CAPM vs PMP: which PMI certification should you take?

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Short answer: take **CAPM** if you have little or no project management experience; take **PMP** once you meet its experience requirement. PMI lists no experience requirement for CAPM, while PMP needs three to five years depending on your education.

TL;DR The short version

- Take CAPM if you have little or no project management experience, and PMP once you meet its experience requirement.
- PMI lists no experience requirement for CAPM, while PMP needs three to five years depending on education.
- On a technical path toward tech lead or engineering manager, a project management credential covers only part of the job.

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	CAPM	PMP
Experience	None required	Bachelor's + 3 years; associate degree + 4 years; high-school diploma + 5 years; PMI GAC-accredited degree + 2 years
Exam	150 questions, 180 minutes	180 questions, 240 minutes
Training	See PMI's page	35 hours
Renewal	PDUs over a three-year cycle	PDUs over a three-year cycle

From pmi.org, read 20 October 2026.

Is CAPM worth it if you will take PMP later?

It can be, if you are early in your career and want a credential now, or if you want structured study before you have the experience for PMP. If you already meet the PMP experience rule, most people go straight to PMP.

What about technical roles?

If your path is technical, such as software engineer to tech lead or engineering manager, a project management credential covers only part of the job. IICTP's Associate Technical Practitioner (ATP) is the foundational technical equivalent: no experience requirement, 100 questions in 120 minutes and a 65% pass mark. Its practitioner level, CTP, requires 36 months of technical leadership experience with a bachelor's degree.

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> Facts about Scrum Alliance, Scrum.org and Scaled Agile were read on their own websites on 20 November 2026; facts about PMI were read on pmi.org on 20 October 2026. Issuers change exams and rules, so check their pages before you book.

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Sources and further reading

1. PMI. Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM). pmi.org/certifications/certified-associate-capm. Read 20 October 2026.
2. PMI. Project Management Professional (PMP). pmi.org/certifications/project-management-pmp. Read 20 October 2026.
3. PMI. Maintain your certification. pmi.org/certifications/certification-resources/maintain. Read 20 October 2026.
4. IICTP. Exam facts, eligibility and blueprints. iictp.org/certifications/exam-facts.

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