

MANAGEMENT

APM Project
Management
Qualification (*PMQ*)

Exam Techniques

Project Management Qualification Exam Technique

Short answer questions test your level of knowledge and understanding of a topic and will contain command verbs such as 'explain' and 'describe'.

Each PMQ question is worth 50 marks and will have two parts, part a) is worth 20 marks and part b) is worth 30 marks. A question will target one learning outcome from the syllabus and each part of the question will target different assessment criteria from the same learning outcome.

For part a) questions, which are 20 marks, you will be required to write two credit-worthy things in answer to the question posed. For part b) questions, which are worth 30 marks, you will be required to write three credit-worthy things in answer to the question posed.

The PMQ requires you to demonstrate knowledge and understanding.

Each PMQ question paper will consist of short questions to which you must produce your own response. If a question asks for two explanations/descriptions, then two must be given to achieve higher marks.

Often candidates confuse 'how' with 'why' and do not give an appropriate response. 'Why' refers to the cause of something, for example "Explain why a motivated project team performs effectively." In this example an appropriate response would focus on reasons such as to achieve key performance indicators or to deliver a quality service.

However, 'how' in contrast refers to what makes something happen. Consider the question "Explain how a motivated project team performs effectively." In this instance, an appropriate response would focus on topics such as performing effectively through proactive collaborative working or by reducing the number of quality errors.

When reading a question, it is important for you to understand its components. You must recognise the command verb and what it means (see the command words section of the Syllabus). You must also recognise the broad topic area or context, and the specific aspect of a question.

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

A response that focuses on motivation as a general concept would receive very few marks, but a response 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.

The way in which you respond to a question will influence the number of marks that are awarded for a response. If the response is not clear and/or the content of a response is disjointed, it will be difficult for an assessor to be confident that you have demonstrated secure knowledge and understanding.

You must present a response through a logical and easy to understand structure that focuses on the exact requirement of the question. An assessor must be able to understand what it is you are saying so that the assessor can determine if you have provided a relevant response.

Exam Technique Suggestions

APM does not recommend one particular exam technique. Time management within the PMQ examination is very important if you are to provide responses to all the questions.

The PMQ examination:

- Is of three hours duration.
- Has been designed for candidates to answer 10 question within 3 hours, which works out as 18 minutes per question, including reading time. This can be further broken down as 7 minutes for the part a) 20-mark questions and 11 minutes for the part b) 30-mark questions.
- Contains 16 equally weighted questions, from which candidates must select 10 questions.

One possible technique is to read through all the questions and make a note of those that you are more confident of answering effectively and those where they have less confidence. The RAG approach could be used here where:

R for Red indicates low confidence

A for Amber indicates medium confidence, and

G for Green indicates high confidence.

You could, after the initial review, begin with G, followed by A, followed by R. This would give you the greatest chance of achieving the highest marks possible.

The PMQ examination for PRINCE2:

- Is of two hours duration.
- Has been designed for candidates to answer 6 questions within two hours, which works out as 20 minutes per question, including reading time. This can be further broken down as 8 minutes for the part (a) 20-mark questions and 12 minutes for the part (b) 30-mark questions.
- Contains 10 equally weighted questions, from which candidates must select 6 questions.

Further Reading

You are advised to read the PMQ Syllabus on APM's website, so you are aware of what areas of knowledge they are expected to demonstrate in the exam. As part of the syllabus document is a list of the command words used in the syllabus and question paper, with a definition of what they mean.

For the PMQ, APM will also be publishing on our website indicative content for each assessment criteria. The indicative content is not a sample or model answers but a guide to the type of responses you could make for each assessment criteria. Exact responses should be tailored to fit the question asked.

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