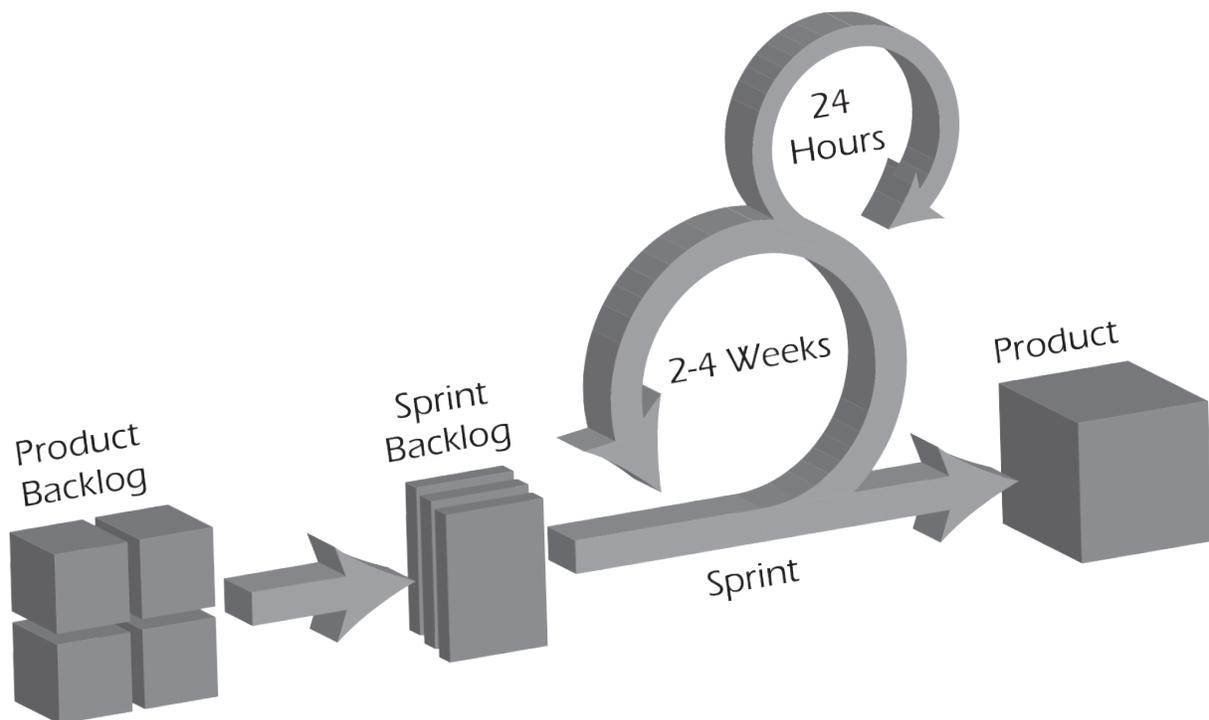


A Guide to the PMI-ACP® Exam Change

Everything You Need to Know to Survive the Upcoming Exam Change...and A Few Things You Don't



For More Information on this or Any Pending Examination Change, Please Visit:

shop.rmcls.com/examchanges

Written by the RMC Editorial Staff and Mike Griffiths, PMI-ACP and Member of the PMI-ACP® Steering Committee

WHY SHOULD YOU READ THIS DOCUMENT?

Starting in the summer of 2015, PMI will be making some changes to the PMI Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP)® examination. This complimentary report will explain things like why the exam is changing, what exactly is changing, and how these changes will affect your preparation for taking the PMI-ACP exam—whether you plan to take the exam before or after the exam changes have been implemented. This report will also offer a few key dates PMI-ACP® aspirants need to be aware of. So please read through this information carefully, and feel free to pass this document on to any friends, colleagues or co-workers who might be interested as well.

FIRST THE BASICS: WHAT IS PMI?

PMI is a worldwide nonprofit organization that owns and administers some of the most widely-recognized and popular professional certifications on the planet. The professional designations PMI currently administers and supports include the [Project Management Professional \(PMP\)®](#), the [Certified Associate in Project Management \(CAPM\)®](#), the [Professional in Business Analysis \(PMI-PBA\)®](#), the [Agile Certified Practitioner \(PMI-ACP\)®](#), and many others. RMC Learning Solutions (formerly RMC Project Management) also supports all of the above listed designations through a variety of books, software, live classroom training, and self-directed e-Learning courses for professionals seeking certification.

WHAT IS THE PMI-ACP EXAM?

Passing the PMI-ACP exam is a required part of earning the PMI-ACP designation—along with successful completion and acceptance of an application that includes prerequisites for work experience, education, and classroom training hours. The exam is 120 questions and 3 hours in length, and tests the student's knowledge of agile principles, practices, and tools and techniques across agile methodologies to ensure they meet professional standards. The exam has been offered by PMI since 2011, and this is the first major change PMI has instituted since the exam was released.

WHO IS MIKE GRIFFITHS, AND WHY SHOULD I WANT HIS THOUGHTS ON THIS?

Mike Griffiths is a world-renowned project manager, trainer, consultant, and writer, holding multiple project management and agile-related certifications. Mike helped create the agile method DSDM (Dynamic Systems Development Method) and has been using agile methods including FDD, Scrum, and XP for over 20 years. He helped start the PMI® Agile Community of Practice, which is now the largest PMI community in existence. He has also served on the Board of Directors for the Agile Alliance and the Agile Project Leadership Network (APLN).



Mike Griffiths,
PMI-ACP, PMP, CSM

But most importantly Mike is a member of the PMI-ACP Steering Committee, which defines the agile-related knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to be tested on the PMI-ACP exam. He is also the author of the book [PMI-ACPSM Exam Prep, Premier Edition](#), the best-selling PMI-ACP exam prep guide in the world. And he will also be the author of the second edition of this book, to be released later this year.

SERIOUSLY . . . WHY IS THE EXAM CHANGING?

When PMI introduced the PMI-ACP certification exam in 2010, it was a big departure from the traditional project management subject matter PMI was familiar with. Rather than trying to assemble agile topics internally, they engaged a Steering Committee of agile experts to source, consolidate, and organize the material into an exam content outline. This original exam content outline was vetted with industry practitioners and the new exam was trialed with a pilot group before the exam was rolled out in 2011.

In 2014, after the exam had been live for three years, PMI assembled a Task Force to conduct a Role Delineation Study to gauge the industry reaction to the exam content outline. The goal was to find out if the topics covered by the current PMI-ACP exam were those widely used by practitioners, if any new and emerging techniques should be added, if any topics should be dropped, and if the scoring breakdown across the topics was still accurate. Several thousand very detailed questionnaires were sent out to PMI-ACP holders, PMI-ACP applicants, and industry practitioners—and almost 1,000 fully completed questionnaires were received back. Once the Task Force correlated the results and catalogued suggestions for additions, deletions, and scoring changes, they decided that a few changes needed to be made to the exam.

SO WHAT EXACTLY IS CHANGING, AND ARE THE CHANGES MINOR OR MAJOR?

Based on the Role Delineation Study questionnaire results, the Task Force and Steering Committee examined the existing Domains, Tools and Techniques, and Knowledge and Skills areas that comprised the original PMI-ACP exam content outline. All in all, the suggested changes were minor, and the Role Delineation Study validated that the PMI-ACP design is still applicable and suitable.

Although the Tools & Techniques and Knowledge & Skills listed in the exam content outline have been simplified, the knowledge base required for the exam remains essentially the same. Some topics have been moved between domains, and the names of some domains and subdomains have been tweaked—but these changes only affect the organization of the exam content outline and aren't tested on the exam. For the purposes of preparing for the exam, the major changes that resulted from the study are as follows:

- 1) The important topics of agile values, principles, and methodologies have been folded into a new domain called “Agile Principles and Mindset.” In the first edition of the *PMI-ACPSM Exam Prep book*, these topics are covered in Chapter 2 (“Agile Framework”). The domain change doesn't affect how these topics will be tested on the exam.
- 2) The weighting of the exam questions is now based on the domains, rather than the Tools & Techniques and Knowledge & Skills. However, this is simply a change in how the weighting is organized. The T&T and K&S icons in the first edition of the *PMI-ACPSM Exam Prep book* are still an accurate guide to the relative weighting of the topics for the exam. (The new weightings by domain are shown below.)
- 3) The reference books for the exam have been updated. Some of the older titles have been replaced by newer books that better reflect today's use and understanding of agile practices. However, all the key exam content in the reference books is included in the *PMI-ACPSM Exam Prep book*, so you don't need to read those books to prepare for the exam. **RMC's book is the only resource you need.**

A GENERAL TIMELINE OF EVENTS WOULD BE HELPFUL HERE. DO YOU HAVE ONE?

The changes to the exam will go into effect during a Pilot Period from July 15 to October 14, 2015, when PMI will be testing the grading scale for the new version of the exam. If you take the exam during that time, the good news is that you will receive a 20 percent rebate on the exam fee from PMI. But the bad news is that your exam results will be delayed—possibly until October 22nd. Is this suspenseful wait worth a 20% discount to you? Only you can decide that.

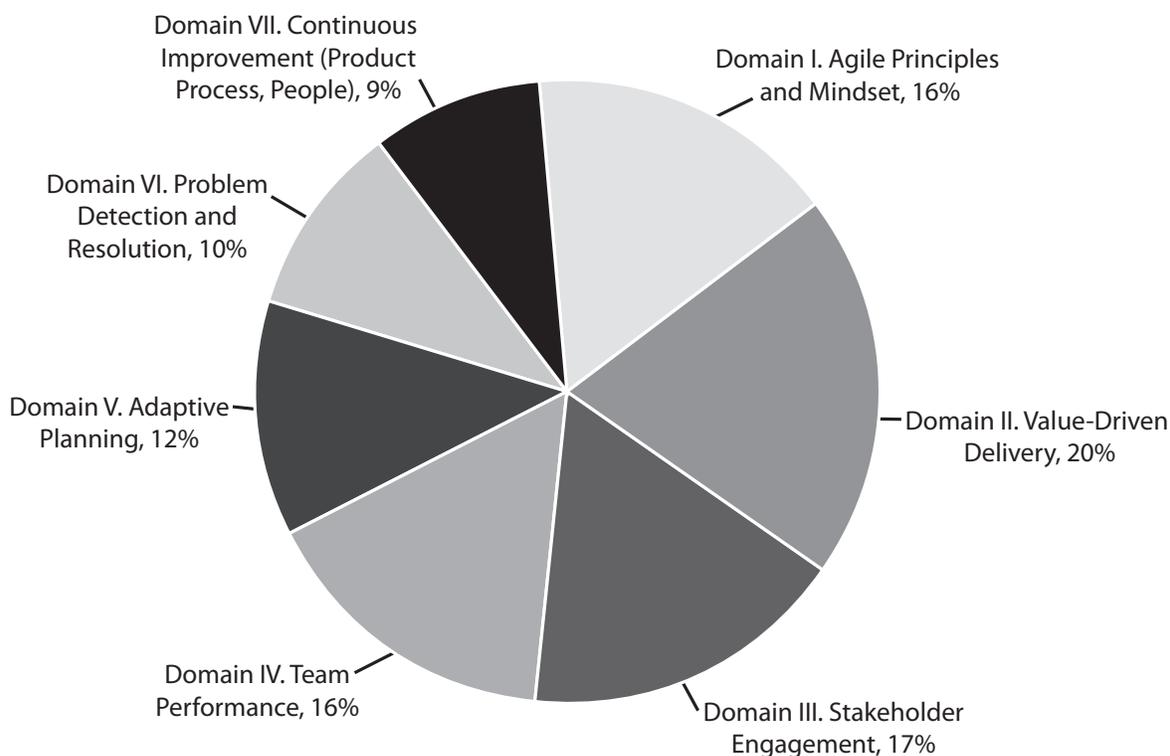
Once the Pilot Period has concluded, a new version of the exam will go into effect starting on October 15, 2015. If you wait until then to take the exam, your scores will be available immediately after testing, as usual. At that point, there should be no further changes to the exam, in theory, for at least three to four years. To help you decide what to do during this transition, we have assembled this easy-to-follow timeline:

Exam Milestone	Date
Last day to take original version of PMI-ACP exam	July 14, 2015
Start of Pilot Period for new PMI-ACP exam	July 15, 2015
End of Pilot Period for new PMI-ACP exam	October 14, 2015
First day to take new version of PMI-ACP exam without waiting for your results	October 15, 2015

WHAT ARE THE NEW DOMAINS AND THEIR EXAM WEIGHTINGS? AND WAIT . . . WHAT IS A DOMAIN EXACTLY?

To help people prepare for the PMI-ACP certification exam, PMI has organized the content that will be tested into seven domains of knowledge (see diagram below). Each domain describes a general category of information that you have to understand to pass the exam. Now don't worry, these domains aren't anything you have to memorize. Although PMI uses them to organize exam content, the exam itself doesn't refer to the domains or test them in any way. In other words, if you were the world's greatest agile expert but had never heard of PMI's domains, you could still ace the exam with flying colors.

Having said that, for most people the domains are very helpful in studying for the exam. You can use them to quickly diagnose which areas you already know well, and which areas you need to spend more time on. They can also help you allocate your study time for the exam topics, since PMI tells us what percentage of exam questions will be based on each domain:



WHAT ARE THE NEW DOMAINS AND THEIR EXAM WEIGHTINGS? AND WAIT . . . WHAT IS A DOMAIN EXACTLY? (CONTINUED)

Now, if you were only using PMI's exam content outline to prepare for the exam, this weighting by domains would only take you so far, because there are many agile practices that PMI doesn't identify by domain. For example, the daily standup is a team practice, a planning tool, AND a way to stay on top of problems (as well as a basic manifestation of agile principles). So which PMI domain does it fall under? The answer is that for the new exam, it is counted as part of the Planning domain.

To solve the problem of figuring out which topics fall in which domain, in the new version of the *PMI-ACPSM Exam Prep* book Mike Griffiths will organize all the exam topics by domain for you, so you will know which topics fall in each domain and can allocate your study time effectively.

For the new version of the PMI-ACP exam, some exam topics have also been moved around between domains. So if you are using the first edition of the *PMI-ACPSM Exam Prep* book and taking the exam after July 14th, then use the T&T and K&S icons as outlined in that book to guide how much study time to allocate to each topic—instead of weightings by domain. That's still an effective way to study for the new exam since the actual content being tested hasn't changed that much.

Other than moving some topics around between the domains, the only major change to the domains is that PMI has added a new domain called "Agile Principles and Mindset." However, the topics in this new domain were already being tested on the previous exam; they just weren't assigned to a domain. So this change doesn't affect what you need to know for the exam. In the first edition of the *PMI-ACPSM Exam Prep* book, these topics are covered in Chapter 2 ("Agile Framework").

LET'S GET TO THE POINT: HOW WILL THESE CHANGES AFFECT MY PREPARATION?

The most important thing to understand is this: **all the changes listed above are minor.** Whether you are planning to take the exam before the Pilot Period or during it, the [first edition of the PMI-ACPSM Exam Prep book](#) still covers all the topics you need to understand, and will still be the most comprehensive study resource for the exam through the end of the Pilot Period. The same goes for our 21-hour [PMI-ACP Self-Directed e-Learning Course](#).

That said, we will be releasing a new set of study materials for the updated exam—a book, a set of flashcards, and an exam simulation application—approximately four weeks before the end of the Pilot Period. This will give you plenty of time to study for taking the PMI-ACP exam after October 15th, if you choose to wait until then.

WHEN WILL UPDATED STUDY PRODUCTS FOR THE NEW EXAM BE AVAILABLE?

RMC is in the process of updating the *PMI-ACPSM Exam Prep* book, as well as the *Hot Topics* flashcards and *PM FASTrack[®]* Exam Simulation Software to reflect the new domains and the upcoming exam changes. After those exam preparation products are completed, we will also be updating our 21-hour self-directed e-Learning course. As mentioned above, these updated materials will be ready in time for students who are planning to take the new exam after the Pilot Period is over. (And just between us, there is a very good chance we'll offer a significant preorder discount on all of these items to people who are on our e-newsletter list.)

HONESTLY, I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF THIS. CAN I JUST TALK TO SOMEONE?

Of course you can! Our customer service staff, marketing people, salespeople, and practice directors have a really good handle on all of this. If you feel more comfortable communicating directly with us, please feel free to contact RMC Learning Solutions any time via the options listed below. We look forward to hearing from you, and good luck!

Web: www.rmcls.com

Email: info@rmcls.com

Phone: (952) 846-4484

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/rmcproject>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/rmc-project-management>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/rmcproject>

So with the above in mind, after reading this report, there are really only two things you need to know:

1. If you plan on sitting for the PMI-ACP exam **on or before October 14th of 2015**, [our current products and courses](#)—along with this report—offer everything you will need to take and pass the exam.
2. If you plan on sitting for the PMI-ACP exam **on or after October 15th of 2015**, RMC will have new products and courses available approximately one month prior to the exam change.

It's really that simple!

** RMC Project Management is now RMC Learning Solutions™*



10953 Bren Road East • Minnetonka, Minnesota 55343 USA
Main 952.846.4484 • Fax 952.846.4844 • E-mail info@rmcls.com