PRINCE2® 2017 Update
FAQs

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1   General questions

1.1 WHAT IS PRINCE2?

PRINCE2 is firmly established as the world's most practiced method for project management and is globally recognized for delivering successful projects.

The Best Practice represented by the PRINCE2 method is supported by a scheme that offers three levels of certification: Foundation, Practitioner, and Professional. Alongside this, there is a membership scheme that offers project management professionals a wide range of content designed to help them achieve exam success, excel in their professional roles, and advance their careers.

The PRINCE2 method is comprised of seven themes, principles, and processes and equips practitioners with the knowledge to manage projects in a range of environments.

1.2 WHAT HAPPENED TO PRINCE2 IN 2017?

Mid-2017 marked the arrival of the updated PRINCE2 guidance (*Managing Successful Projects with PRINCE2 2017 Edition*) and new Foundation and Practitioner examinations. Together, these formed the PRINCE2 2017 update and represented the first major update to PRINCE2 since 2009.

The update in 2017 only initially impacted the English versions of the guidance and exams. Translated copies of the guidance and exams will follow in 2018 and beyond in our key market regions. See section 2.7 for further details.

1.3 WHY WAS THERE AN UPDATE TO PRINCE2?

AXELOS continually monitors global community feedback on the need for and value of updates to our entire portfolio and seeks to respond to it accordingly.

The feedback received was that the core elements of PRINCE2 remain as relevant as ever with PRINCE2's strength deriving from decades of Best Practice in project management across diverse organizations and industries.

After an extensive consultation period with our partners and PRINCE2 users (well over 75% of Accredited Organizations (AOs) agreed that PRINCE2 should be updated[1]), AXELOS came to the conclusion that both the guidance and exams could be enhanced to provide even more practical, authoritative, and relevant guidance to anyone managing a project in today's environment.

The update reflects a wealth of expert feedback from PRINCE2 practitioners, who successfully apply the method in today's dynamic working environment, and who are well aware of the ever-growing pressure to achieve more for customers and stakeholders.

1.4 HOW HAS THE METHOD CHANGED?

This updated PRINCE2 affirms the methods tried and tested approach to project management, with its overall structure of seven *principles*, *themes*, and *processes*. In the new PRINCE2 guide, the *themes* chapters have been restructured to enhance flow and readability and to accommodate important new material on how to tailor projects.

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[1] AXELOS Accredited Organization Consultation Survey, January 2016

The update is characterized by an emphasis on:

- tailoring PRINCE2 to the needs of organizations and project environments
- the *principles* that underpin PRINCE2
- greater clarity on the link between the *themes* and *principles*
- the restructuring of the *themes* guidance to accommodate specific examples of tailoring
- the practical application of guidance, with numerous examples, hints, and tips.

1.5 WHY IS TAILORING FEATURED SO STRONGLY IN THE UPDATED VERSION OF PRINCE2?

Flexibility has always been a key factor in the success of PRINCE2: the method is readily tailored to the needs of any organization, the project in hand, and the professional role of the person managing the project.

The philosophy and practice of tailoring is a thread that now runs throughout the guidance and the training programme. In fact, it permeates the entire thinking of the PRINCE2 2017 update.

While the update's increased and consistent practical emphasis on tailoring enhances PRINCE2's value to a wide range of organizations and job roles, the essential and universal *principles* of the method remain as valid as ever.

PRINCE2 has always been applicable in a wide variety of environments, and this includes environments that favour an agile approach to project management. The PRINCE2 2017 update includes specific guidance on agile adoption and makes direct reference, where relevant, to PRINCE2 Agile.

PRINCE2 is extremely flexible and versatile. Completely scalable: its *principles* remain consistent, but not all elements of the method need to be applied comprehensively to every project. To provide clarification on the mandatory elements, the PRINCE2 2017 update provides guidance on identifying the minimum requirement for a PRINCE2 project and on making selective, but optimum use of PRINCE2's elements to suit the scale of the project in hand.

1.6 WHAT TERM SHOULD BE USED TO DESCRIBE THE UPDATE?

The PRINCE2 name will remain unchanged.

For the purposes of differentiating between the old and new, AXELOS will refer to the updated version of PRINCE2 as the "PRINCE2 2017 update" or "the 2017 update".

1.7 WHO WAS CONSULTED ABOUT THIS UPDATE?

This latest evolution of PRINCE2 has been developed in close consultation and collaboration with project management professionals (practitioners, the AXELOS accredited community, academics) from the widest possible range of industry sectors and cultures.

The guidance was written by a team of three authors supported by three mentors. The guidance was also reviewed by over 100 project management professionals. The exams have been developed by a team of six examiners for both Foundation and Practitioner exams.

Before launch the new Practitioner exam was also sat by over 250 of our accredited trainers who provided feedback on the new exam questions and format. Over 100 trainers also supported the development of the Foundation exam, reviewing new questions.

1.8 WHEN IS THE UPDATE FOR PRINCE2 TAKING PLACE?

The English version of the new guidance, *Managing Successful Projects with PRINCE2 2017 Edition* was published on 18 May 2017. It is now available to order on the AXELOS store.

The English Foundation and Practitioner exams became available through our Accredited Training Organizations (ATOs) in early July. To date thousands of delegates have already sat the training and exams based on the 2017 update.

Please refer to section 2.7 for details on the release of the translations.

1.9 WHO IS DEVELOPING THIS UPDATE?

AXELOS has worked closely with a team of authors and mentors to develop this update for PRINCE2.

The members of the authoring team are:

- Nigel Bennett
- Robert Buttrick
- Phil Stanton

Supported by a group of mentors:

- Andy Murray
- Keith Richards
- Michelle Rowland

In addition to this team there is also a broad team of examiners:

- Chief Examiner: Michelle Rowland
- Practitioner Exam Team: Michelle Rowland, Adrian Hicks, Anne McGrath, Angela Faithful and Ravi Rebelly
- Foundation Exam Team: Michelle Rowland, Sue Childs, Steven Gardiner, Michal Kwiatek, Stefan Ondek and Eralp Tezcan

An advisory board also supported the development of the update. They were also supported by a wider team of over 100 reviewers, across two review stages and drawn across industry sectors and geographies.

1.10 HAS THERE BEEN ANY CROSSOVER PERIOD BETWEEN THE TWO VERSIONS OF THE EXAMS IN ENGLISH?

There was a crossover period between the two versions of the exams for English. To facilitate an optimal transition, both versions were available from the launch of the update until the end of 2017.

From 1 January 2018, it is not possible to take an English version of the pre-update (2009) Foundation, Practitioner or Practitioner re-registration exams. This will only be applicable for English language versions, please see section 2.7 for further details about PRINCE2 in other languages.

1.11 IS THIS THE PRECURSOR TO PRINCE3?

No, this is not PRINCE3 nor a first step on the path towards it. PRINCE2 was the evolution of the original IT specific PRINCE project management approach. The PRINCE2 2017 update remains a generic project management approach and therefore there is no need for a name change. This update is focused on enhancing the core product of PRINCE2 to ensure that it remains relevant and valuable to those who adopt the method.

1.12 WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR PRINCE2?

AXELOS is committed to the continuous improvement of PRINCE2 (and the rest of the PPM portfolio), as is demonstrated by this update. AXELOS will continue to monitor the PPM community feedback and continue to improve the portfolio whether through new product development, or the maintenance and updating of existing products.

2 The PRINCE2 2017 update guidance, exams and certification

2.1 WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHANGES TO THE EXAMS?

The changes to the exams are as follows:

- **Foundation exam:**
  - AXELOS has taken steps to make the exam more efficient and focus more clearly on the core of PRINCE2. The major changes include:
    - Elements of the exam that are not part of the core have been removed (such as configuration management, which is now not described in detail within the method)
    - Assessment criteria around tailoring have been added (such as what must be applied from each theme in order to be adopting PRINCE2 in a project environment)
    - The emphasis on different parts of the syllabus has been readjusted, for example the *principles* feature more prominently, and there is a more equal weighting amongst the seven *themes*
    - Improvements to the exam design have been made, such avoiding negative questions and reducing the number of missing word and list questions. The number of questions on a paper has been reduced from 75 to 60 and trial questions have also been removed.
    - The time allowed for the exam is 60 minutes (this is the same as the 2009 version)
    - The pass mark has been increased to 55% (from 50% in the 2009 version). Therefore, to pass candidates require 33 marks out of 60.
- **Practitioner exam:**
  - There is renewed focus on ensuring that candidates have the ability to apply PRINCE2 practically in a given project environment and increase the value gained from using the method. The major changes include:
    - The Practitioner exam will now test candidates on all parts of the PRINCE2 method
    - The emphasis on different parts of the syllabus has been readjusted, for example there are questions specifically around the *principles*, and the number of questions about management products has been reduced
    - The candidate is tested on their ability to apply the core of each theme and process (at Bloom's level 3), and also on their practical ability to assess, in a particular context, whether an particular approach to project management is effective and fit for purpose (at Bloom's level 4)
    - Improvements to the exam design have been made, such as reducing the amount of 'additional information' needed to answer the questions and removing complex question styles, such as 'assertion-reason'. The number of marks on a paper has been reduced to 68
    - The time allowed for the exam is 2 hours and 30 minutes (this is the same as the 2009 version)
    - The pass mark for the exam is 38 marks out of 68 (approximately 55%).

2.2 WILL THE DIFFICULTY OF PRINCE2 EXAMS CHANGE WITH THIS UPDATE?

As part of the exam development process for the PRINCE2 2017 update AXELOS has conducted a number of pre-tests on the new Practitioner papers, both through the trainer readiness events hosted in March 2017 as well as a follow up controlled candidate trial.

This process has enabled us to conduct a standard setting exercise which has taken into account the changes in the exam, the results of these tests and feedback provided by candidates and trainers.

Any change in difficulty of the questions that make up the exam, has been offset by the change in pass mark or reduction in the number of questions asked in the same amount of time as the 2009 version.

2.3 IF I HAVE THE 2009 VERSION OF THE FOUNDATION EXAM, CAN I TAKE THE UPDATED PRACTITIONER EXAM?

Yes. The PRINCE2 2017 update does not affect the existing prerequisite requirements.

In order to sit the PRINCE2 Practitioner examination you must provide proof of having passed one of the following:

- PRINCE2 Foundation (this must be a 2009/2017 certificate)
- Project Management Professional (PMP)
- Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM)
- IPMA Level A® (Certified Projects Director)
- IPMA Level B® (Certified Senior Project Manager)
- IPMA Level C® (Certified Project Manager)
- IPMA Level D® (Certified Project Management Associate).

Please see the PRINCE2 certification pages on AXELOS.com for further information.

2.4 WHEN WERE THE OLD EXAMS PHASED OUT IN ENGLISH?

The 2009 version of the exams (based on the 2009 edition of the guidance) in English were phased out at the end of 2017.

For questions relating to languages other than English versions of the exams and guidance please refer to section 2.7.

2.5 WILL TSO REMAIN THE OFFICIAL PUBLISHER FOR PRINCE2?

Yes, TSO published the new edition of PRINCE2. It is available to order from the AXELOS store or TSO bookstore. The retail price for the new publication is £85.00.

2.6 ARE ALL THE PUBLICATIONS BEING UPDATED?

In addition to updating the PRINCE2 manual, AXELOS, through TSO has published the *PRINCE2 Handbook, 2017 Edition*. It is available to buy through the AXELOS Store. The retail price for the new publication is £9.95.

AXELOS will share updates regarding other publications, such as the *Passing your PRINCE2 Examination, Directing Successful Projects with PRINCE2* and *The Executive Guide to Directing Projects within a PRINCE2® and MSP® Environment* in due course.

2.7 WHAT LANGUAGES WILL THE UPDATED VERSION OF PRINCE2 BE AVAILABLE IN?

In 2017, the updated guidance and exams were initially provided in English. Before launch they went through extensive testing and their performance continues to be reviewed now that they are in use.

The translations work of both the guidance and the Foundation and Practitioner exams into the following languages have begun:

- Dutch
- German
- Polish
- French
- Danish
- Norwegian.

AXELOS is also planning to translate the guidance and exams into the below languages:

- Italian
- Chinese
- Czech
- Spanish.

AXELOS has selected these initial languages based on the current level of demand for PRINCE2 in each. As with all future translations, AXELOS will review any further translation requests on a case-by-case basis.

More details about the progress and timeline for translations can be found on the relevant page on the AXELOS website.

2.8 WHEN WILL, THE OLD EXAMS BE PHASED OUT FOR THE OTHER LANGUAGES?

The 2009 version of the exams (based on the 2009 edition of the guidance) in English were phased out at the end of 2017.

For the first six languages (detailed in point 2.7) the 2009 version of both the Foundation and Practitioner exams will be available until 31 March 2019. AXELOS will communicate a crossover period for the other languages in due course.

2.9 WHAT IS THE PROCESS USED WHEN AXELOS TRANSLATES ITS BEST PRACTICE PRODUCTS?

AXELOS has an in-house translations team which includes five people whose main role is to prepare and coordinate all AXELOS translation projects.

This team uses several tools and techniques to deliver these projects;

- A Translation Management System (TMS) which includes a project management module, a web editor and a term base amongst other things. All translations since September 2017 have been managed and carried out within the TMS

- A global language services supplier with operations in all the regions where translations are required. This means that for each language, there is a dedicated team of native-speaking linguists working on the project

- A wide range of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) who have at least 5 years' experience of working with the product which they are reviewing. SMEs are usually accredited trainers, but also include consultants and practitioners who provide up-to-date input on terminology.

A typical translation project follows these steps:

1. Review of English content to ensure that it is ready for translation. A set of Global English guidelines based on translation best practices is used to proofread all core content

2. Translation by professional translators and reviewers

3. Internal check by the AXELOS translations coordinator and preparation for SME review

4. SME review to ensure technical content is accurate for their language and region

5. AXELOS translation coordinator liaises between SMEs and AXELOS product teams to resolve any queries

6. Implementation of all changes and corrections

7. Translations team validates translation

8. Publication of translated content and distribution via appropriate channel or distributor.

2.10 I HAVE THE 2009 VERSION OF THE PRACTITIONER CERTIFICATE. HAS THE UPDATE MADE THIS REDUNDANT?

Any current PRINCE2 Practitioner certificate holder who passed the exam before the 2017 update remains as relevant as any end learner. Your current certification in PRINCE2 will remain valid until the end of its five-year period and it is still applicable for PRINCE2 digital badge available via the PRINCE2 Membership programme.

AXELOS is, however, updating the way in which PRINCE2 Practitioners remain current. Please refer to section 2.11 for details.

It is recommended that any existing PRINCE2 Practitioners familiarize themselves with the changes through reviewing the new guidance or joining our PRINCE2 Membership programme which will provide exclusive content on the changes covered within the PRINCE2 2017 update.

2.11 ARE THERE ANY CHANGES TO THE WAY NEW PRINCE2 PRACTITIONERS RE-REGISTER?

The purpose of re-registration is to ensure that PRINCE2 Practitioners keep their knowledge current. As part of the update we are changing these requirements to reflect the growing importance of professional development.

From the release of the new guidance and exams in mid-2017, end learners certified in PRINCE2 will be encouraged remain current through a new programme linked to PRINCE2 Membership. This will enable our Practitioners to record CPD (Continuing Professional Development) activities on an annual basis, which they can collect throughout the year. CPD allows practitioners to demonstrate they are maintaining their professional expertise and avoids the need for a mandatory re-registration exam.

The main elements of the new programme are:

- The new PRINCE2 2017 Practitioner certificates have a registration expiry date of three years
- Candidates can retake the full Practitioner exam at the end of the three years (or at any point after that) to remain current. There will be no PRINCE2 2017 update re-registration exam
- PRINCE2 Membership offers an alternative option for candidates. In order to remain current with their certification candidates must satisfy the following criteria within the three-year period:
    1. Join membership within three months of passing their exam and remain in membership for the three-year period by renewing the subscription each year
    2. Maintain the PRINCE2 digital badge which will be awarded as part of membership for the three-year period. Candidates will need to record 20 CPD points each year, in the prescribed categories, for the badge to be extended on renewal.

- If a candidate has satisfied the above two criteria they will be considered current and issued a new certificate at the end of year three that is valid for a further three years. You will only receive a new certificate if your digital badge has been maintained for the three-year period
- To support candidates who wish to remain current, AXELOS will be including one year's PRINCE2 Membership with every PRINCE2 2017 update Practitioner exam. Once a candidate successfully passes their exam AXELOS will contact them with details of how to activate their membership and claim a digital badge
- Current PRINCE2 certifications (issued prior to release of the updated PRINCE2 guidance and exam in mid-2017) remain valid until the expiry date shown on the certificate. These candidates can maintain their current registration via AXELOS Membership and logging the required 20 CPD points each year to maintain their digital badge. However, these individuals will not be issued a new certificate at the end of three years, instead their digital badge is proof that they have maintained their professional expertise
- The membership service is currently only available in English. AXELOS will accept CPD submissions in languages other than English and be able to audit if required
- The changes to re-registration are only applicable to PRINCE2 Practitioners taking the English language version of the 2017 examination. Existing translated exams of 2009 PRINCE2 will still be available as will their re-registration exams
- Trainers can choose to remain PRINCE2-certified via the new programme, or re-sit the Practitioner exam at the end of their three-year certification period.

For more information about these changes see the AXELOS PRINCE2 Membership FAQs.

2.12 WHY IS THE MEMBERSHIP SERVICE NOT OFFERED IN ANY LANGAUGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH?

AXELOS Membership launched in late-2015 and the programme has gone through various stages of development since then. In addition, membership numbers are still growing and hence we do not have a valid business case to invest in the full translation of the programme at this stage.

If in future AXELOS sees growing demand for our membership service in other languages, then we will endeavour to meet that demand.

2.13 IF I HAVE THE 2009 VERSION OF PRINCE2, CAN I STILL TAKE PRINCE2 AGILE® PRACTITIONER?

Yes. The PRINCE2 2017 update does not affect the existing prerequisite requirements for PRINCE2 Agile.

In order to sit the PRINCE2 Agile Practitioner examination you must provide proof of having passed one of the following:

- PRINCE2 Foundation (this must be a 2009 certificate or later)
- PRINCE2 Practitioner
- Project Management Professional® (PMP)
- Certified Associate in Project Management® (CAPM)
- IMPA Levels A, B, C and D® (Certified Projects Director).

To find out more information about the prerequisites for PRINCE2 Agile please visit the related certification page.

2.14 HOW HAS THE UPDATE AFFECTED THE GUIDANCE FOR PRINCE2 AGILE?

As the PRINCE2 2017 update affirms the method's tried and tested approach to project management, with its overall structure of seven *principles*, *themes*, and processes, there will not be a major impact on PRINCE2 Agile.

Where the PRINCE2 Agile guidance has directly referenced or quoted the 2009 PRINCE2 guidance, AXELOS will in due course make the required changes.

PRINCE2 Agile remains current and valuable to our end learner and accredited community. AXELOS expects continued strong growth into 2018 and beyond.

2.15 IS TRAINING MANDATED FOR PRINCE2 FOUNDATION AND PRACTITIONER?

As with similar AXELOS products, training is not mandated, although it is strongly recommended for both PRINCE2 Foundation and Practitioner qualifications. If you are undertaking training as part of your exam preparation it is important to make sure it is with an AXELOS accredited training provider. The advantage of training is that the Accredited Training Organization (ATO) is able to support individuals and provide any necessary clarification of the guidance including relevant industry examples.

AXELOS has taken this decision as a direct response to community feedback, where candidates have requested that training not be mandated in order to take our certifications.