Certification Regulations

Certified Project Management Associate
(IPMA Level D)

Contents

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Classification	© PMAC-AGPC CB, public
Status	Version 2.2 Released
Electronic file	8120-D-PROC-Certification-Regulations-22

Released by	Last name	Date	Signature
PMAC-AGPC CB management	Selver	December 21, 2012	

Version	Changes	By	Date
2.1	Updated file structure & added IPMA logo	Selver	December 21, 2012
2.2	Updated to ICR4	Selver	June 12, 2018

1. **Introduction**

The guidelines for Certified Project Management Associate (IPMA Level D) certification explain:

o   the requirements for candidates
o   the certification and recertification process flows

Certification is based upon:

o   the standard ISO/IEC 17024 for certifying persons
o   the IPMA Competence Baseline (ICB), Version 4.0
o   the IPMA Certification Regulations and Guidelines (ICR), Version 4.0
o   PMAC-AGPC Certification Body (CB) certification guidelines & rules.

These documents are taken into consideration for a proper understanding of the process.

The certification system under the rules of PMAC-AGPC CB is based on the ICB and ICR.

The present document is intended as a brief introduction to certification for candidates, supervisors, HR managers and other interested parties.

2. **Aim of certification**

The aim of certification is to ensure that the competence necessary for a project management associate can be documented by a certificate of achievement. The combination of theoretical knowledge and initial application experience gives the project management associate the ability to carry out practical administrative tasks in a project team in all areas of project management. In addition, he/she can be used as a specialist in particular areas (e.g., scheduling). The certificate is issued by the certification body and is internationally recognized.

3. **Previous training and experience**

Experience in the project management competence elements is not compulsory at this level; but it is an advantage if candidates have previously applied their project management knowledge to some extent. Level D is constructed in terms of knowledge across all relevant competences only.

4. **Registration requirements**

To register for certification at IPMA Level D applicants must have, at least a bachelor's degree, and one year of experience in a project role (entry requirement).

The applicant shall have knowledge in all competence elements (core competence), i.e. the candidate

o   can practice in any competence element (CE).
o   works as a project team member or a member of the project management staff.
o   has broad project management knowledge and the ability to apply that knowledge.

The certification body decides on the equivalent nature of other education and professional experience.

The decision to admit a candidate is based on the Application for Certification and candidates are notified in writing accordingly. If a candidate is rejected, the rejection letter will state the reasons why and include instructions for appealing against the decision, naming the appeal body and the deadline for filing appeals.

5. Certification process

5.1. Basis for certification

Those interested in certification can obtain the documentation for candidates from the CB administration office in accordance with the fee schedule.

The documentation, including the ICB (in English version), is available free on the CB web site at http://www.pmac-agpc.ca/certification .

If the applicant so wishes, the full current documentation for candidates can be supplied in hard copy against invoice.

5.2. Complexity of projects, programmes and portfolios

Project, programme and portfolio complexity is evaluated based on the requirements of eligibility for each certification level, and candidates use suitable examples of evidence for their application to meet the complexity criteria.

The assessment of a D-level candidate is based on knowledge where candidates can demonstrate understanding of the relevant CE in a *non-complex* project environment;

5.3. Overview of the certification process flow

Certification is a process through which an organization grants recognition to an individual that meets certain established criteria. The IPMA 4-L certification is composed of:

- The Initial Certification Process
- The Recertification Process

Prior to commencement of the certification or recertification, all applicants are to be fully informed about the assessment process. The CB has ensured that the information package provided to applicants and candidates includes all relevant steps in the process. In particular, the information includes the evaluation criteria.

The CB may decide to allow applicants and candidates to temporarily interrupt the process or postpone a part of it for a limited period of time. In such cases the CB may impose additional administrative fees.

The following figure shows the Initial Certification Process flow:

Stage	Activities	Parties			
		Applicant / Candidate	Administration	Assessors	CB Operational Management
	Information Meeting	X	X		
	Registration	From	To		
	Confirmation and Invoice	To	From		To
	Assignment		X		X
	Notification of Assignment	To	From	To	
	Possibility of Rejection	X		X	
1	Application, and Self-Assessment	From	To		
1	Formal Check		X		
1	Application, Self-Assessment and Report Proposal		From	To	
1	Assessment			X	
1	Recommendation of Assessors		Via	From	To
1	Decision				X
1 *	Notification of Decision	To	Via		From
2	Preparation of Exam			X	
2	Candidate's sitting for exam	X	X	X	
2	Assessment			X	
2	Feedback from Assessors		Via	From	To
2 *	Notification of Feedback	To	Via		From
3	Competence Development Plan	From	Via	To	
5	Final Evaluation			X	
5	Recommendation of Assessors; with documents for CB archive		Via	From	To
5	Decision				X

5	Notification of Decision and Certificate	To	Via		From
5	Feedback (Appeal)	From	Via		To
	Legend: X = Activity with one or more parties, where "X" indicates which parties participate From, Via, To = Transmission of documents (Activity within brackets) = optional step * = Possible stoppage of the process due to disqualification of the candidate				

5.4. The Initial Certification Process

The applicants are assigned to the assessors by the CB Operational Management Board and the Administration. For IPMA Level D, each applicant and candidate shall be assessed by two assessors during the whole certification process. One of the assessors shall be a lead assessor.

The assessor and the applicant or candidate must not have any other kind of relationship; preferably they have never met. If a conflict of interest or risk of unfair treatment is likely, the assessor has the right to reject the applicant or candidate, or the applicant or candidate has the right to reject the assessor.

5.4.1. *Stage 1*

5.4.1.1. *Application for Certification*

The application should include all necessary personal details and the initial certification level applied for. As a minimum it should include:

- Personal details of the candidate (name, address, contact details, etc).
- Career details of the applicant including all relevant project management roles and positions held and when.
- Professional qualifications undertaken and any project management training and education details.
- Details of any project management professional achievements of the applicant such as publications books articles, presentations and awards.
- A detailed summary of any projects the candidate has been involved in:
    - Deliverables, duration, phases, budgets, interested parties, management complexity of the project
    - role, responsibility, extent of engagement of the applicant

The applicant's shall confirm that they agree to abide by the conditions and obligations of the IPMA Certification process including, but not limited to: certification fees, code of conduct, publication of their name (unless they have explicitly expressed a wish not to do so).

5.4.1.2. *Self-Assessment*

Completion of self-assessment is an important part of the Certification process. The candidate's self-assessment score is to be considered in the initial preparation; however, it is not part of the calculation of the final result.
The applicant is required to complete a self-assessment, addressing knowledge for all competence elements of the ICB.

As an aid for both the applicant and the assessors, the self-assessment form includes instructions and example of how to fill in the form.

After completing the self-assessment, the applicant should discuss the results with another person who knows them well. The outcome of such a discussion may result in an adjustment of the scores.

5.4.1.3. *Checking Application Documents*

Prior to forwarding to assessors all documents shall be reviewed by the CB Administration.
The CB shall document its decision to accept or reject the applicant to enter the initial certification process and become a candidate.

5.4.2. *Stage 2*

5.4.2.1. *Exam*

The minimum duration of a written exam (which may be supplemented by an oral exam) shall be 3 hours. The duration of the written exam can be reduced if an oral examination is included.

Direct questions (i.e. multiple choice and / or short questions) and at least one of the following types of questions shall be included:
- Open essay (proposal, calculation, process description).
- Intellectual task (case study).

The direct question shall include all competence elements while open essays and / or intellectual tasks shall include 3 elements per range.

The minimum number of direction questions shall be 46 while the minimum number of open essays and / or intellectual tasks shall be 9.

The written exam should be supervised by the CB examiner. All exams are subject to strict quality control criteria and checklists, signed by the examiner, should be used to assess the examination environment.

Grading of the exam shall be completed by at least one assessor. Grading shall be agreed if more than one assessor is involved in the examination process before submitting the final results to the CB operational management.

5.4.3. *Stage 3*

5.4.3.1. *Competence Development Plan*

The candidate should prepare a competence development plan for review by the assessors. The assessors will provide feedback on this plan based upon their assessment of the competence of the candidate.

5.4.4. *Stage 4*

Not applicable to level D candidates.

5.4.5. *Stage 5*

5.4.5.1. *Final evaluation and recommendation*

Upon completion of stage 3, the assessors determine if the candidate has satisfactorily met all required criteria for the IPMA Level applied for. Their recommendation with supporting documentation is then forwarded to the CB operational management for decision. Both assessors are required to verify the evaluation report. The self-assessment score is not part of the final evaluation.

5.4.5.2. *Decision and issue of certificate*

On behalf of the CB, the operational management of the CB makes the decision about granting a pass or fail based upon the recommendation of the assessors.

Certificates are issued in English, stating the language of certification process (English or French).

Certificates shall be registered in both CB and IPMA databases. The information is published on the IPMA website as public information unless the applicant has explicitly expressed a wish not to.

The candidate should be aware that the misuse or making of false or misleading statements about their content, validity or duration will result in immediate withdrawal of the certificate by the CB.

5.5. Certification period

The following table is a rough guide to the times required for each stage of the certification process:
The following table is a rough guide to the times required for each stage of the Initial Certification Process:

Stage	Time
1. Application for Certification, and Self-Assessment	Approx. 2 weeks
1. Documents assessment and notification of results	Approx. 2 weeks
2. Exam	Taken on a pre-announced date
2. Exam assessment and notification of results	Approx. 2 weeks
3. Competence Development Plan, and Feedback	Approx. 2 weeks
TOTAL	At least 8 weeks

5.6. Recertification

It is the responsibility of the certificate holder to monitor the expiry date of their certificate and to initiate the recertification process.

The CB should suggest to the certificate holder via the website or by a written notice, that they have reached the mid-point of ca. 2.5 years since their initial certification or their last recertification. As a service to certificate holders, the CB issues invitations for re-certification.

Candidates are encouraged to evaluate their project management activities and their continuing PM education at the mid-point.

The recertification candidate shall be assessed by two assessors. If there is any doubt as to the result, then the assessors shall propose an interview via the CB.

A recommendation is then made regarding renewal. If non-renewal is recommended, supporting documentation shall accompany the recommendation.

The assessors use the documents produced during the previous certification or recertification for reference.

The recertification process stages the regulations and guidelines are the same as for the corresponding initial certification process stages.

5.7. Delays and extensions

If a candidate misses any deadlines set by the CB Administration office for submitting documents (application, and self-assessment) by more than five business days, he or she will automatically fail. In consultation with the assigned assessors, the CB Operational Management Board may approve a request for an extension, provided this is submitted by the candidate in advance and clearly states the reasons for the request.

5.8. Deferrals

There is no provision for deferring any stage in the process.

5.9. Validity of certification

The certificate is valid for a period of five years. Certified Project Management Associates are personally responsible for extending the certificate by another five years. They are notified of the requirements for recertification in writing by the CB Administration office three months before the certificate's expiry date. Certified Project Management Associates are required to notify the office of any change of address.

5.10. Appeals and complaints

The candidate may appeal against the decision of the certification office or file complaints against the staff of the CB office (see Certification Rules, Chapters 10 and 11).

5.11. Confidentiality

All information and documents submitted by candidates are treated in strict confidence by the CB. The documents are accessible only by authorized individuals at the certification office, the

assigned assessors, and the appeals committee (in the event of an appeal), but not by the candidate.