

# Self-study for PRINCE2 Foundation and beyond



Any self-study resource has to be set a level that will work with every type of student. A trainer in a classroom can subtly change the pace and style to match the needs of the class. Online web-casts and pod-casts that offer live interaction between students and trainer are a close alternative to the classroom, but still don't solve the need to be studying at your own pace and in your own time.

Many people have to juggle the day job and catching up with study at odd times during the day and at home. This is where eLearning has the distinct advantage. Through a web or cd-based course, students can access self-study material and resources at a time and pace of their choosing, and trainers can be contacted offline by email to resolve any problems.

PRINCE2 2009 lends itself to an imaginative approach to eLearning. QA have taken a step in that direction with their suite of Virtual eLearning materials that includes the PRINCE2 Foundation eLearning.

They gave us access to the web-based course to get a flavour of the student's experience. It's probably a good idea to assume you'll need help to get going. So the welcoming email from QA includes a 23-page pdf file that has explicit instructions on using the key provided to enter and register. It's less daunting than it sounds as most pages are simply a single screen shot with one or two basic instructions. The accompanying PRINCE2 publications relevant to the course come via the post, so you can immerse yourself in the printed documents as well the online experience.

It's easy to get started and there is an engaging 'live' presenter, Ray, who explains the product and how to get going. Ray is the guide through the course. We worked through a couple of modules to get a flavour of the training and skipped through a few others.

The course is based around a refurbishment project set in a hotel. The hotel management are new to project management, so they hire in an expert who leads them through the experience. It's a journey that's shared by the student.

Needless to say, the modules



cover all the relevant parts of the foundation course from an overview of the methodology and Starting up a Project to the Business Case and Managing & Stage Boundary and onwards to closing the project and tailoring PRINCE2.

You can review sample management documents that can also be used in real life and are encouraged to read the relevant sections of the PRINCE2 manual as you progress. There are also a series of knowledge nuggets that take you beyond the material in the case study.

When designing an eLearning product

you have to work within the possible limitations of the net, so bandwidth munching videos and glossy images can look good, but the user's online experience may not match the hype.

QA have eschewed the former approach in favour of text with a voice over and cartoon-based images, but the drawings of the cartoon characters wouldn't win any awards and the speech bubbles are a bit retro. The

spoken dialogue is clear and goes at a pace that allows the points to sink in.

The lessons are based around the spoken dialogue between various of the participants in the project, interspersed with multiple choice assessments and questionnaires. There are additional resources available online in the 'project manager's office'.

William Macpherson, QA's ceo explains that the scenario-based approach was taken to ensure: 'that the experience really engages the learner, so we've used a technique called third-person directed learning, which allows the user to watch a project unfold from end-to-end rather than just listen or watch an explanation of how it works.'

'This completely brings the project to life and allows them to see how the techniques and method they're learning can be applied to a real life project. In addition the project documents that are used in the case study have been designed so they can be used as templates back in the workplace.'

It may be a self-study course, but email assistance is at hand with one or other of QA's 25 PRINCE2 experts.

The Foundation level eLearning can either be completed as a stand-alone certification, or as a component for full PRINCE2 Foundation and Practitioner certification.

**More details from**  
[www.qa.com/elearningcourses](http://www.qa.com/elearningcourses),  
or 0845 757 3888.



© 2010 Project Manager Today. All rights reserved. By downloading this pdf file the recipient agrees to use this information for personal use only and may print one copy. This pdf may not be copied, altered, or distributed to other parties without the permission of the publishers. First published in this form in Project Manager Today.