PMI Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP)^{SM}

Practitioner Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Last Updated 16 March 2012

[What is Agile?](#)

[What is the PMI-ACP^{SM}?](#)

[Why did PMI develop an Agile Certification?](#)

[Agile, *PMBOK® Guide* and PMI Standards](#)

[Experience Eligibility Requirements](#)

[Education Eligibility Requirements](#)

[Application Process and Fees](#)

[Examination Expectations](#)

[Continuing Certification Requirements (CCR)](#)

What is Agile?

Agile is a philosophy that uses organizational models based on people, collaboration and shared values. The *Agile Manifesto* outlines tenets of agile philosophy. Agile uses rolling wave planning; iterative and incremental delivery; rapid and flexible response to change; and open communication between teams, stakeholders and customers. There are many agile methodologies that adhere to these tenets, such as Scrum, XP, Lean and Test-driven Development (TDD), etc.

- Agile principles and practices are topics of growing importance in project management. Project management practitioners can use agile principles and practices to successfully manage change, improve communication, reduce cost, increase efficiency and demonstrate value to customers and stakeholders.

- Here are basic definitions for some common terms associated with agile principles and practices:

Term	Definition
Agile Manifesto	A public declaration of the philosophy and principles of agile software development, created in February 2001 in Snowbird, Utah. Visit **http://www.Agilemanifesto.org/** to learn more.
Agile Methodologies	Frameworks and processes whose practices support the *Agile Manifesto* principles. Examples include: Scrum, Extreme Programming (XP), Crystal, Dynamic Systems Development Method (DSDM Atern), Feature Driven Development (FDD).
Agile Practices	Activities that are the application of agile principles.

Term	Definition
Agile Principles	Fundamental truths and shared values that drive behavior in agile methodologies.
Iterative and Incremental	The approach of implementing a work product in successive pieces (increments), while also gradually refining the work product through targeted improvements (iterations).

What are some examples of agile principles and practices?

- Agile principles and practices include:

  o Early, measurable return on investment through defined, iterative delivery of product increments.

  o High visibility of project progress allows early identification and resolution or monitoring of problems.

  o Continuous involvement of the customer throughout the product development cycle.

  o Empowerment of the business owner to make decisions needed to meet goals.

  o Adaptation to changing business needs, giving more influence over requirement changes.

  o Reduced product and process waste.

How are agile principles and practices different from waterfall principles and practices?

- Agile principles and practices seek to manage change through flexibility, adaptation and direct communication. Waterfall principles and practices, often referred to simply as "waterfall," are sequential, phase-driven project management approaches where each phase must be planned and completed before further work can progress-

  o Agile principles and practices are suited to projects which require a nimble response to change and continual communication to customers.

  o Waterfall principles and practices are suited to projects where little to no change in requirements is expected, and where requirements are clear and well-understood by all team members.

  o Agile principles and practices can be adapted to suit organizations and industries that follow waterfall principles and practices. Agile and waterfall principles and practices are not mutually exclusive - some organizations apply elements of both principles and practices. However, it important to know that not all organizations lend themselves to agile principles and practices.

Where can you learn more about agile?

- Visit the PMI Agile Community of Practice at **http://agile.vc.pmi.org/**

What is the PMI-ACP^{SM}?

What value does the PMI-ACP^{SM} bring to a practitioner?

- The PMI-ACP^{SM} validates a practitioner's ability to understand and apply agile principles and practices on basic projects. The PMI-ACP^{SM} demonstrates that a practitioner can select agile principles and practices as a project management approach based on the needs and demands of a specific project. By earning the PMI-ACP^{SM}, practitioners can:
  - Demonstrate to employers their level of professionalism in agile practices of project management.
  - Increase their professional versatility in project management tools and techniques.
  - Show they have the capacity to lead basic teams using agile principles and practices by holding a certification that is more credible than existing offerings based only on exams or training.

What value does a practitioner with the PMI-ACP^{SM} bring to an organization?

- The PMI-ACP^{SM} demonstrates a practitioner's value to employers and level of professionalism:
  - The knowledge of both agile and waterfall practices gives the practitioner greater breadth and depth as a project manager.
  - The certification shows the practitioner's ability to lead basic teams using agile principles and practices.
  - The certification appeals to a wide, rapidly growing audience as more organizations adopt agile principles and practices.

What value do agile principles and practices bring to an organization?

- Organizations who use agile principles and practices have documented the value they see from these techniques:
  - Adaptive to changing business needs, giving the organization more influence over adding, changing, or removing requirements.
  - Early and continuous customer feedback— as the customer is involved throughout development, they will end up with an end-product that they want and will use.
  - Empowered business owner who can receive and review critical information necessary to make decisions to steer the project toward the goal continually throughout the development process.
  - Early measurable return on investment –this allows for defined deliverables for each iteration, early in the process.
  - High visibility and influence over the project progress leading to early indications of problems.
  - Incremental delivery—rather than a single complete delivery at the end of the project.

- o Reduces product and process waste.
- o Agile principles and practices are disciplined and value driven.

How is the PMI-ACP^{SM} different from the PMP® Credential?

- The PMI-ACP^{SM} specifically validates a practitioner's ability to understand and apply agile principles and practices. The PMP® Credential recognizes demonstrated competence leading and directing project teams.

Why did PMI develop an Agile Certification?

Why did PMI develop the PMI-ACP^{SM}?

- Agile is a topic of growing importance in project management. PMI market research shows that project management practitioners are embracing agile principles and practices as a technique for successfully managing projects. Additionally, the following points show the increasing demand for an agile certification:
  - o PMI members, credential holders, and individuals who embrace agile principles and practices are looking to PMI for certification, recognition and learning opportunities.
  - o Many project professionals experienced in traditional techniques are seeing the demand for agile principles and practices in many industries and organizations. These practitioners are eager to add agile principles and practices to their project management "toolbox."
  - o Organizations that use project management to serve both internal and external clients are seeing value in agile principles and practices to deliver projects more quickly, with less waste and cost due to misunderstood or poorly defined requirements.

Is a certification program sufficient to grow agile skills?
- PMI has helped grow the knowledge and skill of Agile practitioners over the last several years. With the introduction of this program, PMI now has a full suite of resources available to develop and recognize agile knowledge and skills:
  - o **Professional Development:** Whether attending dedicated agile trainings at PMI SeminarsWorld^{SM} and eSeminarsWorld^{SM}, or Area of Focus presentations at Global Congress, PMI has been offering high-quality learning programs for those interested in Agile principles and practices. In addition, PMI chapters have been offering their own training opportunities.
  - o **Community:** The Agile Community of Practice is a formal network of PMI members interested in sharing their questions, concerns and successes with agile principles and practices. Launched in the summer of 2009, the community has attracted over 8,000 subscribers submitting nearly 600 posts of knowledge sharing.
  - o **Certification:** The PMI-ACP^{SM} recognizes practitioners for their understanding of agile principles and practices. The certification represents an important facet of a practitioner's professional development.

- o **Key Thought Leaders:** Key thought leaders in project management and the Agile Community of Practice have advised PMI on the best way to offer an agile certification to serve practitioners and organizations.

Agile, *PMBOK® Guide* and PMI Standards

What is the difference between *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge* (*PMBOK® Guide)* and agile principles and practices?

- The *PMBOK® Guide*—Fourth Edition contains principles of project management and project management processes. These processes describe "what should be done during the management of a project." Agile methodologies are different in that they describe "how to do the things that should be done" – in short, "what" versus "how." The approaches defined in the *PMBOK® Guide*—Fourth Edition and in agile are compatible. Agile can be used together with the *PMBOK® Guide*—Fourth Edition because the "how" can be layered on top of the "what".

- The *PMBOK® Guide*—Fourth Edition is an American National Standard that is developed and approved by PMI under an ANSI-accredited standards process. There is no standardized collection of agile methodologies, principles or practices.

Do the best practices in the *PMBOK® Guide*—Fourth Edition support agile principles and practices?

- The *PMBOK® Guide*—Fourth Edition does not specifically mention agile or any specific agile methodologies, though the approach outlined in the *PMBOK® Guide*—Fourth Edition allows for iterative approaches to project management, can be applied to projects managed according to agile principles and practices, and does not contradict agile methodologies. It is up to the project manager to determine which principles and practices to apply to any specific project.

How do agile principles and practices compare to *PMBOK® Guide*—Fourth Edition process groups?

- The project management principles recommended by the *PMBOK® Guide*—Fourth Edition starts with processes associated with Initiating the project, followed by process groups for Planning, then a recursive cycle of processes for Executing and Controlling & Monitoring while revisiting Planning as necessary. At the end of the project are processes for Closing.

- Agile methodologies start with developing a Product Vision (which can correspond with Initiating); followed by development and prioritization of user stories (which can correspond to Planning); followed by a series of sprint or iterative cycles and reviews (which can correspond to Executing, Control & Monitoring, and Planning); followed by Product Delivery (which can correspond to Closing).

- The agile approach emphasizes iterative development where each agile sprint or iteration cycle involves the creation of a limited number of product features or components which are completed before proceeding to the next iteration. The *PMBOK® Guide*—Fourth Edition approach, while allowing for multiple project phases, emphasizes completion of the project within a limited number of phases. It is up to the project manager to determine which approach to apply to any specific project.

Experience Eligibility Requirements

What are some examples of work experience that applicants can claim for eligibility?
- Review the *Examination Content Outline* to learn about tasks that typify an agile practitioner.

Is the three-year experience period effective from the date of my application?
- The three-year experience period is begins the date you submit the application.

Why does the experience requirement only cover a three-year period?
- The experience requirement is based on a study of agile practitioners and their skills, tools and techniques. Due to the fast pace of agile practices, the limit is in place to ensure practitioner knowledge is current.

Education Eligibility Requirements

How can I determine if an agile course that meets the education eligibility requirement?
- Review the *Examination Content Outline* and compare it to the content of the agile course. Only hours of training in agile practices will meet the certification eligibility requirements. One hour of education equals one contact hour of education eligibility.

Where can I find training in agile practices to meet the training eligibility requirements?
- Visit CCRS (http://www.pmi.org/ccrs) to search for education activities in your location.

Do Scrum Alliance® Certified ScrumMaster (CSM) courses quality for the education eligibility requirement?
- Yes, Scrum Alliance® courses qualify for the education eligibility requirements. Only hours of training in agile practices will meet the certification eligibility requirements. One hour of education equals one contact hour of education eligibility.

I teach agile methodologies and/or develop course work for agile education. How can I find out of the courses are applicable for the PMI-ACP^{SM}?
- Review the *Examination Content Outline* to ensure that the course content is relevant for those seeking certification. You can also investigate becoming a PMI Registered Education Provider (R.E.P.).

Are there any books that I can read to study for the agile certification exam?
- You can find a reference list of suggesting reading for agile principles and practices on http://www.pmi.org/en/Certification/New-PMI-Agile-Certification.aspx in the Resources list.

Application Process and Fees

What is the application fee for the PMI-ACP^{SM}?

Exam Administration Type	PMI Member Status and Cost (US Dollars)
Computer-based testing (CBT)	Member $435
	Nonmember $495
Reexamination CBT	Member $335
	Nonmember $395
CCR credential renewal	Member $90
	Nonmember $130

After completing the application, how much time do I have to complete the examination?
- A candidate has one year to pay the certification fee and take the examination after his or her application is approved.

Once I apply for the certification, how long do I have to meet the eligibility requirements?
- Candidates must complete the education eligibility requirements before taking the exam.

Examination Expectations

Where will PMI offer the certification examination?
- PMI will offer the PMI-ACP^{SM} examination globally at computer-based testing centers. A candidate cannot schedule his or her examination appointment until eligibility notification is received and payment is submitted.

Will the examination be available in translations?
- The examination is only available in English at this time. PMI is considering the addition of translations at a future date.

If I fail the examination, can I take it again? If so, when can I retake the examination? How many times can I retake the examination?
- The examination retake policies are the same as those followed for other PMI certifications. Candidates have three opportunities to take the examination within their one-year eligibility period. Each retake requires an additional payment.

How many questions are in the examination?
- There are a total of 120 questions on the examination. Of the 120 questions, 20 are considered pretest questions. Pretest questions do not affect the score and are used in examinations as an effective and legitimate way to test the validity of future examination questions. All questions are randomly placed throughout the examination.

How much time do I receive to complete the examination?

- The allotted time to complete the examination is three hours.

Is the exam based primarily on any one agile methodology? For example, if I am knowledgeable about Scrum, will I to study XP or TDD to pass the exam?

- The exam is not based on a specific agile methodology. Review the *Examination Content Outline* to learn more about the contents of the exam.

How can I find a list of testing centers before applying for the certification?

- There are several thousand computer-based testing centers located across the globe. A list of testing centers is available from www.prometric.com/pmi. Customer Care agents can look up locations based on your location.

Continuing Certification Requirements (CCR)

What are the Continuing Certification Requirements (CCR) for this certification?

- PMI-ACP^{SM} holders are required to earn 30 professional development units (PDUs) in agile topics during each three-year renewal cycle.

Can PMI-ACP^{SM} PDUs count toward the maintenance of other PMI credentials?

- The 30 PDUs in agile topics can also count towards the maintenance of the PMP$^{®}$ or PgMP$^{®}$ certification(s). If an agile practitioner is taking general project management classes, only the hours that pertain to agile topics can be applied towards the PMI-ACP^{SM}.