

PRINCE2® Foundation  
Examination Specification

July 2017

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# 1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline:

- the learning outcomes of the PRINCE2 Foundation qualification and the assessment criteria that a candidate is expected to meet for each learning outcome (with reference to the PRINCE2 *Managing Successful Projects with PRINCE2* publication, 2017 edition)
- the examination design, in terms of question types to be used, exam duration and administrative considerations
- the weightings (number of questions) across learning outcomes, assessment criteria and 'Bloom's level' (level of cognitive processing required to answer the question/task, according to Bloom's (revised) taxonomy).

The target audience for this document is:

- Examination Institute partners
- Accredited Training Organization partners

The purpose of the PRINCE2 Foundation Examination is:

- to assess whether the candidate can demonstrate sufficient recall and understanding of the PRINCE2 project management method, as described in the syllabus below, to be awarded the PRINCE2 Foundation qualification. (The PRINCE2 Foundation qualification is a prerequisite for the PRINCE2 Practitioner Examination, which assesses the ability to apply understanding of the PRINCE2 project management method in context.)

The target audience for this qualification is:

- Project Managers and aspiring Project Managers
- Other key staff involved in the design, development and delivery of projects, including: Project Board members (e.g. Senior Responsible Owners), Team Managers (e.g. Product Delivery Managers), Project Assurance (e.g. Business Change Analysts), Project Support (e.g. Project and Programme Office personnel), and operational line managers/staff.

## 2. PRINCE2 Foundation Syllabus

The table below specifies the learning outcomes of the PRINCE2 Foundation qualification, and the assessment criteria used to assess a candidate's achievement of these learning outcomes, subsequent to a course of study. Note: Principal book references are in parentheses. These refer to the section, but not the subsections within it. The verb for each assessment criterion indicates the Bloom's level (BL): 'Recall'/'Define' indicates Level 1 basic recall and recognition, 'Describe'/'Explain', indicates Level 2 understanding/comprehension.

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria	BL
1. Understand key concepts relating to projects and PRINCE2	1.1 Recall: a) the definition and characteristics of a project (2.1), b) the six aspects of project performance to be managed (2.3), c) the integrated elements of PRINCE2: principles, themes, processes and the project environment (1.1), d) what makes a project a PRINCE2 project (1.3).	BL1
	1.2 Describe: a) the features and benefits of PRINCE2 (1), b) the customer/supplier context on which PRINCE2 is based, including considerations when undertaking projects in a commercial environment (2.5, 2.5.4).	BL2
2. Understand how the PRINCE2 principles underpin the PRINCE2 method	2.1 Explain the PRINCE2 principles: a) continued business justification (3.1), b) learn from experience (3.2), c) defined roles and responsibilities (3.3), d) manage by stages (3.4), e) manage by exception (3.5), f) focus on products (3.6), g) tailor to suit the project (3.7).	BL2
	2.2 Explain which aspects of a project can be tailored, who is responsible, and how tailoring decisions are documented (4.3.1-2).	BL2
3. Understand the PRINCE2 themes and how they are applied throughout the project	<b>Business case theme</b>	
	3.1.1 Explain the purpose of: a) the business case theme (6.1), b) key management products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• business case (A.2.1),</li> <li>• benefits management approach (A.1.1).</li> </ul>	BL2
	3.1.2 Describe PRINCE2's minimum requirements for applying the business case theme (6.2).	BL2
	3.1.3 Define key concepts related to business justification, and the differences between them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• outputs (6.1, fig 6.1),</li> <li>• outcomes (6.1, fig 6.1),</li> <li>• benefits (6.1, fig 6.1),</li> <li>• dis-benefits (6.1, fig 6.1).</li> </ul>	BL1
	<b>Organization theme</b>	
	3.2.1 Explain the purpose of: a) the organization theme (7.1), b) key management products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communication management approach. (A.5.1)</li> </ul>	BL2
	3.2.2 Describe what PRINCE 2 requires, as a minimum, for applying the organization theme (7.2, fig 7.3).	BL2

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria	BL
3. (continued) Understand the PRINCE2 themes and how they are applied throughout the project	<b>Organization theme (continued)</b>	
	3.2.3 Describe the role and responsibilities of: a) project board (7.2.1.1), b) executive (7.2.1.2), c) senior user (7.2.1.3), d) senior supplier (7.2.1.4), e) project assurance (7.2.1.5), f) change authority (7.2.1.6), g) project manager (7.2.1.7), h) team manager (7.2.1.8), i) project support (7.2.1.9), including j) which roles can be combined (7.2.1.10).	BL2
	3.2.4 Explain key concepts related to organization: a) stakeholder (7.1), b) the three project interests and how these are represented within the four levels of management (7.1, fig 7.1, fig 7.2).	BL2
	<b>Quality theme</b>	
	3.3.1 Explain the purpose of: a) the quality theme (8.1), b) key management products: • product description (A.17.1), • project product description (A.21.1), • quality management approach. (A.22.1), • quality register (A.23.1).	BL2
	3.3.2 Describe PRINCE2's minimum requirements for applying the quality theme (8.2).	BL2
	3.3.3 Explain key concepts related to quality, and the differences between them: a) quality planning and quality control (8.1.1), b) project assurance and quality assurance (8.1.1), c) customer quality expectations and acceptance criteria (8.1, 8.3.6, 8.3.8).	BL2
	<b>Plans theme</b>	
	3.4.1 Explain the purpose of: a) the plans theme (9.1), b) types of plan: • project plan (9.2.1.1, A.16.1), • stage plan (9.2.1.2, A.16.1), • exception plan (9.2.1.3, A.16.1), • team plan (9.2.1.4, A.16.1).	BL2
	3.4.2 Describe PRINCE2's minimum requirements for applying the plans theme (9.2).	BL2
	3.4.3 Recall the steps in: a) the recommended approach to planning (fig 9.2), including b) the recommended approach to defining and analyzing the products (fig 9.6), and explain: c) the factors to consider when structuring the project into management stages (9.3.1.1).	BL1
		BL2
	<b>Risk theme</b>	
	3.5.1 Explain the purpose of: a) the risk theme, including the purpose of a risk budget (10.1, 10.3.7), b) key management products: • risk management approach (A.24.1), • risk register (A.25.1).	BL2
	3.5.2 Describe PRINCE2's minimum requirements for applying the risk theme (10.2).	BL2
3.5.3 Define key concepts related to risk, and the differences between them: a) a risk: threat or opportunity (10.1), b) recommended risk response types (tab 10.3), c) risk owner and risk actionee (10.4.4), d) cause, event and effect (10.4.1.2), e) risk probability, risk impact and risk proximity. (10.4.2.1)	BL1	
3.5.4 Describe the recommended risk management procedure (10.3.2, 10.4.1-5).	BL2	

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria	BL
<p>3. (continued) Understand the PRINCE2 themes and how they are applied throughout the project</p>	<p><b>Change theme</b></p>	
	<p>3.6.1 Explain the purpose of: a) the change theme, including the purpose of a change budget (11.1,11.3.6), b) key management products:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• change control approach (A.3.1),</li> <li>• configuration item record (A.6.1),</li> <li>• issue register (A.12.1),</li> <li>• issue report (A.13.1),</li> <li>• product status account (A.18.1).</li> </ul> </p>	BL2
	<p>3.6.2 Describe PRINCE2's minimum requirements for applying the change theme (11.2).</p>	BL2
	<p>3.6.3 Describe: a) types of issue (11.1, tab 11.1), b) the recommended issue and change control procedure (fig 11.1, 11.4.1-5).</p>	BL2
	<p><b>Progress theme</b></p>	
	<p>3.7.1 Explain the purpose of: a) the progress theme (12.1), b) key management products:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• daily log (A.7.1),</li> <li>• lessons log (A.14.1, 12.2.2.3),</li> <li>• lessons report (A.15.1),</li> <li>• work package (A.26.1, 12.2.2.1),</li> <li>• end stage report (A.9.1, 12.2.2.4),</li> <li>• end project report (A.8.1, 12.2.2.4),</li> <li>• checkpoint report (A.4.1, 12.2.2.4),</li> <li>• highlight report (A.11.1, 12.2.2.4),</li> <li>• exception report (A.10.1).</li> </ul> </p>	BL2
	<p>3.7.2 Describe PRINCE2's minimum requirements for applying the progress theme (12.2).</p>	BL2
<p>3.7.3 Explain key concepts related to progress: a) event-driven and time-driven controls (12.2.2), b) tolerances and exceptions, including how tolerances are set and exceptions are reported (12.2.1, fig 12.1, 12.2.3).</p>	BL2	
<p>4. Understand the PRINCE2 processes and how they are carried out throughout the project</p>	<p>4.1 Explain the purpose of the PRINCE2 processes: a) starting up a project (14.1), including h) the purpose of the project brief (A.19.1), b) directing a project (15.1), including i) the purpose of the project initiation documentation (A.20.1), c) initiating a project (16.1), d) controlling a stage (17.1), e) managing product delivery (18.1), f) managing a stage boundary (19.1), g) closing a project (20.1).</p>	BL2
	<p>4.2 Explain the objectives of the PRINCE2 processes (a-g above) (14.2, 15.2, 16.2, 17.2, 18.2, 19.2, 20.2).</p>	BL2
	<p>4.3 Explain the context of the PRINCE2 processes (a-g above) (14.3, 15.3, 16.3, 17.3, 18.3, 19.3, 20.3).</p>	BL2

## 3 PRINCE2 Foundation Examination Design

### 3.1 Examination Administration

Duration: 60 minutes

NOTE: Candidates taking the exam in a language that is not their native or working language may be awarded 25% extra time, i.e. 75 minutes in total.

Materials permitted: This is a 'closed book' examination. No materials other than the examination materials are permitted.

### 3.2 Question Types

All 60 questions are Objective Test Questions (OTQs), which present four options from which one option is selected. Distractors (wrong answers) are options that candidates with incomplete knowledge or skill would be likely to choose. These are generally plausible responses relating to the syllabus area being examined. Question styles used within this type are: 'standard', 'missing word', 'list' (2 correct items), and, exceptionally, 'negative' standard OTQ.

#### Example 'standard' OTQ:

What is the purpose of the quality theme?

- a) To do Q
- b) To do P
- c) To do R
- d) To do S

#### Example 'list' OTQ:

Which statements about product-based planning are CORRECT?

1. It does Q
  2. It does P
  3. It does R
  4. It does S
- a) 1 and 2
  - b) 2 and 3
  - c) 3 and 4
  - d) 1 and 4

NOTE: Two of the list items are correct. List style questions are never negative (see below)

#### Example 'missing word' OTQ

Identify the missing word(s) in the following sentence.

During the 'controlling a stage' process, the team manager should update the [ ? ] to reflect the timing of the work packages that have been authorized.

- a) Product Q
- b) Product P
- c) Product R
- d) Product S

#### Example 'negative' standard OTQ:

Which role should NOT be shared with the role of project manager?

- a) Role Q
- b) Role P
- c) Role R
- d) Role S

NOTE: Negative questions are only used, as an exception, where part of the learning outcome is to know that something is not done or should not occur.

### 3.3 Scoring

Number of questions: 60

Marks: Each question is worth 1 mark. There are 60 marks available. (There are no ‘trial’ questions.)

There is no negative marking.

Pass mark: 55% or higher - a raw score of 33 marks or above

### 3.4 Weightings by Bloom’s Level

There are 7 questions at Bloom’s Level 1 = approx. 12%

There are 53 questions at Bloom’s Level 2 = approx. 78%

### 3.5 Weightings by Learning Outcome

Learning Outcome	No.OTQs	Approx. weighting
1. Understand key concepts relating to projects and PRINCE2	5	8%
2. Understand how the PRINCE2 principles underpin the PRINCE2 method	8	13%
3. Understand the PRINCE2 themes and how they are applied throughout the project	31	52%
4. Understand the PRINCE2 processes and how they are carried out throughout the project	16	27%
	60 OTQs	100%

### 3.6 Weightings by Assessment (sub-) Criterion

The (2017) PRINCE2 Foundation Examination is designed to test both the breadth and depth of the syllabus. Every assessment criterion is tested on each assessment (ensuring that breadth is covered). Not all assessment sub-criteria are tested on each assessment, but have the possibility of being presented according to the weightings and paper build rules outlined in the table on page 9, thus requiring that the candidate acquire depth of knowledge in a high proportion of the syllabus content. Question selection, in terms of sub-criteria assessed, must follow the paper build rules below, but otherwise be random.



Learning Outcome	Assessment (sub) criteria		No.OTQs			Paper build rules
			BL1	BL2	Total	
1. (Projects and PRINCE2)		1.1a-d	3	0	5	Max. 1 OTQ on any one sub-criterion
		1.2a/b	0	2		Max. 1 OTQ on any one sub-criterion
2. (PRINCE2 principles)		2.1a-g	0	7	8	Max. 1 OTQ on any one sub-criterion
		2.2	0	1		
3. (PRINCE2 themes)	Business case theme	3.1.1 a/b	0	1	3	See additional paper build rule 1
		3.1.2	0	1		
		3.1.3	1	0		
	Organization theme	3.2.1a/b	0	1	7	See additional paper build rule 1
		3.2.2	0	1		
		3.2.3a-d	0	4		Max. 2 OTQ from these 4 subcriteria Max. 1 OTQ on any one subcriterion
		3.2.3e-j				Max. 1 OTQ on any one subcriterion
		3.2.4	0	1		
	Quality theme	3.3.1a/b	0	2	4	Max. 1 OTQ on any one sub-criterion
		3.3.2	0	1		
		3.3.3a-c	0	1		
	Plans theme	3.4.1a/b	0	1	4	See additional paper build rule 1
		3.4.2	0	1		
		3.4.3a/b	1	0		
		3.4.3c	0	1		
	Risk theme	3.5.1a/b	0	1	5	See additional paper build rule 1
		3.5.2	0	1		
		3.5.3a-e	2	0		Max. 1 OTQ on any one subcriterion
		3.5.4	0	1		
	Change theme	3.6.1a/b	0	1	3	See additional paper build rule 1
3.6.2		0	1			
3.6.3a/b		0	1			
Progress theme	3.7.1a/b	0	2	5	Max. 1 OTQ on any one subcriterion	
	3.7.2	0	1			
	3.7.3a/b	0	2		Max. 1 OTQ on any one subcriterion	
4. (PRINCE2 processes)	Purpose	4.1a-g	0	5	16	Max. 1 OTQ on any one subcriterion
		4.1h/i	0	1		
	Objectives	4.2a-g	0	5		Max. 1 OTQ on any one subcriterion
	Context	4.3a-g	0	5		Max. 1 OTQ on any one subcriterion
Total			BL1 = 7	BL2 = 53	60	

### 3.7 Paper Build Rules

Exam papers must be built to consist of the number of questions per assessment (sub-) criterion shown in the table on page 9. Questions must be presented in random order, not in the order of the syllabus. Answer options must be presented in the order provided in the question bank, and not in alphabetical order/order of length/random order.

Additional paper build rules are:

1. The number of questions specifically testing knowledge of the purpose of the PRINCE2 management products (listed in Appendix A of *Managing Successful Projects with PRINCE2*, 2017 edition) is limited to a minimum of 3 OTQs, and a maximum of 5 OTQs.

One OTQ for each of 3.3.1b, 3.7.1b and 4.1(h/i) are mandated in the paper build (see table on page 9) therefore a maximum of 2 OTQs may be presented to test 3.1.1b, 3.2.1b, 3.4.1b, 3.5.1b and/or 3.6.1b.

2. There are the following limits on the number of questions per question style

Question style	No.OTQs
Standard	Max. 52 Min. 50
Negative	Max 2
Missing word	4
List	4
	60 OTQs