


# ACHIEVE BUSINESS ANALYSIS CERTIFICATION



KNOWLEDGE  
THAT WILL SET  
YOU APART!

## A Concise Guide to PMI-PBA®, CBAP®, and CPRE EXAM SUCCESS



- Unlocks the secrets to passing any of the 3 major BA certification exams on the first try, while cutting study time in half
- Provides pre-assessment tests, study tips, exercises, and sample questions throughout, and full post-assessment tests
- Covers all subjects on the PMI-PBA® exam and the materials needed to pass the IIBA CBAP® and IREB CPRE exams
- Delivers all the Agile knowledge needed, and is aligned with the *BABOK® Guide v3* and *PMI-ACP® Exam Content Outline*, and the *PMBOK® Guide—5th Edition*
-  Offers free online access to over 800 practice questions for the PMI-PBA® exam, and hundreds of downloadable questions for the IIBA CBAP® and IREB CPRE exams

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# Business Analysis Certification Overview

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# 1

## 1.1 BRIEF INTRODUCTION: CERTIFICATION

For every project, investment, or pitch for new products, a compelling requirement specification is vital in order to succeed. This powerful, easy-to-use, and concise book is that tool for enhancing your professional development and greatly improving your chances of passing these world-recognized business analysis certifications.

Based upon the knowledge and experience of numerous experts on business analysis and packed with additional material from leading researchers, this comprehensive study guide, used in conjunction with the *Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide)*, provides all you need to know about the Project Management Institute Professional in Business Analysis (PMI-PBA)® examination content, PMI recommended reference material, and the *Business Analysis for Practitioners: A Practice Guide*, to successfully pass the PMI-PBA certification exam. This authoritative reference gives you a unique look into the PMI-PBA exam content, from needs assessment to planning, analysis, traceability, monitoring, and evaluation; and enables you to learn from the best in an easy and timely manner.

Used in conjunction with *A Guide to the Business Analysis Body of Knowledge (BABOK® Guide) v3* and the Agile Extension, you will also have all you need to know to successfully pass the International Institute of Business Analysis (IIBA®) Certified Business Analysis Professional (CBAP®) exam. Furthermore, this study guide provides the knowledge covered in the Certified Professional for Requirements Engineering (CPRE)-Foundation Level (FL) syllabus and all you need to achieve the CPRE-FL designation offered by the International Requirements Engineering Board (IREB).

Some of the materials that you will need to pass these three business analysis certifications will be made available to you in electronic format; the rest is presented in this one book. The first chapter will set the stage and introduce you to how you can maximize the value of the book in order to pass the certifications within a relatively short period of time and with a high level of knowledge and confidence. After reading the first chapter, you will be ready to begin your journey toward achieving exam success and learning the value of the business analyst certifications.

## 1.2 BUSINESS ANALYSIS CERTIFICATION ORGANIZATIONS

“The Project Management Institute is the world’s leading not-for-profit professional membership association for the project, program, and portfolio management profession. Founded in 1969, PMI delivers value for more than 2.9 million professionals working in nearly every country in the world through global advocacy, collaboration, education, and research” (PMI, 2015).

## 4 Achieve Business Analysis Certification

PMI delivers the wide range of certifications listed below, with corresponding frameworks including processes, tools, and techniques for project success, as well as program and portfolio management:

- Professional in Business Analysis (PMI-PBA)<sup>®</sup>
- Project Management Professional (PMP)<sup>®</sup>
- Agile Certified Professional (PMI-ACP)<sup>®</sup>
- Risk Management Professional (PMI-RMP)<sup>®</sup>
- Program Management Professional (PgMP)<sup>®</sup>
- Portfolio Management Professional (PfMP)<sup>®</sup>
- Scheduling Professional (PMI-SP)<sup>®</sup>
- Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM)<sup>®</sup>

As highlighted throughout this book, the PMI-PBA certification is very much entangled with the PMP-ACP, as well as the PMI-RMP certification, because it is the business analyst who delivers the organizational needs throughout projects.

The IIBA was founded in Toronto in 2003, and is globally recognized today for the IIBA standard for practice of business analysis, which is a generally accepted practice for business analysts. The standard for practices are found and verified in the CBAP<sup>®</sup> designation, which is a professional certification for individuals with extensive business analysis experience.

Since 2007, the IREB has certified business analysts with their CPRE exam, which includes Foundation, Advanced, and Expert levels. As of 2014, the exam has been taken by practitioners in 51 countries, with 17,000 successfully passing, of which a large number are based in European, German-speaking countries.

### 1.3 BUSINESS ANALYST CERTIFICATION AND BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

The business analyst certification (PMI-PBA) is based upon a role delineation study (RDS) where leaders, skilled practitioners, and key organizational stakeholders—who span a wide variety of industries and geographies in order to maintain a broad and all-encompassing perspective—were taken into account, in order to create the best practice body of knowledge for business analysts. By doing so, PMI employs the very best of project management, and it is reflected in the *PMBOK<sup>®</sup> Guide—Fifth Edition* and in the Body of Knowledge from the PMI-ACP certification, in order to create a competitive and relevant business analyst designation.

The CBAP<sup>®</sup> from the IIBA is based upon the *BABOK<sup>®</sup> Guide v3*, while the CPRE-FL has a syllabus and recommended reading materials, which are to the degree needed, included in this study guide.

A business analyst's work is partly project management related, and partly requirements management related—with both, project management as well as requirements management, being fields with a growing demand. However, there are areas where many projects have the possibility of doing much better. The following research highlights some of the challenges that requirements management is facing today:

- PMI's 2014 Pulse of the Profession<sup>®</sup> study said that poor requirements management is a major cause of project failure—second only to changing organization priorities. That same Pulse study

found that 37 percent of organizations report inaccurate requirements gathering as a primary reason for project failure.

- Business Analysis Benchmark 2009: The Path to Success, a study by IAG consulting, found that poor requirements definition and management maturity undermines organizational competitiveness.
- Poor requirements management made the list of *Top 5 Project Failure Reasons, or Why My Project Fails*, by Eric McConnell.
- Companies with poor business analysis efforts will have three times as many project failures as successes (Ellis, BA Benchmark Report, 2009).
- Companies pay a premium of as much as 60% in time and budget when they use poor requirement practices on their projects (Ellis, BA Benchmark Report, 2009).
- 50% of defects are related to requirement errors (Schwaber, 2006).
- Getting requirements right early in the project can save you one-third or more of your overall project budget (Hooks and Farry, 2001).
- 90% of projects that delivered on time and on budget did not deliver expected business outcomes (Burdette, 2013).
- On average, large information technology (IT) projects run 45% over budget and 7% over in time, while delivering 56% less value than predicted (Forrester, 2012).

Additionally, the benefits of increasing the quality and value of requirements management are tremendous, as costs associated with fixing a defect in the requirements later in the project are very high, and symptoms for inadequate requirements engineering are as numerous as their causes.

## 1.4 THE VALUE OF BUSINESS ANALYST CERTIFICATIONS

*When it comes to career and professional development, education is important, and in order to determine the value of certifications, professionals should ask, “How can a specific certification help me achieve my career goals?”*

Part of the answer to this question is related to the organization behind the certification. Professionals and organizations alike need to put trust in the organizations that have developed the certifications. The PMI-PBA certification is developed and managed by PMI, an entity that is well-known and trusted by organizations and their hiring managers for their credential standards. If we examine PMI a bit closer, the statistics of interest, as of May 31, 2014, show 450,011 active members and 650,000 certified individuals globally; these numbers depict an organization that delivers value to 2.9 million professionals working in nearly every country in the world, through global advocacy on a yearly basis. A vast majority of the 650,000 certified individuals are PMPs. However, the PMI-PBA designation is brand new and will quickly gain popularity. When examining the organization, one may also examine the alternative—which for a business analysis professional is the IIBA. The IIBA has over 28,000 members as of 2014 within six continents and is well-known for the Certification of Competency in Business Analysis (CCBA®) and CBAP® certifications. In Europe, the alternative is the IREB. The conclusion is that the

amount of people being certified along with the demand from the industry will increase the value of these certifications for most professionals.

The second part to answering the question is related to the content of the certifications, and to some degree, to the requirements in the industry. What is also of significant value is the fact that leading researches and publications are part of the certification, as reference materials, and are not just supported by a single piece of reference. PMI does not endorse specific review courses, resources, references, or other materials for certification preparation. However, PMI does publish a reference list as a courtesy for professionals. The reference list contains best practice sources on business analysis, which are an integrated part of the PMI-PBA certification. The same goes for the IIBA and IREB designations.

The third part to answering the question with regard to the value of a certification relates to the individual and the organization (see Tables 1.1 and 1.2).

The last part of answering the question is associated with deciding whether certification training fits with your current or desired lifestyle. This really has to do with personal and career goals and your current situation in life.

**Table 1.1** Value of the certification for individuals

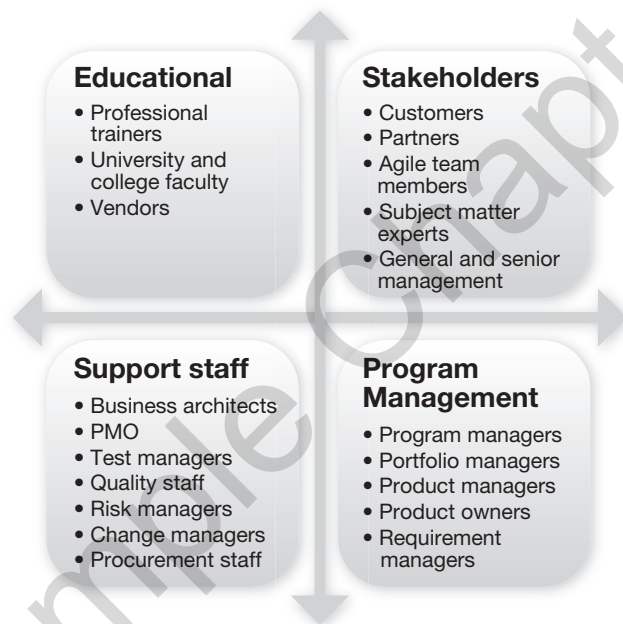
Demonstrates knowledge of the skills necessary to be an effective business analyst	Recognition of professional competence by peers and management
Develops a professional level of competence in the principles and practices of business analysis	Advances career potential by creating a separate and distinct career path within the IT industry and business community
Participates in a recognized professional group	Demonstrates dedication to the business analysis profession
May obtain an increase in salary with certification	May follow market demands and job requirements more effectively
May apply the knowledge and skills to a higher degree than non-certified professionals	Increases professional versatility in business analyst knowledge and skills

**Table 1.2** Value of the certification to organizations

Certificate holders are acknowledged as competent individuals who perform a role that is increasingly recognized as a vital component of any successful project	Certificate holders can demonstrate the ability to transfer knowledge across the organization
Global knowledge of the working methods and standards of the organizations	Certificate holders can be identified as individuals with an advanced level of knowledge and qualifications
Certifications follow established standards outlined by PMI, IIBA, and IREB	Certificate holders demonstrate a commitment to quality and may increase the attractiveness of working for the organization
Certificate holders obtain a high relative value, as the effort to pass the certification and the costs associated with it are exceeded by the gains	Certificate holders produce reliable, quality results with increased efficiency and consistency

## 1.5 TARGET GROUPS FOR BUSINESS ANALYST CERTIFICATIONS

The target groups for business analyst certifications are fairly comprehensive since business analysis is about evaluating the organization's needs. Business analysis is a broader perspective on requirements management, and works closely with project and program management to deliver the organization's needs. The projects may be delivered in a plan-based (Waterfall approach) manner, or by the use of agile (Spiral model) methodologies, which also highlights the importance of varied competence and target groups for business analyst certifications (see Figure 1.1).



**Figure 1.1** Target groups for business analyst certifications

## 1.6 PMI-PBA® EXAM CONTENT

As mentioned previously, early in 2012, PMI initiated an RDS in order to examine the best practice for a PBA designation. The findings were documented as tasks, knowledge, and tools and techniques. The findings were aligned with *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge*, known as the *PMBOK® Guide—Fifth Edition*, and were published in the PMI-PBA examination content outline, which is available for free at the PMI website at <http://www.pmi.org>. Early in 2015, PMI published *Business Analysis for Practitioners*, which serves as a practice guide.

The PMI-PBA examination outline describes the content of the certification, which is divided into five domains and 40 sets of knowledge and skills. Table 1.3 illustrates the five domains, the amount of tasks contained in each domain, and the percentage of items tested on the actual exam.

The five domains contain a total of 28 tasks, ranging from four to eight tasks in each domain. The tasks are detailed descriptions of the content of the domain. A task can be explained as a process by which we *define or review a business problem or opportunity using problem and opportunity analysis techniques in order to develop a solution scope statement and/or to provide input to create a business case*. In addition to the domains, the PMI-PBA examination content outline also includes 40 sets of knowledge and skills. An example of content in the knowledge and skills section would be *negotiations tools and techniques*.

The PMI-PBA exam contains 175 scored questions and 25 pretest questions, which are not counted towards the final score. The allocated examination time includes a tutorial in the beginning before time begins, then four hours of exam time, followed by a survey of 15 minutes at the end. Table 1.4 contains the PMI-PBA exam blueprint with the exam and pretest questions. The exam questions on the knowledge and skills are found throughout the domains. Chapter 10 includes an overview of the knowledge and skills mapped to the domains.

The passing score is not published by PMI. However, in order to pass the examination, the level is similar to other PMI certifications. This estimate is around 110–120 correct answers or a score of 63–69%.

As demonstrated earlier, the PMI-PBA examination content outline is an excellent resource on your journey toward your business analyst certification. The second key resource is the PMI-PBA handbook, as it describes the PMI-PBA credential process, including the PMI-PBA eligibility requirements and continuing certification requirements program.

**Table 1.3** PMI-PBA domains

Domain	Tasks	Percentage of items on test
Domain 1 – Needs Assessment	5	18%
Domain 2 – Planning	6	22%
Domain 3 – Analysis	8	35%
Domain 4 – Traceability and Monitoring	5	15%
Domain 5 – Evaluation	4	10%

**Table 1.4** PMI-PBA exam blueprint

Domain	Exam questions	Pretest questions
Domain 1 – Needs Assessment	32	4
Domain 2 – Planning	38	5
Domain 3 – Analysis	61	9
Domain 4 – Traceability and Monitoring	26	4
Domain 5 – Evaluation	18	3



The PMI-PBA designation emphasizes education and experience, testing competence, and ongoing development for the business analyst. The PMI-PBA credential process is conducted online at the PMI website at <http://www.pmi.org>, and is highlighted by the timeline of the PMI-PBA credential process:

- Application submission
- Application completeness review
- Application payment process
- Audit process
- Multiple choice examination eligibility
- Certification cycle
- Certification maintenance
- Certification renewal
- Certification suspension
- Credential expiration

On your journey toward business analyst certification, you need to fulfill the PMI-PBA eligibility requirements. These are found in Table 1.5, and contain requirements related to your educational background, business analyst experience, general project experience, and training in business analysis. Two sets of requirements are present, depending on your educational background, as the PMI-PBA eligibility requirements are reduced if you have a bachelor or higher degree.

However, passing the PMI-PBA eligibility requirements and the actual exam is one thing; another aspect is the Continuing Certification Requirements (CCR) program. The CCR program is an online application created in order to enhance ongoing professional development, foster learning opportunities, and sustain the global recognition and value of certification. This is managed by collecting 60 professional development units (PDUs) within a 3-year cycle. The CCR program includes educational activities, as well as *giving back to the profession* activities. Tables 1.6 and 1.7 describe the activities and the maximum PDUs obtained within each category. In general, one PDU is awarded for one hour.

As of December 2015, PMI has changed the CCR program due to the evolution of the profession. One change is that PDUs can be given in smaller size segments of 0.25 in order to reflect how learning has changed. Another part of this update is the new PMI Talent Triangle, which represents the skill set that global organizations have deemed as critical for project practitioners. The Talent Triangle illustrates the three skill areas employers need: Technical Project Management (i.e., requirements gathering, risk management), Strategic and Business Management (i.e., business acumen, legal, finance) and Leadership (i.e., conflicts resolution, motivation).

**Table 1.5** PMI-PBA Eligibility requirements

<b>Educational background</b>	<b>Business analyst experience</b>	<b>General project experience</b>	<b>Training in business analysis</b>
Secondary degree	7,500 hours earned within the last eight years	2,000 hours earned within the last eight years	35 contact hours
Bachelor or higher degree	4,500 hours earned within the last eight years	2,000 hours earned within the last eight years	35 contact hours



**Table 1.6** Education

<b>Education (35 PDU minimum)</b>	<b>Maximum PDUs within the category in a 3-year cycle</b>
Courses offered by PMI R.E.P. chapters and communities	None
Continuing education	None
Self-directed learning	30 PDUs
No maximum PDUs within a 3-year cycle	

**Table 1.7** Giving back to the profession

<b>Giving back to the profession</b>	<b>Maximum PDUs within the category in a 3-year cycle</b>
Creating new project management knowledge	45 PDUs
Volunteer service	45 PDUs
Work as a professional in project management	45 PDUs
No maximum PDUs within a 3-year cycle	

The education requirement is a minimum of 35 PDUs for the PMI-PBA certification. A minimum of 8 PDUs must be obtained within each of the three areas of the Talent Triangle. The remaining 11 PDUs can be obtained in any area of the triangle.

Review this list of activities. Can you tell which ones are accepted by PMI as PDUs?

- Attending a conference on IT practices?
- Attending a work meeting on business analysis?
- Reading a book on business analyst practices?
- Taking part in a free online webinar?
- E-learning from the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) or the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM)?
- Completing a business analysis two-day course?
- Doing extra work on a project?

Interestingly, all of these activities can be considered for PDUs. However, the amount of PDUs may vary depending on the actual activity. This also stresses the fact that PDUs are not necessarily costly or bound to PMI. It's all about ongoing professional development and fostering learning opportunities in order to sustain the global recognition and value of the certification.

Chapters 14 and 15 describe the IIBA CBAP® and the IREB CPRE-FL certifications, content, and requirements.

## 1.7 USING THIS BOOK TO PASS BUSINESS ANALYST CERTIFICATION EXAMS

The PMI-PBA examination content outline sets the boundaries for the examination. And as mentioned previously, in order to cover the material, PMI has published a list of reference materials for the PMI-PBA certification. Table 1.8 highlights this reference material.

This book summarizes most of the relevant content for the certification exam from the material on the PMI list of reference materials, which represents approximately 5,000 pages in total. Thus, your savings in terms of time and costs are tremendous with this book. In addition, an extensive range of sources have been added to significantly increase your chance of exam success on the very first try—in a quick and easy manner—for the professional business analyst who wants or needs more than to *just pass* the exam. The content of the book is structured around five main bodies as illustrated here:

- Part 1 (Chapters 1–4) gives an introduction to the area of business analysis and cover all the relevant certification issues. Pretest exams are provided for all three business analysis certifications—study tips are provided as well.
- Part 2 (Chapters 5–9) contains the five domains: Needs Assessment; Planning; Analysis; Traceability and Monitoring; and Evaluation, which are demonstrated by the tasks highlighted by PMI. This part is the main bulk of knowledge you need to learn.

**Table 1.8** Reference materials for the PMI Professional in Business Analysis (PMI-PBA) Certification

Title	Author	Publisher
<i>A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide)</i>	Project Management Institute	Project Management Institute
<i>Business Analysis: Best Practices for Success</i>	Steven Blais	Wiley
<i>Business Analysis Techniques: 72 Essential Tools for Success</i>	James Cadle, Paul Turner, and Debra Paul	British Informatics Society Ltd.
<i>Seven Steps to Mastering Business Analysis</i>	Barbara Carkenord	J. Ross Publishing
<i>The Software Requirements Memory Jogger: A Pocket Guide to Help Software and Business Teams Develop and Manage Requirements</i>	Ellen Gottesdiener	Goal QPC Inc.
<i>Unearthing Business Requirements: Elicitation Tools and Techniques</i>	Kathleen Haas and Rosemary Hosenlopp	Management Concepts, Inc.
<i>Customer-Centered Products: Creating Successful Products Through Smart Requirements Management</i>	Ivy F. Hooks and Kristin A. Farry	AMACOM
<i>The Business Analyst's Handbook</i>	Howard Podeswa	Cengage Learning PTR
<i>Mastering the Requirements Process: Getting Requirements Right</i>	Suzanne Robertson and James Robertson	Addison-Wesley Professional
<i>Data Modeling Essentials</i>	Graeme Simsion and Graham Witt	Morgan Kaufmann
<i>Software Requirements 2</i>	Karl Wiegers	Microsoft Press
<i>Business Analysis for Practitioners: A Practice Guide</i>	Project Management Institute	Project Management Institute

- Part 3 (Chapters 10–13) includes the 40 knowledge and skills areas highlighted by PMI along with what you need to know about traditional project management and agile project management. This is the second main part of knowledge to be learned. In addition, the PMI Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct is included.
- Part 4 (Chapters 14–15) gives an overview of the IIBA and IREB certifications and alignment to the PMI-PBA certification.
- Part 5 (Chapter 16) contains one full PMI-PBA practice exam with 175 questions and should be completed within 4 hours. You should not begin the practice exam until you have finished the book. Additionally, with the purchase of a new, physical copy of this book, readers will have 45 days of free access to an online PMI-PBA test bank with over 800 practice exam questions (see this book's WAV material on page xiv for more details).
- Part 6 contains a glossary and a number of acronyms which may be useful as references and for test-prep memorization.

The beginning of most chapters includes a list of the key terms you are required to know by PMI. You may start with these terms, but if you already have solid knowledge of them, then you may consider skipping that chapter. However, once you have finished reading the chapter, you can refer back to the list and test your knowledge.

Each chapter also explains the examination content outline tasks, knowledge, and skills, so you can easily follow your progress and ensure that nothing is missed. Most tasks include relevant exercises that you can complete to get an increased understanding of the content and/or hands-on experience. Furthermore, some chapters have an exercise where you need to match the key terms to their definitions, which will help you memorize the content.

At the end of each chapter, the content is aligned with *PMBOK® Guide* and agile practices in order to set the domains, tasks, knowledge, and skills respectively, and increase the mode of application. This is also quite useful as many examination questions relate to these practices.

Each chapter with exam content has a posttest at the end of the chapter, which is a small practice exam with just five questions to be completed in six to seven minutes. These questions are relevant to the chapter that has just been completed, and taking a posttest is an easy way to measure your own progress.

