



**APMP Professional Certification  
Impact Paper and Panel Interview  
Assessment Standards**



## Amendment history

Version 1.0 – Baseline document September 2019.

Version 1.3 – Capture Practitioner added as a pre-requisite for Professional

Version 1.4 – Clarification to submit PPIP direct to Chief Examiner

Version 1.5 – Update of wait period to re-apply for the Professional Level

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# Preparing for APMP Proposal Professional Certification

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## Introduction

The purpose of the PPIP is to establish your firm claim for the significant impact that you have made in the proposals profession. APMP have defined 'impact' as:

*Demonstrating advocacy of best practices achieved through leadership and communication*

APMP Professional Certification is tough, not everyone will achieve it, since you must demonstrate significant thought leadership or innovation within your organization or the profession. Additionally, throughout your impact paper you must be able to demonstrate that what you did was:

- Significant
- Sustainable
- Required senior stakeholder engagement, management and leadership
- Conflict resolution was carried out effectively if it was required
- Communication is effective using different mediums

## Preparing your PPIP

To be eligible to receive APMP-Professional Certification you MUST HAVE passed at APMP-Practitioner Level OR APMP Capture Practitioner level, and have at least seven-year's experience of working in a bids and proposals environment.

To complete the PPIP Assessment, you must complete a standard PowerPoint presentation template that is part of the Professional Preparation Pack.

Using the template you must document your impact and consider how to include all the following information:

- What your impact is and why it was required
- How you engaged senior stakeholders to support your impact
- How identified the stakeholder community
- How you managed all stakeholders
- How you led and managed others through the tasks and activities
- Actual results measured quantitatively or qualitatively measured results
- How you measured the results
- What is in place to ensure that your impact is sustainable?
- Your continuing education plan of how you will continue to develop for the next 24 months.

How you design and use PowerPoint as a medium to communicate the key messages about your impact is also assessed. This means that you must use a good balance of graphics and words.

For further information on the best practices that APMP will assess your slide design against please review the following BoK Chapters: Developing and Delivering Presentations and Graphics and Action Captions.



Submit your PPIP directly to the Chief Examiner, [chiefexaminer@apmp.org](mailto:chiefexaminer@apmp.org), for assessment and attach your copy of your payment receipt. The subject line should use the syntax: [First Name] {Last Name} PPIP.

## PPIP Preparation Self Scoring Guidance

This Guide has been designed for you to use as you develop your slide-set to support your application for APMP Professional Certification. If you are not sure, whether what you have written, or designed meets the APMP best practices and standards for this level of certification then you should use the APMP BoK to remind yourself of the best practices.

Since your Leadership and Communication competencies are being tested at this level, you are not expected to require any additional help. The APMP assessors are not allowed to act as Mentors. Should you wish to test your impact and or slide presentation, then it is up to you as a leader, applying to be recognized at the highest APMP level of certification to find others to provide feedback.

The APMP Assessors will be using the same criteria to assess your slides once you formerly submit them. For it to be of the most use, score yourself honestly, and after you have developed your slide-set.

**To be taken through to the second stage of the competency based interview your assessors must score your impact paper with a minimum of 41 Marks out of 48 (approx. 85%)**

**Score 1** where you believe that you have demonstrated appropriate knowledge but had few or no opportunities to demonstrate your skills against this requirement

**Score 2-3** where you believe that you have appropriate knowledge and have demonstrated some of your skills against this requirement

**Score 4** where you believe that you have appropriate knowledge and have fully demonstrated all of your skills in this competency element

Req No:	APMP Requirement	Score
1	Has followed the APMP Template	
2	Impact – what was achieved over what time and who was affected, is described in the Summary	
3	Impact has identified senior stakeholder engagement	
4	Impact paper has a timeline for tasks and activities	
5	Tasks and activities are clearly aligned	
6	Tasks and / or activities are specific	
7	Impact paper contains quantitative and/or qualitative results	
8	Impact paper describes how results were measured	
9	Impact paper describes how the results have been made sustainable	
10	CPD Plan describes specific activities	
11	Slides have a good balance of text and graphics	
12	Graphics have meaningful action captions	
	<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	

## Second Stage is your competency-based interview

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### What is a competency based interview?

A competency-based interview is a structured series of questions aimed at eliciting behavioral information against specific bid related competencies that have been defined by the APMP®. A competency in this context is a type of behavior found to be relevant to the role expected of Proposal Professional.

### What does the interview focus on?

At the interview, there will be two APMP approved assessors. You will be pre-notified by your lead assessor that your impact and the slides have met the APMP Standards and you are being moved to the second assessment stage, the competency-based interview.

*Assessors carry out Professional Certification interviews on the last Friday in each month. Once your impact paper has been accepted as meeting the APMP standards, you will be offered the next available scheduled interview date and time slot. with consideration for time zone you are in.*

*If you are unable to attend on the date and time offered by your assessors, you will be moved to the next month interview schedule.*

At the same time, you will be provided with a list of four competency-based questions for which you are expected to pre-prepare your answers. These questions will focus on the Key Competency 'Behavior and Attitude', and some of the detailed competencies. Typically, these would be:

- Persuasiveness
- Communication
- Building relationships and teams
- Decision making and delegating responsibility
- Innovation
- Meeting leadership

### What sort of questions will be asked in the interview?

Competency based interview questions are slightly different to the style you may be used to. They will tend to focus on situations and your behavior in those situations. Questions are likely to start with:

"Provide an example of when. . ."

or

"Describe an occasion when" etc.

Your assessors may also ask questions concerning your reference assessment. Where the answer given by the reference implies a shortfall in a particular area, your assessors will seek to understand why. You will receive notification of any areas of concern raised by the reference assessment in advance of your competency-based Interview.

If you are not rated highly enough by your reference, you will have the option to provide a different reference. If this reference still does not rate you highly enough you will fail. You will be able to reapply for the Professional assessment again once you are prepared (recommended time is up to six months).

## What sort of answers are the assessors looking for?

Your assessors will be looking for specific examples that demonstrate the depth and breadth of your experience within bids and proposals. You should only use examples that demonstrate situations in your professional career. If you provide personal examples the assessors may fail you.

*NB: The assessors are not seeking to understand the team's role as a whole was or, what you would do in a hypothetical situation.*

The assessors will be interested in the outcome of the situation, whether there was anything you learned from the experience, etc. You must use the STAR model to provide a structure for your answers:

- Situation - describe a situation or problem that you encountered within the context of the Impact you have described in your PPIP
- Task - describe the task that the situation required.
- Action - describe the action you took, and the challenges that you had to overcome
- Results - describe the outcomes achieved from the actions you took

NB: The assessors are looking for you to concisely explain:

- what you did
- actions you took and the resulting outcomes.

Anecdotal information, summaries of projects and war stories do not provide the kind of behavioral evidence that is being sought by the interviews for professional level.

If you do not clearly use the STAR model to answer your competency-based questions you are very likely to fail your competency-based interview.

## How is the competency-based interview arranged and when does happen?

You will be invited to attend your competency-based interview following the successful assessment of their Proposal Professional Impact Paper (PPIP), and as the final stage for APMP Proposal Professional Certification. You will be expected to present your PPIP PowerPoint slides to a minimum of two APMP Approved Assessors.



At the time you are notified that your Impact paper has met the standards required by APMP, you will be pre-notified of the competency-based questions that you need to answer following your presentation. You must have a minimum of 5 days to prepare your answers.

The questions will be competency based and developed around the Behavioral and Attitude Key Competency Area defined by the APMP.

## How long will it last?

The interview will last a maximum of 45 minutes.

During this time you will have 20 minutes to present your PPIP to the Interviewers. You are responsible for managing your presentation to meet the specified time limits.

Failure to manage your time will result in a failure and you will incur the FULL cost of re-applying

Following your presentation, the assessors will ask you the 4 questions for which you have pre-prepared answers. The interviews are seeking to understand what you personally have done, not what your team did or, the project achieved.

When designing the answers to your 4 competency-based questions, remember it is a good idea to choose examples that demonstrate the depth and breadth of your professional career within Bids and Proposals, or associated disciplines.

## What happens if I fail the competency interview?

Your Lead assessor will provide you with a PDF document with the questions for which you should pre-prepare your answers at the interview. Failure to prepare answers that specifically demonstrate the competencies being assessed will result in a deferral.

You are only allowed one deferral, if you do not pass your interview at a second attempt you will be failed. Should you fail to meet the standards required during your interview, and unless you have reasonable grounds for an appeal, you will be able to reapply for the Professional assessment again once you are prepared (recommended time is up to six months).

*\*Further guidance on how to prepare answers to the questions can be found on pages 7-8 of this document.*

The process for assessment will then be the same as for your first submission. You may however, submit the same impact paper. In this instance it is advisable to consider all the feedback you have received during your first assessment and interview before re-applying.

When re-applying you will have to re-register and pay the full fee required for Professional Registration.

## When will I know whether I have passed?

You will be notified of the assessment result for your PPIP within 4 weeks of submission.



You will be notified of the result of your interview immediately following the interview.  
Your APMP Certificate will be posted to you within 30 days of your notification.

# Example Questions for the Competency Based Interview

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## Persuasiveness

You may have strong verbal skills but did you influence another person or others to change their thinking or take some action. At Proposal Professional level do you have you the skills to persuade and involve, rather than coerce?

- Tell me about how you were able to change someone's/the organization's viewpoint significantly to enable your impact.
- Tell me about a time when you were asked to do something that you disagreed with.

## Communication

Successful communication is having the ability to listen to all types of communication in an open way. Therefore consider whether you are an active listener:

- Give an example of when you listened to a team member and heard what was actually said?
- Give an example of your ability to read and act upon the non-verbal messages that others communicate?

## Clear, effective and engaging communication

- Give an example of a difficult or sensitive situation that required you to use excellent communication skills to achieve your impact.
- Give an example of how you have developed communication skills in others?
- Tell me about a time when you were successful in getting crucial information from another person.
- Tell me about a time when someone misunderstood what you were attempting to communicate to them.
- What do you think are the three most important things about communication?
- Tell me about a time when you worked with people from a culture unlike your own. What did you do to overcome any perceived barriers to communication?

## Building relationships and teams

Employers need people who are socially competent. The desire to build and maintain relationships in and beyond the workplace is critical. Many workplaces function on the basis of project teams that are task oriented and short lived. Those who are highly collaborative and co-operative are most likely to thrive in this type of environment.

- • What skills and personal qualities did you contribute to the team to achieve your impact?

- • Tell me about a time when you used tact and diplomacy.
- • Tell me about the most difficult person you worked with to achieve your impact.
- • What kinds of people did you enjoy working with most to achieve your impact?
- • What kinds of people frustrated you the most whilst you were achieving your impact?
- • What qualities do you admire most in others?

## Decision making and delegating responsibility

These questions try to understand your problem-solving style. Do you manage your activities to minimize or avoid them? How do you behave in a crisis?

- Tell me about a difficult or unpopular decision that you had to make.
- Tell me about a time when you had to make a quick decision. What were the circumstances and what did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you had conflicting priorities and what you did to resolve them.
- Tell me about a significant crisis you have faced.
- Have you ever anticipated a difficult situation before it arose? Describe the situation, the action you took and the outcome.

## Meeting leadership

These questions are designed to help define your leadership style at meetings.

- Describe how you led a team (comprising trainees, juniors and seniors) through a difficult audit.
- How did you take action for poor performance?
- Describe a situation where you had to take charge either with a demanding customer or with your own team.

## Continuous Professional Development

Employers are likely to be investing money for you to become accredited by the APMP. The APMP Certification Program has been developed to promote Continuing Professional Development. APMP Professional Certification seeks to ensure and promote advocacy of best practice and continuing professional development both yourself and others.

Your assessors will therefore be expecting you to clearly articulate:

- Why you want to become a Proposal Professional

and

- How you plan to keep up with developments in your field in the future