

Exam-Taking Tips

A Day or Two Before the Exam

The PMP exam is offered in Prometric testing centers. An important first consideration after signing up to test is to know how to get to the testing center and how long it will take to get there (adding time for bad weather or traffic). If it is unclear, you may wish to pay a visit there a day or two in advance. Determine not only where the building is but where the testing center is in the building; it may not be easy to find. This will reduce risks of being late and exacerbating your exam-day nerves.

Get a good night's sleep the day before the exam and good meals the night before and the day of the exam. Since the human brain requires a night's sleep to transform learning into memory, do not study much on the day of the exam. Get prepared in the days leading up to the exam and, on the day of the exam, focus instead on doing things that help you get and stay calm.

The Exam-Day Experience

The testing center is a secure location, so you will need to empty your pockets and leave your phone, wallet/purse, and other things in a storage locker once you have checked in. The testing center staff will explain the exam process, give you some pencils and scratch paper, and then set you down at a computer. These computers will have a software-based four-function calculator as part of the learning environment, but if you want a physical calculator, be sure to ask for one in advance. You can also ask for more paper or pencils in advance.

Starting the Exam

The first part of the exam is a 15-minute tutorial on how to use a mouse, how to answer the multiple-choice questions, and how to mark them for review and return to the review later. Even if you are comfortable with this type of exam, go through the tutorial so that you don't have any surprises after the timed exam begins.

When you start the actual exam, the timer will start. As noted earlier, you may want to use the first few minutes of the exam to write out the Process Group and Knowledge Area map and the math formulas.

Pacing Yourself

You will need to keep up a steady pace to finish on time. After the first 15 minutes of answering test questions, determine whether you will finish on time if you keep working at your current pace. If not, you need to find ways to work more efficiently. One way to make your multiple-choice process more efficient is to determine which answers are definitely wrong and rule those out so that there are fewer answers to mull over.

Marking for Review

Many people find it helpful to automatically mark for review any question that involves math calculations and then return to these at the end when you know how much time you have left. One advantage of doing it this way is that you might find that one exam question provides the answer to a different question.

While you can use the mark-for-review function for questions you are unsure of, be sure to select an answer for these before moving on, because if you run out of time, you won't necessarily get these questions wrong. Be sparing in how often you use the mark-for-review function. Reviewing takes time, so the fewer questions marked for review, the more time you will have for each review question. Often your first choice is correct and you can second-guess yourself into a wrong answer. Question your reasons for changing an answer and make a change only if you have strong reasons to do so.