

1 • CREDENTIAL

PMP®

2 • FULL TITLE

Project Management Professional

3 • ISSUING BODY

PMI

4 • LAST VERIFIED

AUG 22, 2026

5 • STATUS

Maintained

The PMP is the credential US job postings ask for by name, and it's the one that turns "I ran operations" into something a hiring manager can price. It isn't entry level. PMI wants documented months of leading projects before you're allowed to sit the exam, and that requirement is both the part that stops people applying and the part military experience covers better than most people expect.

CHANGE NOTICE • JULY 9, 2026

PMI replaced the PMP exam on July 9, 2026. It runs 240 minutes rather than 230, the domain weightings moved to People 33% / Process 41% / Business Environment 26%, and PMI tagged two question formats as new: case or scenario items and graphic-based questions. The eligibility tiers changed too, to four routes rather than three, on an experience window of the past 10 years rather than 8.

Be careful which edition you're reading, because PMI's site still hosts both. The July 2026 Exam Content Outline is the one written for the current exam, with four routes and a 240-minute paper. The January 2021 Exam Content Outline, copyright 2023, is still up and still describes three routes and 230 minutes on an 8-year window. Same document, older edition, and the newer one wins. It's easy to miscite because its URL ends project-management-professional-handbook.pdf, so people call it the PMP handbook, and there is no separate PMP handbook. Almost every summary online still repeats its numbers, including sources that look authoritative. DoD carries the older structure as well, and that one matters more, because a serving reader goes there for the money before they go anywhere else: credential pmp2741 on COOL dated the written exam to July 9, 2026 and still listed two routes on an 8-year window when it was read on August 22, 2026.

1 What counts from your service

PMI wants months of "leading and directing projects," and since July 2026 it defines a project as a temporary initiative in a unique context undertaken to create value. The uniqueness sits in the context, not in what you handed over. The word project doesn't have to have appeared in your job title. Many of the people who assume they're not eligible already are, and are reading their own record in the wrong language.

WORK THAT QUALIFIES

A deployment workup

Fixed end date, a training and certification plan, personnel and equipment readiness, and a deadline nobody was going to move. If you ran the workup rather than went through it, that's a scope and a schedule you owned. The deployment that follows is ongoing operations, so it's the workup you list and not the tour.

A unit move, PCS of a squadron, or a base closure

Defined start and end, a budget, contractors, property accountability and stakeholders in three directions. Relocations are among the easiest to write up because everything was already tracked.

A phase inspection or depot maintenance cycle

Scoped work, a return-to-service date, parts procurement, and a team you scheduled. Recurring work counts when each cycle was scoped and delivered as its own effort with its own end date, and PMI's uniqueness test asks about the context rather than the output. A maintenance schedule you worked inside isn't a project, and describing it in project language won't make it one.

An exercise: Red Flag, RIMPAC, a CPX or an FTX

Planning cell, phased execution, external units to coordinate, and a hard date. Exercise planning maps onto PMI's process language almost word for word.

Standing up or shutting down a capability

A new comms flight, a new shop, a decommissioning. Initiation to closeout, which is the whole lifecycle in one line on your record.

A system fielding or software rollout

Requirements, testing, training, cutover and sustainment handoff. If you ran the unit's side of a program office's fielding, that's yours to claim.

WORK THAT DOESN'T

- Standing a watch, or your day-to-day duty section rotation. Ongoing operations are operations, not projects.
- Routine admin and reporting that had no defined end.
- Anything you supported but didn't lead. PMI is asking what you ran.

PROVING IT

Your evaluations are the raw material, not the evidence. An NCOER, OER, fitrep or award citation usually already describes scope, team size, budget and outcome, in bullets written to impress a promotion board, so pull them before you lose access. But they aren't what an audit asks for. PMI asks for a copy of your degree, certificates from whoever delivered your 35 hours, and signatures from the supervisor or manager on each project you listed. The people who sign are the constraint, so collect names and personal email addresses before you out-process, because a chain of command scatters within a couple of PCS cycles and .mil addresses die at separation.

High school diploma or secondary-school equivalent

60 months of non-overlapping experience leading projects, earned in the past 10 years.

Associate's degree or equivalent short-cycle qualification

48 months of non-overlapping experience leading projects, earned in the past 10 years. This tier is new as of July 2026 and it's the one most worth checking if you're enlisted, because it's a full year less to document than the 60-month route. PMI defines it by framework level rather than by naming schools: a qualification mapped to EQF Level 5 or ISCED 5, which is where an associate degree sits. See the CCAF question below for what an audit asks if a credential doesn't state its level.

Bachelor's degree or higher

36 months of non-overlapping experience leading projects, earned in the past 10 years.

Bachelor's or postgraduate degree from a GAC-accredited program

24 months of non-overlapping experience leading projects, earned in the past 10 years. GAC is PMI's own program-quality designation, and PMI is explicit that it doesn't by itself change the degree level you need. Check whether your school holds it rather than assuming you're on the 36-month route. If it does, GAC coursework also counts toward the 35 training hours.

35 hours of project management training, on every route

It can come from a PMI Authorized Training Partner, an accredited university course, an employer program, a training company, or a self-paced course that ends in an assessment. PMI doesn't require a particular provider, and books and practice exams alone don't count.

An active CAPM waives the 35 hours

It waives the training requirement only, and does nothing for the experience requirement, which is why CAPM is a separate track rather than a rung on a ladder.

You led it, whatever it was called

PMI doesn't require the job title of project manager, and it does require that you performed the role on every project. Contributing rather than directing doesn't qualify, however senior you were.

Months, not projects

PMI counts tenure in months, so three projects running through the same month is one month, not three. Paid work isn't required but a professional setting is, so school projects and home renovations don't qualify.

3 The route**1 Work out which route you're on**

Your education level sets how many months you need, and the gap between the top and bottom routes is three years. If a degree is close to finished, finishing it first can be cheaper than waiting out the extra months.

2 Count your months honestly

Leading and directing, in the past 10 years, non-overlapping. This is where most transitioning veterans stall, and usually for the wrong reason: the work qualified, the paperwork just never described it as project work.

3 Get the 35 hours

Any of the provider types above. If you're still serving, get this funded through your service's Credentialing Assistance program before you pay for anything yourself.

4 Write the application

Each project gets a description of what you led. Write it in civilian terms: scope, schedule, budget, stakeholders, team size. Applications are randomly audited, and an audit asks for degree documentation, proof of the 35 hours, and sign-off from someone who can verify the experience, so pick people you can still reach. Don't submit until you're close to ready: approval starts a one-year clock.

5 Pay, then schedule

Approval gives you a one-year eligibility period and up to three attempts inside it. If you were audited, it starts the day PMI tells you that you cleared it. Payment doesn't start that clock, so paying late holds nothing open. What it gates is scheduling: PMI issues your eligibility ID once the fee is in.

6 Sit the exam

180 questions in 240 minutes, of which 170 are scored and 10 are unscored pretest items. Two 10-minute breaks, and you can't return to a section after you've broken. Available at a test center or online with a proctor.

7 Keep it

60 PDUs every three years plus the renewal fee. This is a commitment rather than a one-off purchase, and it's worth knowing the number before you start.

4 What it costs

Exam, PMI member	\$425, not confirmed by PMI
Exam, non-member	\$675
PMI global membership	\$129 a year, \$10 to join
Retake, member / non-member	\$275 / \$375
Renewal, every 3 years, member / non-member	\$60 / \$150
35 hours of training	\$0 to \$2,000+, depending entirely on the provider

Join PMI before you apply. The discount is \$250 and PMI's global dues are \$129 a year plus \$10 to join, so it pays for itself on the first attempt. A retake saves another \$100, which is less than a year's dues, so it doesn't pay for membership twice. PMI won't refund the difference if you join after paying the non-member price. That \$250 needs a caveat. No PMI document states a PMP exam fee and pmi.org blocks automated reading, so \$675 rests on two independent sources, Pearson VUE's government store and VA's approved test register, both read August 22, 2026, and \$425 rests on the store alone. The source notes below set out why the store reads as a mirror of PMI's price rather than a markup, and what still keeps \$425 short of confirmed: the training partners who reported PMI's August 6, 2026 increase say the member fee didn't move, several putting it at \$405, which would make the gap \$270. One of them is Rosemet. A co-host of this show owns a company that trains for the PMP and the CAPM. Assume we may have a commercial interest here. Treat \$425 as the better-supported number and check it at PMI's checkout before you budget. There's no PMI military discount, so membership is the only lever on PMI's own price. Membership means PMI's global dues, \$129 a year plus a one-time \$10 fee to join, from four PMI chapter pages read August 22, 2026. The \$149 to \$164 quoted around the web is a combined total, PMI's dues plus a chapter's, and chapter membership is optional and buys no exam discount. The renewal fees come from a 2022 PMI handbook that the April 2026 edition replaced without republishing them.

5 Getting it paid for

- The PMP is on VA's approved licensing and certification register, as record 3432v79, PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL under Project Management Institute, with \$675 on file for the exam. Read from VA's live register on August 22, 2026, and all eleven of PMI's current credentials are on there. Claim on VA Form 22-0803 after you've paid and sat it, with the receipt and either your result or the certificate. You have to already be covered under Post-9/11 (Chapter 33), MGIB-AD (30), MGIB-SR (1606) or DEA (35). VA pays even if you fail.
- Eight days of entitlement, and the arithmetic is short. VA reimburses the actual test cost up to \$2,000 per test and charges entitlement at one month for every \$2,578.64 it pays, at the rate effective August 1, 2026 through July 31, 2027. That's the Post-9/11 rate, so check your own chapter's if you're on MGIB or DEA. The \$675 on VA's file is 0.26 months, about eight days, and a member price about five. VA reimburses whichever you paid. VA resets the rate every August 1, and anything telling you a test burns a whole month is describing the pre-2018 rules.
- Prep courses are a separate claim on Form 22-10272, charged at one month per \$2,508.33, off the same VA rate page and the same August 1, 2026 to July 31, 2027 year. The exam and the training that gets you to it are two benefits with two forms.
- Still serving is the better position, because Credentialing Assistance can cover training and exam and you don't pay first. The PMP is credential pmp2741 on DoD COOL, and Army COOL flags it both CA eligible and approved for promotion points. Get the credential and the provider approved in your service's COOL portal before you spend anything.
- Army CA halved. ALARACT 102/2025 of November 14, 2025 sets it at \$2,000 a fiscal year for one credential, three in ten years, so anything quoting \$4,000 is out of date. AR 621-5 of March 19, 2026 carries the recoupment: take the funded training, don't sit the exam, and the Army wants the money back. CA and tuition assistance share one \$4,500 fiscal-year ceiling, in Army COOL's Costs and Funding FAQ and at paragraph 6 of the Army's December 11, 2024 memo, both read August 21, 2026.

- Army commissioned officers, O-1 to O-10, lost Credentialing Assistance on March 19, 2026 under AR 621-5. Warrant officers and enlisted soldiers keep it. One clause survives: a goal submitted before that date can still be funded to completion. MyArmyBenefits, read August 22, 2026.
- AFCOOL is \$4,500 lifetime rather than annual, enlisted only, with sub-caps on prep courses and materials, and you're ineligible inside 120 days of separation. It won't fund the 35 hours that make you eligible, which is the trap: you have to arrive already qualified to apply.
- Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard run their own programs with different rules, and the PMP doesn't sit the same way in all three. Marine Corps and Coast Guard COOL both flag funding on pmp2741. Navy COOL flags none on it, and does flag voluntary funding on the CAPM, read August 22, 2026. Treat the live COOL portal as the only authority on your own service.
- Onward to Opportunity is genuinely free training, and the exam voucher isn't universal. It covers the exam for transitioning service members in their last six months and for veterans or spouses who are unemployed. Employed veterans get the training and pay their own exam fee, and so do Guard and Reserve members, which catches people out.
- SkillBridge doesn't pay your exam fee. It's authorized time in your last 180 days with your pay continuing, and it only helps with the PMP if the host organization happens to include the training.
- VET TEC is gone. The pilot ended April 1, 2024, so anything recommending it is out of date.
- There's no PMI military discount on the exam, and pages claiming one are wrong. That's an absence rather than a statement: PMI's military pages block automated reading, and no PMI document publishes such a discount. Membership is the only lever on what PMI charges, and who ends up paying that charge is what the notes above are for.

6 Keeping it

Cycle	3 years
Required	60 PDUs
Renewal fee	\$60 for members, \$150 for non-members, from PMI's 2022 handbook

At least 35 of the 60 have to be Education PDUs, with a minimum of 8 in each of PMI's Talent Triangle areas: Ways of Working, Power Skills and Business Acumen. The remaining 11 can come from any area. Giving Back is optional, capped at 25 per cycle.

How current this is

Everything above was checked against published material from PMI on August 22, 2026. Requirements, fees and course content all move, and they are not always announced loudly. Check the sources below before you spend

money on the back of anything here.

This guide was written independently: PMI had no part in it and did not endorse it. Where this page names a training provider or a school, assume we may have a commercial interest in it and judge the guide on whether the facts check out against the references below.

This is a guide, not advice. We're not PMI, the VA, DoD, your security manager or your education office, and the funding rules in particular change by service and by year. Anything here that costs money, or that may be restricted in any way in your own work, is worth confirming with the people who own it before you act on it.

R References

- **PMP Examination Content Outline, July 2026 (PMI)** (<https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/microsites/announcements/pmp-examination-content-outline-2026.pdf>) Eligibility tiers, the 35-hour requirement, exam format and retake policy on this page were read from this document.
- **PMP certification and fees (PMI)** (<https://www.pmi.org/certifications/project-management-pmp>) PMI's own page, and it blocks automated reading. PMI publishes no exam fee in any readable document: the handbooks carry other charges but say only that the exam fee is subject to membership and regional pricing. The fees here come from Pearson VUE and VA's register instead.
- **PMI Certification Handbook, revised June 2026 (PMI)** (<https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/generic-certification-handbook.pdf>) Audit requirements, the eligibility period, the no-show policy and the passing-score statement. It carries no experience window of its own and sends applicants to the Exam Content Outline. Read August 22, 2026.
- **Continuing Certification Requirements Handbook, ©2022 (PMI)** (<https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/certifications/resources/ccr-certification-requirements-handbook.pdf>) The renewal fees, the 60-PDU cycle and how it splits. The current edition, last updated April 2026, keeps the PDU rules and publishes no fees at all, which is why the ones here carry a date. Both read August 21, 2026.
- **Pearson VUE government store, PMP exam vouchers** (<https://govstore.pearsonvue.com/p/PMI-PMP>) Four vouchers, one price each, read August 22, 2026: PMI-PMP \$675, PMI-PMP-MBR \$425, PMI-PMP-MBR-RTK \$275, PMI-PMP-RTK \$375. Pearson VUE resells rather than issues, so it was tested against the issuer: on PMI-RMP, the only PMI credential whose handbook still prints a fee table, it matches exactly at \$520 and \$670.
- **PMP exam fee increase, August 6, 2026 (Rosemet, PMI Authorized Training Partner)** (https://www.linkedin.com/posts/rosemetllc_if-you-are-planning-to-pursue-the-project-activity-7491252014757113856-eG-5) The August 6, 2026 increase, posted the day it took effect: the US non-member base fee rose to \$675 and the member base fee was unchanged. It doesn't name the member figure, which is why \$425 and \$405 are both still live. Rosemet is owned by Michael Shick, who co-hosts this show, and sells PMP and CAPM training, so assume we may have a commercial interest here.
- **Post-9/11 GI Bill rates, entitlement charge (VA)** (<https://www.va.gov/education/benefit-rates/post-9-11-gi-bill-rates/>) The \$2,000 per-test cap and the \$2,578.64 entitlement charge per month of test fees, effective August 1, 2026 through July 31, 2027. The same page charges prep courses at \$2,508.33.

- **Approved licensing and certification tests, search tool (VA)** (<https://www.va.gov/education/gi-bill-comparison-tool/licenses-certifications-and-prep-courses>) Record 3432v79, PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL EXAM, \$675 on file, read from VA's live register on August 22, 2026. All eleven current PMI credentials are listed.
- **Project Management Professional (PMP) credential record (DoD COOL)** (<https://www.cool.osd.mil/army/credential/index.html?cert=pmp2741>) Credential pmp2741, read in a browser on August 22, 2026: Army CA and promotion points, Marine Corps and Coast Guard funding, none on Navy, and an eligibility section still showing the superseded two routes on an 8-year window. Swap army for usn, usmc or uscgc.
- **DoW SkillBridge** (<https://www.skillbridge.mil/>) Read August 22, 2026: 180 days or fewer of service remaining, and it is authorized time with an industry provider rather than a funding line. No exam-fee benefit appears anywhere on it. It is now DoW SkillBridge, and the skillbridge.osd.mil address this guide used to cite 301s here.
- **Onward to Opportunity learning pathways (IVMF, Syracuse)** (<https://ivmf.syracuse.edu/programs/career-training/learning-pathways/>) O2O's own exam-fee rule, read August 22, 2026: fees are "covered only for participants who are currently unemployed", and active duty members qualify only "during their final six months of service". Guard, Reserve, employed veterans and employed spouses get the training and not the fee. The PMP sits on its Business Management pathway.