

The PMP Exam Contact Hour FAQ - All About Contact Hours

What is a Contact Hour?	The PMI defines a Contact Hour as follows: "One contact hour is equal to one hour of participation in an educational activity". This means that if you sit in a classroom for 60 minutes and you are trained on a project management topic you have just earned 1 Contact Hour.
What do I have to document?	Document 35 contact hours of project management education/training that addressed learning objectives in project management.
Are Contact Hours and PDUs the same?	Technically they are not the same, but as you are preparing for the PMP exam you can "think" of them as being the same. Here is the difference: You need Contact Hours <i>before</i> you apply for the PMP Exam and you will need PDUs <i>after</i> you have passed the exam in order to keep your certification going. But don't let that worry you too much. If you attend a project management training and you receive a certificate for 10 PDUs, then that means for you that you can use this certificate for 10 Contact Hours.
What types of training are acceptable?	As a general rule: Any type of project management training counts towards your contact hours for the PMP certification. The training must be related to project management and can include content on project quality, scope, time, cost, human resources, communications, risk, procurement, or integration management. Courses, workshops and training sessions offered by one or more of the following education providers apply. A. PMI Registered Education Providers (R.E.P.s) B. Courses or programs offered by PMI Component organizations C. Employer/company-sponsored programs D. Training companies or consultants E. Distance-learning companies, including an end of course assessment F. University/college academic and continuing education programs As you can see, this pretty much means "everybody".
What types of training is not acceptable?	The following training does not satisfy the requirements described by the PMI: - PMI chapter meetings - Self-study (e.g., reading books) There is one exception to this: "If at least one hour of a chapter meeting is spent conducting a learning activity, the hour(s) spent in that activity can be counted towards the educational eligibility requirement." So if your chapter meeting included a 60 minute presentation on a project management topic, then this counts as 1 contact hour for you.
Can I claim contact hours for my college or university course?	Yes. If you have completed a university or college course on project management that met for three hours per week for 15 weeks, you would document $3 \times 15 = 45$ contact hours. If only a portion of a course dealt with project management, only the hours spent on project management can be applied toward the total. Note: While you may be able to document applicable classes that counted toward a bachelor's degree or MBA, you cannot document the degree program in its entirety because some classes within the program will not apply. In this case we recommend that you determine the number of hours that were actually spent discussing project management topics and only claim this portion for your PMP exam.
How long ago can the training have been?	It doesn't matter how long ago you received a training. You can claim contact hours for it as long as it was on a project management topic. Here is what the PMI says: "Document all education hours regardless of when they were accrued." This means that if you took an "Introduction to Project Management" course 20 years ago, then you can still claim it. However, it is always best to have some form of documentation or proof of your participation in this course. And most of us don't keep training certificates for this long... :-)
My training is still going on. Can I claim contact hours for it?	Only partially because you can claim contact hours only for training that is completed. The PMI writes that "the course work must be completed at the time you submit the application". This means that if your course is still going on right now, then you cannot claim all the contact hours. Example: If your course is 30 hours long and it is 50% over, then you can only claim 15 hours for it. You must wait until it is completely over to claim all 30 hours.
What documentation do I need?	If the course you took was an online course, then the PMI requires "an end of course assessment". This usually means, that the online training company will ask you to take an online test and then you will receive a certificate. If the course was a classroom course, then we recommend that you have some form of proof that you did indeed participate in the course like: invoice, course curriculum, certificate of attendance or any other document that will satisfactorily show that you were there. Please note that any form of documentation is helpful. This is because the PMI performs random audits on all PMP applications. We therefore recommend that you use the following rule: If you cannot prove that you have participated in a training it is best that you do NOT claim contact hours for it.