BSB41515 Certificate IV in Project Management Practice

Assessment Guidelines

Pre-enrolment program

There are no pre-requisites to entry for the pre-enrolment program.

OPEN

OPEN is a multimedia project management resource hub, available free to all, whether or not you intend applying for Certification.

The 12 online units in OPEN cover all aspects of contemporary project management, including a number of well-known and highly regarded methodologies such as PMBOK, Agile, and PRINCE2.

Successfully completing all the online quizzes that follow each topic will satisfy the pre-requisite entry requirements for the BSB41515 Certificate IV in Project Management Practice.

Advanced Recognition and Certification (ARC) workshop

As an alternative to completing OPEN, candidates can attend an Advanced Recognition and Certification (ARC) workshop run by the Institute.

The workshop is a wholly interactive experience in which participants initiate, plan, deliver and close an actual project.

Over five (5) collaborative days our expert facilitators leverage your latent project experience, connecting a common frame of reference, common purpose and common-sense approach to the cohesive delivery and oversight of professional and personal projects.

The cost of attending an ARC workshop is listed on the website – group and corporate rates are also available.

Graduate outcomes

Upon completion of OPEN / ARC you can exit the qualification pathway program as a Certified Project Officer.

Project Reflection

In order to demonstrate your competence as a Project Professional, you are required to identify a project you have recently made a significant contribution to and critically reflect upon its performance.

Part 1

The final output will take the form of a written report aimed at recommending improvements for the performance of future projects. The recommendations are primarily intended for organisation that delivered the project. The reflection should **not** be a (product) review of the deliverable created by the project.

In addition to common requirements for business writing, the Reflection should include the following major elements:
- An overview of the project
- Critical analysis of:
  - Project initiation
  - Project planning
  - Project delivery
  - Project close
- A conclusion that is linked to your previous discussion

⚉ Clearly articulated and supported (SMART) recommendations

For assessment purposes, the Reflection must be **at least 2,500 words** in length. The word count does not include headings and titles, footnotes, references and/or appendices.

The following documents relevant to the project you have reviewed may also be appended or linked to your report:
⚉ A business case and/or project charter
⚉ A work breakdown structure (WBS), schedule and budget
⚉ Risk and stakeholder registers
⚉ Position descriptions for key project team members
⚉ Status reports / change requests

You may independently prepare them for examination purposes if they do not already exist.

Part 2

Once your evidence of knowledge, experience and your written report have been successfully assessed per the criteria in this guide, you will be contacted for your final interview.

In that interview (usually via Skype), your assessor will invite you to make a **15-minute presentation** of your Project Reflection findings. This will be followed by a detailed **question and answer session**.

In order to successfully complete this final interview, you will need to be familiar with larger issues, such as project management frameworks, theories and best practice; more importantly, you need to have a deep understanding of the project you have reflected upon and the major issues encountered.

Candidates who successfully complete the BSB41515 Certificate IV in Project Management Practice may also be eligible to be admitted to the Institute of Project Management as a Certified Project Professional.
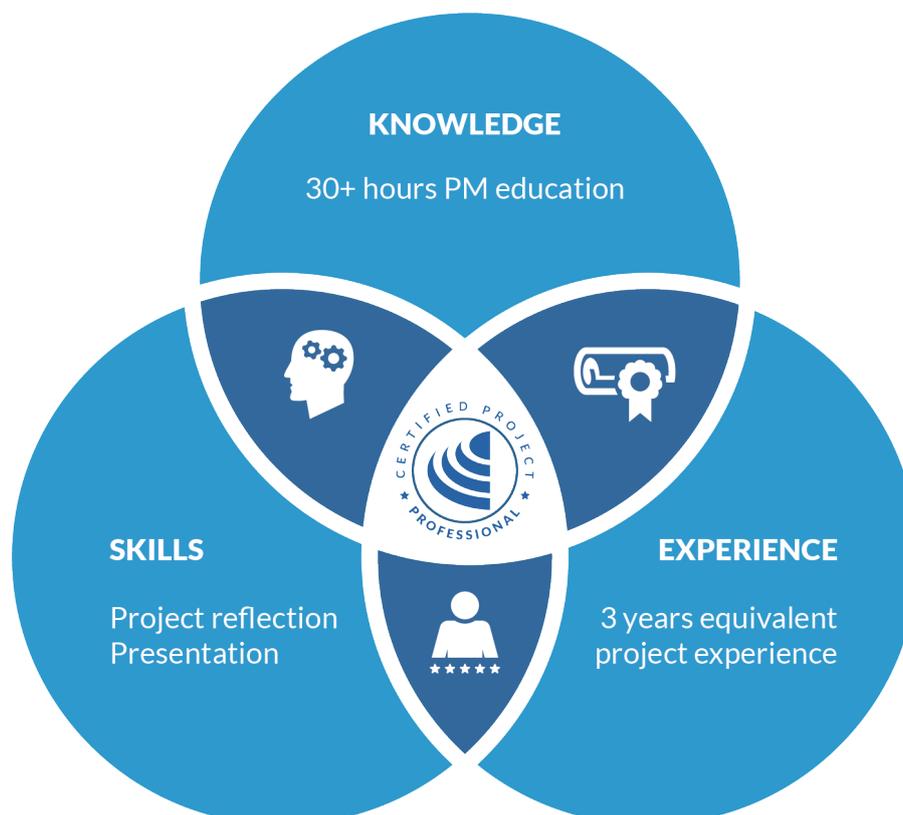
Assessment Guide: Project Reflection

The following guide is intended to show you step-by-step how to complete the Project Reflection requirement for admission to the Institute of Project Management as a Certified Project Professional.

1	Gather data

There are two (2) stages to data collection; however, they are not necessarily consecutive. The first stage involves gathering and reviewing all the relevant project planning documentation, including (but not necessarily limited to) the baseline and subsequent versions of the project:

- Concept brief
- Business case
- Project charter
- Scope (WBS)
- Schedule
- Budget
- Risk register

- Stakeholder register
- Communications plan
- Procurement plan
- Quality plan
- Human resource plan
- Position descriptions
- Finance plan

You should also review any and all project:

- Status reports
- Meeting agendas & meetings
- Change requests
- Issues logs
- Change logs
- General correspondence

From this data, you will begin to get a sense of what the project did well, and where you may have opportunities to improve the future delivery of like projects. You might also draw important conclusions from the poor recordkeeping within (or even absence of) any or all of these documents.

These first impressions should then inform and guide any stakeholder interviews you wish to conduct (stage two). Interviewing people such as the project manager, sponsor and client can give you new perspectives and insight into how the project performed and opportunities for improvement.

As you are also likely to discover more relevant documents as part of this process, you should continually update you secondary (document) sources and the relationships that exist therein.

MENTOR SUPPORT

At this point, your mentor is an excellent resource to bounce ideas off and begin to challenge some of your formative analysis. Although your mentor **will not** directly review any of the data you gather (or, for example, propose stakeholder questions for you); they can support, encourage and guide you as you consolidate your findings.

2 Analyse & report

Data analysis is the process of converting all the fragments of *information* you have collected into reliable, actionable *intelligence*.

Unfortunately, the amount of data you have likely generated could answer an incredible number of questions – you could spend the rest of your life trying to analyse all of that information! That is why it is important to go back to the original questions that you are trying to answer.

At the highest level, these questions can be found in your Reflection terms of reference; drilling down they may be included in your pre-defined report template. Beyond that, look at other ideas and themes that have emerged from your data (surprises), and consider them in terms of how they relate to your questions and their potential implications for the performing organisation.

You should always be looking for multiple points of evidence for each of your conclusions, all of which will lead to actionable recommendations – the entire purpose of your Reflection.

Using the Project Reflection template

Although you may use any report format, a Project Reflection template appropriate to this assessment task can be downloaded from https://open.institute.pm/free-project-management-resources/. Ensure the blue guidance text is deleted – it cannot be included in your word count!

Minimum word counts for each section are suggested below; however, they are presented as a **rough guide**, and not intended to be prescriptive. For example, not all the items in *Section 5 – Lessons Learned* may actually reveal lessons to learn! You are encouraged here to use your expert judgment in selecting how much detail to respond with at each criterion.

This section is all about critical analysis. For some topics, you might simply acknowledge that there were no major issues or lessons to be learned – for others, you may present several hundred words of analysis. Where you place your emphasis depends on the specific contingencies of the project you are reflecting upon.

Total words: 2,500

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MENTOR SUPPORT

You should look to engage your mentor at least twice during the analysis and reporting stage, prior to submitting your final report.

In the first instance, you should provide a 'dot-point draft' to your mentor. This involves noting your thoughts for each sub-section of the report, without going into any real detail. The process allows you to organise your thinking into a coherent structure for high-level discussion and feedback. Note that if you write too much at this stage – and subsequently discover you are not on the right track – you may waste significant effort in re-work.

Your second draft should incorporate the feedback provided and begin to flesh out the ideas into a more complete, evidenced analysis. As a guide, the draft you provide to your mentor here should be around 75% complete.

Following this, you should be ready to finalise your report, applying appropriate formatting and style so that it presents as well as it reads.

Although these stages are proposed here as the ideal points of collaboration, in practice you may choose as few or as many interactions as you like as part of the unlimited, on-demand nature of the mentoring program.

3 Interview

You will then be required to make a **15-minute presentation** of your Project Reflection findings, followed by a detailed **question and answer session** to complete this assessment activity. You will be contacted directly to schedule your interview once your written report has been assessed.

In order to successfully complete this part, you will need to be familiar with larger issues, such as project management frameworks, theories and best practice; more importantly, you need to have a deep understanding of the project you have reflected upon and the major issues encountered.

As most presentations are conducted via Skype, you should have with you important materials for easy reference in the course of your interview; these may include key project documents, stakeholder interview notes, and the like.

As you will see from the assessment criteria (below), your interview is evaluated in terms of content and clarity, as well as style. Don't speak too fast and don't overly rely on notes. Be prepared to clarify or elaborate on your assumptions, theoretical positions, methods, and conclusions. Often an examiner plays the devil's advocate to see how well you can think on your feet and justify yourself.

During the interview, don't rush your answers. It is perfectly acceptable to think for a couple of seconds or ask if you are on the right track. If you are not clear about the question you are entitled to ask for clarification.

Try to be concise and to the point, but at the same time demonstrate that you have a good grasp of the complex issues involved. In other words, do not give superficial answers, but at the same time, do not try and present an entire PhD-level theory of project management in each response.

Importantly, you should put up a good defence of your findings without being defensive. A good defence means that you can provide strong logical arguments and empirically support or defend your position or recommendations. However, don't become hostile if the examiner is critical of your work.

If they are able to point out some real flaws or weaknesses in your reflection, accept their criticisms with humility, and indicate how you might learn from this for the future.

Note that this is an essential real-world skill and may be directly assessed!

Assessment

Assessment Integrity

Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarism, allowing another candidate to copy work for an assignment or an examination, and any other conduct by which a candidate:

- seeks to gain, for themselves or for any other person, any academic advantage or advancement to which they or that other person is not entitled, or
- improperly disadvantages any other candidate.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating. It is taking and using someone else's thoughts, writings or inventions and representing them as your own, for example:

- using an author's words without putting them in quotation marks and acknowledging the source
- using an author's ideas without proper acknowledgment, or
- copying another candidate's work.

All your assessable works may be submitted to the plagiarism checking service *TurnItIn* to obtain a report on possible instances of plagiarism. Assessable works may also be included in a reference database.

Candidates engaging in any form of academic misconduct may be subject to the imposition of penalties that range from a deduction/ cancellation of marks to exclusion from the course.

Assessment Rubrics

A rubric for assessment, 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 teachers apply consistent standards when assessing qualitative tasks and promotes consistency in shared marking.

The following rubrics are applied in assessing your Project Reflection and 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% passing grade.

Written report	Mastered	Advanced	Competent	Developing	Basic
Report methodology	A wide variety of sources consulted. All key project documents appended and referenced throughout.	A good range of source material consulted. Some key project documents appended and referenced.	Information taken from source(s) appears sufficient to support a comprehensive analysis.	Inconsistent and or insufficient data on which the report appears to be based.	Little or no evidence for findings.
Lessons learned	Uses experience and information to generate a variety of high-quality lessons for him/herself and the performing organisation.	Views and reframes problems or issues from multiple perspectives to better identify lessons learned.	Identifies a range of lessons accurately using standard processes, techniques and tools.	Supports diagnosis and opinions with few reasons and little evidence; argument is one-sided and not objective.	Fails to adequately identify and/or respond to potential lessons.
Recommendations and action plan	Frames solutions and recommendations that are both nuanced and actionable, while remaining sensitive to a variety of contextual factors.	Decisively chooses the most effective, actionable solutions after evaluating available responses to the issues.	Makes actionable recommendations that are clearly linked to a critical analysis of the findings.	Investigates and identifies a limited range of possible solutions for effectively addressing issues.	Insufficient, invalid or irrelevant recommendations.
Written presentation	The report is exceptionally well organised and a pleasure to read. It goes beyond words to present data in a variety of creative and intelligent formats.	The report is organised logically, professionally formatted and easy to read. There is good use of layout and design to highlight key points.	The report is organised logically and formatted specifically for its purpose. The writing is articulate and the tone is appropriate and consistent.	The report is not organised logically and/or formatted as a report. The writing is understandable, but prone to error.	The report is neither organised logically nor formatted as a report. The tone and accuracy of language used in the writing is not appropriate or understandable.

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Interview	Mastered	Advanced	Competent	Developing	Basic
Communication	Enthusiastically speaks to the report and beyond by providing clear and insightful answers to questions; discussion was superior, accurate, and engaging.	Competently speaks to the report and beyond by providing clear and insightful answers to questions.	Adequately expands upon findings by providing appropriate answers to questions.	Answers questions, but often with little insight; frequently shows a need for deeper reflection on certain points.	Does not adequately address findings; does not answer key questions; displayed poor grasp of material.
Application of project management knowledge	Connects complex concepts, theory and evidence from best-practice to the issues under examination.	Applies the critical elements of a project methodology or framework to inform discussion.	Demonstrates understanding of key project management concepts and principles.	Misapplies project management principles and best-practice in a way that noticeably detracts from the discussion.	Limited understanding of the relevant issues.
Professionalism	Thoroughly professional and engaging in all correspondence throughout the application process, including the interview itself, demonstrating initiative when appropriate.	Thoroughly professional and engaging in all correspondence throughout the application process, including the interview itself.	Professional in manner and appearance throughout the interview.	Occasionally casual in manner and appearance and/or overfamiliar during the interview process.	Failed to meet the standards of professionalism expected of a Certified Project Professional.