

Project closure checklist

End a project or a release so the result is accepted, runs in the right hands, and nothing is left open.

STEP	DONE WHEN	WHO SIGNS
1 Accept	Outputs meet the agreed criteria; the warranty starts	Sponsor or customer, with users
2 Hand over	Receivers ready: support, training, documents, open risks	The receiving owner
3 Close contracts, money	Obligations met; accounts closed; surplus returned	Contract owner; sponsor
4 Release the team	People reassigned in time; new skills recorded	Project manager, line managers
5 Report and close	Closure report approved; records archived	Sponsor or board, at a final gate

The series' own summary of what IPMA (International Project Management Association), PMI (Project Management Institute) and APM (Association for Project Management) ask for. In iterative work, steps 1 and 2 repeat for each release.

WHAT IT IS

Closing has five steps, each with its own **signature**. Do not confuse **acceptance** (the product meets its agreed criteria) with **handover** (the people who will run it are ready). Early-life support or parallel running bridges the gap, and ends on evidence. It works for a project stopped early too.

HOW IT WORKS

- 01** At the start: agree the receivers, the criteria and who signs.
- 02** Accept; note what the warranty covers and when it ends.
- 03** Bridge to handover; end the bridge on agreed measures.
- 04** Close the rest; if stopped early, record why.

MID-LEVEL · WORKED EXAMPLE

Apply it well

The situation: A city team has eight months to move resident parking permits online. Go-live comes a few weeks before most residents renew in January.

The project manager agrees acceptance criteria and a handover checklist early with the service desk and the IT team. After go-live, the team stays on as early-life support through the January renewals. The sponsor accepts the product; the receivers sign the handover when their checklist is met.

In the exam: Name the criteria, who signs acceptance and who signs handover, how long support lasts and what ends it, and one open item with its owner.

SENIOR · WORKED EXAMPLE

Design and lead it

The situation: A city is joining 14 online services under one login over 30 months, group by group. Its 9 old portals must close once the new services work.

Each department accepts its services against agreed criteria. The old portals run in parallel and close in the final phase, on evidence. The project manager agrees with the steering board who will own and fund the platform, and moves the platform supplier's support contract to that owner.

In the exam: Show the transition you designed: readiness criteria per release, who decides on what evidence, what runs in parallel, and who owns the product after closure.

WHERE IT SITS

IPMA · ICB4	PMI · PMBOK® GUIDE 8 · PMP® EXAM	APM · BOK 8 · PMQ EXAM
4.5.10.6 (p. 140): closing and evaluating phases and the project. Value only once used: 4.5.13 (p. 150)	Guide: Close Project or Phase, §2.1.6.9 (pp. 31–33). Exam outline: Process task 10 ('transition')	BoK (APM's Body of Knowledge) §3.6 Transition into use; 'closure report', §3.6.3. PMQ (APM's Project Management Qualification) objectives 8 and 22d (closing the finances)

Sources: IPMA ICB4 (2015); PMI, PMBOK® Guide, 8th ed.; PMI, PMP® Examination Content Outline (2026); APM Body of Knowledge, 8th ed.; APM, PMQ handbook (v6, 2026)

Key: ICB4 = IPMA's Individual Competence Baseline (4.5.10 etc.: its competence elements); PMBOK® Guide = PMI's body-of-knowledge guide; PMP® = PMI's Project Management Professional. Unofficial study material for IPMA®, PMI® and APM exams. Not affiliated with, endorsed by or approved by IPMA, PMI or APM, and not an accredited or endorsed training provider. IPMA® and IPMA ICB® are registered trademarks of IPMA in Switzerland and other countries. PMI, PMP, CAPM and PMBOK are registered marks of Project Management Institute, Inc. APM is a trade mark of the Association for Project Management. Other marks belong to their owners. PMP® exam facts are from PMI's public PMP® Examination Content Outline (2026); check the current version on pmi.org. APM's qualifications are its own; this series is not an APM Accredited Provider or APM Endorsed. Examples use a fictional city and its projects. Levels (this series' labels): Mid-level = moderately complex projects (IPMA Level C, PMI's PMP®); Senior = complex projects and people (IPMA Level B, APM's Chartered Project Professional).

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