) help us get our ideas written down on the page in a relatively unstructured fashion. Spray diagrams use the following steps:

1. Place the title of the diagram in the centre of the page.
2. The main ideas radiate from the central topic.
3. Subsidiary ideas fan out from the main ideas.
4. All ideas should be limited to one or two words.
5. Create subsidiary diagrams if the topic is too broad for a single diagram.
6. Feel free to colour-code the diagram (e.g., each main idea has its own colour theme)

Spray Diagram example – Motivation Theory

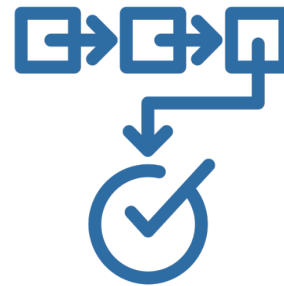


4.3 Study plans

Unless you have a good idea of what you need to do, and by when, it is likely that you will spend a lot of time flitting between topics and wondering whether you are getting anywhere.

'A goal without a plan is just a wish.'

- Antoine de Saint-Exupéry



Being aware of your own knowledge, and where gaps exist, will help you create a focused and time-efficient revision plan. Making a 'study plan' is similar to creating a project plan. You have finite resources and time and need to create a realistic plan that is capable of producing a defined end goal.

It is possible to 'create' time by drawing up a plan of your typical work (W) and identifying where space exists to study (S). Be sure to include your existing work, family (F), and leisure (L) commitments. Once this activity is complete, you can then plan your revision for the relevant study periods.

w/c 01-Apr	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
AM	W	W	W	W	W	L	S
PM	W	W	S	W	W	S	F
EVE	S	L	F	S	L	F	S



5. What is Project Management? (30min)

Read the short introduction to project management that can be found on the Association of Project Management (APM) website.

 	https://www.apm.org.uk/resources/what-is-project-management/
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The webpage also includes an excellent video (2 min 18 sec) that introduces the topics that will be discussed on your forthcoming 'Project Management Fundamentals' course.

The article identifies the key components of project management and answers the following questions:

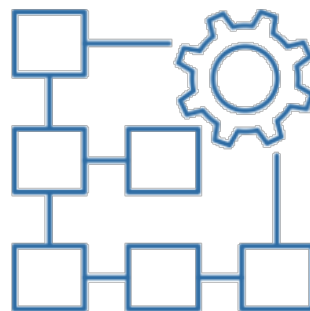
- *Why do we use project management?*
- *When do we use project management?*
- *Who uses project management?*

From the same webpage, two other videos introduce:

1. The importance of Time, Cost and Quality (1min 32sec)
2. The importance of 'Starting the Project Well' (2min 01sec)

These topics will be discussed in detail during your course.

Although not essential, you may also find it useful to have a look at some of the APM blogs that can be linked to from the bottom of the APM webpage.



6. Why Projects “Fail”? (30min)

Watch the short video (2 min 18 sec) in which we discuss common reasons for projects being delivered unsuccessfully.

	Why projects fail
---	-----------------------------------

Consider how each of these reasons may be present within projects in your organisation. The topics covered in your course should help prevent each of these issues from occurring!

Reason for failure	Example	Why does this occur?
Unclear scope		
Failure to engage with the end-user		
Inadequate planning		
Poor change control		
Lack of risk management		
Demotivated team		

7. Benefits of Project Management (30min)

In this second video from QA (1 min 44 sec), we outline some of the benefits that may be realised by the tools and techniques we introduce on your Project Management Fundamentals workshop.

	Benefits of Project Management
---	--

You may find it useful to relate these benefits to your projects as they help to explain why effective project management is crucial to your organisation's ongoing success.

Benefit	How this helps your organisation
Focus on the customer	
Better management of risk	
Efficient and effective use of resources	
Improved stakeholder communication	
More likelihood of project delivery to time, cost and quality targets	
Sharing of project lessons across the organisation	

8. Creating an 'Agile' organisation (30min)

In the short introductory video (4 min 11 sec), QA explains the concept of iterative (or agile) project delivery.

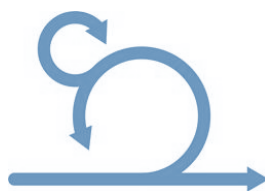
	What is Agile?
---	--------------------------------

Consider the key differences between agile and a more traditional linear project delivery approach. These concepts will be discussed during your course.

Linear	Iterative (Agile)

The video briefly mentions the 4 values and 12 principles of the Agile Manifesto – the Manifesto forms the basis of all Agile frameworks. Although the PMQ exam does not require you to remember all components of the Manifesto, you will benefit from an awareness of its content. You can download a personal copy of the Manifesto by accessing the link below:

	Agile Manifesto
---	---------------------------------



9. PMQ Syllabus (120min)

Please review the APM PMQ Syllabus document that you should already have downloaded from the APM qualifications website – ‘Supporting Resources’.

	project-management-qualification-syllabus.pdf apm.org.uk
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The PMQ Syllabus adopts a different structure to the course and is based around 11 main Learning Outcomes (and 67 individual Assessment Criteria).

Your course and Study Guide are logically structured around the four phases of the APM project management life cycle.

- **Concept** - *Development of an initial idea through initial studies and high-level requirements management, and assessment of viability, including an outline Business Case.*
- **Definition** - *Development of a detailed definition, plans and statements of requirements that include a full justification for the work. It would be typical for a Project Management Plan to form the output of this phase.*
- **Deployment** - *Implementation of plans and verification of performance through testing and assurance to realise intended outputs, outcomes, and benefits.*
- **Transition:** *Handover, commissioning, and acceptance of outputs to the sponsor and wider users, culminating in formal closure.*

(Definitions taken from the APM PFQ Study Guide.)

In advance of your course start date, you will be given access to your official QA PMQ courseware. You may find it useful to cross-reference your Study Guide with the PMQ Syllabus as this will give you a good idea of what the course entails.

Be assured that all the assessment criteria will be covered during your course. We will discuss the Study Guide in more detail during Activity-13.

You can print and annotate Appendix A to help map the Syllabus to your Study Guide at the same time as identifying assessment criteria that you are particularly concerned about.

10. PMQ Exam Technique (60min)

Read the APM PMQ Exam Techniques document from the APM qualifications website – ‘Supporting Resources’. This document gives an overview of the PMQ Exam and offers general guidance on how to approach it.

	project-management-qualification-exam-techniques.pdf (apm.org.uk)
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Note: You will find more detailed information on how to approach the different exam verbs in Activity-12 ‘PMQ Exam Answer Practice’.

10.1 The PMQ Exam

Exam concerns

List the main worries that you have about preparing for and sitting the PMQ exam. Your trainer can help you address each of these concerns.

	Concern	Action
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Management learning and exams

How does your role as a project manager require similar skills to those that may be required in an exam?



When appropriately prepared for, an exam presents a challenge which can produce a number of positive effects. It forces the individual learner to consolidate their learning and effectively communicate what they understand about a specific topic.

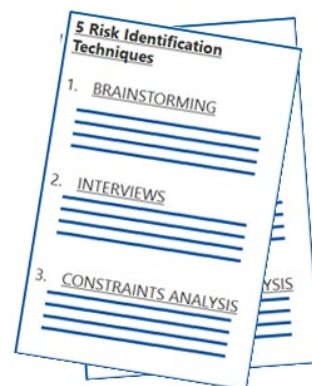
Please don't forget! The majority of QA learners are successful in obtaining a widely sought-after certification that demonstrates their competence in project management.

PMQ is an internationally recognised qualification, which can be carried from one job to another, or from one industry to another.

What examiners like to see

QA is the largest single provider of APM training and has significant experience in helping learners through the PMQ examination.

Learners who are successful in exams provide the marker with a cohesive answer containing the following attributes.



Answer the question that is asked. It is important to recognise the key terms in a question. For example, if a question asks you to explain the 'benefits of adopting a specific process', there is no value of talking about the dis-benefits if the process has not been adopted. Similarly, if you are asked to describe a specific process or model, then the examiner typically has a model in mind and these are listed in the syllabus document (for example, the five stages of team development).

Use material and concepts from the course. It is important that you demonstrate that you have studied the content outlined in the PMQ Syllabus. Answers should be structured around the syllabus assessment criteria, with examples being provided as necessary to support your explanations and descriptions. Ask yourself whether this answer could have been created by someone who has not studied the course topics. Remember that the marker does not know who you are and will not try to assume your existing knowledge or experience.

Time has been used appropriately. All questions have exactly the same mark available so your time should be spread evenly across all 10 answers. Likewise, where a question asks for two or three considerations, each part has a maximum equal value, normally 10 marks each. Pareto's Law also applies to exams (and their preparation) with 80% of your outcome likely to result from 20% of your effort. Do not chase a non-existent perfect answer.

Talk about what you know and do. It is wise to choose questions that have some relevance for your day-to-day work. You can therefore demonstrate your understanding of a specific course concept by showing how it can be applied in the workplace.

Good presentation. Answers should be well structured with clear signposting for the examiner. There is no need for an introduction and a conclusion for PMQ exam answers, but the marker should see distinct sections that can be separately marked.



Examiners do NOT like to see candidates 'dumping' information. Even if the candidate's statement is factually correct, no credit is given unless the information directly answers the question. Even worse is when the candidate provides irrelevant content that is factually incorrect. This demonstrates a lack of understanding and will significantly limit the mark awarded to you.

10.2 Managing exam stress

It is common for learners to feel tense as exams draw closer. This is normal and you're definitely not alone. The content that you have covered during your study will prepare you very well for the PMQ exam.

As you approach the exam, you have the opportunity to consolidate your learning and hone your exam technique. If you're feeling overly stressed, then there are actions that you can take.

- Ensure that you make the time to follow your revision plan; being poorly prepared is the main cause of pre-exam worry and procrastination uses up more energy than actually studying!
- Speak to your trainer.
- Work with your peers (who are likely to have similar fears).
- Take proper breaks from study.
- Maintain some of your regular leisure activities especially where these involve some form of physical exercise.
- Maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle - *treat yourself AFTER the exam!*
- Get plenty of sleep - especially the night before the exam.

Managing stress during the exam

You also need to consider how to place yourself in a position where you can really demonstrate your knowledge and understanding during the exam.

- Try to relax – go to the toilet before sitting down, and wear comfortable clothing.
- Take a deep breath with your eyes closed, then review the exam paper (some people prefer to immediately 'brain-dump' the models, formulae, etc. that they have memorised; you have spare paper to do this).
- Spend your allocated 15 minutes reading time on the following tasks (these 15 minutes are in addition to the 3 hours exam time):
 - Read the paper slowly and carefully.
 - Annotate the question paper or your note paper (for example, add the relevant mnemonic next to the question).
 - Ensure that you are happy answering the specific command verb – 'describe' and 'explain' are NOT the same thing!
 - Select the questions that you feel most comfortable with (normally the ones that are most relevant for your position and/or organisation).
 - Choose the questions that you are not going to attempt.

- Consider the remaining questions only after you have completed your first-choice answers.

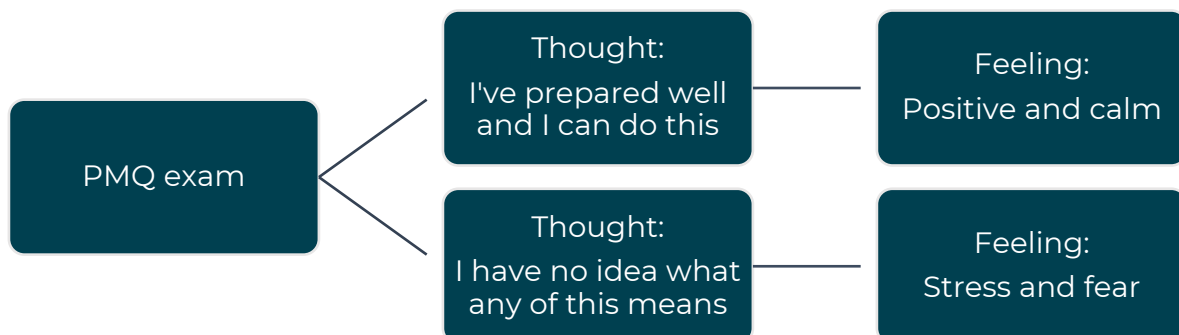
Most learners will start with one of the 'easier' questions to build confidence and momentum, however...

Manage your time

- Note when you start each question at the top of your answer sheet (or screen) and then add 17 minutes so that you know when to move to the next question.
- Following this time management strategy should leave 10 minutes at the end of the exam to complete any unfinished answers.
- Avoid perfectionism - remember that 80% of your marks are likely to come from 20% of your mental effort.
- If you panic - put your pen down, close your eyes, breathe slowly, stretch, and remind yourself how well-prepared you are.

Positive mental attitude

Having a positive mental attitude in exams will help you realise your potential and make the exam a more enjoyable experience.



As a final thought, remember that *'the best can be the enemy of the good'*. Prioritising your time before and during the exam is similar to prioritising project requirements using the MoSCoW method. For each syllabus topic, consider what you:

Mo

• Must do

S

• Should do

Co

• Could do

W

• Will not do

The main source of exam stress is poor preparation. **You** are therefore the person who is best placed to reduce any anxiety levels.



Get a good night's sleep and think of the exam as a challenge, not a threat. Your preparation is complete and it's now time to demonstrate what you know.

10.2 PMQ question types

There are different types of question in the PMQ examination. Successful candidates ensure that the focus of their answer aligns with the command-verb asked in the question. The APM definitions of how each command verb must be answered are shown below.

Describe	A question for a describe command verb is likely to ask the candidate to describe a certain number of situations/examples/benefits in direct relation to the assessment criteria being assessed. Give an account, including all the relevant characteristics, features, qualities, and events. (Focus on what is being done and how).
Explain	A question for an explain command verb will require the candidate to be able to explain the reasons and purpose of the project management practice/knowledge area along with demonstrating understanding of why that project management practice/knowledge is relevant/applied in context to the assessment criteria being assessed. Give an account of the purpose(s) or reason(s) for a project management practice, its importance, and benefits. (Focus on why something is being done).
Differentiate	A question for a differentiate command verb is likely to seek the candidate to explain one or more differences between two project management practices/knowledge areas. (More commonly asked as 'explain the difference between ...'). Recognise or determine what makes something different, the reasons for the difference and why these differences are important.
Interpret	A question for an interpret command verb will provide the candidate with factual information (e.g., numerical data) connected to the project management practice. The candidate will be asked to interpret the information in relation to the assessment criteria seeking justifications from the candidate on their interpretation. Focus on translating information/data into another form to aid understanding of the subject matter, to demonstrate the candidate's understanding of the subject matter and/or to inform a future action.
Outline / state	A question for an outline/state command verb will require the candidate to set out the main points or main characteristics of the project management subject.

Partial example answers

Each example would be worth a maximum of 10 marks as they only illustrate one component of a two or three component answer. 'MYCO' is a fictional organisation, and you would reference your own organisation in your answers.

Describe	Give an account, including all the relevant characteristics, qualities and events
Example: Describe three typical components of a project management plan - 30 marks (10 marks each)	
1. <u>Schedule baseline</u> – details the committed delivery dates for the project outputs including any interim deliverables that may be produced during the deployment phase. In a linear life cycle, the schedule would detail the timing for each phase and when the stage gates will occur. Schedule may be represented as a Gantt chart or as a list of key milestones. This can then be used to monitor and control schedule progress during deployment. The baseline can also be used to incentivise team members and/or external suppliers.	

Explain	Give an account of the purpose(s) or reason(s)
Example: Explain three benefits of formal risk management in a project - 30 marks (10 marks each)	
1. MORE REALISTIC PLANS MYCO's risk process ensures that technical risks are reviewed by an independent subject matter expert (SME) and suitable levels of contingency (time and cost) are assigned to activities. This builds management confidence that an objective review of each risk has been undertaken and appropriate risk mitigation has been planned. The process also helps to prevent project teams from unnecessarily 'padding' activity estimates to account for risk. Involving the SMEs in risk management increases transparency relating to risk and will help gain engagement from the SME community as they are more likely to believe in the project plan.	

State	Express the details without elaboration
Example: State factors which can negatively affect communication in a project – 20 marks (5 marks each)	
<i>The team may be located in different locations (or time-zones) which will make regular face-to-face communication more difficult and likely to result in slower decision-making.</i> <i>Different stakeholders might have variable levels of situated knowledge (e.g., contextual, organisational, technical) that might cause communications to be misunderstood and/or misinterpreted.</i> <i>Language barriers across global teams will make reaching a common understanding more problematic – this may also include technical jargon and/or colloquialisms.</i> <i>Personal distractions or competing priorities might mean that the sender or receiver is not paying full attention and therefore important content may be missed and/or misinterpreted.</i>	

A useful technique that can often be used to prompt your thoughts when answering questions is:

- **What** is the technique, benefit, process step, impact, etc.?
- **How** is this activity carried out?
- **Why** do we do this - what benefit do we get from this action?
- **When** in a project would this be done or alternatively, provide a workplace example?
- **Who** is doing this activity or who is it being done to?

When asked to describe or explain a specific tool or technique, you may also wish to expand your answer by describing the relative strengths and weaknesses of the tool.



Remember!

The primary focus of your answer must align with the command verb used in the question.



11. PMQ Sample Exam – answers/tips (30min)

To help you understand what APM expects in an exam answer, we've created examples of partial answers for the official Sample Exam. This will give you an idea of the structure/content of what constitutes a good exam answer and these examples have been independently reviewed by a representative of APM.

You'll find it useful to have a quick read of this document and then use it as a guide when you complete:

- Typical exam questions contained in Activity-12.
- The official Sample Exam questions that will be worked on during the classroom course.



QA Sample Exam Answers and Tips PDF (you will find this document in your Mimeo account when you receive your course materials – normally five days before your course starts)



12. PMQ Exam answer practice (180min)

Complete the five partial PMQ exam questions below. Do not worry about how long it takes to answer each question but focus on your exam technique. Once complete, compare your answer to the example answers and further guidance provided in Appendix B.

Q1 - Learning Outcome: Understand project procurement (9.3)

Explain three differences between a comprehensive and parallel contractual relationship. Ensure you compare both within each of your differences.

Marks: 30 marks (10 marks each)

Q2 - Learning Outcome: Understand how organisations and projects are structured (1.7)

Explain three components of a formal project management method that may be used to help govern a project and why each component is important.

Marks: 30 marks (10 marks each)

Q3 - Learning Outcome: Understand planning for success (6.8)

Describe three core sections of the project management plan.

Marks: 30 marks (10 marks each)

Q4 - Learning Outcome: Understand communication within project management (4.3)

State four factors which can negatively affect communication.

Marks: 20 marks (5 marks each)

Q5 - Learning Outcome: Understand planning for success (6.14)

Interpret the Earned Value information provided below for a project.

Given the likely schedule impact and cost estimation at completion, propose two practical responses the project manager could take and a justification for each.

A project has a budget at completion of £120,000 and is planned to be completed in 10 months. The table below shows the project's progress at the end of month 5:

Task Planned	Planned budget	Actual cost	Earned value
Total at month 5	£60,000	£40,000	£50,000

CPI = 1.25

SPI = 0.83

EAC = £96k

Planned time/SPI = 12 months

Marks: 20 marks (10 marks each)

13. PMQ Study Guide: Pre-Course Study

(450min)

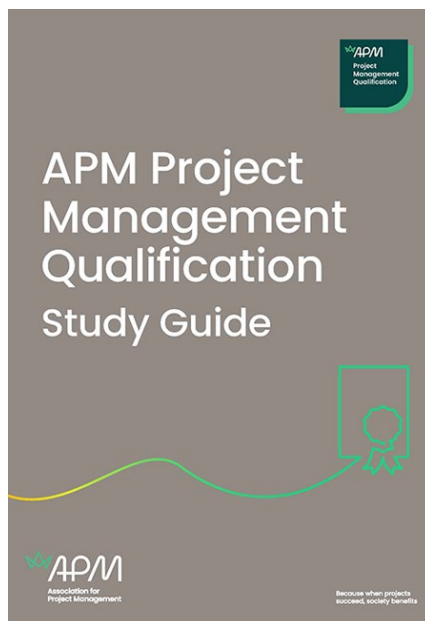
Activity 4 (PMQ Study 'Hints 'n Tips') describes a number of techniques that will make your study of the PMQ Study Guide (eBook) a more active learning experience – ensuring that you come to the course fully prepared.

Please use the techniques described when reading the PMQ Study Guide – crib sheets, mnemonics, spray diagrams, flashcards, etc.

Active reading of the PMQ Study Guide will help identify areas of the syllabus that you may be unfamiliar with. These can be documented in Appendix-A so that you are ready with questions for your course trainer.

Whilst we appreciate that your self-knowledge rating doesn't guarantee proficiency in a certain topic, this exercise will help track your understanding and focus you on eliminating any gaps that you identify.

Note: The structure of the PMQ Study Guide will exactly replicate the delivery order in your course.



1. **Study planning** - General tips on studying for the PMQ exam
2. **Initiating a project** – How organisations can use projects in order to enhance performance, bring about change, and enable the organisation to grow
3. **Project planning** – Consider how the 'project need' is likely to be delivered through a detailed statement of work
4. **Project delivery** - Success involves controlling deployment and ensuring that there is good information about progress and performance

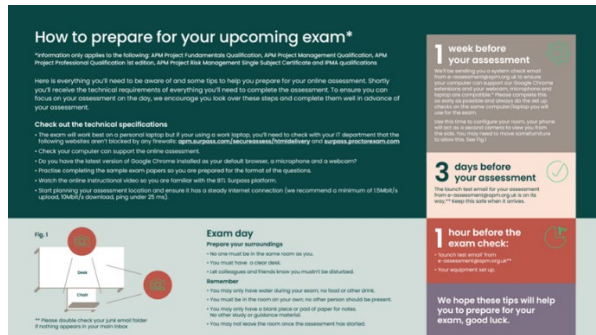
The PMQ Study Guide has several short quizzes that will test your knowledge after reading each topic.

You have the expected two years' experience in managing projects and your trainer will help you relate this experience to each of the PMQ Learning Outcomes.

14. APM Online Exams – IT and rules (30min)

Guidance on online examination setup and IT requirements at:

<https://www.apm.org.uk/qualifications-and-training/online-examinations-what-to-expect/>



This webpage has an excellent overview of the IT requirements for the APM examinations (including an explanatory video) and should be read carefully before you attend the course.

Please complete the APM checklist that can be found on the webpage to ensure that you are ready for the exam.

	Check	Done?
	Webcam and microphone?	
	Second device with camera?	
	Internet speed	
	Latest version of Google Chrome	

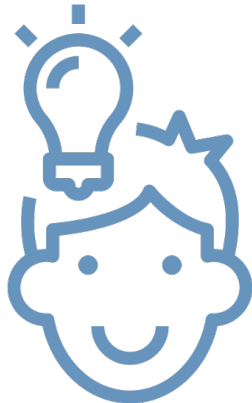
Note: Any technical issues that you uncover can be discussed with the 'online chat' support that is available when testing your system. Failing this, you should speak to your IT department who should be able to help. Performing the IT check early will give you plenty of time to source a personal compatible device if your IT group cannot help.

Important: You must also view the short video that outlines APM's 'Rules and Regulations' relating to online exams. Failure to comply with the rules risks your exam being disqualified either during or after the exam. Full details of the 'rules and regulations for remote invigilated exams' can be found at:

[Terms and conditions | APM](#)

Appendix A: Mapping the PMQ Syllabus to your Study Guide

At QA, we want all our learners to assume more responsibility for their own learning - applying and reflecting upon new knowledge gained throughout the programme. Metacognition means “learning to learn” more effectively, helping you to become a more strategic and reflective learner.

Tacit learners are unaware of their metacognitive knowledge. They do not think about any particular strategies for learning and merely accept if they know something or not.	Aware learners know about some of the kinds of thinking that they do such as generating ideas, finding evidence etc. However, thinking is not necessarily deliberate or planned.	
Strategic learners organise their thinking by using problem-solving, grouping and classifying, evidence-seeking and decision-making, etc. They know and apply the strategies that help them learn.	Reflective learners are not only strategic about their thinking, but they also reflect upon their learning while it is happening, considering the success or not of any strategies they are using and then revising them as appropriate	

You can use the tables below to identify 3-4 assessment criteria of specific concern for each Learning Outcome and track your understanding throughout your studies. Complete the chart to assess your current level of knowledge for each topic – low / medium / high. This is very similar to a KWL chart which is commonly used by students to help you assume greater responsibility for your own learning.



Learning Outcome 1: Understanding project management and the operating environment

#	Assessment Criteria	eBook Page	Low	Med	High



Learning Outcome 2: Understand project life cycles

#	Assessment Criteria	eBook Page	Low	Med	High



Learning Outcome 3: Understand the situational context of projects

#	Assessment Criteria	eBook Page	Low	Med	High

Learning Outcome 3: Understand the situational context of projects

#	Assessment Criteria	eBook Page	Low	Med	High

Learning Outcome 5: Understand the principles of leadership and teamwork

#	Assessment Criteria	eBook Page	Low	Med	High



Learning Outcome 6: Understand planning for success

#	Assessment Criteria	eBook Page	Low	Med	High

Learning Outcome 7: Understand project scope management

#	Assessment Criteria	eBook Page	Low	Med	High

Learning Outcome 7: Understand project scope management

#	Assessment Criteria	eBook Page	Low	Med	High

Learning Outcome 9: Understand project procurement

#	Assessment Criteria	eBook Page	Low	Med	High

Learning Outcome 10: Understand risk and issue management in the context of project management

#	Assessment Criteria	eBook Page	Low	Med	High

Learning Outcome 11: Understand quality in the context of a project

#	Assessment Criteria	eBook Page	Low	Med	High

Appendix B: Practice question answers and tips

Note: The examples provided only show one point of a question that is asking for two or three separate points to be made. Therefore, each example is worth a maximum of 10 marks, and you would expect to spend approximately 3.5mins creating this content. The numbers in brackets refer to the PMQ assessment criteria being examined.

Q1 - Explain three differences between a comprehensive and parallel contractual relationship. Ensure you compare both within each of your differences.

You may be tempted to begin with a description of what a comprehensive and parallel contractual relationship entails – however, no direct credit will be awarded for this description as it isn't what the question is asking. No credit is given for introductions or summaries in the PMQ exam. Your understanding of each relationship can be evidenced when making your comparisons.

Differences worth of explanation might include:

- Level of effort required by the customer to manage each contractual relationship.
- Ability to select specific suppliers on the basis of their capability, cost, experience, etc.
- Risk to the customer if the supplier should default – are “all of your eggs in one basket”?

The question asks the candidate to ‘explain’ the differences so it’s important to demonstrate **why** these differences are important to the project manager and/or the success of the project.

A comprehensive relationship requires less management effort from the customer as the supplier has the internal resources necessary to complete the work (e.g., employing a large building firm with their own bricklayers, plumbers etc.). Conversely, the parallel contract relationship places the onus of managing interrelationships between different suppliers firmly on the customer. This is important as the customer PM may not have time to directly manage these interrelationships and a comprehensive contract might be simpler as there is a single point of contact. Also – managing a parallel relationship could require a certain degree of technical competence on the customer’s behalf if they need to deal with supplier disputes (for example, over the quality of deliverables created). Once again, a comprehensive contract may prove simpler if the customer doesn’t have this expertise.

Q2 - Explain three aspects of a formal project management method that may be used to help govern a project and why each component is important. (1.7)

This question may initially look straightforward, but you are specifically asked to explain why each aspect is important – merely describing each is not enough. Your answer may reference any of the following aspects of a formal method:

- Role definitions and responsibilities
- Policies
- Regulations,
- Life cycle stages
- Processes and procedures
- etc.

My company's project management method contains role descriptions for the primary project roles – sponsor, project manager, and technical lead.

This ensures that each role understands what is expected of them. It also helps the organisation assign suitably qualified and experienced personnel to each role. Furthermore, our method contains responsibility assignment matrices (RAM/RACI) for the primary project activities, for example – scope change evaluation and approval. Understanding who is responsible, accountable, consulted, and informed speeds up decision making and ensures that the appropriate stakeholders have the relevant input to project activities. It also reduces conflict caused by ambiguity relating to project roles and responsibilities.

Q3 - Describe three core sections of the project management plan.

A 'describe' question requires the candidate to describe a specific project management topic and how it may be undertaken. Although you may also be tempted to discuss 'why' each factor is important, it should not be the main focus of your answer.

The project management plan defines the project in detail and your answer might be based on any three of these factors.:

- How will we do it?
- What will we do?
- Who will do it?
- How long will it take?
- How much will it cost?

Project Budget: The PMP details all relevant costs associated with the project including labour, materials, third-party costs etc. These costs may be represented in the form of a cost breakdown structure (CBS) which clearly illustrates where money is forecast to be spent. The PM may rely on professional estimators and/or subject matter experts to provide accurate cost estimates for each work package. Certain industries (e.g., construction) may employ a quantity surveyor who will use parametric estimating to help derive the project budget. The PM will also ensure that the budget contains suitable contingency reserves to help mitigate risk, and a separate management reserve may be held outside the cost baseline to account for unforeseen circumstances that may arise.

Q4 - State four factors which can negatively affect communication. (4.3)

A question for an outline/state command verb only requires the candidate to set out the main points or characteristics of the project management concept in question – expanded description or explanation is NOT required.

Your answer may touch on a wide variety of factors such as:

- Separate locations
- Physical environment
- Time-zone differences
- Cultural factors
- Lack of technical awareness or competence
- Emotional state of the sender or receiver
- etc.

The example below sets out two aspects for the question with a maximum of 5 marks being awarded for each point stated.

1. *Different technical background and competence levels: This can lead to confusion, misunderstanding and frustration for either party. Poor decisions and conclusions are inevitable if technical understanding is not verified and/or supporting information is not provided.*
2. *Separate physical locations: Where face-to-face communication is not possible, the reduced richness of communication methods such as email, or telephone calls, may lead to messages being misunderstood. Further frustration can also be generated if team members have varying levels of access and competence with virtual collaboration tools such as MS-Teams.*

Q5. Interpret the Earned Value information provided below for a project.

Given the likely schedule impact and cost estimation at completion, propose two practical responses the project manager could take and a justification for each.

Currently, the PMQ does not require a candidate to perform any calculations. You are however expected to interpret numerical information relating to the project. In this question, your initial focus should be on comparing the cost and schedule forecasts at month 5 against the baseline targets.

	Baseline	Month 5 forecast
	£120K	£96K
	10 months	12 months

- The project looks like it will finish £24K below the planned budget (CPI = 1.25; above 1.00 is good news)
- The project looks like it will finish 2 months later than anticipated (SPI = 0.83; below 1.00 is bad news)

Your answer should consider possible reasons for the performance and the implications for the project. Both factors will help to inform the justified actions that you wish to take – which is the main focus of the answer.

Assuming that the work performed already is of sufficient quality, possible answers might include:

- Adding resources to recover the schedule.
- Accept the delay (and re-baseline) if cost is more important than schedule for the business or customer.

The CPI of 1.25 indicates that the project will finish £24K under the planned budget of £120K. However, the bad news is that an SPI of 0.83 will result in the project finishing 2 months after the planned completion of 10 months. The £24K saving could be used to 'buy-in' extra resources in the final 5 months of the project to recover some, or all, of the 2 months delay. This would be the recommended course of action if on-time delivery is critical for the project (for example – the launch of a new product). The PM may acquire additional internal resources, authorise overtime working or hire external contractors. The PM must ensure that new team members have the necessary skills and expertise to seamlessly join the project otherwise the familiarisation time involved may slow down an already high-performing team.

Bibliography and useful assets

Guidance on online examination setup and IT requirements

<https://www.apm.org.uk/qualifications-and-training/online-examinations-what-to-expect/>

This webpage has an excellent overview of the IT requirements for the APM examinations (including an explanatory video) and should be read before you attend the course.

APM PMQ Supporting Resources

<https://www.apm.org.uk/qualifications-and-training/project-management-qualification/>

This website contains links to the following resources (you should already have downloaded these documents):

- **Syllabus**
- **Exam technique**
- **Candidate Guidance Notes**
- **Sample Paper** (you will attempt many of these questions during your actual training as directed by your course trainer)

Textbooks

Tyler, S (2007). *The Manager's Good Study Guide*. Open University APM (2019). *APM Body of Knowledge 7th Edition*. APM Publishing

APM (2020). *APM Project Management Qualification Study Guide*. APM Publishing

KWL Charts and Metacognitive Learning

<https://cambridge-community.org.uk/professional-development/gswmeta/index.html>

