

Office of Acquisition and Project Management

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What's With All Those Letters?

The Value of Professional Credentials

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In the world of DOE program and project management, it is not uncommon to find email signature blocks seemingly clogged with an alphabet soup of acronyms denoting professional credentials. PE, CCE, PMP, EVP...what do these mean? A better question still for a young federal project director (FPD) is, "Are those letters worth the time and effort it takes to obtain them?" Most of these professional credentials require years of experience, hours of studying, and a grueling examination...not to mention continuing education hours to maintain certification. However, the short answer to "is it worth it" is a resounding yes. Most credentials are more than just resume padders; they provide you with the knowledge necessary to effectively manage projects. But there are only so many hours in a day - you can't get them all, or at least not in a short period of time. So which are the most important for an FPD?

As an engineer, a Professional Engineer (PE) license is one of the highest achievements you can attain. A PE license opens new doors and opportunities to those practicing in the engineering profession, but also carries a high standard of conduct to safeguard life, health, and property, and protect the public welfare. Becoming a licensed professional engineer is a rightfully strenuous task. Requirements may vary from state to state. The typical path to licensing usually starts with obtaining an engineering degree from an accredited university. You cannot be licensed without this. The second step towards licensing is to pass the Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) exam, an eight hour exam that covers broad engineering theory. Although this exam can be taken anytime, it is generally best to prepare and take this exam while still in school. The next step is to gain a minimum of four years of practical engineering experience under the direction of a licensed professional engineer. Once these milestones are achieved, the final steps are to apply to the board of professional engineers in your chosen state and pass the PE exam.

No problem....right? The FE and PE exams are challenging and require a significant amount of time to properly prepare —not everyone passes. However, if you do obtain

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APM wishes you a happy and healthy holiday season!

the license, you have demonstrated mastery in the practical application of engineering principles and you become a member of a small society of engineers who can legally use the term “engineer,” “PE,” or “Professional Engineer.”

For engineers and non-engineers alike, the Project Management Institute’s (PMI) Project Management Professional (PMP) credential is an important internationally recognized certification for project managers. This industry-recognized credential demonstrates that you have the experience, education, and competency to lead and direct projects.

Requirements for the PMP include a bachelor’s degree, three years of project management experience, to include 4500 hours leading and directing projects, and 35 hours of project management education. Candidates must submit an application documenting experience and have it approved by PMI before taking the four hour PMP exam. Much of the DOE project management structure and methodology mirrors what is learned and tested through the PMP credential.

Although both the PE and PMP require significant effort to obtain, these credentials provide a sound basis for the practice of our profession. The time spent to obtain these credentials reinforces the experience and knowledge required of a federal project director. The value is immeasurable.

PARS II Helpful Hints

Catherine Mohar, PARS II Administrator, MA-632, Project Systems Division

Have you ever pondered the relation between the Contractor Project Performance (CPP) Data As-Of Date and the Oversight & Assessment (OA) Status Date in the Project Assessment and Reporting System II (PARS II)? Have you further wondered about the correlation of these dates with contractors uploading their earned value (EV) data into PARS II?

The CPP module is where the contractors upload their EV data directly into PARS II via an extractor tool. It is required for any project post Critical Decision (CD) 2 with a total project cost (TPC) over \$20 million that the contractor upload the project’s EV data no later than the last day of the month following the period on which they are reporting. As depicted in the table below, if the contractors reporting period ends on December 21 (the CPP Data As-Of-Date), they are required to upload the EV data into PARS II no later than January 31. This data will then be reviewed by the FPD, Program Office and APM analysts to be included in the February Monthly Deputy Secretary Project Status Report (typically issued on or about the 25th of the month; the OA Status Date is always the 26th of the month). The contractor can upload the EV data as soon as it is deemed ready regardless of the PARS II OA period. For example, if the December 21 data is ready to be uploaded on January 13 for the February Status Report, the contractor can immediately upload the data even though the current OA Status Date in PARS II would be January 26.

DS Report Due	OA Status Date	CPP Data As-of Date*	CPP Upload required by	FPD Assessment Due
Feb 25, 2013	Feb 26, 2013	Dec 21, 2012	Jan 31, 2013	Feb 5, 2013
Mar 25, 2013	Mar 26, 2013	Jan 22, 2013	Feb 28, 2013	Mar 5, 2013

* The contractor CPP Data As-of Date must be subsequent to the 10th of the month.

If a contractor uploads the following month's EV data mid-month after the FPD has already completed the FPD Monthly Status Assessment, the FPD should not go back into PARS II and pick a more current CPP Data As-of Date from the pull down menu on the FPD assessment screen. To continue on the example above, the February FPD Monthly Status Assessment is due no later than the 3rd working day, which would be February 5th. As such, the FPD should select and review the EV data associated with the CPP Data As-of Date of December 21. If the contractor then uploads the January 22 EV data on February 15th, the FPD should not pick the new FPD CPP Data As-of Date of January 22, or modify the FPD Monthly Status Assessment until after the February Monthly Deputy Secretary Project Status Report is issued on (or about) February 25 and the OA status date is rolled forward to March 26.

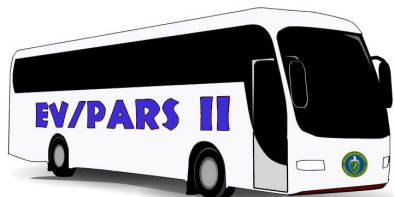
APM recommends that any project that is already at CD-1 and anticipates going to CD-2 within 6 months begin the coordination process for EV uploads on any project with a TPC over \$20 million. Just because a contractor already uploads EV data into PARS II does not mean the same people will be uploading the EV data on a project that is newly reaching the CD-2 milestone. Verify that everyone has a PARS II account with the correct level of access to the current CD-1 project. A PARS II account must be requested via the Management Information System (MIS): <https://mis.doe.gov/>.

Once the contractor staff members have access, EV test uploads are typically executed on the PARS II test platform so that data can be verified for accuracy before an upload is performed in the PARS II production environment. Contractors are required to officially begin uploading EV data when the project reaches CD-2.

Hopefully, this article has provided some clarity on this multi-faceted process. If not, please contact the PARS II Help Desk or the PARS II Administrator.

Still on the Road:

Upcoming PARS II/EVMS Road Show Date



Germantown, January 16-17

New Leadership and Communication Course Pilot

The pilot delivery of *Leadership Through Effective Communication* was held November 6-8th in DC. The highly interactive nature of the course enables participants to sharpen their leadership abilities by becoming more self-aware and garnering their communication skills and emotional intelligence. The pilot was a success and praised by participants from all different fields:

"The course helped me identify and understand communication styles and tailoring approaches for more effective communication outcomes."—Christine Hurley, Information Technology Specialist

"Whether an FPD is managing the integrated project team, giving direction to a contractor, or briefing senior management, communication is the key to successful project management and leadership. This course helps the FPD, or other management attendees, critically examine their personal communication preferences and provides helpful appraisal of how they are perceived by others. While the course is tough, one day our managers might be in front of a large, hostile audience questioning the environmental impacts of a proposed project or meet the NNSA administrator to discuss a "red project" in a small face-to-face meeting – they will be better prepared for both scenarios if they take this course."—Mike Keane, PE, Level II FPD

"This course provided a marvelous opportunity to discuss recent developments in our fields of practice within the Project Management Career Development Program. The passion, expertise and enthusiasm of the class members, facilitated by one of best instructors I've had, made this a unique, challenging and rewarding course to attend."—J.M. Drake, PE, System's Engineer, Level I FPD

"This course provides useful tools to ferret out issues without rancor, to recognize habits that lead to poor decision-making, and to appreciate our differences and how they contribute to problem solving. I plan to refer to the course materials often to reinforce what I learned in class."—Lorri Wilkins, Procurement Analyst and COR Certification Program Manager

"Just what is leadership through effective communication? I thought the training was just another course to fulfill PMCDP requirements, but it turned out to be time well spent learning how to get your point across professionally."—Chester Miller, Level I FPD

Leadership Through Effective Communication is replacing two PMCDP level 2 classes, *Project Leadership* and *Effective Program and Project Communication* and is required for Federal Project Directors; however, the Professional Development Division (PDD) encourages everyone in the acquisition workforce to take this course. Four more deliveries are scheduled in FY2013:

- 4/16 to 4/18, Idaho Falls, CHRIS codes: 002366,0003
- 5/21 to 5/23, Oak Ridge, CHRIS codes: 002366,0005
- 6/11 to 6/13, Richland, CHRIS codes: 002366,0006
- 9/10 to 9/12, Aiken, CHRIS codes: 002366,0004

PDD hopes that you will take advantage of this exciting opportunity and we look forward to hearing your feedback.

Questions of the Month

Question 1

Does the PMCDP provide any tools or job aids to help candidates complete certification applications?

Answer 1

Yes. The PMCDP, in conjunction with the Programs, developed application templates for each level of PMCDP certification. These templates mirror the competency requirements listed in the *Certification and Equivalency Guidelines* and allow candidates to prepare their profiles in an editable template prior to entering the information into the Employee Self Service (ESS) system. Once the candidate has completed the template, the information can be entered into ESS using “copy and paste.” These templates are available on the PMCDP website under the “PMCDP Quick Links” section.

Question 2

I recently had several continuous learning point (CLP) requests cancelled in ESS. These were valid requests that I need to maintain my PMCDP certification. Why were they cancelled, and how can I get them reinstated and approved by PMCDP?

Answer 2

All CLP requests that are not approved by your first-line manager within 90 days will automatically be cancelled in the ESS system. A reminder notice will be forwarded to your first-line supervisor 15 days prior to cancellation. If no action is taken and a CLP request is cancelled, you must submit a new request. Please note all CLP requests must first be approved by your first-line supervisor before they can be reviewed by PMCDP.

Question 3

I’m trying to get certified, but the classes I need are rarely held at my site. I am unable to travel to training due to limited travel funds. What options do I have?

Answer 3

For certification competencies covered by PMCDP courses, candidates are allowed to satisfy requirements through equivalent training and/or experience.* To demonstrate equivalency, participants are required to provide specific examples of their prior experience and/or training relating to the majority of knowledge areas listed under each competency. For more information and examples, please reference the *Certification and Equivalency Guidelines* found under the “Quick Links” section of the PMCDP website.

**For some competencies (1.1.1, 1.1.3, 2.5.1, 3.4.1), there is no alternative training that covers the same PMCDP course knowledge areas. For those, only experience can be used for equivalency.*

Site Planning Symposium Success

Cindy Hunt, APM, Facilities Infrastructure Division

Great sites don't just happen. Intense, continuous planning ensures the Department's sites meet their current mission requirements and remain ready to meet those of the future. The planning for each site depends on a diverse set of professionals located at the sites themselves, at field or site offices, in multi-site offices, and at headquarters. These teams often find innovative approaches to making the process responsive, efficient, and most importantly, effective.

To facilitate communication across Departmental program elements, on November 8, 2012, the Office of Acquisition and Project Management hosted a half-day, virtual web symposium to share effective and innovative site planning approaches. Over 150 professionals from 31 site or field offices and 9 headquarter program elements convened to share current approaches to infrastructure planning and space management. Peers with responsibility for real property established connections and learned from each other, while headquarters personnel learned about state of the art practices in the Department.

The agenda consisted of 12 presentations. Topic areas covered:

- Establishing Workplace Guidelines
- Designing Facilities to Support Organizational Goals
- Developing Requirements and Prioritizing Needs
- Aligning Space with Mission Requirements
- Exploiting Efficiency Enabling Technology

All participants were asked to complete an on-line survey to assess the overall success of the symposium and suggest possible future topics. Eighty percent of survey respondents found the event worthwhile and more than fifty percent sought follow-up presentations on topics such as: footprint reduction, facility utilization, and capability planning. The majority found the various topics informative and worth considering or adapting into their business practices.

Please visit the [Site Planning Symposium](#) page on Powerpedia to stay abreast of community activities, connect with peers from other sites, and view presentations that may help you deliver adaptable, efficient, and effective facilities in support of mission needs at your site.

Recently Certified FPD

The Certification Review Board certified the following individual:

Office of Environmental Management:

- Talley W. Jenkins Jr., Level I

**Congratulations to our
newly certified FPD!**





Course Schedule

For a full list of DOE acquisition certification training, please visit the Acquisition Career Management Program (ACMP) Powerpedia Page: <https://powerpedia.energy.gov/wiki/ACMP>



Special Thanks!

We would like to thank Terry Zimmerman, a Level III FPD, for contributing to the newsletter. We welcome questions and news from the field. If you have a question or would like to write a newsletter article, please contact Vicki Barth. Help us make the newsletter a valuable resource for you.

Questions or Comments?

For PMCDP, please email general questions and comments to PMCDP.Administration@hq.doe.gov, or visit our website: <http://energy.gov/management/office-management/operational-management/project-management-career-development-program>.

For ACMP, please email questions and comments to ACMP@hq.doe.gov.

For specific information, please contact one of the following individuals:

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