

APMP Professional Accreditation Panel Interview Standards and Guidelines



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ASSOCIATION OF PROPOSAL MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS



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Preparing for Proposal Professional Accreditation

Am I eligible for Professional Accreditation?

Understanding what is required at this level

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

What is the Proposal Professional Impact Paper (PPIP)?

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 being something you have done within your organization or the profession to promote best practice and change behavior, both of the organization and/or individuals. You are also asked to provide a Continuing Education plan of how you will continue to develop over the next 12 to 24 months.

To complete the PPIP Assessment, you are asked to complete a standard PowerPoint presentation template that is downloaded from the web <http://www.apmg-exams.com>

How long do I have to complete it?

After registering to become a Proposal Professional you can take up to 6 months to complete your PPIP.

How do I submit my PPIP?

When you are ready to submit your PPIP, you should email it to certification@apmp.org.

How is the APMP Professional Reference Assessment different to that of Practitioner Level?

Understanding the role of your reference

The Professional Reference assessment focuses on the behavior and attitude demonstrated by you, particularly in the areas of managing and motivating others to carry out required actions.

The assessment comprises a detailed assessment of 9 competencies within the KCA Behavior and Attitude. Within these individual competencies your reference will be asked to rate you based upon a set of pre-defined statements.

What is the process for my Reference Assessment?

As soon as you register and pay for Professional Accreditation you will be required to provide an email address for your reference. This should be someone who is prepared to confirm that you have worked for at least 7 years in a bids and proposals environment.

Payment automatically generates an email to your reference requesting that they complete an on-line competency sub-set assessment designed to take no more than 30 minutes to complete. Your reference will have the option to complete the assessment by filling in the attached Word Document and returning it to the APM Group, and an email address will be provided. The APM Group will then forward the completed assessment to the nominated APMP Assessor.

This assessment must be completed and returned by your reference to the nominated assessor within 4 weeks of the assessment request.

It is your responsibility to ensure the reference provides the required assessment within the timescale.

What happens after I submit my PPIP?

Understanding the submission process

Your PPIP will be reviewed by your APMP Assessor and you will be contacted if any further information is required to support your survey answers.

You will be notified whether you have reached the standard required by your APMP Assessor within 4 weeks of submitting your PPIP. If you are successful, you will be invited to attend a Panel Interview and you will be pre-notified of the questions for which you should pre-prepare your answers

Interviews are likely to be carried out by telephone in the initial stages of the Program rollout. The Approved Training Organizations may run schedules of public Panel Interviews. These are likely to be held quarterly. Should a face to face interview be your preference, it is worth contacting the ATO's in your area directly.

For either type of interview you will be notified of the first available date, time and venue as soon as possible.

Why might I be deferred during my PPIP Assessment?

Understanding the deferral process during assessment

If your PPIP does not meet the APMP standards, you will be notified by your APMP Assessor of the areas that need to be improved. You will be asked to update your PPIP with consideration for the comments that have been given to you. At this time you will also have the option of using your original subject of Impact or choosing another one. Your Assessor will give you guidance on this.

There is no charge for resubmitting your PPIP at this stage.

What happens if I fail the Panel Interview?

Understanding why you might fail the panel interview

Your Assessors will provide you with a PDF document that contains 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 Deferral.

Should you fail to meet the standards required during your interview, and unless you have reasonable grounds for an appeal, you will have to wait six months before you will be allowed to take it again.

**Further guidance on how to prepare answers to the questions can be found on pages 5-11 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.

Preparing for the Competency Based Interview

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?

You will be pre-notified by one of your interviewers regarding the time and date of the interview. At the same time you will be provided with a list of questions for which you are expected to pre-prepare your answers. These questions focus on the Key Competency 'Behavior and Attitude', and its detailed competencies:

- Persuasiveness
- Communication
- Quality orientation
- Stress tolerance and energy
- Building relationships and teams
- Decision making and delegating responsibility
- Continuous Professional Development
- 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:

"Please give me an example of when. . ."

or

"Please describe an occasion when" etc.

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

In the event that you are not rated highly enough by your reference, you will be given the option to provide a different reference. If this reference still does not rate you highly enough you will fail and be asked to wait 6 months before re-applying for assessment at Professional level.

What sort of answers are will the panel interviewers be looking for?

The interviewers will be looking for specific examples explaining exactly what you did in situations related to your PPIP.

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.

You can choose any relevant examples that relate to your PPIP. You will be asked to discuss the example in some detail.

The interviewers will be interested in the outcome of the situation, whether there was anything you learned from the experience, etc.

If you are not able to answer any of the questions with specific reference to your PPIP, you must clearly state why the question is not relevant to your PPIP.

Using the **STAR** model will provide you with 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 interviewers 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.

When does the competency based interview happen?

Candidates will be invited to attend the competency-based interview following the successful assessment of their Proposal Professional Impact Paper (PPIP), and as the final stage for APMP Proposal Professional accreditation. You will be expected to present your PPIP to an Interview Panel that will consist of three interviewers. The Panel must have as a minimum of two APMP accredited assessors.

You will have be pre-notified of the questions that will be asked following your presentation, and given a minimum of 3 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.

NB: at the discretion of the interviewers, this period of time may vary. It is important should you require less time to prepare the interview, that the interviewers are convinced that preparation to answer the questions has been carried out.

The questions will predominantly relate to your PPIP, but may require you to call upon other, previous experience.

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 deferral and you will incur the **FULL** cost of re-applying

Following your presentation, the Interviewers will then ask you the 6 questions for which you have pre-prepared answers.

Hints and Tips

Look again at the impact you have described in your PPIP. The interviewers will ask questions related to that impact

As the interview will be focused on specific examples from achieving your impact, it would be advisable to think about possible examples that you could use.

- Consider your role in the situation
- Were there any potential barriers or pitfalls?
- How did you overcome them?
- Is there anything you would have done differently?
- Is there anything that you have learned?

The interviews are seeking to understand what you personally have done, not what your team did or the project achieved.

You may not be asked these particular questions during interview, but they will prepare you for possible questions and encourage you to think about these areas.

Example Questions for the Competency Based Interview

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?

Do you communicate in an engaging and convincing way?

- 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?

Quality Orientation

This area will check that you have effective work habits and knowledge of workplace routines as well as some experience of common office administration systems.

- Tell me how you organize your work and schedule your time.

Stress tolerance and energy

These questions will be to understand your resilience in the work environment.

- Give an example of a time when you had to keep inappropriate emotions in check (either yours or a member of your team) and explain how you positively managed this situation?
 - Which two accomplishments to achieve your impact gave you the most satisfaction? Why?
 - Describe a time when you led or motivated others.
 - Tell us about a time when you had more to do than you could complete in the time allocated; tell us what you did about it and what the outcome was.

It is possible that the panel will try to understand how you manage or avoid stress.

- Tell me about a time when you felt under pressure.
- Tell me about a time when you felt frustrated by your work.
- What has been your most satisfying/ disappointing experience within the proposals environment?

You may also like to consider areas of your experience that would demonstrate that you strive to achieve a standard of excellence, use initiative at the appropriate time and show persistence in pursuing goals. This is likely to include how your team responds to your personality and temperament.

- How would you describe your management style?
- What are your greatest strengths?
- What's your greatest weakness?
- What does "success" mean to you?
- What does "failure" mean to you?
- What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
- Tell me about a major problem you encountered whilst achieving your impact and how you dealt with it?

Building relationships and teams

- What have you learned from your mistakes?

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.
- What significant problems did you face to achieve your impact?
- 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.
- What kind of problems do you handle best?

How do you behave in a crisis? What does it take to shake your poise or self-confidence? What approach do you take to problem solving?

- Tell me about a significant crisis you have faced.
- How do you resolve conflict in the groups or teams that you have membership of?
- Have you ever anticipated a difficult situation before it arose? Describe the situation, the action you took and the outcome.
- What would you do if your colleagues were complaining to you about the organization?
- Tell me about a time when you bent the rules. When do you think it is okay to do so?

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 improve their work?
- 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 Accreditation Program has been developed to promote Continuing Professional Development. APMP Professional Accreditation seeks to ensure and promote advocacy of best practice and continuing professional development both yourself and others.

The Panel interviewers 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