

PRINCE2[®] Practitioner Examination Specification

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline:

- the learning outcomes of the PRINCE2 Practitioner 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 Practitioner examination is:

- to assess whether the candidate can demonstrate sufficient ability to apply and tailor the PRINCE2 project management method (as described in the syllabus below) to be awarded the PRINCE2 Practitioner qualification. A successful Practitioner candidate should, with suitable direction, be able to start applying the method to a real project but may not be sufficiently skilled to do this appropriately for all situations. Their individual project management expertise, complexity of the project and the support provided for the use of PRINCE2 in their work environment will all be factors that impact what the Practitioner can achieve.

The target audience for this qualification is:

- project managers and aspiring project managers
- it is also relevant to 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 Practitioner Syllabus

The table below specifies the learning outcomes of the PRINCE2 Practitioner qualification and the assessment criteria used to assess candidate's achievement of these outcomes, subsequent to a course of study.

Note: Principal book references are in parentheses. † denotes inclusion of all subsections.

The verb for each syllabus area/assessment criteria indicates the Bloom's level (BL):

e.g. 'Apply', 'Carry out', indicates Level 3

e.g. 'Assess', 'Analyze', indicates Level 4 (see also section 3.4)

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria	BL	No. Marks
1. Apply the PRINCE2 principles in context	1.1 Analyze the application of PRINCE2 principles in context: 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, 4.1, 4.3†).	BL4	8
2. Apply and tailor relevant aspects of PRINCE2 themes in context	2.1.1 Apply the PRINCE2 requirements for the business case theme (6.2†), demonstrating an understanding of: a) key management products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> benefits management approach (A.1†), business case (A.2†), b) the recommended roles and responsibilities within the theme (tab 6.1), and c) outputs, outcomes, benefits and dis-benefits (6.1, fig 6.1).	BL3	3
	2.1.2 Assess whether an approach to applying the business case theme is effective and fit for purpose, taking into consideration: the context, the PRINCE2 principles, and the purpose and requirements of the theme (6-6.3†, 4.3†, 5.1, A.1†, A.2†, App.C†, 14.5.2, 16.5.2).	BL4	2
	2.2.1 Apply the PRINCE2 requirements for the organization theme (7.2†), demonstrating an understanding of: a) key management product: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> communication management approach (7.2.2, A.5†), b) the recommended roles and responsibilities within the theme (tab 7.1), and c) the recommended project management team structure (7.1-2†, fig 7.2, 7.3.1, 7.3.7, App C†).	BL3	3
	2.2.2 Assess whether an approach to applying the organization theme is effective and fit for purpose, taking into consideration: the context, the PRINCE2 principles, and the purpose and requirements of the theme (7.1-2†, 7.3.1-5, 7.3.7, 4.3†, 5.1, 16.5.2, A.5†, App.C†, 15.5.2, 14.5.3, 16.5.3, 17.5.3, 18.5.3, 19.5.3, 20.5.3).	BL4	2

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria	BL	No. Marks
2. (continued) Apply (and tailor) relevant aspects of PRINCE2 themes in context	<p>2.3.1 Apply the PRINCE2 requirements for the quality theme (8.2), demonstrating an understanding of:</p> <p>a) key management products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • product description (A.17[†]), • project product description (A.21[†]), • quality management approach (A.22[†]), • quality register (A.23[†]), <p>b) the recommended roles and responsibilities within the theme (tab 8.1), and</p> <p>c) key activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quality planning (8.1.1, fig 8.1, 8.3.6, 8.3.8-9, 8.3.11), • quality control (8.1.1, fig 8.1), • quality assurance (8.1.1, 8.3.5). 	BL3	3
	<p>2.3.2 Assess whether an approach to applying the quality theme is effective and fit for purpose, taking into consideration: the context, the PRINCE2 principles, and the purpose and requirements of the theme (Ch.8[†] (excluding 8.3.10 & 8.3.12), 4.3[†], 5.1, 16.5.2, 19.5.2, A.17[†], A.21-23[†], App.C[†]).</p>	BL4	2
	<p>2.4.1 Apply the PRINCE2 requirements for applying the plans theme (9.2[†]), demonstrating an understanding of:</p> <p>a) key management products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • project plan (9.2.1.1, A.16[†]), • stage plan (9.2.1.2, A.16[†]), • exception plan (9.2.1.3, A.16[†]), • team plan (9.2.1.4, A.16[†]), <p>b) the recommended roles and responsibilities within the theme (tab 9.1), and</p> <p>c) the recommended approach to planning, including the recommended approach to defining and analyzing the products (9.3.1-7 (excluding detailed estimating and resource scheduling techniques)).</p>	BL3	3
	<p>2.4.2 Assess whether an approach to applying the plans theme is effective and fit for purpose, taking into consideration: the context, the PRINCE2 principles, and the purpose and requirements of the theme (9.1-3[†] (excluding detailed estimating and resource scheduling techniques), 9.4.1, 4.3[†], 5.1, 14.5.2, 16.5.2, 18.5.2, 19.5.2, A.16[†], App.C[†]).</p>	BL4	2
	<p>2.5.1 Apply the PRINCE2 requirements for applying the risk theme (10.2), demonstrating an understanding of:</p> <p>a) key management products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • risk management approach (A.24[†]), • risk register (A.25[†]), <p>b) the recommended roles and responsibilities within the theme (tab 10.1), and</p> <p>c) the recommended risk management procedure (10.3.2, 10.4[†] (excluding risk estimation and evaluation techniques)).</p>	BL3	3
	<p>2.5.2 Assess whether an approach to applying the risk theme is effective and fit for purpose, taking into consideration: the context, the PRINCE2 principles, and the purpose and requirements of the theme (Ch.10[†] (excluding risk estimation and evaluation techniques), 4.3[†], 5.1[†], 16.5.2, A.24-25[†], App.C[†]).</p>	BL4	2

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria	BL	No. Marks
2. (continued) Apply (and tailor) relevant aspects of PRINCE2 themes in context	2.6.1 Apply the PRINCE2 requirements for applying the change theme (11.2 [†]), demonstrating an understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) key management products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • change control approach (A.3[†]), • configuration item record (A.6[†]), • issue register (A.12[†]), • issue report (A.13[†]), • product status account (A.18[†]), b) the recommended roles and responsibilities within the theme (tab 11.2), and c) the recommended issue and change control procedure (11.4[†], 11.3.6), including types of issue (11.1, tab 11.1). 	BL 3	3
	2.6.2 Assess whether an approach to applying the change theme is effective and fit for purpose, taking into consideration: the context, the PRINCE2 principles, and the purpose and requirements of the theme (Ch.11 [†] , 4.3 [†] , 5.1, 16.5.2, 17.5.2, A.3 [†] , A.6 [†] , A.12 [†] , A.13 [†] , A.18 [†] , App.C [†]).	BL 4	2
	2.7.1 Apply the PRINCE2 requirements for controlling progress (12.2 [†]), demonstrating an understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) key management products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • checkpoint report (A.4[†]), • daily log (A.7[†]), • end project report (A.8[†]), • end stage report (A.9[†]), • exception report (A.10[†]), • highlight report (A.11[†]), • lessons log (A.14[†]), • work package (A.26[†]), b) the recommended roles and responsibilities within the theme (tab 12.2), and c) tolerances and raising exceptions (12.2.1, 12.2.3). 	BL 3	3
	2.7.2 Assess whether an approach to applying the progress theme is effective and fit for purpose, taking into consideration: the context, the PRINCE2 principles, and the purpose and requirements of the theme (12.1-3 [†] , 4.3 [†] , 5.1, 14.5.2, 17.5.2, 18.5.2, 19.5.2, 20.5.2, A.4 [†] , A.7-11 [†] , A.14 [†] , A.26 [†] , App.C [†]).	BL 4	2
3. Apply (and tailor) relevant aspects of PRINCE2 processes in context	3.1.1. Carry out the starting up a project process activities (14.2-4 [†]), and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) recommended associated actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appoint the executive and the project manager (14.4.1), • capture previous lessons (14.4.2), • design and appoint the project management team (14.4.3), • prepare the outline business case (14.4.4), • select the project approach and assemble the project brief (14.4.5, A.19[†]), • plan the initiation management stage (14.4.6), demonstrating an understanding of: b) the recommended roles and responsibilities within the process (tab 14.1-6), and c) how the themes may be applied (Ch.6-12[†]). 	BL 3	3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria	BL	No. Marks
3. (continued) Apply (and tailor) relevant aspects of PRINCE2 processes in context	3.1.2 Assess whether starting up a project process activities/actions, roles and responsibilities are effective and fit for purpose, taking into consideration: the context, the PRINCE2 principles, and the purpose and objectives of the process (Ch.14 [†] (excluding 14.5.2), 4.3 [†] , 13.4, A.19 [†] , App.C [†]).	BL 4	1
	3.2.1 Carry out the directing a project process activities (15.2-4 [†]), a) and recommended associated actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • authorize initiation (15.4.1), • authorize the project (15.4.2), • authorize a stage or exception plan (15.4.3), • give ad hoc direction (15.4.4), • authorize project closure (15.4.5), demonstrating an understanding of: b) the recommended roles and responsibilities within the process (tab 15.1-5), and c) how the themes may be applied (Ch.6-12 [†]).	BL 3	3
	3.2.2 Assess whether directing a project process activities/actions, roles and responsibilities are effective and fit for purpose, taking into consideration: the context, the PRINCE2 principles, and the purpose and objectives of the process (Ch.15 [†] , 4.3 [†] , 13.4, A.19 [†] , App.C [†]).	BL 4	1
	3.3.1 Carry out the initiating a project process activities (16.2-4 [†]), a) and recommended associated actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agree the tailoring requirements (16.4.1), • prepare the risk management approach (16.4.2), • prepare the change control approach (16.4.3), • prepare the quality management approach (16.4.4), • prepare the communication management approach (16.4.5), • set up the project controls (16.4.6), • create the project plan (16.4.7), • refine the business case (16.4.8), • assemble the project initiation documentation (16.4.9, A.20[†]), demonstrating an understanding of: b) the recommended roles and responsibilities within the process (tab 16.1-9), and c) how the themes may be applied. (Ch.6-12 [†]).	BL 3	3
	3.3.2 Assess whether initiating a project process activities/actions, roles and responsibilities are effective and fit for purpose, taking into consideration: the context, the PRINCE2 principles, and the purpose and objectives of the process (Ch.16 [†] (excluding 16.5.2), 4.3 [†] , 13.4, A.20 [†] , App.C [†]).	BL 4	1

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria	BL	No. Marks
3. (continued) Apply (and tailor) relevant aspects of PRINCE2 processes in context	<p>3.4.1 Carry out the controlling a stage process activities (17.2-4[†]), a) and recommended associated actions:</p> <p>Work packages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • authorize a work package (17.4.1), • review work package status (17.4.2), • receive completed work packages (17.4.3), <p>Monitoring and reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review the management stage status (17.4.4), • report highlights (17.4.5), <p>Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capture and examine issues and risks (17.4.6), • escalate issues and risks (17.4.7), • take corrective action (17.4.8), <p>demonstrating an understanding of:</p> <p>b) the recommended roles and responsibilities within the process (tab 17.1-8), and c) how the themes may be applied (Ch.6-12[†]).</p>	BL 3	3
	<p>3.4.2 Assess whether controlling a stage process activities/actions, roles and responsibilities are effective and fit for purpose, taking into consideration: the context, the PRINCE2 principles, and the purpose and objectives of the process (Ch.17[†], (excluding 17.5.2), 4.3[†], 13.4, App.C[†]).</p>	BL 4	1
	<p>3.5.1 Carry out the managing product delivery process activities (18.2-4[†]), a) and recommended associated actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accept a work package (18.4.1), • execute a work package (18.4.2), • deliver a work package (18.4.3), <p>demonstrating an understanding of:</p> <p>b) the recommended roles and responsibilities within the process (tab 18.1-3), and c) how the themes may be applied (Ch.6-12[†]).</p>	BL 3	2
	<p>3.5.2 Assess whether managing product delivery process activities/actions, roles and responsibilities are effective and fit for purpose, taking into consideration: the context, the PRINCE2 principles, and the purpose and objectives of the process (Ch.18[†] (excluding 18.5.2), 4.3[†], 13.4, App.C[†]).</p>	BL 4	1
	<p>3.6.1 Carry out the managing a stage boundary process activities (19.2-4[†]), a) and recommended associated actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan the next management stage (19.4.1), • update the project plan (19.4.2), • update the business case (19.4.3), • report management stage end (19.4.4), • produce an exception plan (19.4.5), <p>demonstrating an understanding of:</p> <p>b) the recommended roles and responsibilities within the process (tab 19.1-5), and c) how the themes may be applied (Ch.6-12[†]).</p>	BL 3	2

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria	BL	No. Marks
3. (continued) Apply (and tailor) relevant aspects of PRINCE2 processes in context	3.6.2 Assess whether managing a stage boundary process activities/actions, roles and responsibilities are effective and fit for purpose, taking into consideration: the context, the PRINCE2 principles, and the purpose and objectives of the process (Ch.19† (excluding 19.5.2), 4.3†, 13.4, App.C†).	BL 4	1
	3.7.1 Carry out the closing a project process activities (20.2-4†), a) and recommended associated actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prepare planned closure (20.4.1), • prepare premature closure (20.4.2), • hand over products (20.4.3), • evaluate the project (20.4.4), • recommend project closure (20.4.5), demonstrating an understanding of: b) recommended roles and responsibilities within the process (tab 20.1-5), and c) how the themes may be applied (Ch.6-12†).	BL 3	2
	3.7.2 Assess whether closing a project process activities/actions, roles and responsibilities and actions are effective and fit for purpose, taking into consideration: the context, the PRINCE2 principles, and the purpose and objectives of the process (Ch.20† (excluding 20.5.2), 4.3†, 13.4, App.C†).	BL 4	1

3. PRINCE2 Practitioner Examination Design

3.1 Examination Administration

Duration: 150 minutes (2.5 hours)

NOTE: Candidates taking the exam in a language that is not their native or working language may be awarded 25% extra time, i.e. 188 minutes in total.

Materials permitted: This is an ‘open book’ examination. The *Managing Successful Projects with PRINCE2* (2017) publication is permitted, however no materials other than this publication and the examination materials may be used in the examination.

3.2 Question Types

Two types of Objective Test Questions (OTQs) are used:

'Standard classic' OTQs, which present four options from which one option is selected.

Example:

<preamble (giving the context, where appropriate)>

<question>

- a) <option>
- b) <option>
- c) <option>
- d) <option>

'Matching' OTQs - The candidate must link items in one list to items in a second list. There is only one correct response to each question item, but options from the second list may be used once, more than once (in most cases), or not at all.

Example:

<preamble (giving the context, where appropriate)>

<question (which option relates to each item of information)>

<instruction (to choose one answer from the options on the right)>

1.	<information>	a) <option>
2.	<information>	b) <option>
3.	<information>	c) <option>
		d) <option>
		e) <option>
		f) <option>

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: 46 (35 Standard Classic + 11 Matching OTQs).

Number of question items: 68 (Each matching OTQ has 3 question items to be matched (=33 items). Therefore, with the 35 standard classic questions, there are 68 question items in the assessment.)

Marks: Each question item is worth 1 mark. There are 68 marks available. (There are no 'trial' questions.)

There is no negative marking.

Pass mark: 38 marks (approx. 55%).

3.4 Weightings by Bloom's Level

Questions require the candidate to carry out the following levels of cognitive processing, according to Bloom's (revised) taxonomy:

Bloom's level	Explanation	Weighting (approx.)
Level 3 - Application	Questions require the candidate to <u>use</u> acquired knowledge of the PRINCE2 method and <u>apply</u> techniques and rules. They have to identify connections and relationships between learnt concepts and the information provided in order to solve problems in a given context.	57%
Level 4 - Analysis	Questions require the candidate to <u>analyze</u> information in order to reach a conclusion. They have to <u>examine</u> and break information into component parts, determine how the parts relate to one another and the PRINCE2 method, and find evidence to support or oppose a given course of action or reasoning.	43%
		100%

3.5 Weightings by Learning Outcome

Learning Outcome	No. question items	Weighting (approx.)
1. Apply the PRINCE2 principles in context	8	11.76%
2. Apply and tailor relevant aspects of PRINCE2 themes in context	35	51.48%
3. Apply and tailor relevant aspects of PRINCE2 processes in context	25	36.76%
	68	100%

3.6 Weightings by Assessment (sub-) Criterion

The (2017) PRINCE2 Practitioner 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 below, thus requiring that the candidate acquire depth of knowledge in a high proportion of the syllabus content.

The table overleaf shows the sections of the exam, the question type used to test each assessment criterion, and the Bloom's level (according to Bloom's revised taxonomy).

Learning Outcome	Exam section	Assessment (sub) criteria	Question type (M=Matching, SC = Standard Classic)	No. question items/marks			
				BL3	BL4	Total	
1. (PRINCE2 principles)	Principles	1.1 a-g	SC	0	8	8	
2. (PRINCE2 themes)	Business case	2.1.1 a-c	M	3	0	5	
		2.1.2	SC	0	2		
	Organization	2.2.1 a-c	M	3	0	5	
		2.2.2	SC	0	2		
	Quality	2.3.1 a-c	M	3	0	5	
		2.3.2	SC	0	2		
	Plans	2.4.1 a-c	M	3	0	5	
		2.4.2	SC	0	2		
	Risk	2.5.1 a-c	M	3	0	5	
		2.5.2	SC	0	2		
	Change	2.6.1 a-c	M	3	0	5	
		2.6.2	SC	0	2		
	Progress	2.7.1 a-c	M	3	0	5	
		2.7.2	SC	0	2		
	3. (PRINCE2 processes)	Starting up a project	3.1.1 a-c	M	3	0	4
			3.1.2	SC	0	1	
Directing a project		3.2.1 a-c	M	3	0	4	
		3.2.2	SC	0	1		
Initiating a project		3.3.1 a-c	M	3	0	4	
		3.3.2	SC	0	1		
Controlling a stage		3.4.1 a-c	M	3	0	4	
		3.4.2	SC	0	1		
Managing product delivery		3.5.1 a-c	SC	2	0	3	
		3.5.2	SC	0	1		
Managing a stage boundary		3.6.1 a-c	SC	2	0	3	
		3.6.2	SC	0	1		
Closing a project		3.7.1 a-c	SC	2	0	3	
		3.7.2	SC	0	1		
Total				39	29	68	

3.7 Paper Build Rules

AXELOS will generate exam papers according to the design described above, and also following the rules described in the table below, in order to ensure breadth of coverage of the syllabus and reliability of assessment across the exam papers produced.

Assessment (sub) criterion	Minimum	Maximum	Rationale
	Number of marks on any one examination		
1.1 a/b/c/d/e/f/g	1	2	To ensure that knowledge of each PRINCE2 principle is assessed, there is at least one question on each. There are eight questions (marks) on PRINCE2 principles, therefore, one principle (at random) is tested within two questions. This also ensures that candidates cannot identify the principle being tested, by a process of elimination.
Sub-criterion (a) within: 2.1.1/ 2.2.1/ 2.3.1/ 2.4.1/ 2.5.1/ 2.6.1/ 2.7.1	6	9	Questions that test the (a) sub-criterion, within the assessment of PRINCE2 themes, test the ability to apply the PRINCE2 requirements for managing the theme and the use of associated management products.
Sub-criterion (b) within: 2.1.1/ 2.2.1/ 2.3.1/ 2.4.1/ 2.5.1/ 2.6.1/ 2.7.1	6	9	Questions that test the (b) sub-criterion test knowledge of the roles and responsibilities within the theme.
Sub-criterion (c) within: 2.1.1/ 2.2.1/ 2.3.1/ 2.4.1/ 2.5.1/ 2.6.1/ 2.7.1	6	9	Questions that test the (c) sub-criterion test knowledge of particular concepts, procedures and techniques within the theme.
Sub-criterion (a) within: 2.1.1/ 2.2.1/ 2.3.1/ 2.4.1/ 2.5.1/ 2.6.1/ 2.7.1	6	9	To ensure that the candidate is tested on each of these aspects of applying PRINCE2 themes, there are at least two matching questions (6 marks) on each.
Sub-criterion (a) within: 3.1.1/ 3.2.1/ 3.3.1/ 3.4.1/ 3.5.1/ 3.6.1/ 3.7.1	8	13	Questions that test the (a) sub-criterion, within the assessment of PRINCE2 processes, test the ability to carry out the appropriate activities and actions for managing the process.
Sub-criterion (b) within: 3.1.1/ 3.2.1/ 3.3.1/ 3.4.1/ 3.5.1/ 3.6.1/ 3.7.1	2	7	Questions that test the (b) sub-criterion test knowledge of the roles and responsibilities within the process.
Sub-criterion (c) within: 3.1.1/ 3.2.1/ 3.3.1/ 3.4.1/ 3.5.1/ 3.6.1/ 3.7.1	2	5	Questions that test the (c) sub-criterion test knowledge of how themes are applied within processes.
Sub-criterion (c) within: 3.1.1/ 3.2.1/ 3.3.1/ 3.4.1/ 3.5.1/ 3.6.1/ 3.7.1	2	5	The weightings reflect the importance within the method of each of these aspects of the PRINCE2 processes.
2.2.1c/other using the 'Additional Information' in the <i>Scenario Booklet</i>	1	3	There is at least one question for which the 'Additional Information' must be used to answer the question. If the assessment sub-criterion 2.2.1c is not tested (selection of the project management team roles from the person profiles), there will be one or two questions (at BL4) that use the 'Additional Information'.