

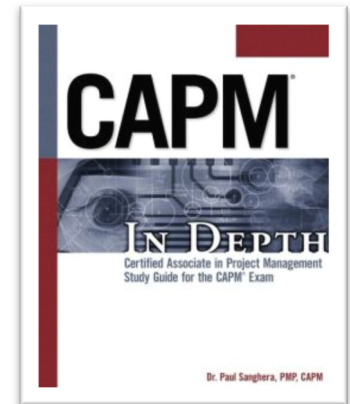
Summary of my CAPM Experience

Mark J. Grover

On Monday, October 21, I made the decision to take the CAPM for several reasons.

1. I am scheduled to begin teaching an IT project management course at Cape Fear Community College. This certification is important since it gives me a unique perspective to teach students to prepare to take this same industry-recognized certification.
2. It validates many years of project management work I have performed in the course of my professional career.
3. It satisfies the requirements of one of my Graduate Courses: MIS592 - IT Project Management, Dr. Cummings, Instructor.

Upon discussion with Dr. Cummings regarding this undertaking he let me borrow a book to prepare: *CAPM in Depth: Certified Associate in Project Management Study Guide for the CAPM Exam*; Dr. Paul Sanghera, PMP, CAPM; Course Technology/Cengage, 2011, ISBN: 978-1-4354-5534-4.



On Wednesday, October 23rd I began the process of scheduling my Exam. First, I had to create an account on the Project Management Institute's website (www.pmi.org), and then complete an application to sit for the CAPM. The application included an option to enter at least 1,500 hours of Project Management Experience or 23 hours of verifiable project management education. Since I completed a Project Management Certificate Program in Fall 2010 through UNCW's Swain Center for Business I already had accumulated 35 hours of formal PMI training so I chose the education option. Upon completion of my application I had to wait for my application to be approved. Later the same day I received an email showing that I was eligible to sit for the CAPM. After logging back onto PMI's website, and paying the \$300 exam fee, I received an email showing a PMI Eligibility ID and an Expiration Date (how long this application was valid). Although I had just paid for the exam I didn't feel ready to schedule it quite yet, so I decided to focus on studying the weekend.

With the support of my family, from Friday, October 25th through Sunday, October 27th I proceeded to read all 370 pages of the CAPM in Depth book and completed many of the review questions and exercises. The challenge I had with this book was that it is based on PMBOK version 4. The Project Management Institute (PMI) released version 5 of their standards in July 2013, so not many publications have been released that conform to the new standard. I decided that I would focus on knowing version 4 and not worry about the differences, since most changes are incremental at best.

On Monday, October 28th I scheduled my exam for Monday, November 4th at 1:30pm. In order to make the appointment I had to log into Prometric’s website (for which I already had an account) and schedule the test. Prometric did not require any payment, just the PMI Eligibility ID I received 5 days earlier. Now my course was set, and I had a “hard date” to which I had to prepare for. I spent the majority of the week going over the *CAPM In Depth* book reviewing key concepts and doing more practice questions.

On Friday, November 1 I focused my study on looking at PMP/CAPM type questions. I started off using www.PMStudy.com since they had “free” resources. I completed two free tests, both of which I felt were helpful. I wanted to do some more “real world” simulation so I started searching for some additional information. I happened upon the website www.pmhubs.net. I found this website to contain a LOT of very useful information. I found a link under “Popular Topics” for CAPM related blog postings. Basically, a bunch of comments were left stating what people experience and what helped them pass. In one of the postings someone made reference to the “JimBOK” – a summary of the PMBOK written by Jim Owens. I found his resource to be very helpful as it broke down each knowledge area into 5-11 page summaries. The best part was this was FREE and available to anyone who joins the pmhub blog (as stated on the blog: Out of respect for the author’s request, the JimBOK is not to be freely distributed – only made available to members of pmhub.net).

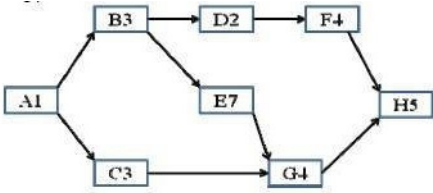
Saturday & Sunday,
November 2-3 – I decided I was ready to begin taking practice tests. In my research on Friday I learned about a good practice site –

www.pmexampreparation.com. This site had a CAPM eSimulator that provided Unlimited timed and scored practice exams, Study by Process Group or Knowledge Area, and had a bank of 600+ questions. The questions were based on the PMBOK 4th edition, so I knew that I would be at a slight disadvantage of

not having the 5th edition, but I was OK with that. I initially signed up for the “free trial” which gave limited questions limited to the Time Process group. I quickly decided to pay the \$10 fee for 24 hour access (which actually ended up giving me 2 full days!). What made this site of particular interest to me was that it is NOT a brain dump site. PMExamPreparation.com did not advertise themselves as having actual test questions, nor did they endorse such a practice. As I began doing the practice exams, I quickly found where I was deficient and needed study (note in the picture my early attempts weren’t so good!). One area where I was weakest was with Earned Value formulas.

The screenshot shows an 'Exam Simulator' interface for 'Mark Grover'. It displays 'Exam Statistics' for a 'Medium' difficulty exam completed on 11/03/2013 with a score of 62%. Below this is a table with columns for Knowledge Area, Time (in min), Average time per question (in min), Percent Correct, Feedback, and Study Meter. The table lists performance across various PMBOK knowledge areas, with 'Cost Management' and 'Communication Management' showing the lowest scores at 40% and 44% respectively.

Knowledge Area	Time (in min)	Average time per question (in min)	Percent Correct	Feedback	Study Meter
Integration Management (18 questions)	06:59	00:23	67%		Read this Chapter again
Scope Management (15 questions)	30:40	02:02	73%		Good!
Time Management (18 questions)	09:31	00:31	56%		Read this Chapter again
Cost Management (15 questions)	08:56	00:35	40%		Definitely need some more time!
Quality Management (10 questions)	03:44	00:22	60%		Read this Chapter again
Risk Management (15 questions)	06:59	00:27	73%		Good!
Human Resource Management (13 questions)	05:01	00:23	62%		Read this Chapter again
Communication Management (9 questions)	03:12	00:21	44%		Definitely need some more time!
Procurement Management (9 questions)	04:28	00:29	78%		Good!
Intro (11 questions)	03:46	00:20	82%		You nailed it!
Project Management Processes (17 questions)	05:41	00:20	59%		Read this Chapter again
Professional and Social Responsibility (0 questions)	-	-	-		



I had a group of questions where a diagram (SAMPLE PICTURE) was given and multiple questions were asked about the picture (critical path, float time, early and late start, dependencies).

I also had a group of questions where I was given a table of values and had to calculate CV, CPI, SV, SPI and EAC – I was sure glad I found that chart by Geoff Crane! So all the formulas I memorized were used.

As I completed the questions, I marked ones I was not confident on for further review. When I finished answering all the questions I took a quick bathroom break (the test center allows this, but at no point could I exit the testing facility – I might also mention that I had to place EVERYTHING “on my person” in a locker or lock it in my car. I couldn’t even take my wallet to the testing area!). After returning to the computer I went through the questions I marked to see if any questions in the exam would have helped me answer others. For the majority of the questions I left them as originally selected. When I finished the exam I clicked on “End Exam” and then Survey opened up. Needless to say that was the last thing I wanted to do – I just wanted to know my score! After 2 hours of working on this exam I quickly completed the survey, and when I was done I nervously clicked the “Finish” button. I was elated to see one word on the next screen: **Pass**.

Although I received “Below Proficient” on two sections, I attribute my shortcomings on only studying 4th edition material. Stakeholder Management is a new Knowledge area with the 5th edition and I spent no time reviewing the new criteria. Procurement Management was tricky in that you had to distinguish exactly when a contract was bid, opened, closed, or modified and who the seller or owner was and I honestly didn’t spend enough time reviewing – so I’ll have to do some review so that doesn’t trip me up again. That’s it – my path to CAPM.

