

# PRINCE2 2017 Update FAQs

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# 1 General questions

## 1.1 WHAT IS PRINCE2?

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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 IS HAPPENING TO PRINCE2 IN 2017?

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

The update in 2017 will only initially impact 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 2.8 for clarification.

## 1.3 WHY IS THERE AN UPDATE TO PRINCE2?

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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 is 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<sup>1</sup>), 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?

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This updated PRINCE2 affirms the method's 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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<sup>1</sup> 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?

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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?

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The PRINCE2 name will remain unchanged.

For the purposes of differentiating between the old and new during 2017, 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?

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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.

## 1.8 WHEN IS THE UPDATE FOR PRINCE2 TAKING PLACE?

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The PRINCE2 2017 update will see a phased launch take place over several months.

The English version of the new guidance, *Managing Successful Projects with PRINCE2* is due for publication on 18 May 2017. It is now available to pre-order on the [AXELOS store](#).

The English Foundation and Practitioner exams are scheduled to be delivered to our Examination Institutes in mid-June with the exams becoming publicly available soon after.

Please refer to section 2.8 for details on the release of non-English languages.

## 1.9 WHO IS DEVELOPING THIS UPDATE?

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AXELOS has been working 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 Rebellly
- Foundation Exam Team: Michelle Rowland, Sue Childs, Steven Gardiner, Michal Kwiatek, Stefan Ondek and Eralp Tezcan

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

## 1.10 WILL THERE BE ANY CROSSOVER PERIOD BETWEEN THE TWO VERSIONS OF THE EXAMS?

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There will be a crossover period between the two versions of the exams. To facilitate an optimal transition, both versions will be available from the launch of the update until the end of 2017 to ensure there is minimal disruption to training and certification programmes. This allows organizations to complete training cycles across the changeover period.

From the 1st January 2018 it will not be possible to take an English version of the pre-update (current/2009) Foundation, Practitioner or Practitioner re-registration exams. This will only be applicable for English language versions, please see section 2.8 for further details about PRINCE2 in other languages.

### **1.11 IS THIS THE PRE-CURSOR TO PRINCE3?**

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No, this is not PRINCE3 nor a first step on the path towards it. PRINCE2 was the generic evolution of the original IT specific PRINCE project management approach. The PRINCE 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?**

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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?

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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 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 removing 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/current version)
    - The pass mark has been increased to 55% (from 50% in the current 2009/current 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/current 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?

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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 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/current version.

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

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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
- 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 WILL THE OLD EXAMS BE PHASED OUT?**

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The current version of the exams (based on the current/2009 edition of the guidance) in English will be phased out by the end of 2017.

For questions relating to non-English versions of the exams and guidance please refer to section 2.8.

## **2.5 WILL TSO REMAIN THE OFFICIAL PUBLISHER FOR PRINCE2?**

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Yes, TSO will be publishing the updated edition of PRINCE2. It is available to pre-order from the [AXELOS store](#) or [TSO bookstore](#). The retail price for the new publication is £85.00.

## **2.6 WHEN WILL THE NEW PRINCE2 GUIDE BE AVAILABLE?**

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The new version of the guidance is available to pre-order now for a retail price of £85.00. The guidance will be published on 18 May 2017.

AXELOS, through our publisher TSO, will release a hard copy version in addition to online PDF and online subscriptions, all for the official launch.

## **2.7 ARE ALL THE PUBLICATIONS BEING UPDATED?**

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AXELOS is currently working on the development of the PRINCE2 Pocketbook to complement the main guidance. The launch of the pocketbook will be aligned with the main publication date.

AXELOS will share updates regarding other publications, such as the *Directing Successful Projects with PRINCE2* and *The Executive Guide to Directing Projects within a PRINCE2® and MSP® Environment* later in 2017.

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

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The updated guidance and exams will initially be available in English for the launch in mid-2017. Before launch, the guidance and exams will go through extensive testing and AXELOS will continue to review performance after launch.

AXELOS will use this period to ensure that the new exams and guidance are of the highest quality, and will then begin the process of translating both the guidance and the exams into the following languages:

- Dutch
- German
- Polish
- French
- Danish
- Norwegian
- Italian

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.

A more detailed timeline will be provided nearer the launch date of the English version.

## 2.9 I HAVE THE CURRENT/2009 VERSION OF THE PRACTITIONER CERTIFICATE, WILL THE UPDATE MAKE THIS REDUNDANT?

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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 2.10 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.

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

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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 Practitioner certificates have an expiry date of three years
- Candidates can retake the full Practitioner exam at the end of the three years to remain current. There will be no PRINCE2 2017 update re-registration exam
- PRINCE2 Membership offers an alternative option for candidates. To remain current with your certification, you must satisfy the following criteria:
  1. Have an active subscription to PRINCE2 Membership which they maintain for the three-year period
  2. Complete the required 20 CPD points each year across the three-year period. On joining the programme candidates will earn a PRINCE2 Practitioner digital badge. This badge will be extended every year as long as the 20 CPD points are recorded.
- 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
- 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 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](#).

## 2.11 IF I HAVE THE CURRENT/2009 VERSION OF PRINCE2, CAN I STILL TAKE PRINCE2 AGILE® PRACTITIONER?

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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
- 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](#).

## 2.12 WILL THIS UPDATE AFFECT THE GUIDANCE FOR PRINCE2 AGILE?

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As 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 current/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 2017 and beyond.

## 2.13 WILL TRAINING BE MANDATED FOR PRINCE2 FOUNDATION AND PRACTITIONER?

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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.

