

The 5 Steps to Achieve PMP® Certification

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I believe that everybody can learn from the experiences of others. In this article, I will share how I planned for and studied to pass the PMP® exam. I followed five steps:

1. Choose your preparatory course.

You need to search at least three training centers and compare the material, benefits and costs. After that, choose the best cost/benefit for you.

Tip: Make sure that you choose a Registered Education Provider (REP) that is a registered and authorized by the Project Management Institute.

2. Choose your study material.

Pay attention when choosing the material. You will have a lot of options of books, courses, blogs and specialized websites that will offer everything about PMP certification. You have to choose (at maximum) three books; otherwise, you will not have time to read them all.

When I studied for the exam, I used:

- Preparatory course materials, with books and simulation exams
- *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide)*
- The *PMP Exam Prep* textbook by Rita Mulcahy
- FASTrack PMP Exam simulation software (with over 1,600 questions)

I am sure that the material above is enough to study and pass the exam. You don't need read all the books and materials that you find on the internet.

Tip: Spending too much time searching for exam materials on the internet will be a waste of time.

3. Plan your studies.

You will find people that studied one month, three months, six months and even a year for the exam. You have to find the way that works best for you. In my case, I did the preparatory course, and after three months I took the exam with success.

My planning of study was in seven steps:

1. After I finished my preparatory course, I did the FASTrack PMP Exam simulation to check my level of knowledge at that moment and recorded the results.
2. I read the *PMBOK® Guide*, underling the main topics and writing important notes.
3. When I finished with the *PMBOK Guide*, I began study the Mulcahy textbook, again underling the main topics and writing important notes.
4. At this point, with much more knowledge, for a second time I did a FASTrack simulation so that I could compare the results between the first and second simulations and see the evolution.
5. The next step was a fast revision in the underlined topics and the important notes.
6. After the revision, I took a third FASTrack exam so I could compare the results of the three simulations and again track the evolution. At this moment, I reached a 90% score in the simulation.
7. The last step was a revision in some questions and topics to finish my studying and finally schedule the exam.

Tip: *There is not a “magic recipe” to be prepared for the exam. You have to find your own way and time to study for it, but I consider three things very important to achieve success: planning, focus and discipline.*

4. Start eligibility for the exam.

In general, the first thing that people do is start their eligibility—you have one year from the date of acceptance of your application. But I consider that a mistake because sometimes you can't follow your study planning, or other priorities take over and you lose the valid year of your eligibility.

So when is the best moment to start the eligibility period for the exam? I started mine when I finished my preparatory course and when I was doing my study planning. What did I need to meet eligibility? On the PMI.org, you can find the credential handbook that explains all of the details about eligibility [how to pay for the exam, the audit process, the process of Continuing Certification Requirements (CCR), etc.].

Tip: *Do your study plan and schedule your exam, because you will have more motivation to study.*

5. Schedule the exam.

The scheduling of your exam can be done after your eligibility approval. You can find all the information that you need in the handbook. The cost of exam is US\$405 for PMI members or US\$555 for non-PMI members. You should consider becoming a PMI member before paying for your exam.

Tip: Do not be afraid of the PMP exam! There are a lot of things to study, and you may always think that you aren't prepared enough. Just do your study planning and follow it...believe in you!

About the Author



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Fábio Mourão, Project Manager & Personal Coach, has worked for over 20 years with IT Projects in small, medium and large companies. He holds a Bachelor's degree in System Analysis, MBA in IT Business Management and Post MBA in Executive Project Management.

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