

PMP® vs. PMI-ACP®: Which Certification Is Right for You?

Choosing between PMP® and PMI-ACP® certifications can shape your project management career. Let's explore their differences and help you decide.

 by Kimberly Wiethoff



Understanding Project Management Certifications

Project Management Professional (PMP®)

The gold standard for project managers across industries.

Validates ability to manage projects using predictive, Agile, and hybrid approaches.

Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP®)

Focuses exclusively on Agile practices from frameworks like Scrum, Kanban, and XP.

Ideal for professionals in Agile teams or environments.





PMP® Focus Areas



Project Scope & Schedule

Managing project boundaries and timelines effectively.



Cost & Risk Management

Controlling budgets and mitigating potential issues.



Stakeholder Management

Engaging with all parties involved in the project.



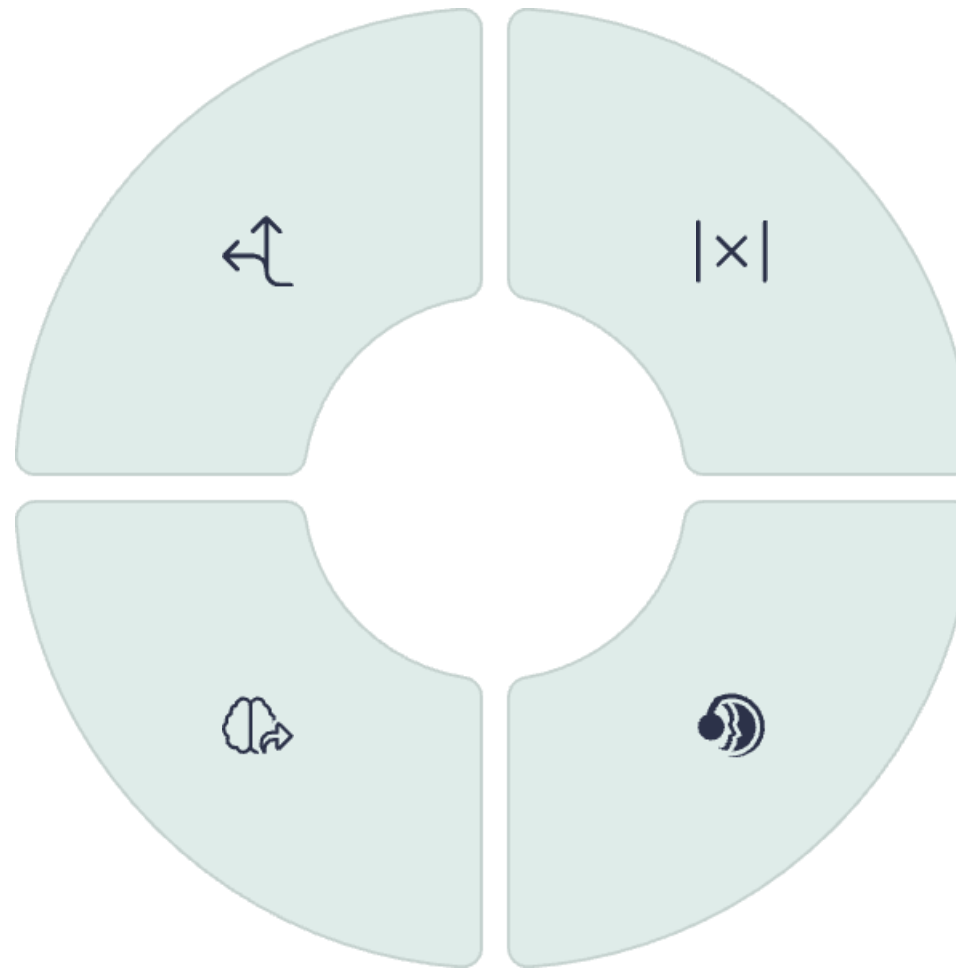
Delivery Models

Implementing predictive, Agile, and hybrid approaches.

PMI-ACP® Focus Areas

Agile Mindset
Embracing change and continuous improvement.

Adaptive Planning
Responding to changing requirements through iterative development.



Value-Driven Delivery
Prioritizing features that deliver maximum business value.

Team Performance
Fostering self-organization and cross-functional collaboration.



PMP® Prerequisites



Education & Experience Path 1

4-year degree plus 36 months of project management experience.



Education & Experience Path 2

High school diploma plus 60 months of project management experience.



Training Requirement

35 hours of formal project management education or CAPM® certification.



PMI-ACP® Prerequisites

Basic Education

Secondary degree (high school diploma or equivalent).

General Project Experience

12 months of general project experience within the last 5 years.

Agile Project Experience

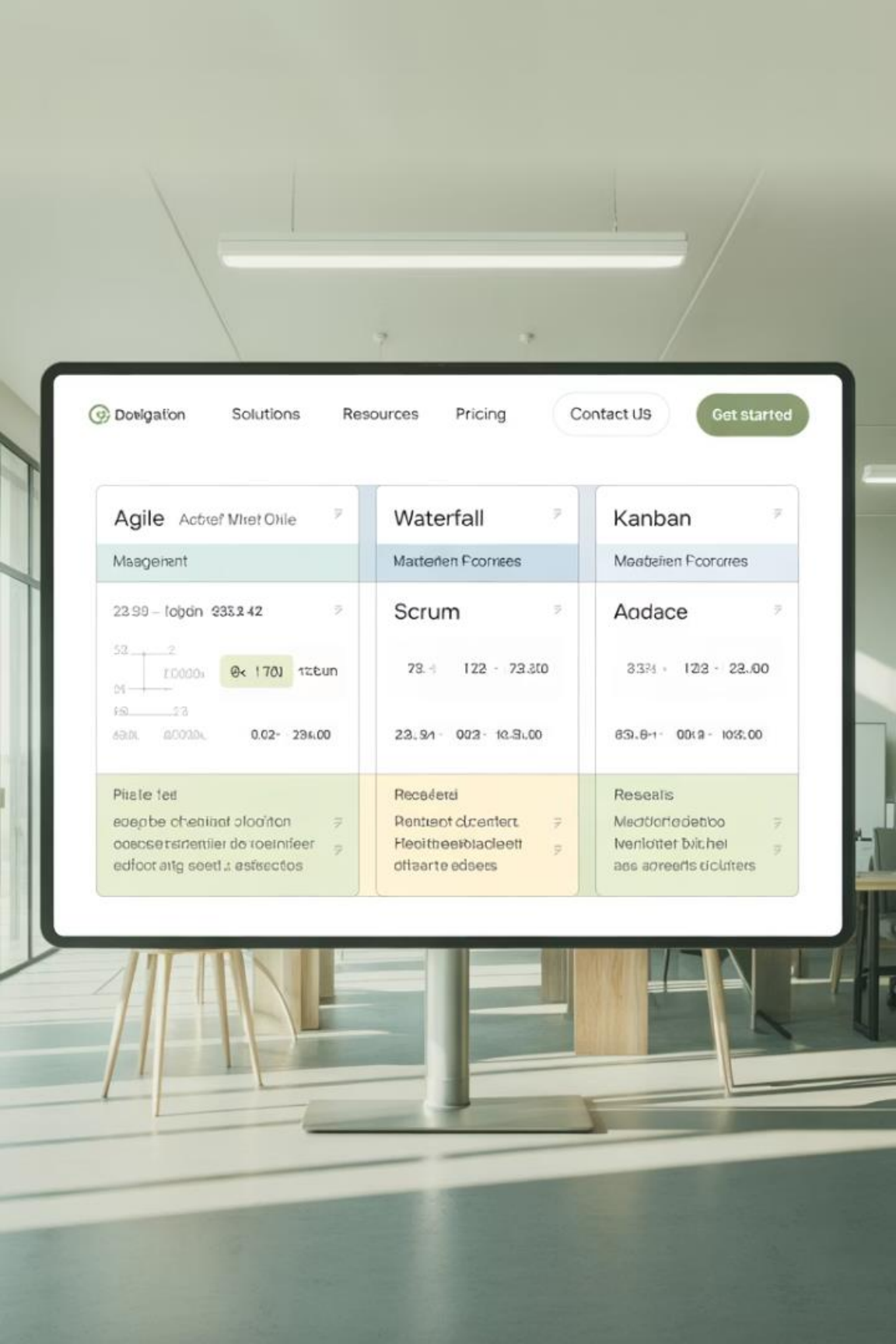
8 months of Agile project experience within the last 3 years.

Agile Training

21 contact hours of formal Agile practices training.

Key Differences Between Certifications

Feature	PMP®	PMI-ACP®
Primary Focus	Predictive, Agile, and Hybrid	Agile Frameworks and Mindset
Exam Length	180 questions, 230 minutes	120 questions, 180 minutes
Frameworks	PMBOK® Guide, Agile, Hybrid	Scrum, Kanban, XP, Lean
Cost	\$405–\$555	\$435–\$495





When to Choose PMP®



Complex Projects

You're leading cross-functional, complex projects across departments.



Versatile Skills

You want to validate both Agile and traditional project skills.



Leadership Role

You're pursuing program or portfolio management positions.



Global Recognition

You need a globally recognized credential for career advancement.



When to Choose PMI-ACP®



Agile Team Member

You're part of an Agile or Scrum team.



Tech Industry Focus

You work in tech, product development, or digital transformation.



Framework Expertise

You want to prove your expertise in Agile methodologies.



Agile Leadership

You aim to become an Agile Coach, Scrum Master, or Agile PM.

Exam Comparison

180

PMP® Questions

230 minutes to complete the
exam

\$555

PMP® Max Cost

For non-PMI members

120

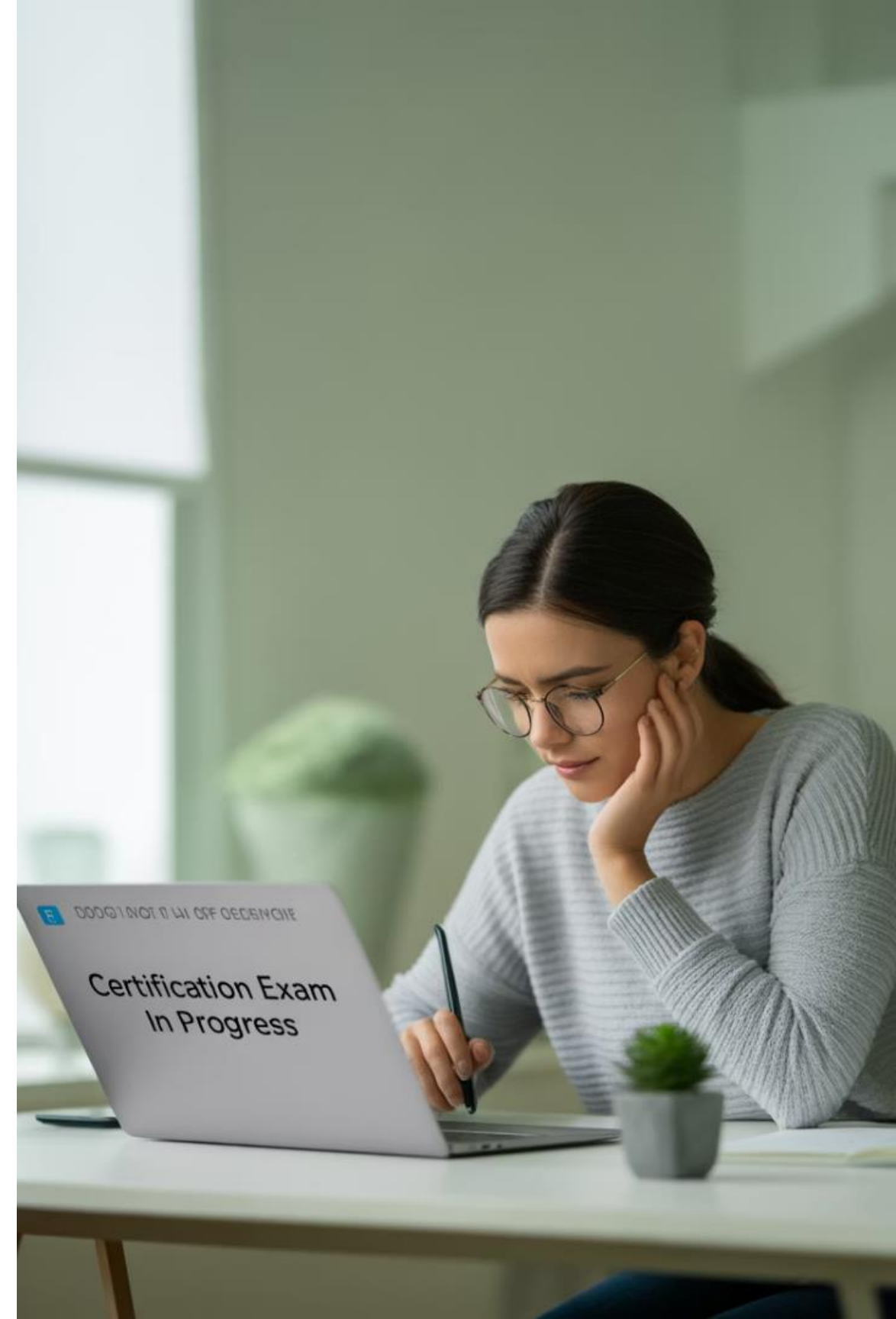
PMI-ACP® Questions

180 minutes to complete the
exam

\$495

PMI-ACP® Max Cost

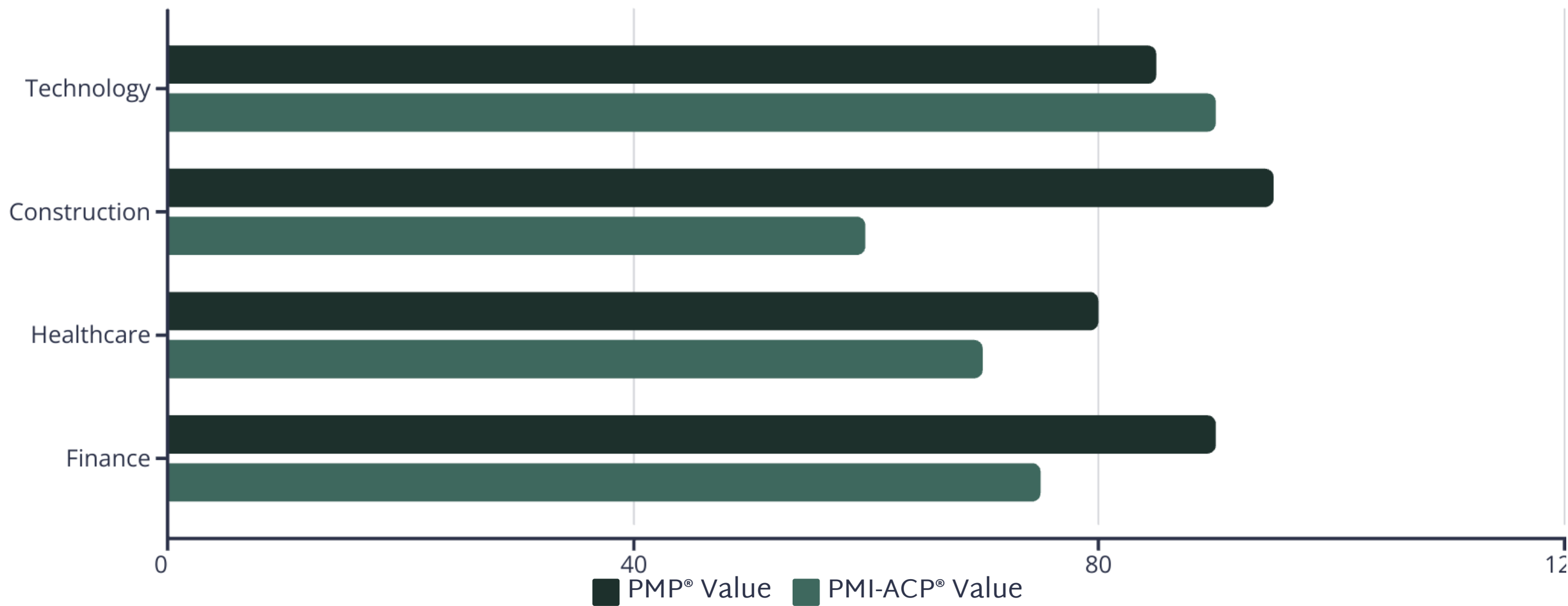
For non-PMI members



Why Consider Both Certifications



Industry Value of Certifications



Making Your Decision

Assess Your Role
Consider your current position and daily responsibilities.

Commit to Learning
Both paths require dedication to continuous improvement.



Define Career Goals
Determine where you want to be in 3-5 years.

Evaluate Industry
Research which certification is more valued in your field.

Final Thoughts

The right certification depends on your current role, career aspirations, and the environments you work in. If you're navigating waterfall-heavy projects, PMP is a must. If your world revolves around sprints, backlogs, and user stories, PMI-ACP will feel like home.

Whichever path you choose, both certifications equip you with the tools to drive success in a world where **change is constant**, and **agility is key**.

