

## Preparing for the PMP or Other Certification Exam

When you are preparing for the PMP Exam or any other certification, the best advice is to treat it as a project – plan it, schedule it, monitor it. Here are some tips to help you out:

1. Treat preparing the exam just like a project. Set up a schedule – an hour of study tonight, an hour on the weekend, another session a week from now.
2. Cramming only works for a short period – if you could study the whole PMBOK by staying up all night and take the exam the next morning, you will probably get a better mark than if you didn't cram. But if you want to retain the information over a longer period of time, the best approach is slow and consistent.
3. Practice tests and quizzes are a powerful tool of learning rather than merely assessment. The process of retrieving an idea seems to fundamentally alter the way the information is subsequently stored, making it more accessible in the future.
4. Don't try to take the PMP exam immediately after your prep class. Similarly, don't wait for months either. The right moment is usually between 2-5 weeks after your class.
5. During that time do lots of reading and practice tests.
6. PMI doesn't want you to fail the test but they also don't make it easy. PMI primarily wants to ensure that you understand and can apply the best practices in the PMBOK Guide so they fine tune the exam to ensure an acceptable pass ratio.
7. You do have to learn the formulas, mostly in the cost management area. Some students report that they saw no formula based questions at all and others say they were really glad that they studied the formulas in depth.
8. Before the actual exam starts, write down as many formulas as possible on the scratch pad provided in the exam room. That way you don't have to dredge them from memory in the midst of an anxiety attack.
9. Don't hesitate to go back and change the answer to a previous question. Sometimes you encounter a situation where answering one question provides you with further insight into a previous question. You can also mark a question for review.
10. Pay attention to the words "except" and "not". Read over the question to ensure you understand the meaning.
11. One form of question is to present 4 choices; sometimes they all seem reasonable so focus on the BEST answer.
12. During the exam, be sure to take at least one break – even if it is just to stretch or drink some water. Changing your focus for a short time, helps you to broaden your thinking.
13. Know the inputs, techniques and outputs from the PMBOK. Don't simply memorize them. You will have to show that you can answer situational questions.