

# The Certification Outlook

Connecting you to credentialing resources

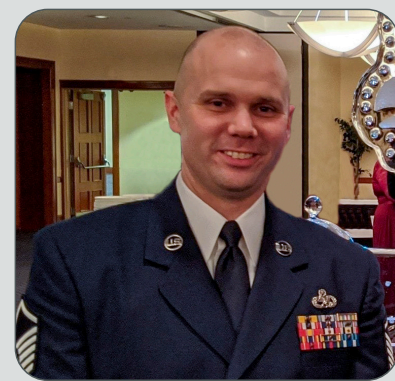


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## How an Air Force Master Sergeant leverages his own experience to help Service members get certified

**Scott Johnson, Master Sergeant, United States Air Force.**

For many Service members, the most daunting part of the certification process is understanding how to meet the exam registration requirements. Once Master Sergeant Scott Johnson realized that his Air Force taskers provided the necessary expertise to earn a Project Management Professional certification, he was able to start the process and get certified. Now he volunteers as a mentor to help others on their project management journeys.



Scott Johnson, Master Sergeant,  
United States Air Force

### **How long have you been in the Air Force, and what is your current rank and AFSC?**

I've been in the Air Force about 13 years. I'm a Master Sergeant and my career field is 2A5, which is aviation maintenance. I'm an aircraft section chief and I oversee about 97 maintainers. We handle scheduling changes along with our production superintendents to make sure we have the right people in the right place at the right time to generate air mobility missions. I also build different maintenance teams based off diverse tasks and projects that come down.

### **What made you want to get a project management certification?**

The field of project management first interested me when I was learning what my father-in-law and brother-in-law — both project managers in Buffalo, New York — do on a day-to-day basis. After that, I started doing some research, and I realized that project management is something that I would like to pursue when I retire from the Air Force.

The Project Management Professional (PMP) certification is a very valuable, and I don't want to be someone who retires from the military after 20 years scraping to find something. I want to make sure I set myself up for success.

“ Having a mentor is imperative to make sure that you have someone to help you understand the process. ”

—Scott Johnson

## Certification Spotlight

### Can you explain your process for researching the PMP?

Even though I used Air Force COOL to pay for this certification, the certification is not cheap, so I wanted to make sure that it was something that I wanted to do when I eventually transition to civilian life. I had my Airframe and Power Plant certification to fall back on as a safety net, but I wanted to try to reach for something, and that was the PMP. I had some good mentors in my father-in-law and brother-in-law, who showed me the benefits of project management in the civilian sector.

Finally, there was a network of mentors on LinkedIn, and they were really helpful in providing information about the benefits of the certification. I'm now part of a growing list of PMP-certified military personnel that mentor others through the process.

### Describe some of the unique challenges that you faced attempting to get certified while on active duty.

The big thing was scheduling. I had three major holidays — Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day — between when I participated in the boot camp in November 2018 and when I took my PMP certification exam in March 2019. Aircraft maintenance is always a high tempo career field with missions and pilots maintaining their qualifications. Once you add in a family life with two kids and a wife at home, time becomes extremely valuable and every minute matters. The most important piece was setting a plan and ensuring that I had time to reach the milestones and stay on schedule. My shift hours were 7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., so I would get into work around 5:00 a.m. and go through the material until about 6:30 a.m. Everyone's schedule might be different, but you

need to find a plan and stick with it. When people don't have a plan in place, they fall off track and miss their milestones.

### Do you believe that military experience helps prepare people for the project management certification?

I absolutely believe a military member's unique experience helps them prepare for getting their PMP certification. I've had the opportunity to mentor three or four military members that are working toward their PMP certification who are unsure if their experience will translate. Once we start going through the application process and breaking down all the projects that they work on, they realize they've been doing project management for a long time. There's a lot of similarities between project management and what we do in the military. Once you learn the proper terminology, then it's just connecting the dots.

### What recommendations do you have for Service members who are just starting their certification process? Are there particular study and preparation tools and techniques that you recommend?

Do your own research and find out what learning process works best for you. There is a multitude of free exam questions available on the internet; it just depends what you're looking for and what tools are best for your learning style. PMI will give you everything that you need to take your exam, but they won't give you all the "between the lines" content that is crucial, and that's where a mentor can help. Having a mentor is imperative to make sure that you have someone to help you understand the process.

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—Scott Johnson

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## On the road again...Our event calendar in 2022!

After nearly two years of digital conferences and video meetings, we are appreciating the renewed opportunities to meet with our partners and customers in the federal government at industry events. Whether it was the CCME Symposium in February, the SAME SBC conference in May, or one of many AFCEA events, these 2022 events have reinforced enthusiasm for industry certifications within the military.

But we're not done yet! Below is a list of the remaining events we're attending in 2022. Perhaps we'll see you there!



### Alamo ACE

**When:** Monday, November 14 – Thursday, November 17

**Where:** La Cantera Resort & Spa  
16641 La Cantera Parkway  
San Antonio, Texas

<https://www.alamoafcea.org/mpage/2022aace>



### Department of Defense Intelligence Information System (DoDIIS) Worldwide

**When:** Monday, December 12 – Thursday, December 15

**Where:** Henry B. Gonzales Convention Center  
900 E. Market Street  
San Antonio, Texas

<https://www.ncsi.com/event/dodiis/>

# 70%

*of survey respondents said certification made them better coworkers and mentors.*



2021 Pearson VUE Value of Certification Federal Supplement.

*\*Calendar subject to change*

## Pearson VUE at the 2022 CCME Symposium

We were thrilled to present four sessions as part of the 2022 Council of College and Military Educators (CCME) Symposium. We covered a wide range of topics designed to help Service members, test centers, and military educators in their pursuit of industry certification. Here are some highlights:



- Pearson VUE's Federal Director Christopher Bloor and Smarthinking's Christa Ehmann Powers discussed **the benefits of online tutoring as a supplementary learning tool** for dependent students of PCSing Service members.
- Christopher Bloor moderated a panel of certification experts who **detailed strategies for optimizing the certification process**, including how they determine exam requirements and map certifications to industry job roles and the attributes of successful candidates.
- Pearson VUE's Senior Product Manager Bryan Ochs highlighted the **motivations and outcomes of IT certification** from the Pearson VUE 2021 Value of IT Certification report, emphasizing the implications of differences between the global and federal government response data and how to use the data to inform test centers and training programs.
- Bryan Ochs also presented with representatives of the Project Management Institute (PMI), and together they reviewed the **differences in focus areas and ideal experience and expertise between various PMI certifications**.

To learn more about our sessions, request copies of the presentation slides, or ask questions of the speakers, please contact [Justin.Berndt@Pearson.com](mailto:Justin.Berndt@Pearson.com).

# 80%

*of survey respondents are likely to pursue another certification in the next 12 months.*



2021 Pearson VUE Value of Certification Federal Supplement.

### Don't forget

**COOL/CA:** Service members in all branches can find information on training, credentials, and licenses related to their military and civilian careers. Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) and the Army's Credentialing Assistance program help identify training gaps and define the paths needed to earn civilian and federal positions. Additionally, each COOL website features key information about funding, accreditations, and in-demand credentials. Visit [PearsonVUE.com/military/funding](https://PearsonVUE.com/military/funding) to learn more about how COOL works in your branch.

**Government Store:** Service members and government employees can shop at Government pricing for certification vouchers and learning materials for leading certifications at Pearson VUE's Government Store. [GovStore.PearsonVUE.com](https://GovStore.PearsonVUE.com) offers multi-modal training and testing solutions featuring eLearning, study guides, practice tests, and certification vouchers to help students take the next step in their certification pathway. Visit [GovStore.PearsonVUE.com](https://GovStore.PearsonVUE.com) to see our full product suite of learning, testing, and procurement options.

### Help your military community succeed:

If you are interested in opening a Pearson VUE test center on your installation, contact [DoD@Pearson.com](mailto:DoD@Pearson.com).

**Are you PCSing?** Let us know who the new test center manager is so we can keep them updated on key events and information. Please email [Rodrigo.Rampazzo@Pearson.com](mailto:Rodrigo.Rampazzo@Pearson.com) and share details about our new point of contact.

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