



***Association of Proposal Management
Professionals (APMP) Micro-Certification***

Bid & Proposal Writing



Syllabus
August 2023

1 Introduction

APMP qualifications are offered through APMP's Signature certification scheme as well as through APMP's Micro-Certification:

- Signature Certification:
 - Bid/Proposal Foundation Certification
 - Bid/Proposal Practitioner Certification
 - Bid/Proposal Professional Certification
 - Capture Practitioner Certification

- APMP Micro-Certifications
 - Executive Summaries
 - Bid & Proposal Writing
 - Price to Win

This syllabus covers the Bid & Proposal Writing Micro-Certification level of examination for APMP. It is based on the APMP Body of Knowledge (BoK).

The primary purpose of the syllabus is to provide a basis for accreditation of people involved with creating winning proposals. It documents the learning outcomes related to the use of the APMP body of knowledge and describes the scope of the qualification requirements a candidate is expected to meet to demonstrate that these learning outcomes have been achieved.

The target audience for this document is:

- Exam Board
- Exam Panel
- APMG Assessment Team
- Accredited Training Organizations.

This syllabus informs the design of the exams and provides accredited training organizations with a more detailed breakdown of what the exams will assess. Details on the exam structure and content are documented in the APMP Micro-Certification Design.

2 Bid & Proposal Writing Micro-Certification

2.1 Purpose of the Bid & Proposal Writing Micro-Certification

The purpose of this Micro-Certification is to measure whether a candidate has sufficient knowledge and understanding of the APMP body of knowledge to act as an informed member of a bid and proposal writing team. This micro-certification provides recognition for the essential skills required to write compelling bids and proposals.

2.2 Target Audience

This qualification is aimed at proposal writers, proposal managers and others who write in their roles, such as sales, business development and subject matter experts who provide content for bids and proposals.

2.3 High Level Performance Definition of a Successful Candidate

The candidate who meets this High Level Performance Definition should, as a minimum, be able to recall, recognize and demonstrate understanding of the best practices outlined in the APMP body of knowledge.

Specifically they should be able to demonstrate this understanding by being able to:

- Write new and edit content to create high quality responses to formal procurement led documents such as RFXs (Request for Information, Proposals, etc) and ITTs (Invitations to Tenders)
- Write new and edit content to create high quality proactive sales proposals

- Support other related activities such as scripting for bid presentations/orals, creating writing guides for proposals and contributing to proposal knowledgebases

3 Assessment Model

Each learning outcome in the High Level Performance Definition requires the candidate to demonstrate specific knowledge and skills. For each learning outcome, a number of learning outcome measures are identified which are evaluated in the examination, in accordance with the Examination Design, to confirm that the learning outcome has been achieved. These learning outcome measures are shown as syllabus topics and define the scope of the standard required to achieve the qualification.

A classification widely used when designing assessments for certification and education is the Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. This classifies learning objectives into six ascending learning levels, each defining a higher degree of competencies and skills. (Bloom et al, 1956, Taxonomy of Educational Objectives).

APMG have incorporated this into a Learning Outcomes Assessment Model that is then used to develop each qualification's Assessment Model. The model provides a simple and systematic means for assessing and classifying the learning outcome measures. .

This structured approach helps to ensure:

- The appropriate level is identified for a qualification
- A clear delineation in learning level content between different qualifications
- Wording is standardized and syllabi are presented consistently across APMG's qualification portfolio
- Exam questions and papers are consistent in their design.

The Micro-Certification qualification examines at levels 1 (recall) and 2 (understand).

APMP Micro-Certification Assessment Model				
	1. Recall	2. Understand	3. Apply	4. Analyse
APMG Learning Level Definition	<i>remember previously learned information</i>	<i>grasp the meaning and make sense of information</i>	<i>use information to perform a skill or task</i>	<i>identify whether information has been used appropriately according to the rules and guidance</i>
Generic APMG Headers <i>For introducing the learning outcome measures (topics) in the Syllabus</i>	Recall terms and key facts about concepts, principles and procedures from the reference material	Understand key facts, concepts, principles and procedures from the reference material	Apply key facts, concepts, principles and procedures to a given scenario	Differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate use of the reference material in a given scenario
APMP Micro-Certification	Recall terms and best practice related to bid and proposal writing	Understand the terms, best practices, recent trends, common pitfalls and misconceptions when bid and proposal writing	Apply best practices when bid and proposal writing for a given scenario	Differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate use of best practices within the context of a given scenario

4 Qualification Scope

The definition of scope for the qualification is presented in the syllabus tables at the end of this document. Each syllabus area is a unit of learning that relates to the reference material or training course module.

The following syllabus areas are identified.

Syllabus Area Code	Syllabus Area Title
PW	Best Practice in Bid & Proposal Writing

5 Syllabus Presentation

For each syllabus area the learning outcome measures are presented in order of learning level and are introduced by a standard header. There is only one header at each learning level for each syllabus area. The wording in this header is derived from the Assessment Model. Each measure is specific to a learning level.

Each of the syllabus areas is presented in a similar format as follows:

Syllabus Area Code		Syllabus Area :	Primary References
XX [2]		QUAL Syllabus Area (XX) Theme [1]	
Level	Topic		
Recall terms and key facts related to bid and proposal writing. [3] Specifically to recall the:			
01 [4]	01 [5]	[6] Purpose of an Executive Summary	[7] https://bok.apmp.org/glossary/executive-summary/
01	02	Purpose of a Bidder Comparison Matrix (BCM)	https://bok.apmp.org/glossary/bidder-comparison-matrix-bcm/

Key to the Syllabus Area table

1	Syllabus Area	Unit of learning, e.g. course module, key activity area or section of the reference guide.
2	Syllabus Area Code	A unique 2 character code identifying the syllabus area.
3	Learning Level Header	Header introducing the syllabus topics (<i>learning outcome measures</i>) for a given learning level.
4	Level	Learning level of the learning outcome measure..
5	Topic Reference	Number of the topic within the learning level.
6	Topic Description (<i>Learning Outcome Measure</i>)	Precise and specific description of what is required of the candidate to demonstrate that a learning outcome has been achieved.
7	Primary Reference	The main reference supporting the learning outcome measure.

6 Important Points

The following points about the use of the syllabus should be noted.

6.1 APMP Body of Knowledge (BoK) References

The APMP BoK references provided should be considered to be indicative rather than comprehensive, i.e. there may be other valid references within the BoK.

The APMP BoK comprises topics organized into categories. The Bid & Proposal Writing Micro-Certification is based on the following topics within the BoK:

Focus on the Customer

- Identifying Requirements for Compliance and Responsiveness
- Customer-Focused Proposal Writing
- Executive Summaries – Transmittal letters, foreword and emails
- Features, Benefits, and Discriminators
- Persuasion
- Proof points
- Proposal Theme Statements
- Unseating the incumbent
- Value Propositions

Create Deliverables

- Developing and Delivering Presentations
- Graphics and Action Captions
- Headings - Signposting
- Orals
- Page and document design
- Persuasive Writing
- Proactive Proposals
- Proposal Organization
- Q&A Response Development
- Resumes - CV and Team Profiles
- Strategy and Win Themes
- Writing Clearly

Use Tools and Systems

- Content Plans
- Interviewing Subject Matter Experts
- Proposal Library

Manage Processes

- Review Management

7 Syllabus Exclusions

There are no exclusions.

Syllabus Area Code BP		Syllabus Area: <i>Best Practice in Bid & Proposal Writing (BP)</i>	Primary References
Level	Topic		
		Recall terms and key facts related to writing bids and proposals. Specifically to recall the:	
		Understand the best practices, recent trends, common pitfalls and misconceptions when writing bids and proposals Specifically to:	
02	01	Understand the goals of customer-focused proposal writing	Customer Focused Proposal Writing
02	02	Understand the 6 techniques that help proposal writers to focus on being customer focused: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start with the customer 2. Talk about them, not you 3. Show empathy and understanding 4. Tailor any re-used or boilerplate content 5. Ask yourself the “So What?” question 6. Review and edit with customer focus in mind 	Customer Focused Proposal Writing
02	03	Understand the need to write to the evaluation criteria	Customer Focused Proposal Writing
02	04	Understand the application of customer-focused proposal writing best practice in diverse environments and the common pitfalls and misconceptions	Customer Focused Proposal Writing
02	05	Understand the importance of persuasion in proposal writing	Persuasion
02	06	Understand how central and peripheral processing affect decision-making	Persuasion
02	07	Understand Robert Cialdini’s six Weapons of Influence to structure your argument effectively and hone your arguments with lessons from modern behavioral science <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reciprocity 2. Consistency 3. Social proof 4. Liking 5. Authority 6. Scarcity 	Persuasion Persuasive Writing
02	08	Understand how knowing your audience can help in using the right techniques to match their perspectives	Persuasive Writing
02	09	Understand the traditional rhetorical principles of argument	Persuasive Writing
02	10	Understand how to anticipate your readers’ questions so you can remove reasons for rejection	Persuasive Writing
02	11	Understand how to use graphics and multimedia to immerse your audience in the potential of your solution	Persuasive Writing

Syllabus Area Code BP		Syllabus Area: <i>Best Practice in Bid & Proposal Writing (BP)</i>	Primary References
02	12	Understand the principles of writing clearly	Writing Clearly
02	13	Understand the purpose and benefits of storytelling	Writing Clearly
02	14	Understand the six principles for effective story telling	Writing Clearly
02	15	Understand best practices of writing clearly: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use active voice 2. Write tight 3. Show your document's structure 4. Plan to revise 	Writing Clearly
02	16	Understand the application of writing clearly best practice in diverse environments and the common pitfalls and misconceptions	Writing Clearly
02	17	Understand the purpose of review management	Review Management
02	18	Understand the purpose of a final document review	Review Management
02	19	Understand the purpose and process for content development reviews	Review Management
02	20	Understand the purpose of proof reading	Review Management
02	21	Understand the principles of compliance and responsiveness and why responsiveness is key to winning	Compliance and Responsiveness
02	22	Understand best practices in compliance and responsiveness <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare a comprehensive compliance matrix for every bid request 2. Address non-compliance 3. Include statements that clearly show compliance 4. Maintain a customer focus 	Compliance and Responsiveness
02	23	Understand the application of compliance and responsiveness best practice in diverse environments and the common pitfalls and misconceptions	Compliance and Responsiveness
02	24	Understand the definitions and principles of <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Features 2. Benefits 3. Discriminators 	Benefit Rich Content Feature Benefit Discriminator

Syllabus Area Code BP		Syllabus Area: <i>Best Practice in Bid & Proposal Writing (BP)</i>	Primary References
02	25	Understand best practices in the identification and use of features, benefits and discriminators: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine your discriminators 2. Use feature/benefit tables 3. Apply the “So what?” litmus test 	Benefit Rich Content
02	26	Understand best practices in unseating the incumbent <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collect and compile intelligence on the customer and incumbent 2. Assess incumbent performance and develop improved solutions 3. Capitalize on the incumbent's weaknesses and neutralize its strengths 	Unseating the Incumbent
02	27	Understand the definition and purpose of proof points	Proof Points
02	28	Understand best practices in the identification and use of proof points: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand your win strategy and corresponding win themes 2. Started before you have an RFP 3. Conduct internal and teaming partner data calls before and after RFP drop 4. Maintain a repository of proof point data 5. Ensure that proof points are persuasive, tangible, and credible 6. Provide evidence of proof point accuracy 7. Aggregate and interpret data 	Proof Points
02	29	Understand the pitfalls and common misconceptions about proof points	Proof Points
02	30	Understand the definition of a hot button	Hot Buttons
02	31	Understand the definition of a differentiator and how it can be used to ghost the competition	Differentiator
02	32	Understand the purpose and value of a content plan	Content Plans

Syllabus Area Code BP		Syllabus Area: <i>Best Practice in Bid & Proposal Writing (BP)</i>	Primary References
02	33	Understand best practices for content plans: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adjust the level of planning is necessary 2. Build and manage a requirements baseline for each proposal 3. Create a robust topical outline 4. Annotate your outline to provide guidance to authors 5. Develop detailed content plans for important sections 6. Create content with evaluators in mind 	Content Plans
02	34	Understand the purpose and goals of using effective headings	Headings
02	35	Understand best practices in the use of headings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Follow exact bid request instructions for proposal headings, including heading content, numbering scheme, and heading levels 2. Use an informal table of contents 3. Use headings to convey key benefits and discriminators 4. Use informative and telegraphic headings as appropriate 5. Use verb headings to convey action and noun headings to demonstrate your purpose 6. Create a clear information hierarchy 7. Maintain consistency throughout your document 8. Create section introductions beneath active headings 	Headings
02	36	Understand the purpose of graphics and action captions	Graphics and action captions
02	37	Understand the following best practices in the use of graphics and action captions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use graphics and action captions when they are most valuable 2. Use graphics to signal the quality of your work 3. Write action captions before you start writing and even before you create your graphic 	Graphics and action captions
02	38	Understand how proposal writers can support the creation of scripts for an oral proposal presentation	Orals
02	39	Understand the principles of page and document design	Page and Document Design

Syllabus Area Code BP		Syllabus Area: <i>Best Practice in Bid & Proposal Writing (BP)</i>	Primary References
02	40	Understand the purpose of value propositions	Value Propositions
02	41	Understand best practices in the use of value propositions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sell the value based on client benefits 2. Link the benefits to your unique selling points 3. Quantify the payback 4. Make it visual 5. Structure your value proposition in a logical, orderly way 6. Focus on the right kind of impact 7. Address common obstacles to using value propositions 	Value Propositions
02	42	Understand the purpose of interviewing subject matter experts	Interviewing Subject Matter Experts
02	43	Understand best practices in interviewing subject matter experts: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decide what you want to learn 2. Create a list of interview questions 3. Conduct your interview 4. Analyze the outputs from your interview 5. Validate and expand on your content 	Interviewing Subject Matter Experts
02	44	Understand application in diverse environments, recent trends, common pitfalls and misconceptions about interviewing submit matter experts	Interviewing Subject Matter Experts
02	45	Understand best practices in Q&A response development: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a definite win strategy 2. Outline your proposal 3. Use lean, concise content 4. Immediately, directly answer the question 	Q&A Proposals
02	46	Understand application in diverse environments, recent trends, pitfalls and common misconceptions about Q&A solicitations	Q&A Proposals
02	47	Understand the purpose of a proposal library	Proposal Library

Syllabus Area Code BP		Syllabus Area: <i>Best Practice in Bid & Proposal Writing (BP)</i>	Primary References
02	48	<p>Understand best practices in the development and use of a proposal library:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementing a proposal library to increase quality and efficiency 2. Including the right content 3. Building the content library 4. Maintaining the library 5. Adapting content to suit your customer's requirements and instructions 6. Creating a proposal writing style guide 7. Tailoring your style guide to each proposal 	Proposal Library
02	49	Understand application in diverse environments, recent trends, common pitfalls and misconceptions about use of a proposal library	Proposal Library
02	50	Understand the purpose of proposal theme statements	Proposal Theme Statements
02	51	<p>Understand best practices in proposal theme statements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop powerful, compelling theme statements 2. Quantify the benefits of your offer 3. Draft concise theme statements, preferably in a single complete sentence 4. Read your theme statements out loud 5. Test the impact of your theme statements and improve them accordingly 6. Build a proposal theme outline against the structure of the response. Then flow themes into content plans 7. Use theme statements consistently 8. Maintain customer focus 9. Tailor your theme statement development and placement approach to the evaluation process 	Proposal Theme Statements
02	52	Understand application in diverse environments, recent trends, common pitfalls and misconceptions about proposal theme statements	Proposal Theme Statements
02	53	Understand the purpose and best practices in the use of executive summaries, cover letters, forewords and email transmittals	Executive Summaries
02	54	Understand the purpose of creating CVs and team profiles	Resumes / CV and Team Profiles

Syllabus Area Code BP		Syllabus Area: <i>Best Practice in Bid & Proposal Writing (BP)</i>	Primary References
02	55	Understand best practice in creating CVs and team profiles: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gather and screen resume resource material from candidates 2. Use a standard, easy-to-follow template 3. Write clear, results-oriented resumes 	Resumes / CV and Team Profiles
02	56	Understand how to organize a proactive proposal according to the customer's hot-button issues, without customer direction <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summarize your proposal in your executive summary 2. Preview the organization of your proactive proposal 3. Explain your solution in the body of your proposal 	Proactive Proposals
02	57	Understand best practice in developing and delivering effective presentations <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use a customer-focused structure to develop presentations 2. Be as rigorous with slide headings as you are with proposal headings 	Developing and Delivering Effective Presentations