Diploma in Pensions Administration

Specification



THE PENSIONS MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

Founded in 1976, the Pensions Management Institute (PMI) is the UK's largest and most recognisable professional body for employee benefit and retirement savings professionals, supporting over 6,500 members in 32 countries.

PMI's members, represented throughout the UK, are responsible for managing and advising some of the largest institutions in the world accounting for £1trillion invested in pensions. We promote excellence through a range of services for the benefit of members, the wider economy and with over six million now saving as a result of automatic enrolment, society as a whole.

The purpose of the Institute is "To set and promote standards of excellence and lifelong learning for employee benefits and retirement savings professionals and trustees through qualifications, membership and ongoing support services".

To achieve this, the PMI:

- Promotes and embeds professional standards, setting the benchmarks for best practice in the employee benefits and retirement savings industry
- Produces qualifications that have a reputation for excellence and ensure that employee benefits and retirement savings professionals, whether they are scheme managers, consultants, administrators or trustees, are educated to the very highest standards and the latest legislation
- Provides continued lifelong learning designed to strengthen the knowledge and skills of employee benefit and retirement savings practitioners in performing to the best of their ability
- Plays a pivotal role shaping the industry, working with government and collaborating with other bodies on research and thought leadership on key issues
- Presents an annual conference and a wide range of technical seminars from entry-level to those for highly experienced professionals
- Provides industry-leading insight, including PMI News, PMI TV, newsletters and blogs to keep practitioners abreast of the very latest developments in a rapidly changing industry
- Proactively has a voice in mainstream and social media with a presence on Twitter and LinkedIn

PMI QUALIFICATIONS

The PMI is the UK's leading professional body for those working in the field of employee benefits and retirement savings. It supports and develops the experts who are responsible for running the UK's pensions industry and is acknowledged as the body for establishing, maintaining and improving professional standards in every area of pension scheme management, consultancy and trusteeship.

PMI qualifications are recognised for both their depth and their standing within the industry. If you choose a single unit, standalone qualification, or a multi-unit qualification over a number of years, it is recognised by the Pensions Industry as having the depth and rigour to demonstrate the knowledge and expertise of those taking them.

SYLLABUSES

Each syllabus area is presented in a form which is intended to give an indication of the depth and breadth of knowledge which is required. Each syllabus area is divided into sections with an initial statement, or learning outcome, indicating what is expected of learners and some notes in italics which give an indication of the way in which the initial statement should be interpreted.

The initial statement and notes use key words in heavy type to indicate the depth and/or breadth of knowledge which is required. The key words should be interpreted as follows:

analyse - interpret and examine in detail

define - make clear the exact meaning

demonstrate - explain or prove by reasoning/example

describe - give a detailed account of distinguish - mark the difference between evaluate – determine the value

explain - make clear or intelligible; illustrate the meaning of

identify - demonstrate what something is

outline - brief general explanation; summary without detail

understand - comprehend; have a thorough knowledge of

compare and contrast – give examples that highlight different approaches to the same theme, discussing how they work, and how they deliver in their respective circumstances

evaluate – as an outcome of different approaches, provide evidence of a potential 'best practice' method, or what works well, given the evidence created, in certain situations

This is then further broken down into Assessment Criteria. Assessment Criteria are descriptive statements that provide learners and instructors with information about the qualities, characteristics, and aspects of a given learning task. Fundamentally, they specify clearly the standards that must be met and what evidence will be used to show achievement of learning outcomes

SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION

These qualifications have been developed with the support of centres who are currently delivering qualifications at this level, or who plan to do so in the future, and from the Industry bodies that support Pension Trustees in the United Kingdom.

QUALIFICATION AIM

Suitable for more experienced pension scheme administrators working in either defined benefit (DB) or defined contribution (DC) schemes, or both. Designed to allow organisations and their pensions administrators to select and construct a competence based qualification that reflects their normal working activities.

PREREQUISITES

There are no formal prerequisites for this qualification; in either qualifications or knowledge and experience.

Some learners will have undertaken the PMI Award in Pensions Essentials, Certificate in Pensions Administration or the Certificate in Pensions Essentials, this is not mandatory, however, we would anticipate most learners would be working in the field

ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING

As this qualification is stand alone there is no formal accreditation of prior learning.

LEVEL 3 APPRENTICESHIP

This qualification can be undertaken as part of the Workplace Pensions Apprenticeship (Administrator or Consultant). Full details can be found on the PMI website.

QUALIFICATION DELIVERY

This qualification is delivered via PMI approved Examination Partners. Approved Examination Partners must comply with the relevant Regulations and Guidance Notes. These can be found on the website.

ASSESSMENT

All units are assessed through work-based assessment where evidence is drawn from the day-to-day activities carried out by the learner.

QUALIFICATION STRUCTURE AND COMPLETION CRITERIA

This qualification comprises nine work-based units. All nine units have to be taken. Unit 2 is a project and will count as a double unit in completion of this award. This then allows for a 10 unit accredited award.

- Unit 1: Applying Overriding Regulatory Requirements
- Unit 2: Project Management (double unit)
- Unit 3: Administering a Scheme through a Pension Protection Fund Assessment Period
- Unit 4: Process Pension Increases to Pensions in Payment
- Unit 5: Implementation of a Pension Sharing Order
- Unit 6: Mentoring and Training Colleagues within Pensions Administration
- Unit 7: Identify and Recommend a New Pensions Administration Process or an Improvement to an Existing One
- Unit 8: Dealing with Pension Scheme Complaints, Disputes, Errors or Omissions
- Unit 9: Implement a Change to a Pension Administration Process

RECOMMENDED STUDY TIME

This is also known as Total Qualification Time (TQT) or Guided Learning Hours. TQT is a measure required by Ofqual the qualifications regulator and is comprised of:

- Guided Learning Hours (GLH). This means time spent being taught by an instructor (and not necessarily face to face); and
- Study Time. This means self-study/revision/reading
- Assessment Time time taken to sit an exam etc

Whilst this qualification is unregulated, we can only offer a guide as to completion time for each component, as this will be determined by individual working practices.

As GLH, as defined above, is not common across all organisations, we have estimated a total of 5 hours for each unit (10 for the double unit). For study time we have estimated 30 hours per unit.

Therefore TQT = **350 hours** for this qualification as follows:

Guided learning hours (GLH)	50 (to include revision courses/sessions)			
Self-study (SS)	300			
Formative Assessment	0 Total Assessment Time (TAT)			
Summative Assessment	0 O Hours			
Total Qualification Time	350 Hours (GLH+SS+TAT)			

The above estimates are based on evidence we have gathered from users of our qualifications, past experience and benchmarking exercises.

The evidence we have gathered indicates that there is considerable variation within the overall TQT estimates as blended approaches are common with differing mixes of Guided Learning and other elements which contribute to TQT. These estimates are reviewed regularly.

QUALIFICATION LEVEL

This content of this qualification has been benchmarked as being appropriate to Level 4.

FEES

Fees for this qualification can be found on this page; <u>Diploma in Pensions Administration - The Pensions Management Institute (pensions-pmi.org.uk)</u> and here in the Qualification fees document : <u>pmi-qualifications.pdf (pensions-pmi.org.uk)</u>

LINKS WITH OTHER QUALIFICATIONS AND PROGRESSION

Those who complete this qualification could proceed to complete additional PMI administration focussed qualifications such as the Certificate in Pensions Calculations, or they could pursue the PMI Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Retirement Provision.

The exact choice will depend on individual circumstances and career path.

MEMBERSHIP ENTITLEMENT

Learners undertaking the qualification will be automatically enrolled as VQ Student Members on registration for the duration of their study

Learners completing the qualification successfully will be eligible to seek election as Diploma Members of the PMI with the designatory initials DipPMI.

CONSTITUENT UNITS

For each of the units the learning outcomes are followed by some more detailed performance criteria.

The syllabus of each of the examined units is presented in a form which is intended to give an indication of the depth and breadth of knowledge which is required. Each syllabus is divided into sections with an initial statement, or learning outcome, indicating what is expected of learners and some additional notes which give an indication of the way in which the initial statement should be interpreted.

UNIT 1: APPLYING OVERRIDING REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

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Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit candidates will know and understand:

- The overriding regulatory requirements for the administration of pension schemes.
- How governing bodies interact with pension schemes.
- The consequences of non-compliance in meeting the overriding regulatory requirements.
- The current legislation concerning the difference between giving financial information and financial advice.
- The signatures and authorisations you need to settle benefits and/or to provide information.

Performance criteria	Scope
You must be able to:	In meeting the performance criteria you must show you can:
 Apply overriding regulatory requirements for administration of pension schemes. 	(A) Apply overriding regulatory requirements in all of the following:(i) Disclosure regulations (including
Explain how governing bodies interact with pension schemes.	whistleblowing) (ii) Data protection (iii) Maintaining security and confidentiality (iv) HMRC allowances (v) The difference between giving financial advice and giving financial information.
	 (B) Explain how the following governing bodies interact with pension schemes: (i) The Pensions Regulator (ii) The Pensions Ombudsman (iii) The Pensions Advisory Service (TPAS) (iv) Pensionwise (v) Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) (vi) HMRC

Evidence

Evidence can be provided through internal training and e-learning and you can prove that you have passed the training. Alternatively, evidence can be provided by candidate statements, work-based evidence or through question and answer sessions.

UNIT 2: PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit candidates will know and understand:

- How to identify the relevant people who will be involved in the project.
- How to create a project plan including, tasks, timescales, resources, risks and contingencies.
- How to monitor a project against the project plan.
- How to identify issues that may affect completion of the project on time.
- How to revise a project plan in light of any changing circumstances.
- How and when to communicate with the relevant people and the best methods to use.

How to evaluate the success of the project.		
Performance criteria	Scope	
You must be able to:	In meeting the performance criteria you must show you can:	
 Agree the objective, scope and timescale of the project with the relevant people. 	A) Agree the objective, scope and timescale of the project with any of the following relevant people :	
 Create a project plan. Agree the project plan with the relevant people. 	(i) Project team members(ii) Mangers(iii) Trustees.	
4. Manage the project.5. Monitor progress of the project against the project plan.	B) Create a project plan to identify any of the following:	
6. Revise the plan in light of changing circumstances.7. Communicate progress and any	(i) key milestones(ii) key staff, potential risks(iii) contingencies.	
changes to the relevant people.8. Complete and review the project with the relevant people.	C) Manage either;	
NOTE - Projects can include:	(i) the whole project or(ii) a workstream within the project.	
Annual Benefit StatementLife CertificatesAnnual Allowance	D) Revise the project plan to take into account any of the following:	
Employer ReturnsAnnual RenewalPayroll Data	(i) staffing (ii) resources (iii) system failures.	
 AVC Fund Values Contributions for a DC pension scheme DC monthly investment cycle DC lifestyling 	Communicate progress and any changes via any of the following methods:	
 Any other project relating to pensions administration of the employer (with agreement) 	(i) team emails (ii) project meetings (iii) phone calls.	

F) **Review** against the project plan

UNIT 3: ADMINISTERING A SCHEME THROUGH A PPF ASSESSMENT PERIOD

Aim

Learning Outcomes

- What event triggers a PPF assessment period and which type of schemes are protected by the PPF?
- What is the impact of starting a PPF assessment period on a pension scheme?
- What is meant by the term 'Admissible Rules'?
- What are the PPF compensation levels that apply to members during a PPF assessment period?
- What are the different rules that apply to members during a PPF assessment period compared to an ongoing pension scheme including retirement and death benefits, revaluation and indexation?
- What are the tasks that the PPF require to be completed during a PPF assessment period?
- What is the purpose of the section 143 valuation/ funding determination as a funding determination can now be used in place of a S143 valuation?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of the PPF and the trustee(s) during the PPF assessment period?
- Which assessment period tasks have strict timescales under PPF regulations?
- What are the PPF's key performance indicators and how are they measured?
- What happens to a scheme once it completes the PPF assessment period if it is:
 - 1. Overfunded on the PPF basis?
 - 2. Underfunded on the PPF basis?

Performance criteria	Scope		
You must be able to:	In meeting the performance criteria you must <u>administer one scheme</u> and show you can:		
 Complete assessment period tasks in line with organisational and regulatory requirements. 	(A) Complete <u>four</u> of the following PPF assessment period tasks:		
Communicate with all relevant parties during the assessment period.	 (i) GMP reconciliation using Shared Workspace or re-input schedules (ii) Data audit (iii) Benefit audit 		
 Update records in line with organisational requirements. 	 (iv) PPF cutback calculations (v) Identifying and securing money purchase benefits (vi) Identifying and actioning insured pensions (vii) Carrying out transition activities to transfer the scheme to 		
 Validate scheme data by identifying and resolving any inconsistencies or omissions. 	the PPF or wind up the scheme outside the PPF (viii) Prepare a budget or project plan (ix) Prepare and issue member announcements (x) Complete a member tracing and existence exercise (xi) Prepare and issue valuation summaries (xii) Preparation of valuation data.		

- 5. Adhere to the timescales set by the trustee(s)/PPF scheme delivery associate and PPF regulations.
- **6.** Adhere to the budget agreed with the trustees and PPF scheme delivery associate.
- 7. Maintain confidentiality.

- (B) **Communicate** with <u>four</u> of the following parties:
 - (i) Members
 - (ii) Scheme actuary
 - (iii) Trustee(s)
 - (iv) NIC & EO
 - (v) PPF scheme delivery associate
 - (vi) Providers.

UNIT 4: PROCESS PENSION INCREASES TO PENSIONS IN PAYMENT

Aim

Learning Outcomes

- How to create a project plan in line with organisational requirements.
- Awareness of statutory, scheme and organisational timescales for pensions in payment.
- How to apply calculation methods and standard practices.
- How to identify sources of information for resolution of queries.
- What the different methods are to notify members of the increase.
- How to review the project plan periodically and at the end of the process.

	Performance criteria			Scope
You m	ust be able to:	In mee	tir	ng the performance criteria you must show you can:
1.	Create and review a project plan to update member records in accordance with the Pensions Increase Review.	(A)	a (i	Establish the basis of increased use the following methods as applicable: i) Fixed increase ii) Retail Price Index (RPI)
2.	Agree and monitor appropriate timescales to ensure compliance with scheme processes and payroll requirements.	(B)	(i (i (\	iii) Consumer Price Index (CPI) iv) Pension splits (including GMPs) v) Discretionary increase. Fest updated data by checking the following for at least
3.	Review scheme documentation to		<u>t</u>	<u>ren</u> members:
	establish the basis of the increase.		(i (i	i) Current pensions in paymentii) Any pension splits (including GMPs.)
4.	Apply increases to update data in order to pay pension increase.	(C)		Resolve at least two of the following queries or special circumstances:
5.	Test updated data with increases applied.		(i (i	i) Member has multiple records ii) Query temporary national insurance number
6.	Investigate and resolve any queries/special circumstances.		(i (i (\	iii) Child pensions due for review iv) Ill health pensioners due for review v) Discretionary or additional benefits
7.	Notify members of the pension increase if applicable.		(\	vi) Members approaching GMP age since last increase vii) Members retiring within the last year viii) Other (must specify in assessment.)
		(D)		Apply increases (to at least <u>ten</u> members) using <u>one</u> of the following methods:
			(i (i	i) Electronic ii) Manual
		(E)		Ensure that scheme, regulatory and/or organisational service evel timescales are met.

UNIT 5: IMPLEMENTATION OF A PENSION SHARING ORDER

Aim

Learning Outcomes

- How to apply a pension sharing order.
- How to apply calculation methods and standard practices.
- Where to identify sources of information for the resolution of queries?
- What are the scheme requirements for the discharge of benefits?
- Who the receiving scheme is and what information they require, if applicable.
- How to apply scheme regulations/rules in order to inform member/partner of appropriate options available to them.
- The internal procedures that you need to follow and records that need to be updated.

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	Performance criteria		Scope
You m	ust be able to:	In meetii can:	ng the performance criteria you must show you
1.	Ensure Pension Sharing Order is		
	authorised by the Court.	(A)	Process <u>one</u> pension sharing order covering <u>any</u> of the following categories of member :
2.	Obtain all information required from the		
	appropriate party(ies) to enable Pension		(i) Active member
	Sharing Order to be implemented.		(ii) Deferred member
	·		(iii) Retired member.
3.	Obtain payment of administration		
	charges, where applicable.	(B)	Communicate with any of the following
			appropriate party(ies) about the Pension
4.	Calculate the CETV or provide relevant		Sharing Order:
	information to the Actuary to calculate the		S .
	transfer value, as applicable.		(i) Credit and debit member (ii) Credit
			and debit member's
5.	Provide the member with relevant		representative(s)
	information, including any details of charges, within required timescales .		(iii) Professional Advisors.
	- 4	(C)	Ensure that both of the following
6.	Create record for Pension Credit member or	,	timescales are met:
	arrange an external transfer to receiving		
	pension scheme.		(i) Regulatory
			(ii) Scheme or organisational service level
7.	Update member's record with details of Pension Debit.		agreements.
8.	Inform appropriate party(ies) of the implementation of the Pension Sharing Order within required timescales .		

UNIT 6: MENTORING AND TRAINING COLLEAGUES WITHIN PENSIONS ADMINISTRATION

Aim

Learning Outcomes

- How to identify and address development needs.
- How to put together a development plan.
- How changes in pensions legislation affects development needs.
- The different methods of supporting others and why some methods are more suitable than others.
- How to evaluate the effectiveness of the training.

	Performance criteria	Scope
You mus	t be able to:	In meeting the performance criteria you must show you can:
1.	Clarify/identify your colleague's development need(s).	(A) Clarify/identify a development need in three of the following areas taking appropriate
2.	Discuss and agree a development plan.	timescales into account:
3.	Seek approval from the appropriate person to implement the development plan.	(i) Pensions technical knowledge(ii) Customer service(iii) Team working(iv) Communication skills
4.	Implement the agreed development/training plan within the appropriate timescales.	(v) Regulatory requirements(vi) Other.(B) Discuss and agree a development/training
5.	Evaluate and review the effectiveness of the training.	plan using any of the following methods:
6.	Continue to monitor training and development needs.	(i) Job competency training(ii) One to one work shadowing(iii) Coaching.
		(C) Discuss the development/training plan with the appropriate person taking into consideration:
		(i) Cost (ii) Timescale (iii) Method (iv) Relevance.
		(D) Evaluate and review the effectiveness of the training:
		(i) Immediately (ii) Within an appropriate timescale

UNIT 7: IDENTIFY AND RECOMMEND A NEW PENSIONS ADMINISTRATION PROCESS OR AN IMPROVEMENT TO AN EXISTING ONE

Aim

Learning Outcomes

- How to identify an opportunity for an improvement to, or, creation of a pensions administration process.
- What factors need to be considered when deciding whether a new process or a potential improvement is essential or desirable and whether it is feasible?
- How to determine the best way of implementing an improvement or creating a new process.
- How to identify the budget and/or resource implications.
- How to identify who the relevant people are in your organisation who you should present your recommendations to.
- Identify the best method to present your findings.

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	Performance criteria		Scope			
You must be able to:		In meeti	In meeting the performance criteria you must show you can:			
1.	Identify an opportunity for creating or improving a pensions administration process.	(A)	Identify an opportunity to create or improve a pensions administration process in <u>one</u> of the following areas:			
2.	Determine the feasibility and implication of the potential creation or improvement.		(i) Administrative systems(ii) Computer systems(iii) Customer service(iv) Your workplace.			
3.	Explain how the potential change or improvement could be implemented .	(B)	Consider the feasibility and implication of the creation or improvement having regard to <u>all</u> of the following:			
4.	Clearly present your recommendations to the relevant people in the organisation.	(C)	 (i) Overall impact (ii) Budget and/or resources required (iii) Desired outcome (iv) Implementation/non- implementation risks. Consider how the creation or improvement could be implemented taking into account both of the following: (i) Timescales (ii) Available resources. 			
		(D)	Present your recommendations to the relevant people in your organisation in <u>one</u> of the following formats (i) Management report (ii) Presentation			

UNIT 8: DEALING WITH PENSION SCHEME COMPLAINTS, DISPUTES, ERRORS OR OMISSIONS

Aim

Learning Outcomes

- How to recognise the difference between a complaint, dispute, error or omission in line with scheme/organisational requirements.
- How to apply scheme or organisational overriding regulations for complaints/disputes.
- How to handle difficult/sensitive situations/issues in line with customer care guidelines.
- What the different stages are in the complaints/internal disputes procedures.
- What outside bodies can be involved in the dispute process and the roles they have.
- What procedures are used for keeping the relevant parties informed.
- The organisational and legal time limits in dealing with complaints and disputes.
- The process for review and determining improvements to organisational procedures.

	Performance criteria		Scope		
You must be able to:		In meet	In meeting the performance criteria you must show you can:		
		(A)	Resolve one Dispute OR 4 of any of the other cases:		
1.	Acknowledge and record receipt of the cases in line with organisational requirements.		 Complaint Dispute Error Omission. 		
2.	Inform the relevant party(ies) of the Scheme's procedures if required.	(B)	Include cases from at least two of the following parties		
3.	Investigate and resolve all cases according to regulatory and scheme or organisational requirements.		(i) Employee (non member) (ii) Active member (iii) Deferred member (iv) Retired member (v) Member representative		
4.	Inform the relevant party(ies) of the decision reached giving any further options available within required timescales , where applicable.	(C)	(vi) Other (must specify in assessment).Process cases with reference to the following relevant party(ies) where appropriate:		
5.	Update records in line with organisational procedures.		 (i) Trustee (ii) Scheme administrator/advisor (iii) Internal dispute resolution person(s) (iv) Pensions Regulator (v) Pensions Ombudsman (vi) FCA (vii) TPAS (viii) Other (must specify in assessment). 		

- 6. Review organisational procedures to determine if improvements are needed and feedback to Manager.
- (D) Ensure that <u>both</u> of the following **timescales** are met:
 - (i) Regulatory
 - (ii) Scheme or organisational service level agreement

UNIT 9: IMPLEMENT A CHANGE TO A PENSION ADMINISTRATION PROCESS

Aim

Learning Outcomes

- How to determine the best way of implementing a change.
- Who are the people most likely to be affected by the change?
- How to collate feedback and determine its impact when implementing the change.
- Who you need to communicate with and at which stages of implementation of the change.
- What factors to take into account when agreeing timescales for implementation and what factors may cause the agreed timescales not to be met.
- How to evaluate the effectiveness of the change and who to report the final outcome to.

mance criteria	Scope
st be able to:	In meeting the performance criteria you must show you can:
Explain the requirement for the essential change.	(A) Explain the essential change to any of the following:
Take into account any feedback.	(i) Colleagues (ii) Customers (iii) Other organisations.
Communicate the change to all relevant parties at the appropriate times.	(B) Implement the change in <u>one</u> of the following ways:
Implement the change within the agreed timescales.	(i) Via a third party (ii) By yourself
Manage any disruptions or deviations from agreed timescales.	(iii) As part of a team.
Review and report, to the relevant people, the effects of the change against the expected outcomes and identify any variances.	 (C) Schedule appropriate times for communication at <u>all</u> of the following stages: (i) Before the change (ii) During the change (iii) After evaluating the outcome of the change.
	Explain the requirement for the essential change. Take into account any feedback. Communicate the change to all relevant parties at the appropriate times. Implement the change within the agreed timescales. Manage any disruptions or deviations from agreed timescales. Review and report, to the relevant people, the effects of the change against the expected outcomes and identify any