The SCRUMstudy guide to PMI – ACP^{SM}

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Overview:

Introduction

The PMI-ACP (Agile Certified Professional) certification is recognition of your knowledge of Agile principles, practices, tools and techniques used across the Agile methodologies. If you or your organization make use of Agile practices in your projects, or are adopting Agile approaches for project management, the PMI-ACP certification is right for you. The PMI-ACP is not limited to project managers or Project Management Professional (PMP) credential holders; individuals with experience working on Agile project teams can also apply.

Who is ideal for becoming an Agile Certified Professional?

Practitioners who are aiming to:

- Demonstrate their level of professionalism in Agile practices of project management to current or potential employers

- Increase their professional versatility

- Gain certification from a highly respected certifying authority

PMI-ACP Requirements:

To apply for the PMI-ACP, you need to meet the following requirements:

PMI Agile Certification Eligibility Requirements	
Requirement	Description
General Project Experience	2,000 hours working on project teams - These hours must be earned within the last 5 years - Active PMP® or PgMP® certification will satisfy this requirement
Agile Project Experience	1,500 hours working on Agile project teams or with Agile methodologies - These hours are in addition to the 2,000 hours required in "general project experience" - These hours must be earned within the last 3 years
Training in Agile Practices	21 contact hours - Hours must be earned in Agile practices
Examination	Tests knowledge of Agile fundamentals

Why PMI-ACP?

What is agile?

"Agility is the ability to both create and respond to change in order to profit in a turbulent business environment. Agility is the ability to balance flexibility and stability."

– Jim Highsmith, 2002

In quite literal terms being Agile means understanding that market needs are dynamic and adopting an approach that accommodates these dynamic changes at any point in the Development Life Cycle. Agile is a philosophy that uses organizational models based on people, collaboration and shared values. The *Agile Manifesto* outlines tenets of Agile philosophy. Agile uses rolling wave planning; iterative and incremental delivery; rapid and flexible response to change; and open communication between teams, stakeholders and customers. There are many Agile methodologies that adhere to these tenets, such as Scrum, XP, Lean and Test-driven Development (TDD).

What value does a practitioner with the PMI-ACP bring to an organization?

- PMI-ACP certification assures an organization of a practitioner's level of professionalism.
- A practitioner's knowledge of Agile practices gives the organization greater versatility in project management.
- PMI-ACP certification assures an organization that their employee has the ability to lead teams using Agile methodologies.
- With organizations rapidly adopting Agile principles and practices, the PMI-ACP certification assures that a company can remain current and competitive.

What value does the PMI-ACP bring to a practitioner?

The PMI-ACP validates a practitioner's ability to understand and apply Agile principles and practices on basic projects. The PMI-ACP demonstrates that a practitioner can select and apply the appropriate Agile principles and practices as a project management approach based on the needs and demands of a specific project. By earning the PMI-ACP, practitioners can:

- Demonstrate to employers their level of professionalism and ability in Agile practices of project management.
- Increase their professional versatility in project management tools and techniques.
- Show they have the capacity to lead basic teams using Agile principles and practices by holding a certification that is more credible than existing offerings based only on exams or training.

PMI-ACP Exam Content Outline

The PMI-ACP examination will consist of 100 scored items and 20 pretest questions; pretest items do not count for evaluation. The pretest items will not be identified and will be randomly distributed throughout the exam. The allocation of questions will be as follows:

Content	% of Exam
Agile tools and techniques	50%
Agile knowledge and skills	50%

Tools and Techniques (50% OF Exam)

Questions about tools and techniques will comprise 50% of the examination. These tools and techniques have been organized into the 10 areas below. The examples given for each area are provided to illustrate the types of Agile tools and techniques that might be found in each area. However, these examples do not provide an exhaustive list of the tools and techniques that might be tested. The toolkits are ranked in the order of their relative importance within the tools and techniques section of the exam.

Tools and Techniques (50% of Exam)	
Communications	Including but not limited to: information radiator, team space, Agile tooling, osmotic communications for colocated and/or distributed teams, daily stand-ups
Planning, monitoring, and adapting	Including but not limited to: retrospectives, task/Kanban boards, timeboxing, iteration and release planning, WIP limits, burn down/up charts, cumulative flow diagrams, process tailoring
Agile estimation	Including but not limited to: relative sizing/story points, Wideband Delphi/planning poker, affinity estimating, ideal time
Agile analysis and design	Including but not limited to: product roadmap, user stories/backlog, story maps, progressive elaboration, wireframes, chartering, personas, Agile modeling
Product quality	Including but not limited to: frequent verification and validation, test-driven development/test first development, acceptance test-driven development, definition of Done, continuous integration
Soft skills negotiation	Including but not limited to: emotional intelligence, collaboration, adaptive leadership, negotiation, conflict resolution, servant leadership
Value-based prioritization	Including but not limited to: return on investment (ROI)/net present value (NPV)/internal rate of return (IRR), compliance, customer-valued

	prioritization, minimally marketable feature (MMF), relative prioritization/ranking
Risk management	Including but not limited to: risk-adjusted backlog, risk burn down graphs, risk-based spike
Metrics	Including but not limited to: velocity, cycle time, earned value management (EVM) for agile projects, escaped defects
Value stream analysis	Including but not limited to: value stream mapping

Knowledge and Skills (50% OF Exam)

The PMI-ACPSM examination includes 43 knowledge and skill areas, which are presented below. The knowledge and skill areas have been organized into levels of importance. These levels suggest the likelihood that a question about a particular knowledge and skill will be included; be aware that not every knowledge and skill may be included on each form of the exam.

Knowledge and Skills Content		
Level	% of Knowledge and Skill Content	% of Exam
Level 1 (18 knowledge/skills)	65%	33%
Level 2 (12 knowledge/skills)	25%	12%
Level 3 (13 knowledge/skills)	10%	5%

Knowledge and Skills
Level 1 (33% of total examination questions)
Active listening
Agile Manifesto values and principles
Assessing and incorporating community and stakeholder values
Brainstorming techniques
Building empowered teams
Coaching and mentoring within teams
Communications management
Feedback techniques for product (e.g., prototyping, simulation, demonstrations, evaluations)
Incremental delivery
Knowledge sharing
Leadership tools and techniques
Prioritization

Problem-solving strategies, tools, and techniques
Project and quality standards for Agile projects
Stakeholder management
Team motivation
Time, budget, and cost estimation
Value-based decomposition and prioritization
Level 2 (12% of total examination questions)
Agile frameworks and terminology
Building high-performance teams
Business case development
Colocation (geographic proximity)/distributed teams
Continuous improvement processes
Elements of a project charter for an Agile project
Facilitation methods
Participatory decision models (e.g., input-based, shared collaboration, command)
PMI's Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct
Process analysis techniques
Self-assessment
Value-based analysis
Level 3 (5% of total examination questions)
Agile contracting methods
Agile project accounting principles
Applying new Agile practices
Compliance (organization)
Control limits for Agile projects
Failure modes and alternatives
Globalization, culture, and team diversity
Agile games
Principles of systems thinking (e.g., complex adaptive, chaos)
Regulatory compliance
Variance and trend analysis
Variations in Agile methods and approaches
Vendor management

Reference List:

The following is a list of publications that candidates may find helpful when preparing for the PMI Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP) examination:

- *Agile Retrospectives: Making Good Teams Great.* Esther Derby, Diana Larsen, Ken Schwaber ISBN #0977616649
- *Agile Software Development: The Cooperative Game – 2nd Edition.* Alistair Cockburn ISBN #0321482751
- *The Software Project Manager's Bridge to Agility.* Michele Sliger, Stacia Broderick ISBN #0321502752
- *Coaching Agile Teams Lyssa Adkins* ISBN #0321637704
- *Agile Project Management: Creating Innovative Products – 2nd Edition.* Jim Highsmith ISBN #0321658396
- *Becoming Agile: ...in an Imperfect World.* Greg Smith, Ahmed Sidky ISBN #1933988258
- *Agile Estimating and Planning.* Mike Cohn ISBN #0131479415
- *The Art of Agile Development. James Shore* ISBN #0596527675
- *User Stories Applied: For Agile Software Development.* Mike Cohn ISBN #0321205685
- *Agile Project Management with Scrum.* Ken Schwaber ISBN #073561993X
- *Lean-Agile Software Development: Achieving Enterprise Agility.* Alan Shalloway, Guy Beaver, James R. Trott ISBN #0321532899

Tips and Tricks:

Despite the official statements of *The PMI-ACP Handbook* you can improve your chances of passing the exam in the first attempt dramatically simply by taking the time to become "streetwise" about the PMI-ACP examination. Quite simply, this is the easiest step in your test preparation, and should not be ignored under any circumstances. To earn the PMI-ACP certification, you must meet the experience and education requirements, and pass the PMI-ACP exam, a 120-question, multiple-choice test.

As a test taker, you should understand:

- The types of exam questions asked and their common fallacies
- How to manage your time wisely
- That regardless of your experience and education, you still have to prepare vigorously for the exam.

Preparation Tips

- Enroll in a formal study course offered by a reputable Agile training organization like SCRUMstudy.com. You can also review self-study books and /or online courses published by such reputable training organizations.
- The PMI-ACP examination does not test how well you can memorize facts; instead, it tests your knowledge of the subject and your application of concepts. You must therefore understand how to use the concepts and processes in the real world, and how they work in combination with each other.
- There is no substitute for experience and exposure in project management (general or Agile), however, if you do not have the experience of using these tools and techniques try to understand the basics from someone who does. This will help you visualize the potential challenges and help prepare you for situational questions in the examination.
- We suggest that you take several practice tests to familiarize yourself with the questioning pattern.
- Wordy and ambiguous questions can be a part of the exam. You should have enough practice to interpret such questions.
- There might be questions that you will not be able to understand or be able to answer despite an intensive preparation. Do not let such questions demotivate you.
- There is no such thing as over preparing, but do not burn the candle on both ends. Try not to add stress to the exam by over-studying.
- Fully understand the principles and practices in Agile (including estimation, prioritization, and team dynamics)
    - Fully understand the Scrum roles
    - Fully understand basic Scrum ceremonies and artifacts (Sprint Planning, Release Planning, Retrospective, Reviews, Burndowns, wallboards, backlog management)
    - Understand the foundational elements of XP
    - Understand Agile Value Stream Mapping
    - Understand Agile Portfolio Management
    - Understand Agile Risk Management
    - Understand some Lean Software Development

Before the Exam

- Rest the day before exam: the PMI-ACP Exam can be an exhausting experience, because it requires 3 hours of concentrated effort. Moreover, you have to use all the knowledge and skills that you have learned in the past 2 - 3 months while preparing for the exam So, try to be completely relaxed before the exam.
- Checklist of things to do before the exam day:
  - Have a good night's sleep.
  - Do not try to cram on the day before the exam (As a general guideline, do not study more than 3 - 4 hours the day before exam day).
  - Take care of your health: No junk food, or strenuous activities, which could impact your health on exam day.
  - Do everything you can to be fit - both mentally and physically for the exam.

During the Exam

- You must bring your authorization letter from PMI to the test site, as well as two forms of ID with exactly the same name you entered on the exam application.
- The exam does not adapt to your answers. This means 120 questions are selected when your exam starts, and those 120 do not change.
- When you take the exam, you will see one question on the screen at a time. You can answer a question and/or mark it to return to it later. You will be able to move back and forth through questions during the exam.
- One of the main reasons people answer incorrectly is they do not read all four choices. Do not make the same mistake! Make sure you read the question and all four choices when you take the exam. This will help you select the BEST answer. If you find yourself forgetting to read all the options, start reading the choices backwards.
- When a question asks you to fill in a blank space, the correct answer may not be grammatically correct when inserted in the sentence.

While choosing the answer:

How do you pace yourself for the test?

- During the ACP Exam, 120 questions have to be answered within 3 hours. So, you get approximately 30 minutes to answer 20 questions. In your clock, keep 30 minutes as a milestone—check after every 30 minutes; if you have answered 20 questions, your pace is good; if you have answered fewer than 20 questions during the 30 minutes, you will have to speed up.
- There are some questions (primarily mathematical questions) which may be complicated and take longer to answer. If you see that any question is taking more than 4 minutes, please mark the question and move on to the next question. That way, you do not miss any of the easier questions that may follow. You can return and answer the marked questions later.
- Answering Pretest Questions: 20 of the 120 questions you will answer will be pretest questions which will not be used for scoring. Since you do not know which questions will not be used for scoring, you should answer all the questions to the best of your ability.

How to answer the each question?

- Read each question and answer choices accompanying it carefully.
- Look closely at the exhibits (if applicable) for the question.
- If required, use the scratchpad, calculator and pencils provided to work the answer (required more for questions involving mathematical calculations)
- For each question, if you know the answer, click the correct Answer
- Try the Elimination Technique if you do not know the correct answer. Try to figure out which choices can be ruled out with certainty as being the wrong answers. You can evaluate the remaining and guess which one is the correct answer. Usually, for any question for which you do not know the answer the probability of getting the answer correct is 25% (i.e. 1 out of 4). Any option you eliminate as "not possible" increases your chance to answer the question correctly. For example, if you eliminate 2 options as being "not correct," then you only have to choose 1 out of 2 possible options. Your probability to answer correctly increases to 50% (i.e. 1 out of 2).
- Mark the Question—You can mark the questions which you would like to review later. Marking the question will be an indicator for you to go back to the question at a later time, and review the answer.
- Answer all Questions—Please, note that there is no negative scoring on the ACP Exam. So, even if you have no inkling of the answer, if you select any choice at random, you have a 25% chance of getting it right, and a 25% probability is definitely greater than 0%. So, Answer All Questions.

Must the questions be answered sequentially (i.e. one after the other)?

- Different people have different ways to solve questions. SCRUMstudy recommends that you answer each question sequentially and mark those questions for which you are not sure of the correct answer. This ensures that you answer ALL the questions.
- You can keep track of how many questions you have answered in a given time period. This will help you monitor your pace (as mentioned above), so, you can speed up or slow down as necessary.

After answering all the questions

- First, remember to go back and review the answers that have been marked.
- If you have additional time remaining, then review all the answers.

Appendix

Continuing Certification Requirements (CCR):

What is the Continuing Certification Requirements (CCR) for this certification?

PMI-ACP holders are required to earn 30 professional development units (PDUs) in Agile topics during each three-year renewal cycle.

Can PMI-ACP^{SM} PDUs count toward the maintenance of other PMI credentials?

The 30 PDUs in Agile topics can also count towards the maintenance of the PMP or PgMP certification(s). If an Agile practitioner is taking general project management classes, only the hours that pertain to Agile topics can be applied towards the PMI-ACP.

Benefits of choosing SCRUMstudy.com:

SCRUMstudy provides one of the best learning experiences available today through a world-class training environment and excellent faculty who are chosen through our extensive selection process. We have developed the most comprehensive study aids and real life role-play exercises that not only deliver the latest knowledge, but also ensure maximum impact through experiential learning. All our instructors have mastered our rigorous "train the trainer" program that ensures they deliver the best coaching possible to you.

We are 100% committed to your success, evident in the fact that we are the only Scrum and Agile training provider in the industry to offer an unique 100% money back guarantee. Enroll yourself for any of our classroom programs and if you do not like to continue after 2 hours in the first day of your class, you get 100% of your money back. That's our promise!

- **SCRUMstudy provides relevant hours of PDUs** (Professional Development Units)**:** with all its certification training courses. These are valid PDUs for continuing education requirements in maintaining PMP (Project Management Professional) certification status and to apply for the PMI-ACP exam (20 PDU's).

- **Best faculty:** SCRUMstudy trainers are highly experienced and are regarded as the best in the industry. Each has extensive industry project management experience in diverse fields such as manufacturing, IT, finance, product development and consultancy services. Through a comprehensive and extensive "Train-the-trainer" program, all of our faculty are trained in SCRUMstudy classroom training techniques and adult learning processes aimed at delivering an exceptional training experience.

- **Scientifically designed, effective and result-oriented instruction method:** SCRUMstudy.com classroom courses have been developed, assessed and evaluated by certified experts, and approved by Scrum and Agile consultants from multiple industries. To improve the learning experience and to enhance retention, our course draws instructional elements from the three primary learning styles— visual (presentations, aids, etc.), auditory (verbal instructions, interactions, etc.) and kinaesthetic (do-it-yourself). Several interactive methods such as

experiential learning, small groups, hands-on practice, trainee panels, periodic evaluation, role-plays and case studies are used extensively.

- **Optimum class size:** The number of students in our classes is kept limited to ensure effective course delivery and to maintain high quality of interaction. This enables our trainers to provide focused individual attention.

- **Excellent Study Environment:** Our classroom training is normally conducted at premium meeting centers/hotels at convenient locations with all the required study aids provided. Lunch, snacks and coffee/tea are provided during the classroom program.

- **Case studies and role-plays:** To relate the Scrum/Agile concepts learned in class to real world applications, our course includes case studies and role-plays.

- **Proven Expertise in Scrum and Agile training:** SCRUMstudy is regarded as one of the leading Scrum Master and Agile Expert training providers globally. SCRUMstudy.com will be your BEST PARTNER for Scrum Master/Agile Expert certification.

- **Completely Free and Complimentary Access to Risk Management** online certificate course for three months, offered by www.RMstudy.com (priced at $300): This course will not only help you understand and apply the concepts of Risk Management in your workplace, but also will offer you 20 PMI PDUs which can be used for the continuing education requirements of certified PMPs.

Recommended Course – Agile Expert Certified

Agile expert certified course details

As organizations rush to become more Agile to deal more effectively with their environment, competitors and customers, there is a need for management professionals who actually understand the power of Agile and know how to wield it. The Agile Expert Certified course aims to provide a wide ranging knowledge and understanding of the values, methods and intricacies of Agile. Participants will be equipped to take the lead in Agile implementation in their organizations. Due to its comprehensive coverage of Agile, this course can also be used as a preparation tool for the PMI-ACPSM examination.

Are you ready to be an agile expert?

This course is primarily aimed at management professionals who are working with/intending to implement Agile in their organization including Project Managers, Product Managers, Team Leads, Project Sponsors, Programmers, Business Analysts, any Mid or Top level Management Executives and any PMI ACP® aspirant. Any professional intending to work with Agile may take the course to gain expertise.

Duration

Three days, 24 Classroom Hours that earn 24 PMI® PDU's.

Certification

After completion of the classroom training, the participants will take an online exam. On successfully completing the examination, the participant will be awarded Agile Expert Certified certification by VMEdu, Inc.

Course Objectives

1. To provide an understanding of the Agile philosophy and practices
2. To provide a working knowledge of the various Agile methodologies
3. To provide the participants with the ability to compare and choose which methodology would be appropriate in a given situation
4. To prepare participants to pass the PMI-ACP certification exam (subject to eligibility criteria required by PMI-ACP)

Course Outcomes

1. Participants will be familiar with the concepts and practices of Agile Project Management.
2. Participants will be equipped with detailed knowledge and understanding of the various Agile methodologies available.
3. Participants will be equipped to compare and choose the methodologies or parts of methodologies that would be most relevant to their situation.
4. Participants will be armed with the proper tools to address, resolve and take the lead on Agile issues in their organizations.
5. Participants will be Agile Expert Certifieds and will also be prepared to pass the PMI-ACP exam.

Course Methodology

1. We promise a highly engaging course that ensures higher retention of concepts and theories.
2. Participants are encouraged to work through the concepts rather than just listen to the concepts. This provides better internalization of course content.
3. Role-plays and scenario discussions are conducted and practical implementation issues are discussed to enable the participant apply Agile in their organizations.

Takeaways

- Student course workbook
- Case study booklet
- Scrum in a page
- Planning Cards
- Agile Expert Certified physical certificate by VMEdu, Inc.
- 24 PMI®PDUs
- Free Risk Management Course with additional 20 PMI PDUs
- Branded stationery and other required materials

Gain Agile Expertise and get certified - Enroll for our AEC Classroom Training Program at a location near you.

Please visit http://www.scrumstudy.com/ for more details regarding our courses.