What to Do If You Fail the PMP® Exam
What’s in the ebook?

This guide will teach you everything you need to know about what to do if you fail the PMP® exam, including strategy, identifying your weaknesses and more.

• **The PMBOK Guide as Your Primary Study Material**
  Find out why this is a big mistake
• **Identify Your Weaknesses**
  This step is critical to preparing for your re-take
• **Refresh Your Knowledge**
  Learn the most effective method for understanding the PMBOK® Guide
• **Take Multiple PMP Mock Exams**
  The best way to get comfortable with the exam
• **Be Strategic**
  How to develop better study habits

What is PMPerfect?

Since 2004, PMPerfect has provided students with professional, high-quality methods of preparing for the Project Management Professional (PMP®) exam. There is a reason why our exam preparation products are relied on by thousands of PMP students across the U.S., Canada, Europe, Australia, and India: they work.

• **We employ the best PMP experts in the industry**
  The SSI Logic team includes multiple PMP subject matter experts and trainers who develop our courseware.
• **Offer highly effective PMP courseware**.
  All of the PMP courseware material developed by our team (or co-developed with our partners) undergoes a thorough quality assurance process.
• **Better learning through technology**.
  By using simple, well-designed technical innovations, we’ve made it easier than ever for students to take PMP courses, learn material, and measure their PMP knowledge.

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What to Do If You Fail the PMP Exam

So you took the PMP exam and the results weren’t what you hoped. The PMP exam is widely considered one of the most difficult certification exams administered for any industry. What is important is acknowledging your deficiencies and passing on your next attempt. Use these strategies to reset your mind and fortify yourself for a retake.

The Project Management Institute (PMI) allows you to retake the exam two more times within a one-year period.
Don’t use the PMBOK® Guide as your Primary Study Material

There are a lot of resources to study for your exam, and many students make the mistake of using the PMBOK® Guide as a primary source of exam preparation. Think of the PMBOK® Guide as a dictionary of project management processes. Would you use Webster’s dictionary to study for a university exam on reading comprehension? You probably would not. While the PMBOK® Guide reflects industry accepted processes, it was not designed to prepare you for the PMP exam.

Similarly, the PMBOK® Guide is best suited to refer back to for concise definitions, inputs, outputs, and techniques; but is most certainly not designed to be a study guide. Many students end up failing the exam because they never truly learn the practical application of PMBOK® Guide processes. Invest in accredited PMP exam prep material that clarifies project management processes rather than trying to decipher them yourself from the PMBOK® Guide.
Use Your Failed PMP Exam Results to Identify Your Weaknesses

Identifying what areas of the PMP exam you are deficient in is crucial to understanding where you need to improve. While the exam itself is “pass/fail”, the results presented to you immediately following your test will identify your performance in each project management domain. PMI will indicate your performance through the following measures:

• Proficient – Your performance is above the average level for this project management domain
• Moderately Proficient - Your performance is average for this project management domain
• Below Proficient - Your performance is below the average level for this project management domain

When you fail the exam, this performance information is displayed by topic area, and becomes critical to preparing for your re-take. You will want to focus heavily on those areas where your knowledge was deemed “Below Proficient.”
Don’t Sweat It

Acknowledging and working with your disappointment is absolutely necessary for you to start studying again. If you are discouraged, you will not retain information like you will with a fresh new attitude. Part of your project management skills are motivating and re-inspiring a team to continue with a project after a setback. Use those same techniques on yourself. Give yourself a break from thinking about the test so when you are ready to resume pursuing your goal, you will be inspired by the idea rather than fatigued by it.
Refresh Your Knowledge with a PMP Self Paced Course or Online Class

If you haven’t figured this out from your first attempt, you should know that memorizing the PMBOK® Guide will not enable you to pass the exam. The most effective method for understanding the PMBOK® Guide and the material on the PMP exam is to learn it from an accredited course. Understanding the practical approach to each knowledge area is extremely important to passing the exam, and will not be explained by the PMBOK® Guide. Further, there are a number of redundant processes in the PMBOK® Guide that students end up wasting time focusing on.
Take Multiple PMP Mock Exams

Many students fail if they have sufficient knowledge; often because they simply didn’t know what to expect on the exam. Simulated PMP exams are an incredible way to become comfortable with the pace, subject matter, and difficulty of the real exam. Besides giving you a way to validate your understanding of the concepts of the PMP exam, a great score on a practice test can boost your confidence and ignite your enthusiasm. A great practice exam will mimic the time constraints of the real exam, and provide detailed explanations and references following each attempt.
Be Strategic

Think about the type of questions you were stumped on when you took the PMP exam. Was there a specific domain or process area that you struggled with? Perhaps you had difficulties working with Earned Value formulas. Your assessment of your own knowledge can effectively guide you to craft a study strategy that will address these weak areas. Until you feel confident that you DO understand these concepts, don’t schedule your re-take. Wait until you are confident about the material.

Develop Better Study Habits for your PMP Exam Retake

Be Consistent without Cramming- Set up a schedule for yourself and commit to it. Small consistent study sessions will benefit you much more than 3 hour cram sessions. Cram sessions fatigue you causing your knowledge retention rate to drop dramatically.

Learn in Comfort- A cluttered study area is a cluttered mind. Identify a clean, comfortable place where you can study. A perfect location for such an environment is your local library; and while you might not think this is convenient, consider how much you want to attain your goal of passing the exam and becoming a PMP. You will also feel silently supported by all of the other people at the library with quiet, focused attitudes.

Understand the way YOU learn- Some people love ‘flashcards’ and others find them completely useless. If you don’t already know, investigate the most effective way for you to learn. A few common ways are visual (through images like flashcards), self-paced instruction (on demand courses), etc. Consider your strengths and utilize them.
Get a study group together- If you can, talk to people who are either on their first or second round taking the exam. We can often learn much more by trying to understand other people’s perspectives. This multi-perspective approach will help everyone understand theories as you try to explain to each other how you justify the correct answer. This is especially important for self studiers.

**Draw Upon Your Real World Experience**

As a project manager, begin to think about how apply the tools and techniques represented in the PMBOK’s processes. As you study, consider how you apply each of the project management Knowledge Areas, and how you can conform them to the standards set by PMI®. While you are probably doing some things differently, drawing a comparison between your own management activities and those outlined across the PMBOK’s processes will give you a more thorough understanding of the conceptual basis for the material. As the old saying goes: “you must understand the rules before you can break them.”

This is a no-brainer, but still needs to be said: try not to stress and fatigue yourself before the test. A well prepared, well rested version of you will definitely score higher on the test. Sometimes, failing the exam is merely moving a step closer to passing the exam. If you refocus and strategize, you can gain the knowledge and confidence to get certified.
Thanks for downloading our ebook! Since 2004, PMPerfect has provided students with professional, high-quality methods of preparing for the Project Management Professional (PMP®) exam. There is a reason why our exam preparation products are relied on by thousands of PMP students across the U.S., Canada, Europe, Australia, and India: they work.

Our On-Demand PMP Bootcamp course is designed to comprehensively prepare students for the PMP exam. Perfect for students who need reinforcement after taking a class, students who may not have time in their schedule to take an instructor-led class, students on a tight budget.

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