

Examination Blueprint PCP-AI

One framework from study to exam — what is assessed, in what proportion, and how



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PROJECT CONTROLS INSTITUTE GLOBAL
AI proposes. The professional disposes.

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How to use this blueprint. The blueprint is the public contract between the candidate and the examination: it states what the PCP-AI assesses, at what weight, in what format and to what standard. Study against it, audit yourself against it, and plan your revision time in proportion to it. Where this document and the published PCI policies differ, the published policies prevail.

— 1. What a blueprint is for

A defensible examination is built backwards from a published framework, not assembled from favourite questions. The blueprint commits the examination to sampling the **PCP-AI Body of Knowledge, First Edition** — thirteen domains, **61 Knowledge Areas** — at published weightings, so that:

- **candidates** know that the framework they study is the framework they will be assessed against — no surprise topics, no untaught content;
- **every examination form** is assembled to the same specification, so a pass means the same thing whenever and wherever it is earned;
- **employers** can read exactly what a PCP-AI holder was assessed on.

The Body of Knowledge, the course outline, the sample questions and this blueprint all describe the same framework. There is one map, published once, used everywhere.

1.1 What the blueprint governs — and what it does not

The blueprint governs	The published policies govern
Which domains are sampled, and at what group weight	Eligibility, application and fees
The item format and cognitive levels	Booking, delivery, identification and accommodations
The formula policy for calculation items	Conduct, misconduct, appeals and complaints
The standard-setting and scoring approach	Retakes, recertification and use of the credential

For everything in the right-hand column, see the Candidate Handbook and the published policies on the PCI website, which prevail over any summary.

— 2. The thirteen domains and their weighting

The examination will sample all thirteen domains in three published groups, weighted **40/40/20**:

Group	#	Domain	KAs	Group weight
Project accounting & finance	D1	Foundations of Accounting for Project Controls	5	40 %
	D2	Financial Reporting & the Standards	5	
	D3	Budgeting & Forecasting	5	
	D4	Performance Management, Variance Analysis & Management Reporting	4	
Project management principles	D5	Cost Management & Cost Control	4	40 %
	D6	Earned Value Management & Forecasting (EVM/EAC)	4	
	D7	Contracts, Commercial Management, BoQ, Invoicing & Revenue	5	
	D8	Project Management Lifecycle	6	
	D9	Agile, Scrum & Adaptive Delivery for Project Controls	6	
	D10	Project Scheduling	4	
	D11	Business Process Cycles (O2C, P2P & the control environment)	3	
	D12	Risk Management for Project Controls	3	
AI knowledge & practical approach	D13	AI for Project Controls & PM: Concepts, Tools & Practice	7	20 %
Total		13 domains	61	100 %

Two notes on reading the table:

- **Weights attach to groups, not to individual domains.** Within each group, coverage is spread across the member domains and their Knowledge Areas; the blueprint does not publish a fixed percentage per domain.
- **AI is examined beyond Domain 13.** Every domain carries embedded "AI in this domain" coverage, so governed-AI judgement can appear inside items in any group; Domain 13 carries the systematic treatment at its own 20 % weight.

2.1 Turning the weighting into a study plan

The weighting is also a revision budget. Rate your confidence against each of the thirteen domains, then allocate study time in proportion to the published group weights and your weaknesses — not your comfort:

- **A finance-strong candidate** (say, a cost engineer from an accounting background) typically under-prepares Domains 8–10 — lifecycle, agile delivery and schedule logic.

- **A planning-strong candidate** typically under-prepares Domains 1–4 — the 40 % accounting and finance group is the most common gap for practitioners who came up through scheduling.
- **Every candidate** should treat Domain 13 and the embedded AI coverage as examinable content in its own right: at the published weighting, one item in five will sit in the AI group, before any embedded coverage is counted.

Exam scenarios cross domains deliberately — a schedule slip implies cost, risk and reporting consequences — so practise reading one project situation through several lenses rather than revising each domain in isolation.

— 3. Cognitive levels

Every item is written and tagged at one of three cognitive levels, the same levels used to tag the published sample questions:

Level	What it asks	Typical stem
Recall	State or recognise a definition, rule, formula or standard's requirement.	"Which statement about debits is correct?"
Application	Use a known method on given data — compute, classify, apply a rule to a situation.	"Given these figures, what is the EAC under this method?"
Analysis	Interpret a situation, weigh competing considerations and select the defensible professional action.	"Given this position, what should the controls professional do next?"

The intended mix is **application-weighted**. The examination is scenario-based by design, so the majority of items sit at Application and Analysis; Recall items appear where precise knowledge genuinely matters (definitions that change decisions, recognition tests, formula selection), not as filler. The exact proportions form part of the examination specification and will be confirmed through item development and the job-task analysis — the honest statement today is: expect to be tested mainly on *doing and judging*, with pure recall the minority of the paper.

— 4. Item format

4.1 The scenario-based MCQ

Every item is a **four-option multiple-choice question with a single best answer (one key)**. A scenario item has three parts: a situation drawn from real controls work, the data needed to judge it, and four options that are all plausible. The task is rarely to spot a wrong number — it is to choose what a

competent professional would do next. Distractors are written to reward candidates who establish the project position from the data before reading the options, and to catch those who do not.

Working an item well follows the same discipline the examination rewards:

1. **Establish the position first.** Before reading the options, state the project position in your own words — what the indices, dates or trends actually say.
2. **Eliminate what ignores the data.** Weak options are usually reasonable-sounding actions that contradict something stated in the scenario.
3. **Choose the professional action, not the heroic one.** The best answer is what a practitioner could defensibly do next — often verifying a figure, escalating a concern or correcting the baseline.
4. **Apply the same test to AI content.** Where the scenario includes an AI-generated output, ask whether it is explainable, validated and owned before anything is built on it.

Worked examples in the published format, with rationales addressing every option, are in the Sample Questions document. Sample items are study material maintained separately from any live examination bank; no live examination content is ever published.

4.2 Calculation items and the formula policy

Calculation items supply the data; they do not supply the method. **Candidates are expected to know the core formulas** of the Body of Knowledge — the accounting equation through the EVM family to [EAC](#), variances and risk quantification — and to select the *right* formula for the situation, which is itself part of what is assessed. **No formula sheet is provided in the examination.** The published Master Formula Sheet is a study aid: every formula in the Body of Knowledge, defined once, with the Knowledge Area where it is taught — use it to prepare, not to lean on.

— 5. Standard-setting and scoring

The examination's psychometric arrangements follow from PCI's founding commitment to a defensible standard; the certification framework is developed with reference to ISO/IEC 17024 personnel-certification

principles. Because the examination is not yet live, these arrangements are stated in the future tense, and each will be confirmed before the first sitting:

- **Item counts will be confirmed by a formal job-task analysis** with practitioners, which validates the blueprint's sampling of the domains against the work the credential attests.
- **The pass mark will be set by a modified-Angoff standard-setting study** – a formal, documented judgement of the standard a minimally competent professional must meet, not a round number chosen for pass-rate optics.
- **Scoring will be criterion-referenced, not curved.** 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. Your result reflects your competence against a published standard, not your ranking against other candidates.
- **Every form will be assembled to this blueprint and the same passing standard**, so a resit or a later sitting clears exactly the bar a first sitting does.

— 6. What this blueprint does not do

Honesty about a blueprint's limits is part of its value:

- **It sets no per-domain minimum.** Weights attach to the three groups; PCI publishes no per-domain percentages or per-domain passing requirements beyond the published group weighting.
- **It is not an item list.** The blueprint governs sampling; the specific items on any form are drawn from secured content and are never published.
- **It guarantees nothing about outcomes.** Studying the blueprint is necessary, not sufficient: no preparation – with any provider, or none – guarantees a pass, and the certification decision is independent of training. PCI makes no representation about pass rates, salaries or employment outcomes.
- **It is not the policy of record.** Fees, booking windows, retakes, accommodations, conduct and appeals are governed by the published policies and the Candidate Handbook that summarises them.

- **It does not claim recognition PCI does not hold.** The framework is developed with reference to ISO/IEC 17024 personnel-certification principles; the PCP-AI is not accredited and carries no governmental approval, and PCI states so plainly.

The blueprint will be maintained under PCI governance alongside the Body of Knowledge. If the framework changes in a future edition, the blueprint changes with it — and candidates will be assessed only against the published edition in force for their sitting.