



# PMI-PBA<sup>SM</sup> Certification: What It Is and Why We Need It

### Introduction

PMI® has announced its newest credential, the Professional in Business Analysis (PMI-PBA<sup>SM</sup>). With this initiative, PMI acknowledges the importance of the BA profession and function. They cite a statistic by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics that “business analysis jobs are predicted to increase by 22 percent by 2020.” The projected growth of jobs along with PMI’s recognition of business analysis as a profession is good news for business analysts across the globe. We feel the PM-PBA certification will increase the stature of Business Analysis and we’re excited about this new offering. See [more at PMI](#).

The certification is being offered now through August 4, 2014 in a pilot phase and will become a regular offering immediately following. Those who participate in the pilot will receive a 20% rebate on the examination fee and will only be required to submit 25 hours of education to qualify.

Many in the industry wonder how this will affect IIBA, and its CBAP® and CCBA® certifications. We see all three credentials co-existing and serving different purposes. Below we will explore the differences and commonalities of these certifications to help you select the certification(s) that are right for you and for your staff.

### Certifications Compared

This new certification for business analysis might introduce confusion in selecting the right certification to help you achieve your professional goals. This



ENHANCED PERFORMANCE. ENDURING RESULTS.

by:

*Vicki James, PMP, CBAP  
Elizabeth Larson, PMP, CBAP, CSM and  
Richard Larson, PMP, CBAP*

View more articles on our website at:  
[www.WatermarkLearning.com](http://www.WatermarkLearning.com)

## PMI-PBA Certification (cont.)

comparison includes application requirements, knowledge required, and your current or desired role.

### PMI-PBA vs Competitive Offerings

The following table compares the three certifications in terms of statistics and qualifications. This information should prove useful in helping you determine which certifications you qualify for.

	IIBA CBAP®	PMI – PBA <sup>SM</sup>	IIBA CCBA®
Launched	November 2006	May 2014	2011
Certification holders	3,872	N/A	565
Minimum Experience Required	7,500 BA hours (~5 yrs); 900 hours in 4 of 6 knowledge areas required	4,500 BA hours (~3 yrs) of which 2,000 spent working on projects	3,750 (~2.5 yrs); 900 hours in 2 of the 6 or 500 hours in 4 of the 6 knowledge areas required
Training Required	21 hours	35 hours	21 hours
References Required	2	No	2
Examination	3.5 hours; 150 multiple choice questions	4 hours; 200 multiple choice questions	3.5 hours; 150 multiple choice questions
Cost	US \$450 member US \$575 non-member	US \$405 member US \$555 non-member	US \$450 member US \$575 non-member
Certification Valid For	3 years	3 years	3 years
Certification Maintained Through	60 CDUs in business analysis	60 PDUs in business analysis	60 CDUs in business analysis
Renewal Fe	US \$85 member US \$120 non-member	US \$60 member US \$150 non-member	US \$85 member US \$120 non-member

Figure 1. PMI-PBA vs Competitive Offerings

### Exam Content

The next chart maps the IIBA CBAP Exam Content, with the exam content for the PMI-PBA. Although there is not a one-for-one correlation in the tasks and tools of the IIBA® Knowledge Areas and PMI® Domains, it is helpful to see how the BABOK Guide knowledge areas align with the PBA topics. For more information on the PA topics, please see [PMI-PBA Task by Domain](#).

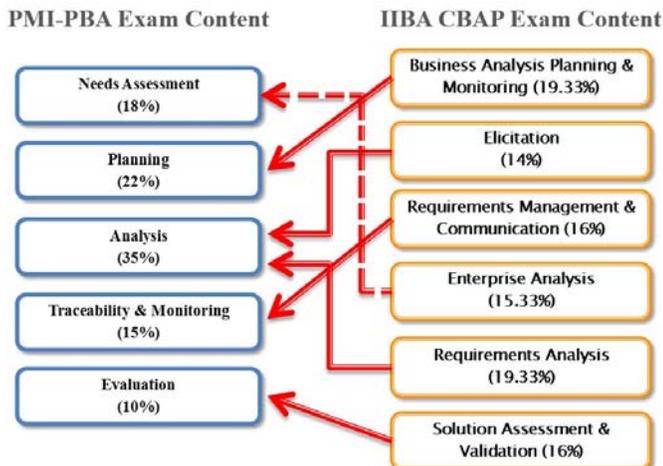


Figure 2. Source: PMI®

### Choosing the Best Certification

The table below was created to help you understand where credential might be best suited for your based on your experience, current certifications, and career aspirations. “Highly Recommended” indicates we think this certification is best suited for the circumstance while “Recommended” is a viable choice.

If you are a(n):	CBAP®	PMI-PBA <sup>SM</sup>	CCBA®
Enterprise BA	Highly Recommended	Recommended	
“Pure” BA	Highly Recommended		Recommended
“Hybrid” BA-PM	Recommended	Highly Recommended	
Current PMP®	Recommended	Highly Recommended	
Current CBAP®		Highly Recommended	
Current CCBA®	Highly Recommended	Recommended	

Figure 3. Choosing the Best Certification

### Application Process

You may be wondering how the application process compares with the IIBA certification process. The application process for the PM-PBA is very straightforward and comparable to the Project Management Professional (PMP) application.

You will need to record the following for each line of experience in addition to the general and contact information:

- Name
- Business analysis hours by domain
  - Needs Assessment
  - Planning
  - Analysis
  - Traceability and Monitoring
  - Evaluation
- A 300-550 character description of the business analysis tasks performed

### Resources

The challenge in achieving the PMI-PBA certification in this timeframe is a lack of focused study material and preparation programs. PMI provides a [list of references](#) for study, but some will crave the definitive security of a ‘body of knowledge,’ practice guide, or standards documentation. A practice guide

## PMI-PBA Certification (cont.)

is in development now and should be available by October 2014. The PMI is also planning a *Requirements Management Body of Knowledge* to be released some time in 2015.

There are many classes available today that cover the content as described by the PMI in the [Exam Content Outline](#). Those wishing to get certified early will find benefit in reviewing the published exam contents to determine where they may need additional study. Look for specific classes that address these areas in order to gain the required education hours and fill the knowledge gaps. Look for Registered Education Providers to provide specific certification preparation courses by this fall.

### Conclusion

In the meantime, we'd like to share our thoughts about the new certification. We believe the major distinction between the two perspectives, PMI's and IIBA's, is that:

- Although PMI understands and appreciates that business analysis spans beyond the project and program environment, they view "the scope of business analysis as performed in a project or program environment." In other words, although business analysis extends beyond the project, it is the program or project that provides the context for business analysis. Therefore, the emphasis is on providing more successful project/program outcomes. The IIBA perspective is that business analysis drives business value. According to Kevin Brennan of the IIBA, business analysis is about understanding "how a solution will fit into the day-to-day operations of a business." Which does the organization need? Both, of course. That is not to say that PMI has

no interest in helping organizations and their operations, nor that the IIBA has no interest in the part of business analysis that supports the project/program. It's a different emphasis.

- For those who mainly work on projects, and for those who perform a hybrid Project Manager-Business Analyst role, the PMI-PBA is a good certification to have.
- Strategic, enterprise BAs, and those BAs who are professional BAs so to speak, might not gain as much from the PMI-PBA certification. While they might find value in the PMI-PBA designation, the IIBA designation will most likely be more meaningful to them.

In the end, the BA community can either try to ignore the new PMI initiative, or embrace it and see how the two competing certifications can co-exist. Ultimately BAs need to understand the PM role and vice versa. They need to collaborate and to communicate, especially in the areas of greatest overlap such as scope management, communications management, stakeholder management, to name a few. Collaboration is the key to project, program, and organizational success.

## About Watermark Learning

Since 1992 Watermark Learning has provided training that turns the complexity of industry standards into practical application. Our courses are laser-focused to enhance performance for business analysts, project managers, and process analysts and lead to enduring results in organizations. Our interactive classes engage students to learn and motivate them to perform.

**7301 Ohms Lane, Suite 360**  
**Minneapolis, MN 55439**  
**(+1) 952-921-0900**  
**800-646-9362 (USA only)**  
**[www.WatermarkLearning.com](http://www.WatermarkLearning.com)**