Drive your Projects to Done

Center of
Applied Project
Management

Assessment Guide

Certified Project Director (CPD)

A Certified Project Director (CPD) has the proven ability to lead multiple complex projects, programs and portfolios of work.

They make high-level autonomous decisions and use initiative and judgement to navigate a diverse range of activities that span functions, organizations, regions and cultures.

Center of Applied PM uses a competency-based assessment model to determine whether a candidate meets the required standard for certification. This means candidates are assessed on their ability to demonstrate applied knowledge, real-world experience, and professional conduct, not simply on academic performance or theoretical understanding.

Unlike graded assessments, competency-based assessment is criterion-referenced: it measures whether you can perform to a defined standard in practice, not how you compare to others.

This approach reflects what employers and industries value most: reliable, demonstrated capability in performing the responsibilities of a project leader.

The CPD certification assessment is structured around four equally weighted competency domains:
1. **Project management knowledge** – your understanding of core project management concepts, tools, and the project lifecycle
2. **Project management experience** – your track record applying that knowledge in real project settings
3. **Project management skills** – your ability to perform key tasks across project domains, assessed through structured interview questions
4. **Professional conduct and ethics** – your commitment to ethical, accountable, and professional behavior.

30 hours' project management education

In order to demonstrate your **Knowledge** as a Project Director, you are required to submit evidence with your application form for the CPD course. This evidence must include:

- A detailed description of the training program completed, including a link to a relevant webpage; OR
- Completion of the Center of Applied PM - CPD course including passing the online questionnaire, AND
- The application form with the following information:
  - Your education experience
  - LinkedIn profile including your role, organisation, years of experience and company reference contact.

Center of Applied PM may directly contact your reference contacts to clarify any details of the experience stated.

Five years' project experience

In order to demonstrate your **experience** as a Project Director, you are required to submit evidence with your application that you have the full-time experience leading projects, programs and/or portfolios of work.

In order to meet the minimum threshold of complexity, the projects, programs or portfolios of work you have led must involve:

- a full-time equivalent delivery team of three (3) or more people (including yourself as the project/program/portfolio manager)
- detailed project documentation at all stages
- formal governance structure (for example: a sponsor and/or governance group), and multiple, complex and dynamic stakeholder relationships.

Years of experience may be accumulated non-consecutively (for example, over six calendar years).

Online Assessment guide

The Online Assessment aims at testing your knowledge of the course content presented in the units. For CPD, there will be 75 questions at the end of the course completion which you will be attempting in 90 minutes time limit.

You will have two re-attempts per question after which you will have to pay a minimal fee to attempt the questionnaire again. On completion of the questionnaire, you will receive a Score Report.

The assessments are timed and it is mandatory for you to attempt this questionnaire by yourself and without any support from other resources. Any disingenuous attempts will be under the examination of Center of Applied PM. As part of the ethics conduct code, you will be asked to review and agree to the Center of Applied PM Code of Ethics as part of the certification process.

Case Writing

Your case writing assessment becomes available after completing of your online questionnaire. This written submission allows you to demonstrate how you've applied the tools and knowledge from your coursework in real project management situations.

You'll receive a case writing prompt based directly on the course content you've covered, such as project communication, stakeholder management, risk assessment, or other modules from your specific learning path. The assignment asks you to present a detailed case study showing how you've used course concepts, frameworks, and tools in actual project work.

This is your opportunity to showcase practical application of course learnings through authentic project experiences you've personally managed or contributed to significantly.
Once you gain access to the case writing assessment, you have a two-month window to submit your case assignment. After this period expires, you'll need to re-enroll and pay a fee to access the assessment.
For CPM, we'll focus on whether you understand and can apply basic concepts correctly.

- Have led at least one project from initiation through to close, or played a senior leadership role across multiple phases of a complex project or initiative
- Understand the strategic objectives, constraints, and risks associated with the project(s) you managed
- Took ownership of key delivery outcomes, including planning, execution, team coordination, stakeholder engagement, and change management
- Can reflect critically on your leadership approach and explain how your decisions influenced project success.

Your submission will be screened for AI-generated content and plagiarism before being assigned to one of our qualified assessors for evaluation. The assessment process typically takes between four to six weeks from submission to results.

If your case writing doesn't meet the required standards initially, you'll have two additional opportunities to resubmit - giving you three total attempts. Each resubmission involves a minimal processing fee that will be determined and communicated to you.
Should your submission not pass after all attempts, we'll provide feedback explaining what elements were missing or need improvement in your case writing. Our philosophy is supportive - we will provide guidance on areas for continued development

Real Project Experience: You must write about an actual project where you had direct involvement—not theoretical scenarios, case studies from other sources, or projects you only observed. We're evaluating your personal application of project management principles.

Specific Details: Authentic cases include concrete details like actual timelines, budget ranges, team sizes, stakeholder names/roles, and measurable outcomes. Vague or generic descriptions suggest theoretical rather than practical experience.

Learning Integration: Clearly demonstrate how specific concepts from the course were applied in your project. Connect theoretical frameworks to real decisions you made or influenced..

Your case should tell a compelling story that showcases not just what you did, but why you made certain choices, how course concepts influenced your approach, and what you discovered through the process. Think of it as demonstrating your growth as a project management professional and your ability to apply learning in complex, real-world situations.

Confidentiality

While we prioritize maintaining the confidentiality of all information shared during assessment interviews, it's important to exercise caution regarding the disclosure of sensitive or secret information, as these interviews are recorded. Generally speaking, our focus is more on your approach to project management rather than the intricate details of the projects themselves.

If you have concerns about meeting the certification standard without sharing such details, we encourage you to contact us in advance so that we can make alternative arrangements that align with your unique circumstances.

Your Account & Privacy

We truly value your privacy and the security of your learning journey with us.

- Your Personal Learning Space: To get access to our programs, you'll simply need to sign up with a unique User ID and password and then purchase the program you're interested about. This creates your very own "Participant Account."
- For Your Individual Use: Your Participant Account is designed for your exclusive use as an individual learner. We kindly ask that you do not share your login credentials with others, as this is essential for maintaining the integrity of your learning experience and our platform.
- Maintaining Account Integrity: Please be aware that if we detect that your Participant Account is being used by multiple individuals or on multiple devices, your access may be suspended or terminated. This measure helps us protect our content and ensures fair access for all registered learners.
- No Resale or Sharing: You're prohibited from reselling, redistributing, sublicensing, or otherwise transferring our course content to any third party. It's for your eyes only, as part of your registered program.
- Your Responsibility: You are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of your account details and for all activities that occur under your Participant Account.
- Our Promise (and What We Can't Control): We are committed to maintaining the security of our platform. However, we will not be held responsible for any issues or claims arising from the use or misuse of your Participant Account if such incidents are caused by:
    - The actions of a third party beyond our control.
    - Your failure to maintain the confidentiality and security of your account.

Pricing and Transaction Details

We aim for transparency and fairness when it comes to pricing your learning programs.

- Your Invoice: Once your payment is successful, you'll be able to view your invoice. It will also be emailed to your registered email ID for the program and will always be accessible in your Participant Account.
- Prices Can Change: Prices for programs, products, and offers on our website are subject to change without prior notice. However, the price you pay at the time of purchase for any course is guaranteed and will not change. Once your payment is processed based on the real-time program fees, that is the final price you are locked into. There will be no refunds or additional charges from our end.
- Pricing Errors: While we strive for accuracy, human errors, digital image issues, or technical glitches may occasionally lead to incorrect pricing. In such rare instances, the prices of programs and products on our website are still subject to change without notice. We are committed to resolving any discrepancies fairly.

Cancellation & Rescheduling

- By Us: We reserve the right to reschedule or cancel a session (online) due to unavoidable circumstances. We promise to communicate any necessary changes to you in a timely manner.
- By You: You must submit a cancellation request for a scheduled interview 2 days prior to the interview day. If you need to reschedule, please provide a valid reason!

Important Disclaimers

While our goal is to empower you, please note the following essential information.

- Intellectual Property - Ownership of Content and Usage Rights:
  - All course materials, including presentations, handouts, and videos, are protected by copyright and may not be reproduced or distributed without prior permission. This includes content owned by us, materials licensed from the Center of Project Innovation (CPI), and any third-party content referenced with attribution to the respective authors.
  - © [2025] [Adi Raheja and Co]. All rights reserved.
- Confidentiality:
  - We kindly request that you maintain the confidentiality of the course material, resources provided, and discussions throughout your program. This helps preserve the value for all our learners.
  - You are responsible for your own data security and protection, including your unique User ID, password, and other Participant Account data.
- Technology:
  - While we strive for a seamless experience, we are not responsible for all technical issues that might arise during course delivery. However, please know that we are here to support and help resolve any issues that are within our control.
  - We should not be held responsible for access issues stemming from:
    - Downtime of the server (though we work with reliable providers to minimize this!).
    - Lack of appropriate technology or internet access on your end.
    - Problems with the hosting platform that are beyond our direct control.
    - Technical issues related to specific software on your device.

- Communities (User-Generated Content):
  - When you use our discussion groups, chat rooms, message boards, blogs, virtual communities, and other collaborative spaces, you are responsible for the User Content you upload or post and the consequences of doing so.
  - We do not represent, warrant, or guarantee the truthfulness, accuracy, quality, or reliability of any User Content posted by others in these interactive services.
- Professional Advice:
  - Please understand that once you purchase or use our course, it does not establish any professional or legal relationship between you and us.
  - Our courses are for educational and informational purposes only and are not a substitute for professional advice. We encourage you to seek qualified professional guidance when needed.
  - You are responsible for deciding to sign up for the course.
  - You should also make sure for yourself that you meet the requirements of the course and that it aligns with your expectations.
- Limitation of Liability
  Except where prohibited by law, we will not be liable for any indirect, incidental, special, consequential, or punitive damages, including lost profits, data, or goodwill, arising from your use of our programs, products, or services. Our total liability to you for any claim arising out of or relating to these terms or your use of our services will not exceed the amount you paid for the program giving rise to the claim.

Red Flags That Indicate Inauthentic Cases

- Overly perfect outcomes with no challenges or setbacks
- AI plagiarised content
- Vague descriptions without specific details, dates, or numbers
- Generic stakeholder titles without industry context
- Theoretical language rather than personal experience narrative
- No mention of course concepts or learning applications

Interview guide

Your assessment will be a recorded video interview lasting between 45-60 minutes. You can use notes for reference, but avoid reading from scripts. We keep these recordings as part of our compliance requirements and privacy protocols.

Preparation is crucial for success. Read extensively to build thoughtful, practical answers for the questions you'll face. You need solid knowledge of project management frameworks, theories, and best practices, but most importantly, you must understand your own projects deeply and the significant challenges you've encountered.

Having key materials within reach can be helpful during your interview - things like important project documents, notes from stakeholder meetings, and similar resources.

Questions you might encounter include:

Scope, time, cost, and resource management

- Describe a time you were responsible for delivering multiple high-stakes projects or programs concurrently. How did you structure oversight and maintain alignment across delivery teams?

- How have you balanced competing demands on time, cost, and resources across a portfolio or program of work? Share an example where difficult prioritization decisions were required.
- Tell me about a situation where you had to re-scope or re-sequence work due to shifting organizational priorities or funding. What was your decision-making process and how did you manage the change?
- What forecasting tools or portfolio-level resource management approaches have you found most effective? How do you ensure optimal allocation without micromanaging project leads?
- How do you monitor and control financial performance across multiple initiatives? Describe a time you had to intervene to recover a program or portfolio budget.?

Stakeholder management

- Share an example of a time you were responsible for aligning stakeholders across multiple departments or jurisdictions. What competing priorities did you face and how did you resolve them?
- How do you influence powerful external stakeholders—particularly when they have limited time or divergent views? Describe an instance where your influence was critical to success.
- How do you foster stakeholder commitment throughout the life of a program or portfolio, especially during periods of ambiguity or change?
- Describe a time when a high-level stakeholder relationship became strained due to delivery pressures. How did you restore trust while protecting delivery outcomes?
- How do you tailor engagement strategies for executive sponsors, operational managers, and delivery teams? What frameworks or tools support this??

Risk and issue management

- What is your approach to identifying and monitoring risks at the portfolio or program level? How do you distinguish between noise and critical threats?
- Tell me about a time when a risk materialized across multiple projects or business units. How did you coordinate the response?
- How do you ensure project managers are empowered to manage risk, while still having appropriate escalation paths in place?
- Describe the reporting mechanisms or dashboards you use to track risk across complex environments. How do you ensure transparency without overwhelming stakeholders?
- Have you ever had to manage a politically sensitive issue or reputational risk? What was your strategy, and what lessons did you take from the experience?

Governance and reporting

- How do you establish governance models that balance oversight with delivery agility across a portfolio or program of work?
- Tell me about a time you presented to an executive board or steering committee. How did you prepare, and what insights did you prioritize?
- Share an example where you were required to defend or reframe a strategic delivery decision. How did you ensure stakeholder understanding and support?
- How do you ensure that project-level reporting rolls up into meaningful portfolio-level insights? What practices or systems support this?
- What audit or assurance mechanisms have you implemented or overseen? How do you use them to drive both accountability and improvement??

Continual improvement and lessons learned

- 1. Describe a time you introduced a process or governance improvement across multiple initiatives. What prompted the change and how did you lead its adoption?
- How do you embed continuous improvement at the program or portfolio level? What have you done to ensure that lessons are not just captured, but actively used?
- What feedback mechanisms have you used to gather insights from teams, stakeholders, or sponsors? How have those insights influenced your leadership practice?
- Share an example of a personal leadership lesson that changed how you direct projects or programs. What was the situation and what did you take from it?
- If mentoring a new project director stepping into their first enterprise-levl leadership role, what three habits or mindsets would you encourage them to develop?

You should always use examples in your responses where possible.
Your interview gets evaluated on both what you say and how you say it. Don't rush through your answers and try not to rely too heavily on your notes. Be ready to explain or expand on your assumptions, theories, methods, and conclusions. Interviewers often challenge your thinking to see how well you can defend your position and think quickly.
Take your time with answers - it's fine to pause and think or check if you're answering what they're looking for. If a question isn't clear, ask for clarification. Aim to be direct and focused while showing you understand the complexities involved. Don't give shallow answers, but also don't try to deliver a dissertation on every topic.
You should defend your ideas strongly using solid logic and evidence to back up your positions and recommendations. But don't get confrontational if an interviewer questions your views. If they point out genuine problems or gaps in your thinking, accept their feedback gracefully and explain how you'd learn from it going forward. This ability to handle feedback professionally is a real-world skill that may be directly assessed during your interview.

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Assessment in a language other than English

If you are not a native English speaker and would prefer to be assessed in your another language, you aremore than welcome to do so. We currently are able to assess in English, Hindi and Marathi.

Please reach out to us in advance to make the necessary arrangements for your assessment. We are committed to ensuring that language barriers do not hinder your ability to fully showcase your skills and qualifications.

What if I 'fail' my assessment interview?

If you have the requisite knowledge, experience and references, and are adequately prepared for your assessment interview, the process should be fairly straight forward.

That said, nerves or just the fact you are not at your best on the day may result in you not interviewing to the standard you know you are capable of.

If you are unsuccessful in your first interview attempt, we will make some recommendations as to how you might do better next time and give you an opportunity to be reassessed at nominal cost of Rs. 5000/-

If you are not yet proficient after a second interview, your assessor will admit you to the Center of Applied PM Project Fundamentals course

Assessment Rubric

A rubric for assessment and case writing, usually in the form of a matrix or grid, is a tool used to interpret and grade candidates' work against criteria and standards. Rubrics are sometimes called "criteria sheets", "grading schemes", or "scoring guides”.

A rubric makes explicit a range of assessment criteria and expected performance standards. Assessors evaluate a candidate's performance against all of these, rather than assigning a single subjective score.

A rubric is intended to:

- make candidates aware of all expectations related to the assessment task, and helps them
- evaluate their own work as it progresses, and
- help assessors apply consistent standards when assessing qualitative tasks and promote consistency in shared marking.
- The rubric shown on the following page is applied in assessing your interview.

In order to achieve this Certification, you need to be assessed as proficient (at a minimum) in ALL the listed criteria. Note that proficiency is generally considered to be a higher standard than a 50% examination grade.

Get in touch

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