

Candidate Handbook PCP-AI Certification

Everything you need to qualify for, sit and maintain the PCP-AI — in one place



OFFICIAL CANDIDATE DOCUMENT
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PROJECT CONTROLS INSTITUTE GLOBAL
AI proposes. The professional disposes.

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How to use this handbook. Read it end to end once, several weeks before you intend to sit; then use it as a reference at each stage — applying, preparing, booking, sitting and maintaining the credential. It summarises the published PCI policies in one candidate-facing document. Where this handbook and a published policy differ, the published policy prevails (see §10).

— 1. About the credential

1.1 What the PCP-AI is

The **Certified Project Controls Professional — AI (PCP-AI)** is the flagship credential of Project Controls Institute Global (PCI). It certifies a professional who can plan, measure, forecast, control and finance a project — and apply AI to that work responsibly. It unites project controls, cost engineering and project finance into a single standard, built on extensive project-management foundations, with AI embedded across every domain of the Body of Knowledge and a dedicated AI domain carrying the systematic treatment.

It is not a generic AI badge, and it is not a project-management certificate. It is a modern project-controls credential: one examination, one standard, covering the whole discipline.

1.2 Who it serves

The PCP-AI is made for the people who hold projects to account:

- Planning engineers and schedulers
- Cost engineers and cost controllers
- Project controls engineers and project controls managers
- PMO professionals and commercial managers
- Project finance professionals
- Project, programme and portfolio managers

Capable people moving into the field are equally welcome: eligibility is based on professional experience, not a particular degree or job title (§3).

1.3 The governing principle

Everything in the framework rests on one principle: **AI proposes, the professional disposes**. AI may draft, calculate, summarise and suggest — but a competent human validates, explains and owns every conclusion that carries a professional's name. The examination assesses that governed judgement directly, and the professional-conduct expectations that follow certification enforce it: "the model said so" is never a defence, because accountability cannot be delegated to software.

1.4 Where PCI stands

PCI is a founding-stage certification body and says so plainly. Its certification framework is being developed with reference to ISO/IEC 17024 personnel-certification principles; PCI holds no accreditation and claims no governmental or third-party recognition. Examination operations described in the future tense in this handbook will be confirmed before the first sitting. PCI publishes its status openly and updates it as the scheme matures.

— 2. The framework: thirteen domains, sixty-one Knowledge Areas

2.1 One framework from study to exam

The PCP-AI assesses the thirteen domains and **61 Knowledge Areas** of the published PCP-AI Body of Knowledge, First Edition. The framework you study is the framework you will be assessed against — the Body of Knowledge, the course outline, the sample questions and the examination blueprint all describe the same thirteen domains, organised in three published groups with a **40/40/20** examination weighting.

Domain group	Domains	Exam weight
Project accounting & finance	D1–D4	40 %
Project management principles	D5–D12	40 %
AI knowledge & practical approach	D13	20 %

2.2 The thirteen domains

#	Domain
1	Foundations of Accounting for Project Controls
2	Financial Reporting & the Standards
3	Budgeting & Forecasting
4	Performance Management, Variance Analysis & Management Reporting
5	Cost Management & Cost Control
6	Earned Value Management & Forecasting (EVM/EAC)
7	Contracts, Commercial Management, BoQ, Invoicing & Revenue
8	Project Management Lifecycle
9	Agile, Scrum & Adaptive Delivery for Project Controls
10	Project Scheduling
11	Business Process Cycles (O2C, P2P & the control environment)
12	Risk Management for Project Controls
13	AI for Project Controls & PM: Concepts, Tools & Practice

2.3 How AI is examined

AI is examined throughout, not in one corner. Every domain carries embedded "AI in this domain" coverage — what AI can and cannot safely do with that domain's work — and Domain 13 carries the systematic treatment, weighted at 20 % of the examination in its own right.

3. Eligibility and how to apply

3.1 The entry requirement

The entry requirement is **three years of professional experience, in any field**, counted on a full-time-equivalent basis. There is no degree requirement, and the experience need not be in project controls: talent enters the discipline from engineering, finance, construction, the trades and non-traditional routes, and a degree is not a reliable proxy for project-controls capability. Meeting the eligibility criteria confirms you are ready to be assessed; the credential itself is earned only by passing the independent examination.

Counting your three years honestly:

- Part-time work counts pro rata; two years at half-time contributes roughly one year.
- Concurrent roles count once — overlapping positions do not double the time.

- Self-employment and contracting count, provided the work can be described and, if asked, verified.
- Career breaks do not reset the clock; experience either side of a gap counts in full.

3.2 Declaring and verifying experience

You declare your experience in the application — roles, dates and a brief description of your responsibilities — and PCI may verify what you declare on a sample or risk basis. Keep a simple record alongside your application: role titles, dates, a one-line description of what you actually did, and a person who could confirm it. State your experience accurately: a misstatement is treated as an integrity matter, not a paperwork error.

3.3 How to apply

Application is fully online. In outline:

1. **Confirm eligibility** against the requirement above.
2. **Enrol** through the PCI website and activate your student membership.
3. **Pay the examination fee.** All fees are published in US dollars on the PCI website and paid as a single one-time payment; current fees, and any current discounts, are shown at enrolment.
4. **Book your sitting** when booking opens for your window.

Examination payment provides examination registration access. Certification is awarded only after meeting eligibility, assessment, verification and PCI policy requirements — membership does not itself constitute certification, and no purchase confers the credential.

— 4. Preparing for the examination

4.1 The published study materials

- **The Body of Knowledge, First Edition** — the framework itself: thirteen domains, 61 Knowledge Areas, with every topic taught in full.
- **The course outline** — every domain, every Knowledge Area and the topics each one teaches, in one map.
- **The sample questions** — study items in the same style, format and cognitive levels the examination will use, each with a rationale

addressing every option. They are maintained separately from any live examination bank; no live examination content is ever published.

- **The master formula sheet** — every formula in the Body of Knowledge, defined once. It is a study aid: candidates are expected to know the core formulas, and the sheet is not provided in the examination.
- **The glossary of terms** — every key term, defined once, attributed to the Knowledge Area where it is first taught.

Certuvo is PCI's official practice and training partner. Preparation with any provider, or none, is your choice — the certification decision is independent of training, and no course guarantees a pass. That separation between training and assessment is part of what makes the credential credible.

4.2 A recommended study path

The domains are designed to be studied in a deliberate order:

- **Domains 1–4 first.** Project accounting and finance is the grammar every later domain assumes — cost coding, revenue, budgets and variance analysis underpin everything from earned value to risk.
- **Domain 6 before Domain 9.** Agile and adaptive delivery (D9) builds on earned value (D6) — AgileEVM and hybrid governance only make sense once the EVM machinery is secure.
- **Domain 13 throughout.** Do not leave AI to the end. Study each domain's embedded AI coverage as you meet it, and let Domain 13 consolidate rather than introduce the governed-AI approach.

4.3 Preparing well

Start with an honest gap analysis: score yourself against each of the thirteen domains, then spend your time in proportion to the published weighting and your weaknesses, not your comfort. Practitioners are usually strong in two or three domains and thinner elsewhere — planners often under-prepare finance and accounting; cost engineers often under-prepare schedule logic.

Because every question is scenario-based, reading alone is poor preparation. Work the sample questions the way the exam works — a situation, four defensible-looking options, one best answer — and note why each wrong option is wrong. Rehearse under timed, exam-like conditions,

and treat AI as examinable content: practise challenging an AI-assisted forecast, identifying what would need validating, and deciding what a professional is prepared to sign off.

— 5. The examination

5.1 Format

The examination consists of **scenario-based multiple-choice questions** with a single best answer. Each item places you in a realistic project situation — reading a schedule and cost position, interpreting earned-value indices, judging a risk response, deciding whether an AI-generated forecast can be trusted — and asks what a competent professional would do next. The multiple-choice format keeps scoring consistent and objective; the scenario design puts the emphasis on applied judgement rather than recall.

Item counts will be confirmed by a formal job-task analysis, and the pass mark will be set by a modified-Angoff standard-setting study, before the examination goes live (§7.1).

5.2 Delivery

The examination will be delivered under live proctoring, either **online with remote proctoring or at a test centre**. The content, rules and scoring will be identical on both routes. Candidates choosing the online route should complete the published technical and room checks on the actual machine, network and room they will use — well before exam day, not the night before.

5.3 Identification

Valid **government-issued photo identification** is required to sit the examination. The name on your booking must match your identification exactly, character for character — a mismatch is the most avoidable cause of exam-day problems, so check it the week before you sit.

5.4 Reasonable accommodations

PCI provides reasonable accommodations so that candidates with disabilities or specific needs can demonstrate their capability on equal terms, without compromising the standard.

- **Request ahead of the examination, when you book – not on the day.** Approved arrangements are set up in advance: extended time is configured in the platform beforehand, agreed rest breaks are recorded with the proctoring arrangements so a legitimate break is never flagged as an irregularity, and assistive technology is checked for compatibility with time to resolve problems.
- **Supporting evidence may be requested** to determine appropriate adjustments.
- **The standard is unchanged.** Adjustments remove barriers that have nothing to do with the competence being assessed; they never alter what competence means – the same knowledge, the same skill, the same pass mark. The policy's promise is a level field, never a lower bar.
- **Examples of adjustments:** additional time where justified; rest breaks or a modified environment; accessible formats or assistive technology; other reasonable adjustments case by case.
- **Confidentiality.** Accommodation information is handled on a strict need-to-know basis and kept apart from assessment judgements. The proctor knows an arrangement exists, but only what is needed to run the session – not why it was granted. Requesting an adjustment has no bearing on how your examination is marked, in either direction.

The full detail is in the Special Accommodations Policy; the accommodation request form explains what to include.

5.5 What to expect on the day

- Arrive (or log in) early, with your identification ready and your workspace clear of notes, devices and second screens.
- A proctor supervises the session; follow all instructions throughout.
- Approved accommodations will already be in place – nothing depends on a conversation under pressure.
- If the session is disrupted, tell the proctor immediately and follow their instructions, then report what happened to PCI as soon as the session ends, while the detail is fresh.

— 6. Rules of conduct, appeals and complaints

6.1 Integrity in the examination

The examination rules protect one thing: that a pass means the same thing for everyone who earns it. In the examination you must:

- present genuine identification and sit the examination yourself — no impersonation in either direction;
- use no unauthorised materials, devices or assistance of any kind (including any AI tool — see §9);
- follow the proctor's instructions throughout;
- **not disclose examination content**, during or after the sitting. Examination items are confidential and secured; reconstructing, sharing or soliciting them — in study groups, online forums or anywhere else — is misconduct, however informal the setting.

6.2 Consequences of misconduct

Suspected breaches are examined under the published examination-misconduct procedure, with fair process: you are told what is alleged, given a genuine opportunity to respond, and judged by people with no conflict of interest. Outcomes are proportionate and can include invalidation of a result, loss of the right to resit (§8), and — for certified professionals — suspension or withdrawal of certification. Adverse decisions carry a right of appeal.

6.3 Appeals and complaints

Two distinct routes exist, deliberately separated so each decision is made by the right people:

- **Appeals** — if you disagree with a decision that affects you (an eligibility, examination, misconduct or certification decision), you may appeal. An appeal is reviewed independently of the people who made the original decision, and raising one never prejudices your standing. See the published Appeals Policy.
- **Complaints** — if you have a concern about PCI's conduct, service or processes, raise it through the complaints process, which sets out how a concern is handled, the timelines and the escalation route. See the published Complaints Policy.

— 7. Results, certification and maintaining the credential

7.1 How results are decided

The examination is **criterion-referenced, not graded on a curve**: everyone who demonstrates the required standard passes, regardless of how many others do. There is no quota and no fixed proportion who succeed or fail. The pass mark will be set by a modified-Angoff standard-setting study before the examination goes live — the certification framework is developed with reference to ISO/IEC 17024 personnel-certification principles — and the same standard will apply to every candidate and every examination form.

Your results letter will show domain-level performance — for unsuccessful candidates, this is the map for targeted preparation before a resit (§8).

7.2 The certification decision

Passing the examination is the central requirement, but certification is a decision, not an automatic receipt: the credential is awarded after eligibility, assessment, verification and PCI policy requirements are all met. The decision is independent of any training you did or did not take.

7.3 Using the credential and the mark

On certification you receive a **verifiable digital badge** and a **print-ready certificate**, and you may use the **PCP-AI post-nominal** in line with the certification policies. Anyone can confirm a professional's status through PCI's public credential verification. Use the credential accurately: it belongs to the named individual, describes competence at the point of assessment and thereafter under maintenance, and may not be transferred, altered or used in a misleading way. Certified professionals are also bound by the Code of Ethics and the Professional Conduct Policy, including full accountability for AI-assisted work.

7.4 Recertification and CPD

The PCP-AI is maintained on a **three-year CPD cycle with a mandatory AI-currency component** — the discipline's AI practice moves quickly, and the credential is designed to stay current with it. CPD is tracked through

membership. This handbook gives only the overview; the published recertification policy governs the detail, including the requirements of each cycle and what happens if a cycle lapses.

— 8. Retakes

8.1 The policy in brief

Not passing first time is not unusual, and the retake policy is built to be fair rather than punitive:

- **Unsuccessful candidates may resit** the examination; eligibility is unchanged between attempts — you do not requalify to try again, subject only to conduct requirements.
- **A short waiting period applies** between attempts.
- **Reasonable limits on attempts within a period** protect item security.
- **Fees and exact windows** are published with the examination rules; the retake fee will be confirmed and displayed before any retake booking is completed.
- **Confirmed misconduct may remove the right to resit.**

A resit is a complete, fresh examination: forms are drawn from secured content to the same blueprint and the same passing standard, so memorising a previous sitting is neither possible nor useful. Identification, security and conduct requirements apply in full, exactly as at a first attempt. A pass after previous attempts confers exactly the same credential as a first-time pass.

8.2 Why the waiting period exists

The interval between attempts protects two things: your money — most near-misses convert with targeted preparation, not immediate resits — and the examination itself, since rapid repeats reward memory of items rather than competence. Use the gap deliberately: review your domain-level results honestly, map the gaps against the thirteen domains, revise the weakest areas first, practise under timed conditions, and book the resit when your practice results say you are ready — not simply when the window opens.

— 9. Candidate note on the use of AI

The position is simple and follows directly from the governing principle:

- **In preparation, AI is welcome.** Using AI tools to explain a concept, generate practice scenarios, test your reasoning or organise revision is legitimate and often good practice — it mirrors how the discipline itself now works. You remain responsible for verifying anything an AI tool tells you against the Body of Knowledge, which is the framework the examination assesses.
- **In the examination itself, AI is prohibited.** No AI tool, assistant or service of any kind may be used during a sitting, on any device, for any purpose. The examination measures *your* judgement — including your judgement about AI — and any AI assistance during the examination is misconduct under the examination rules (§6).

The companion AI-use policy document sets out this position in full, together with PCI's published AI governance policies, which govern how the Institute itself uses AI and what is expected of certified professionals after award.

— 10. Contact and policy precedence

10.1 Contact

Questions about anything in this handbook — eligibility, accommodations, booking, policies — can be raised through the contact page on the PCI website. Accommodation requests use the accommodation request form; appeals and complaints use their published routes (§6.3).

10.2 Policy precedence

This handbook is a candidate-facing summary. The **published PCI policies on the website prevail** over this handbook wherever the two differ, and the policies are updated as the scheme matures. Before relying on a specific provision — a fee, a window, a deadline, a procedural step — check the current published policy. This handbook is reviewed under PCI governance and reissued as the underlying policies develop.

10.3 Status statement

Project Controls Institute Global is a founding-stage certification body. Its certification framework is being developed with reference to ISO/IEC 17024 personnel-certification principles; PCI holds no accreditation and claims no governmental recognition for the PCP-AI. Examination operations described in the future tense will be confirmed before the first sitting. PCI makes no representation about pass rates, salaries or employment outcomes: the credential attests assessed competence, nothing more and nothing less.