

PMP® 2026 Exam Changes

A student guide to the new exam: how the syllabus changed, and how it relates to the PMBOK® Guide 8th Edition.

The PMP exam is scheduled to change on 9 July 2026. This guide explains what has moved, what has been retired, and what is new, so you can focus your studying. It has two parts: how the exam syllabus (the ECO) changed from 2021 to 2026, and how the PMBOK Guide 8th Edition lines up with the new syllabus.

How to read the tables

- Amber – a topic that moved from one domain to another. Know its new home.
- Green – new or strongly expanded on the 2026 exam. Worth extra study time.
- Purple – background or structural; useful context, not a separate task.

Plain rows are direct, like-for-like matches.

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Part 1 – What changed in the exam syllabus (ECO)

The PMP exam is built on the Examination Content Outline, or ECO – the list of domains, tasks, and enablers that defines what is tested. The 2021 ECO is being replaced by a 2026 ECO. Both keep the same three domains (People, Process, Business Environment), but almost everything below that level has changed: the weightings, the task lists, and which domain many topics belong to. This part walks through those changes.

1. The shape of the change

The biggest single change is the weighting. Business Environment grows from a small slice of the exam to more than a quarter of it, while People and Process both shrink. At the same time the task lists are consolidated – fewer, broader tasks – and several topics move from one domain to another.

Domain	2021 exam	2026 exam
I. People	42%	33% (- 9)
II. Process	50%	41% (- 9)
III. Business Environment	8%	26% (+ 18)
Number of tasks (People / Process / BE)	14 / 17 / 4 = 35	8 / 10 / 8 = 26

Two patterns explain most of what follows. First, consolidation: People drops from 14 tasks to 8 and Process from 17 to 10, mostly by merging related tasks. Second, migration: Business Environment grows from 4 tasks to 8 largely by taking over governance, change control, issue management, and risk, which used to sit in Process. The amber rows in the tables ahead mark those moves.

2. People domain (42% → 33%)

People consolidates the most. Five 2021 tasks collapse into the new “Lead the project team,” while two topics arrive from Process (communication and knowledge transfer) and two leave (impediments go to Business Environment, negotiation goes to Process).

2.1 The new People tasks

2026 People task	Came from (2021)	What changed
P1. Develop a common vision	Old P2 (vision/mission enabler) Old P10 Build shared understanding	Vision is promoted from a single enabler to a standalone Task 1. The root-cause-of-misunderstanding idea moves here from old P10.
P2. Manage conflicts	Old P1 Manage conflict Old P12 Define team ground rules	The conflict task absorbs ground-rules content: communicate principles, foster adherence, rectify violations.
P3. Lead the project team	Old P2 Lead a team Old P3 Support team performance Old P4 Empower team members Old P6 Build a team Old P11 Engage/support virtual teams	The largest consolidation in the domain: five old tasks become one. Servant leadership, empowerment, problem-solving, and roles and responsibilities all live here now.
P4. Engage stakeholders	Old P9 Collaborate with stakeholders Old Process P4 Engage stakeholders	Stakeholder engagement consolidates here. A near-identical task existed in the 2021 Process domain; that content now joins People.
P5. Align stakeholder expectations	Old P10 Build shared understanding Old P13 Mentor relevant stakeholders	A new explicit split between aligning (P5) and managing (P6) expectations. Mentoring is folded in as an enabler rather than its own task.
P6. Manage stakeholder expectations	Partly old P9 / P10 New emphasis on internal & external customers	Introduces explicit internal and external customer-satisfaction monitoring – a value-delivery lens not present in 2021.
P7. Help ensure knowledge transfer	Moved from Process: Old Process P16 Knowledge transfer for project continuity	Moved between domains. Knowledge transfer leaves Process and becomes a People task. The ECO even uses this task to illustrate its structure.
P8. Plan and manage communication	Moved from Process: Old Process P2 Manage communications	Moved between domains. Communication management leaves Process for People, and adds transparency, feedback-loop, and governance-reporting ideas.

2.2 2021 People tasks that retire or move

2021 People task	Where it goes in 2026
P5 Ensure team members/stakeholders are adequately trained	Absorbed into P3 Lead the project team and the expectation tasks (P5/P6). No standalone training task remains.
P7 Address and remove impediments, obstacles, and blockers	Moves to Business Environment → BE4 Remove impediments and manage issues.
P8 Negotiate project agreements	Moves to Process → P5 Plan and manage procurement (negotiation strategy and agreement negotiation).
P14 Promote team performance through emotional intelligence	Absorbed into P3 Lead the project team. Emotional intelligence now surfaces through leadership-style and conflict enablers.

3. Process domain (50% → 41%)

Process is reorganized the most. It consolidates 17 tasks into 10, but at the same time hands several topics to Business Environment (governance, change, issues, risk) and two to People, while gaining a new finance task and a deeper value-delivery task.

3.1 The new Process tasks

2026 Process task	Came from (2021)	What changed
P1. Develop an integrated PM plan and plan delivery	Old P9 Integrate planning activities Old P13 Determine methodology/methods	Becomes the anchor of the domain. Approach selection (predictive / adaptive / hybrid), estimating, and integration merge into one task, and sustainability appears as a critical-information example.
P2. Develop and manage project scope	Old P8 Plan and manage scope	Trimmed to three enablers: define, agree, break down.
P3. Help ensure value-based delivery	Old P1 Execute with urgency for value Old BE P2 Evaluate and deliver benefits and value	Value delivery is reframed and pulls benefit-measurement ideas from the old Business Environment domain into Process. Strong value and outcomes emphasis.
P4. Plan and manage resources	Old P5 Plan and manage budget and resources (resource half)	Resources split off from budget. The money half becomes the new P6 Finance task.
P5. Plan and manage procurement	Old P11 Plan and manage procurement	Procurement now absorbs negotiation, which moved in from

2026 Process task	Came from (2021)	What changed
	Old People P8 Negotiate project agreements	People, and adds contract-type selection and vendor-performance evaluation.
P6. Plan and manage finance	Old P5 Plan and manage budget and resources (budget half)	A new, much deeper standalone finance task: financial needs, contingency, spend tracking, financial reporting, and reserves.
P7. Plan and optimize quality of products/deliverables	Old P7 Plan and manage quality	Retitled “optimize.” Adds cost of quality, sustainability, regulatory compliance, and continuous improvement.
P8. Plan and manage schedule	Old P6 Plan and manage schedule	Largely intact. Adds explicit baselining and schedule-variation analysis, and ties estimating to the chosen development approach.
P9. Evaluate project status	Old P12 Manage project artifacts Old P9 (data-analysis enabler)	Reframed from “manage artifacts” to “evaluate status,” combining metrics and progress assessment with artifact management.
P10. Manage project closure	Old P17 Plan and manage closure or transitions	Adds explicit stakeholder approval of completion. Otherwise close to the 2021 task.

3.2 2021 Process tasks that move to another domain

2021 Process task	Where it goes in 2026
P2 Manage communications	Moves to People → P8 Plan and manage communication.
P3 Assess and manage risks	Moves to Business Environment → BE5 Plan and manage risk.
P4 Engage stakeholders	Moves to People → P4 Engage stakeholders.
P10 Manage project changes	Moves to Business Environment → BE3 Manage and control changes.
P14 Establish project governance structure	Moves to Business Environment → BE1 Define and establish project governance.
P15 Manage project issues	Moves to Business Environment → BE4 Remove impediments and manage issues.
P16 Ensure knowledge transfer for project continuity	Moves to People → P7 Help ensure knowledge transfer.

4. Business Environment domain (8% → 26%)

This is the biggest change on the whole exam. The weighting more than triples and the number of tasks doubles. Most of the growth comes from taking over governance, change control, impediments and issues, and risk from Process, plus a new continuous-improvement task. If you studied for the old exam, this is where the most new ground is.

4.1 The new Business Environment tasks

2026 Business Environment task	Came from (2021)	What changed
BE1. Define and establish project governance	Moved from Process: Old Process P14 Establish project governance structure	Moved between domains. Governance arrives from Process and expands: structure, rules, ethics, policies via OPAs; success metrics; escalation paths and thresholds.
BE2. Plan and manage project compliance	Old BE P1 Plan and manage project compliance	Stays in Business Environment, largely intact. Adds sustainability to the compliance examples.
BE3. Manage and control changes	Moved from Process: Old Process P10 Manage project changes	Moved between domains. Change control arrives from Process: execute change control, communicate status, implement approved changes, update documentation.
BE4. Remove impediments and manage issues	Moved from People: Old People P7 Remove impediments Moved from Process: Old Process P15 Manage project issues	Moved from two domains at once. Merges impediment removal (from People) with issue management (from Process), plus recognizing when a risk becomes an issue.
BE5. Plan and manage risk	Moved from Process: Old Process P3 Assess and manage risks	Moved between domains. Risk leaves Process for Business Environment and is built out: identify, analyze, plan, register, respond (including security and sustainability risks), communicate.
BE6. Continuous improvement	Scattered enablers across 2021 (lessons learned, iterative practices, OPA updates)	A new standalone task. Pulls the lessons-learned and OPA-update threads together into one improvement task.
BE7. Support organizational change	Old BE P4 Support organizational change	Stays in Business Environment. Trimmed to culture assessment and change-impact evaluation.

2026 Business Environment task	Came from (2021)	What changed
BE8. Evaluate external business environment changes	Old BE P3 Evaluate external business environment changes	Stays in Business Environment, largely intact. Surveys regulatory, technology, geopolitical, and market changes against scope and backlog.

5. New themes on the 2026 exam

Beyond the task reshuffle, a few themes now run through all three domains. These are the genuinely new ideas to make room for in your studying.

Theme	What it means for the 2026 exam
Artificial intelligence (AI)	Named in the 2026 ECO as a driver of the update and absent from the 2021 exam. Expect AI as a tool for estimating, status, risk, and decision support, appearing across all three domains rather than in one place.
Sustainability	Appears explicitly in several new enablers: critical information requirements (Process P1), cost of quality (Process P7), and risk responses (BE5).
Value & outcomes over outputs	The 2026 ECO reframes project success beyond schedule, budget, and scope, toward stakeholder value and outcomes. This shifts the tone of questions across all three domains.
Finance as its own topic	Process P6 splits finance from budget and resources and adds reserves, contingency, spend tracking, and financial reporting.
Approach mix shift	The 2021 exam was about half predictive and half agile/hybrid. The 2026 exam is roughly 40% predictive and 60% adaptive and hybrid, so study examples lean more toward adaptive delivery.
More interactive questions	The exam is moving toward scenario sets, visual interpretation, and decision-focused question types. Expect to apply judgment to situations rather than recall definitions.

Part 2 – How the PMBOK® Guide 8th Edition relates

The PMBOK® Guide is the main reference the exam draws on, and it also has a new edition – the 8th. This part shows how its structure lines up with the new ECO, so you know where to read when studying a given task. Two things to keep in mind throughout: the exam is defined by the ECO, not the PMBOK Guide, so where they differ the ECO wins; and the 8th Edition lines up with the 2026 ECO much more closely than the previous edition did, because it brings back a clear structure.

6. The two documents

The PMBOK 8th Edition comes in two bound parts: The Standard for Project Management (Part 1, the concepts) and the PMBOK Guide proper (Part 2, the performance domains and processes). The ECO and the PMBOK Guide are different kinds of documents and are not meant to match one-to-one, but the overlap is strong enough to be a useful study map.

The single most useful alignment is in section 8: the 8th Edition’s seven performance domains map cleanly onto the new ECO tasks. Two of those domains – Governance and Finance – are new to the 8th Edition and mirror new emphases in the 2026 exam.

7. Principles and the project life cycle (Part 1)

Part 1 of the PMBOK is mostly conceptual. It maps to the exam at the level of mindset and approach rather than to specific tasks, with two useful exceptions: choosing a development approach (Ch. 4) connects directly to Process P1, and the sustainability principle (3.7) shows up as concrete exam content.

PMBOK 8th Ed. – Standard (Part 1)	Related ECO domain(s) / task(s)	Notes
Ch. 1 Introduction Foundational elements; project vs. operations; portfolio/program/project; organizational vs. project governance	Context for all domains BE1 Governance (1.3.2)	Mostly framing. The governance-connection material underpins the new BE1 governance task.
Ch. 2 A System for Value Delivery Creating value; assessing project success; project	Process P3 Value-based delivery People P4–P6 Stakeholders BE8 External environment	Core to the value and outcomes reframing across the 2026 ECO. “Assessing project success” aligns

PMBOK 8th Ed. – Standard (Part 1)	Related ECO domain(s) / task(s)	Notes
environment (EEFs, OPAs); functions; roles		directly with the exam’s value emphasis.
Ch. 3 Project Management Principles Six principles: holistic view; focus on value; embed quality; accountable leadership; integrate sustainability; empowered culture	All three domains (mindset) Sustainability → Process P1/P7, BE5 Leadership → People P3	Principles are the “why” behind the tasks. Note the explicit sustainability principle, which surfaces as enablers across Process and Risk.
Ch. 4 Project Life Cycles Phases; development approaches; approach selection; delivery cadence; five Focus Areas	Process P1 Integrated plan & delivery Focus Areas ≈ lifecycle	Approach selection maps to Process P1. The five Focus Areas replace the old Process Groups and frame the lifecycle the tasks operate within.

8. The seven performance domains (Part 2)

This is the heart of the study map. The 8th Edition organizes the guide around seven performance domains, and they line up with the 2026 ECO tasks more directly than anything else in the book. When studying a task, find its matching domain here and read that section of the guide.

PMBOK 8th Ed. Performance Domain	Maps to ECO 2026 domain → task(s)	Notes
2.1 Governance	Business Environment → BE1 Define and establish project governance Also BE2, BE7	New domain in PMBOK (replaces Integration) and a near-direct match to BE1. Governance metrics and mechanisms align with BE1’s success-metrics and escalation enablers.
2.2 Scope	Process → P2 Develop and manage project scope Also BE8	Direct match to Process P2. External-environment impacts on scope connect to BE8.
2.3 Schedule	Process → P8 Plan and manage schedule	Direct match. Estimating, baselining, and variance analysis align with P8.
2.4 Finance	Process → P6 Plan and manage finance	New domain in PMBOK (replaces Cost) and matches the new standalone finance task. Both are new emphases: reserves, contingency, spend tracking, financial reporting.

PMBOK 8th Ed. Performance Domain	Maps to ECO 2026 domain → task(s)	Notes
2.5 Stakeholders	People → P4 Engage, P5 Align, P6 Manage expectations People → P8 Communication	Maps across the People domain's stakeholder cluster. Communication is covered here too.
2.6 Resources	Process → P4 Plan and manage resources People → P3 Lead the project team	Splits across two domains: physical resources to Process P4; team leadership and human aspects to People P3.
2.7 Risk	Business Environment → BE5 Plan and manage risk Also BE4	Risk sits in Business Environment in 2026 (moved out of Process). The identify/analyze/respond flow matches BE5; the risk-to-issue transition links to BE4.

8.1 Where the two structures differ

The match is strong but not complete. The 8th Edition dropped Quality, Communication, and Procurement as standalone domains, even though the exam still tests tasks that touch all three. And several exam tasks – especially the people and change ones – have no single matching domain. The table shows where to read instead.

ECO 2026 content with no dedicated PMBOK domain	Where it lives in PMBOK 8th Ed.
Quality, Communication, and Procurement tasks	PMBOK 8th Ed. removed these as standalone domains. – Quality → Principle 3.5 (embed quality) plus the Scope and Schedule domains. – Communication → inside the Stakeholders domain (2.5). – Procurement → Appendix X4 rather than a domain.
Change control, impediments/issues, continuous improvement (BE3, BE4, BE6)	No single matching PMBOK domain. These are distributed: change and issues appear within Governance and the delivery domains; continuous improvement aligns with the Tailoring chapter and lessons-learned threads.
Vision, conflict, leadership, knowledge transfer (People P1, P2, P3, P7)	The human and leadership tasks have no single PMBOK domain. They draw on Principle 3.6 (accountable leader), Principle 3.8 (empowered culture), and the team aspects of the Resources domain (2.6).

9. Appendices that matter for the exam

The appendices are unusually useful this time, because two of them carry content the new exam emphasizes but the guide no longer treats as a domain.

PMBOK 8th Ed. Appendix	Related ECO theme / task	Notes
X3 Artificial Intelligence AI in the project context; use cases; responsible and ethical use	Cross-cutting AI theme (all domains)	The dedicated AI appendix is the natural source for the exam's new AI emphasis.
X4 Procurement Make-or-buy; strategy; bid process; source selection; contract types; claims	Process → P5 Plan and manage procurement	Since procurement is no longer a domain, this appendix is the primary reference for the procurement task, including contract-type selection.
X2 Project Management Offices	BE1 Governance (organizational context)	Useful background for governance and organizational-context tasks (BE1, BE7).

Key dates: updated study materials are available from 14 April 2026. The current exam can be taken through 8 July 2026. The new exam starts 9 July 2026.

PMBOK structure is based on the official PMI table of contents for the PMBOK® Guide – Eighth Edition. The links between PMBOK sections and exam tasks are a study aid; the ECO task statements are the authority for what is tested.