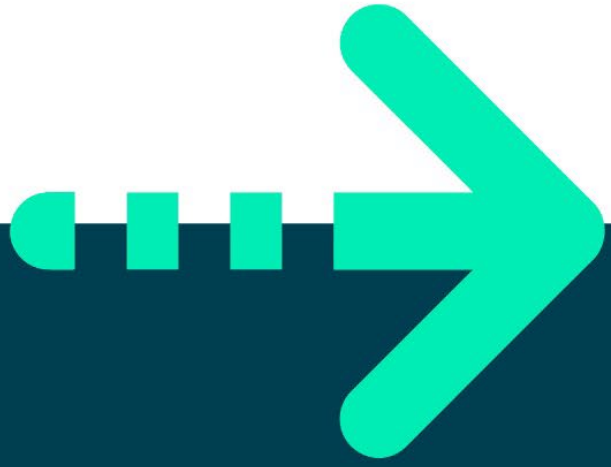
PRINCE2®7 Foundation: Pre-Course Learning Guide

(QAP27F-PCL)

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Contents

Introduction 3
1 What is PRINCE2 Certification? (30min) 5
2 PRINCE2 Study Hints 'n Tips (30min) 6
3 Why Do Projects Fail? (30min) 11
4 Benefits of Project Management (30min) 12
5 Introduction to Agile Delivery (30min) 13
6 PRINCE2 Exam (30min) 14
7 Introducing PRINCE2 (60min) 18
8 Course Case Study: Louistown Shopping Centre (15 minutes) 23
9 Digital Courseware Guidance 24
10 Quick Quiz (30min) 25
Quiz Answers 28
Bibliography and Useful Assets 28



Note: PeopleCert periodically updates its website, and this may affect some of the links you have been provided with in this document. If this occurs, search the PeopleCert website in the first instance. If you still cannot find the resource you are looking for, please ask your contact at QA for assistance – we're happy to help.

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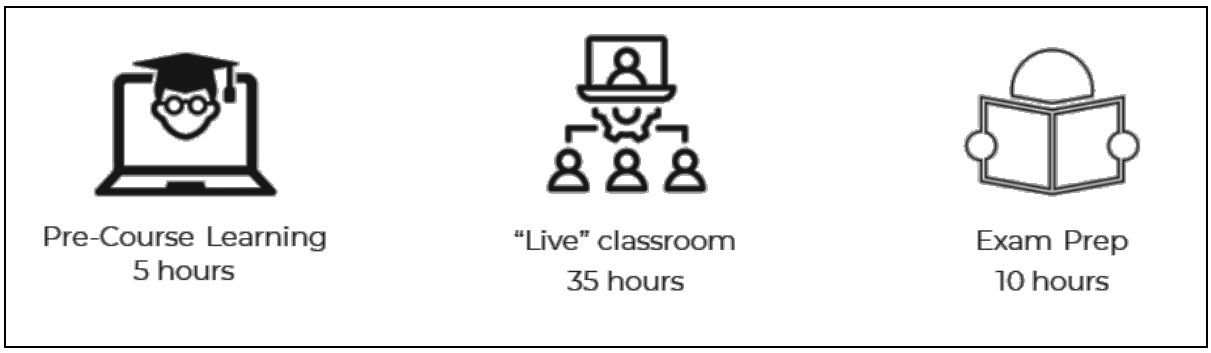
Introduction

Welcome! This Learning Guide will help to set the context for your PRINCE2 Foundation-Practitioner course and give you an understanding of the various assets that are available to support you on your learning journey. Your time spent completing each activity will ensure that the course content can be related to project delivery within your organisation and help prepare you for the PRINCE2 course and exams.

Your Learning Journey

PeopleCert is proud of the credibility of the PRINCE2 exams. Rather than being an introductory qualification, the Practitioner exam is targeted at candidates who are already operating at project manager level.

Depending on your level of experience, QA suggests that the total study time (including your course) for PRINCE2-FP will be a minimum of 50 hours prior to attempting the exam. Your personal study-time will depend on your current level of project management experience and familiarity with the course content. We recognise the commitment you're making in your efforts to achieve one of the world's most-respected project management qualifications and we'll support you fully on each step of your learning journey.

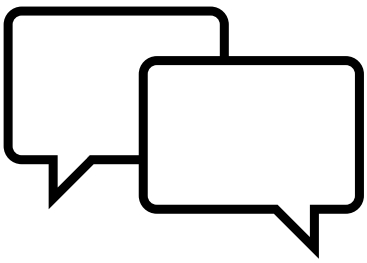


Active Learning @ QA

Active learning puts you, the learner, at the heart of the learning journey – enabling you to become more engaged with your own learning. By becoming active participants, our learners build knowledge through their own experiences. Research indicates that active learning can help you build a deeper understanding of the course content than by simply listening to a trainer or reading the course textbooks.

Your PRINCE2 course will include multiple activities that help you play a more active role in this learning programme. Activities will include:

- Group discussions
- Learner presentations
- Case-study application
- Quizzes
- Learning ‘games’



Our trainers create the environment and opportunities for learners to build knowledge and understanding of a subject for themselves. This differs significantly from more traditional methods of training – such as a trainers simply transferring knowledge to learners as they sit and listen.

There is a well-established evidence base supporting the use of active learning. The benefits to using this approach include:

✓ More engaged learners	✓ Increased motivation
✓ Better critical thinking skills	✓ Improved interpersonal skills
✓ Increased retention and transfer of new information	✓ Decreased course failure
	✓ More enjoyable learning!

PRINCE2-7 FP Study Checklist

	Activity	Complete?	Comments
1	What is PRINCE2 certification? (30min)		
2	PRINCE2 study hints 'n tips (30min)		
3	Why projects fail (30min)		
4	Benefits of project management (30mins)		
5	Introduction to Agile delivery (30mins)		
6	PRINCE2 exam details (30mins)		
7	Introducing PRINCE2 (60mins)		
8	Case-study: Louistown scenario (15mins)		
9	Digital courseware guidance		
10	Quick quiz (30min)		

1 What is PRINCE2 Certification? (30min)

You can find full information on both the Foundation and Practitioner qualifications on the PeopleCert website by clicking on the links below:

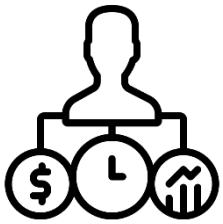
	PRINCE2 Foundation	PRINCE2 Practitioner

2 PRINCE2 Study Hints ‘n Tips (30min)

2.1 PRINCE2 Exam Study

Examinations can be stressful, irrespective of whether you have been successful or not on previous exams. This guide should help you:

- Understand the reasons for exams.
- Build awareness of common exam issues – and how you can overcome these.
- Develop a structured plan for revising and preparing for the PRINCE2 exam.
- Identify strategies for use on the actual exam.
- Consider how you can manage and reduce stress before and during the exam.

PRINCE2 is based upon the tried and tested experience of project management practitioners around the world, and provides the practices, principles, and processes to deliver successful projects of any size and complexity.	

2.2 Preparing for the PRINCE2 Exams

Throughout your learning we emphasise the importance of adequate preparation for examinations. The exam provides an opportunity to consolidate your learning so far and address any areas of weakness that may still exist.



Revising for Exams

The PRINCE2 exam covers a wide range of project management concepts. Revision typically involves identifying areas where knowledge is missing and this might mean spending more time on topics that are less familiar for you. For example, if you work as an engineer in a large manufacturing company, it's likely that you will be familiar with the concepts of quality management. Conversely, configuration management is widely used, but may not be a technique that has been formally adopted in your organisation.

Learners often make similar mistakes when revising for exams. These pitfalls may include some of the following.



1. **Leaving revision until the final minute.** Consider the importance of creating a realistic study plan and more importantly, adhering to it!
2. **Passively reading textbooks and notes.** Revision must be an active process and your study should include a combination of making notes, creating flashcards and mnemonics, drawing spray-diagrams, practising exam questions, etc.
3. **Trying to learn definitions, models and answers off by heart.** Not only would this activity take too much time, but it's likely to be pointless as the exact same question is unlikely to be asked in your exam.
4. **I don't have enough time.** H. Jackson Brown Jr. stated that *"you have exactly the same number of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Pasteur, Michelangelo, Mother Teresa, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein."* Make the best use of short spells of time - for example tea-breaks, lunchtime, commuting on public transport etc. Block out periods of time with your colleagues and co-learners and you are more likely to stick to these commitments.

Try to be realistic about the amount of time you can devote to revising. This will depend on a number of factors.

- Your personal work, family, and leisure commitments.
- Whether you study best in concentrated blocks or short bursts.
- What you want to get out of your learning.

Revision Techniques

Revising for an examination should be an active undertaking. Brief and

selective note taking (for example – summarising, highlighting, eBook annotation etc.) is a useful learning strategy for a number of reasons.

- Focuses on the key points and ideas.
- Helps to process information.
- Aids structured writing.
- Develops understanding of course content.
- Serves as a memory aid, helping exam revision.

a. Mnemonics

Mnemonics are also a useful way to memorise key concepts and models as long as you understand the topic in the first place. The most common method of creating mnemonics is to use the first letter of each key word and create a real or fictional word (e.g., CARDI).

Topic	Mnemonic	Key words
Issue management technique	*CARDI*	*Capture, Assess, Recommend, Decide, Implement*
Horizon scanning	*PESTLE*	*Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental*

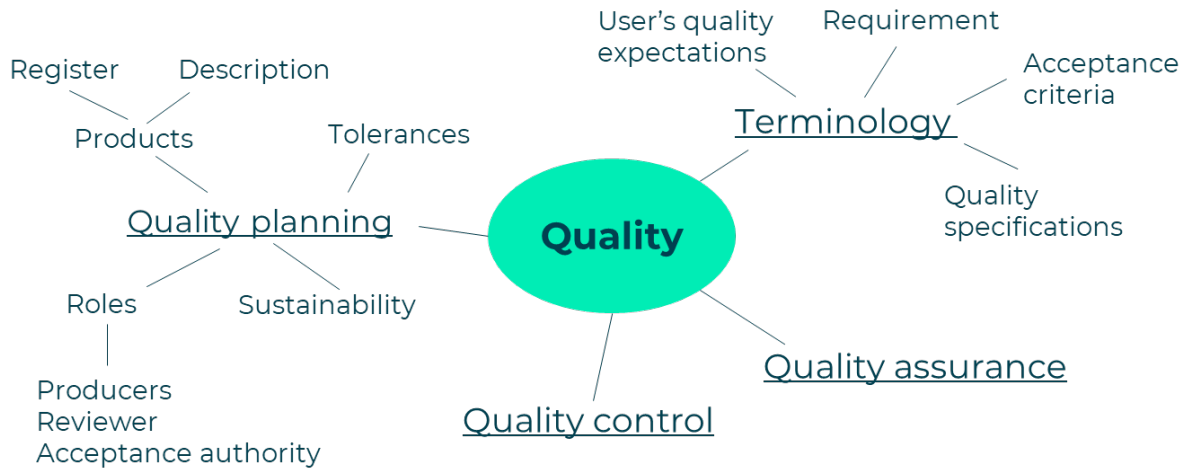
Personal preference will dictate the best technique for taking notes. Some people prefer a linear strategy – for example flashcards, tables, numbered and/or indented lists. Others may prefer a more visual non-linear strategy.

b. Spray Diagrams (mind-maps)

Spray diagrams (or mind-maps) help us get our ideas written down on the page in a relatively unstructured fashion. Spray diagrams use the following steps:

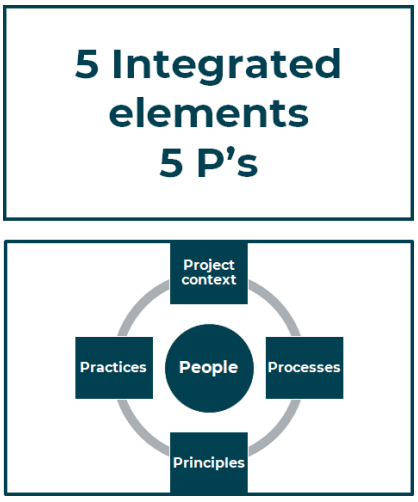
1. Place the title of the diagram in the centre of the page.
2. The main ideas radiate from the central topic.
3. Subsidiary ideas fan out from the main ideas.
4. All ideas should be limited to one or two words.
5. Create subsidiary diagrams if the topic is too broad for a single diagram.
6. Feel free to colour-code the diagram (e.g., each main idea has its own colour theme)

Spray Diagram Example – Quality



c. Flashcards

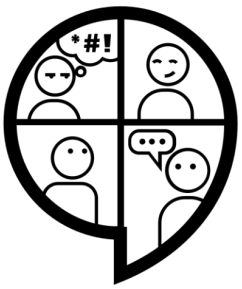
Flashcards aid study through the use of active recall. **You will learn more if you create your own flashcards rather than sharing with a colleague.** This helps to generate the neural pathways which will help you remember and connect the syllabus topics. There are various ways to use flashcards effectively:



1. Mix pictures and words – people tend to remember images more than words.
2. Write only one question per card – break complex topics into multiple questions.
3. Speak your answers out loud when answering them – get a friend, colleague, or family member to quiz you.
4. Study flashcards in both directions; for example, if this is the answer – what is the question being asked?

d. Study Groups

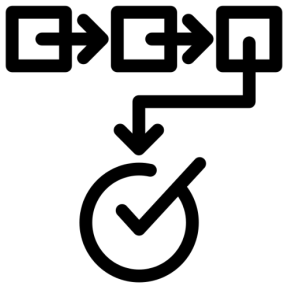
For company specific courses, you may already know the rest of your fellow learners. Set a day, time, and topic then discuss, share ideas, and test each other. Helping each other is a fantastic way to enhance your own learning and understanding. You all have experience and talents that can be shared with each other.



Making this commitment also makes it more likely that you will stick to your study plan. Nobody says that project managers need to do everything themselves – and it's much more satisfying to work things out for yourselves, and it's more fun!

2.3 Study Plans

Unless you have a good idea of what you need to do, and by when, it is likely that you will spend a lot of time flitting between topics and wondering whether you are getting anywhere.



"A goal without a plan is just a wish."

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Being aware of your own knowledge, and where gaps exist, will help you create a focused and time-efficient revision plan. Making a 'study plan' is similar to creating a project plan. You have finite resources and time and need to create a realistic plan that is capable of producing a defined end goal.

It is possible to 'create' time by drawing up a plan of your typical work (W) and identifying where space exists to study (S). Be sure to include your existing work, family (F), and leisure (L) commitments. Once this activity is complete, you can then plan your revision for the relevant study periods.

w/c 01-Apr	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
AM	W	W	W	W	W	L	S
PM	W	W	S	W	W	S	F
EVE	S	L	F	S	L	F	S

3 Why Do Projects Fail? (30min)

Watch the short video (2min 18sec) in which QA discusses common reasons for projects being delivered unsuccessfully.

	Why projects fail

Consider how each of these reasons may be present within projects in your organisation. The topics covered in your course should help prevent each of these issues from occurring!

Reason for failure	Example	Why does this occur?
Unclear scope		
Failure to engage with the end-user		
Inadequate planning		
Poor change control		
Lack of risk management		
Demotivated team		

4 Benefits of Project Management (30min)

In this second video from QA (1min 44sec), we outline some of the benefits that may be realised by the tools and techniques we introduce on your PRINCE2 workshop.

	Benefits of project management

You may find it useful to relate these benefits to your projects as they help to explain why effective project management is crucial to your organisation's ongoing success. PRINCE2 can help in each of these areas.

Benefit	How this helps your organisation
Focus on the customer	
Better management of risk	
Efficient and effective use of resources	
Improved stakeholder communication	
More likelihood of project delivery to time, cost, and quality targets	
Sharing of project lessons across the organisation	

5 Introduction to Agile Delivery (30min)

PRINCE2 does not assume or require any specific delivery approach. In the short introductory video (4min 11sec), we introduce the topic of iterative (or Agile) project delivery.

	What is Agile?

Consider the key differences between agile and a more traditional linear (or waterfall) project delivery approach. These concepts will be briefly discussed during your course.

Linear	Iterative (Agile)

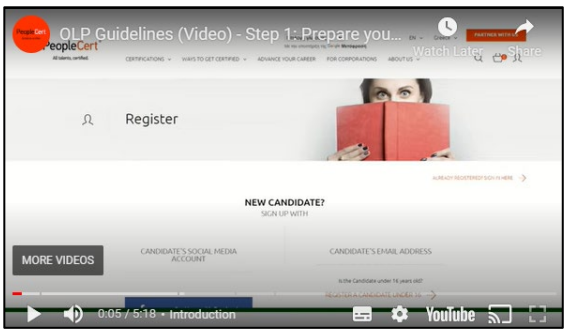
The video briefly mentions the 4 values and 12 principles of the Agile Manifesto – the Manifesto forms the basis of all Agile frameworks. You will not be examined on the Agile manifesto, but you can download a personal copy by accessing the link below:

	Agile Manifesto



6 PRINCE2 Exam (30min)

PeopleCert exams take place remotely via PeopleCert Online Proctoring. You will be required to download and install ExamShield and conduct a hardware compatibility test prior to sitting the exam.



Full details of each of the five steps that describe the IT requirements and exam conditions (including an explanatory video) can be found on the PeopleCert website. **This content must be read carefully, and your system readiness tested before your course.**

	https://peoplecert.org/ways-to-get-certified/olp-guidelines

Note: Any technical issues that you uncover should be discussed with the 'online chat' support that is available when testing your system. Failing this, you should speak to your IT department who will be able to help.

6.1 Exam Details

You will book your exam day and time directly through the PeopleCert website and you may choose to sit your exams at a time that meets your convenience and level of readiness. If you decide to take your exam as soon as possible, please ensure that it is arranged no earlier than when your course has finished for that day – 17.30pm (Day 3 for Foundation and Day 5 for Practitioner).

- **Duration**: 60 minutes (Foundation); 150 minutes (Practitioner)
- **Number of Questions**: 60 (Foundation); 70 (Practitioner – scenario-based)
- **Pass mark**: 60% (Foundation and Practitioner)
- **Use of MSPWP2v7 course manual**: Foundation – no (closed book); Practitioner – yes (open book)

6.2 Exam Concerns

List the main worries that you have about preparing for and sitting the PRINCE2 exam. Your trainer can help you address each of these concerns.

	Concern	Action
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

When appropriately prepared for, an exam presents a challenge which can produce a number of positive effects. It forces the individual learner to consolidate their learning and effectively communicate what they understand about a specific topic.

Please don't forget! The majority of QA learners are successful in obtaining a widely sought-after certification that demonstrates their competence in project management.

With PRINCE2® Practitioner you get sufficient knowledge and understanding of the PRINCE2® method. This certification is suitable for anyone managing projects, either as part of a formal project management function or a role in which project management is an essential part of day-to-day work.

6.3 Managing Exam Stress

It is common for learners to feel tense as exams draw closer. This is normal and you're definitely not alone. The content that you have covered during your study will prepare you very well for the PRINCE2 exam. As you approach the exam, you have the opportunity to consolidate your learning and hone your exam technique. If you're feeling overly stressed, then there are actions that you can take.

- Ensure that you make the time to follow your revision plan; being poorly prepared is the main cause of pre-exam worry, and procrastination uses up more energy than actually studying!
- Speak to your trainer.
- Work with your peers (who are likely to have similar fears).
- Take proper breaks from study.
- Maintain some of your regular leisure activities to get away from your desk and give yourself a break from studying.
- Maintain healthy habits for you. Looking after yourself is key!
- Get plenty of sleep – especially the night before the exam.

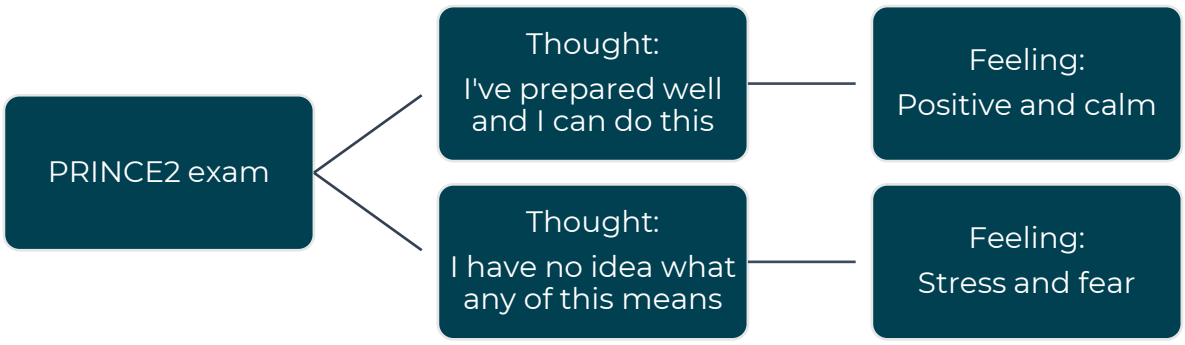
Managing Stress During the Exam

You also need to consider how to place yourself in a position where you can really demonstrate your knowledge and understanding during the exam.

- Try to relax! Drink water, go into the room as calm as possible, and wear comfortable clothing.
- Take a deep breath, then review the exam paper (some people prefer to immediately 'brain-dump' the models, formulae etc. that they have memorised; you have spare paper to do this).
- Manage your time evenly throughout the exam – don't put yourself in the position where you need to rush your final questions.
- Avoid perfectionism – remember that 80% of your marks are likely to come from 20% of your mental effort.
- If you feel yourself panicking, rest, close your eyes, breathe slowly, stretch, and remind yourself how well-prepared you are.

Positive mental attitude

Having a positive mental attitude in exams will help you realise your potential and make the exam a more enjoyable experience.



The main source of exam stress is poor preparation. **You** are therefore the person who is best placed to reduce any anxiety levels.		Get a good night's sleep and think of the exam as a challenge, not a threat. Your preparation is complete and it's now time to demonstrate what you know.

6.3 PRINCE2 Question Types

You will find full details of each exam (including durations, question types etc.) in the respective Syllabus documents that can be obtained from the PeopleCert website. Note: PRINCE2 candidates often ask about further assets that may aid their study and help prepare them for the exam. There are multiple textbooks and mobile apps that offer PRINCE2 study support, example questions etc. QA is unable to recommend any third-party content that is not authored by QA or Axelos.	

7 Introducing PRINCE2 (60min)



At QA, we want all our learners to assume more responsibility for their own learning – applying and reflecting upon new knowledge gained throughout your learning.

It would therefore be useful to familiarise yourself with the structure and content of the 'Managing Successful Projects with PRINCE2 v7' (MSPWP2) eBook before your course.

	**Note: You will be given access to your eBook approximately 5 days before your course starts. Please contact QA if you have not received access instructions by this time.**

When you receive your eBook, read through the following sections before attempting the short quiz that concludes your pre-course learning.

Section	Content
1.1 – 1.4	Introduces PRINCE2, project management, and the course manual.

Projects differ from operational work in five specific ways:

- They introduce change.
- They are temporary.
- Often, they are cross-functional.
- Every project is unique in some way.
- They are riskier due to the uncertainty associated with the change.

PRINCE2 is a structured, proven method that increases the likelihood of a successful outcome through effective management of these change initiatives. PRINCE2's principles, practices, and processes will help the project team better manage each of the seven aspects of project performance.

1. Benefits	4. Quality	6. Sustainability
2. Costs	5. Scope	7. Risk
3. Time		

At the start of your course, we also consider the project context. MSPWP2 states that – *"The principles, practices, and processes are applied by the people involved to ensure that the method is fit for the project context. How PRINCE2 can be applied to common contexts is outlined in section 1.5."*

Section	Content
2	Details the guiding **principles** that determine whether a project is genuinely managed using PRINCE2.

MSPWP2 states that – *"The principles are the guiding obligations that determine whether the project is genuinely being managed using PRINCE2. There are seven principles, and unless all of them are applied, it is not a PRINCE2 project. The PRINCE2 principles are explained in Chapter 2."*

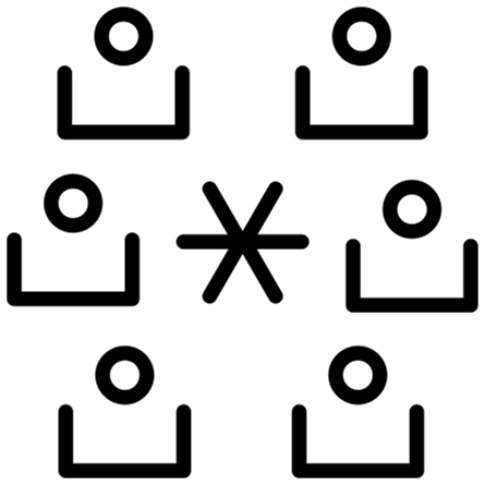
The seven PRINCE2 principles are:

1. **Ensure continued business justification** – this warrants the investment in the project.
2. **Learn from experience** – sharing good and bad lessons as appropriate.
3. **Define roles, responsibilities, and relationships** – helping to engage the business, user, and supplier relationships.
4. **Manage by exception** – through establishing the limits of delegated authority and agreed performance tolerances.
5. **Manage by stages** – helping to mitigate risk by planning, monitoring, and controlling the project on a stage-by-stage basis.
6. **Focus on products** – building confidence and understanding by agreeing user quality expectations and requirements.
7. **Tailor to suit the project** – based a on a project's size, complexity, importance, delivery method, team capability, and level of risk.

Section	Content
3.1	Discusses how PRINCE2 covers the **people** working on a project and those who may be impacted by it

MSPWP2 states that – *"Projects need people, mainly those working on the project and those affected by the project. An understanding of the needs, capabilities, and motivations of the people involved and the relationships between them is crucial to how the project is established and managed. How people are put at the centre of the method is described in Chapter 3."*

The 'People' section of the PRINCE2 manual discusses how people are central to the method including:

• How change can be successfully managed and introduced, considering cultural and stakeholder concerns and considerations. • Building and leading successful teams through collaboration, co-creation, leadership, and motivation. • Effective communication with internal and external project stakeholders.	

Section	Content
4.1	Summarises the seven **practices** that must be consistently applied throughout a PRINCE2 project

MSPWP2 states that – *"The practices describe essential aspects of project management that must be applied consistently and throughout the project life cycle. The seven practices explain the specific treatment required of that aspect of project management for the PRINCE2 processes to be effective and why they are necessary. The PRINCE2 practices are covered in Chapters 4 to 11."*

The seven practices constitute the core of PRINCE2.

Business case	The business case answers the *'why'* for the project and justifies the required investment needed to deliver the change.
Organising	The *'who'* for the project is dictated by the various roles and responsibilities and this practice also describes how the business, user, and supplier interests are represented in the project activities and decisions.
Plans	*'How, how much, and when'* are documented in the various layers of plan that are created for any project, helping to communicate and control project activities throughout the lifecycle.
Quality	The quality practice defines *'what'* will be delivered in terms of the project requirements, deliverables, and quality expectations.

Risk	Change involves uncertainty and the risk practice addresses the *'what if'* scenarios that need to be proactively managed to ensure a successful project outcome.
Issues	General problems, requests for change, or products that do not meet specifications may require the project manager to consider - *'what now'* needs to happen?
Progress	Performance against agreed tolerances must be constantly monitored and reported through both event and time-based controls – helping to answer: *'where are we now?' 'where are we going?'* and *'should we carry on?'*

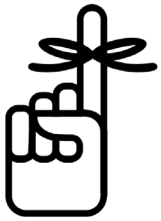
Section	Content
12	Introduces the seven **processes** that will ensure that the project is directed, managed, and delivered successfully

MSPWP2 states that – *"The seven processes describe the entire project lifecycle, from activities before getting started, through the stages of project delivery, and to the final act of project closure. Each process has checklists of recommended activities and related responsibilities. The PRINCE2 processes are provided in Chapters 12 to 19."*

Starting up a project	*'The purpose of the process is to ensure that the prerequisites for initiating a project are established by answering the question, 'do we have a viable and worthwhile project?'*
Directing a project	*'The purpose of the process is to enable the project board to be accountable for the project's success by making key decisions and exercising overall control while delegating day-to-day management of the project to the project manager.'*
Initiating a project	*'The purpose of the process is to establish solid foundations for the project, enabling the business to understand the work that needs to be done to deliver the project product before committing to any significant expenditure or resources.'*
Controlling a stage	*'The purpose of the process of controlling a stage is to assign work, monitor such work, handle issues, report progress to the project board, and take corrective actions to ensure that the stage remains within the tolerances set by the project board.'*

Managing product delivery	*'The purpose of the process is to control the link between the project manager and the team manager. This is achieved by agreeing the requirements for acceptance, execution, reporting, and delivery of specialist products. The role of the team manager is to coordinate an area of work that will deliver one or more of the specialist products that form the project product. Team managers can be internal or external to the organisation running the project.'*
Managing a stage boundary	*'The purpose of the process is to enable the project manager to provide the project board with sufficient information to be able to:* • *review the success of the current stage.* • *prepare the next stage plan.* • *review the updated project plan.* • *confirm continued business justification and acceptability of the risks.'*
Closing a project	*'The purpose of the process is to provide a fixed point at which acceptance of the project product is confirmed. It also provides a point to recognise that the objectives or the approved changes to the objectives, as established in the project initiation documentation, have been achieved.* *Where there is a cause for a premature close, this process ensures the project is closed in an orderly way.'*

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Remember that Activity-1 'PRINCE2 Study Hints 'n Tips' describes techniques that will make your study of the course content a more active learning experience, ensuring that you're fully prepared for the exam. Use the techniques described throughout your study – mnemonics, spray diagrams, flashcards, etc.

8 Course Case Study: Louistown Shopping Centre (15 minutes)

In preparation for your course, read through the fictional case study content (Scenario 2) in Section 1.7 of your course manual when you receive your PeopleCert access code. This case study will help demonstrate the application of many of the tools and techniques that are introduced on your course and will be used in both the Foundation and Practitioner segments.

A new shopping centre will be built as part of a wider regeneration project. The project will include the creation of a modern retail facility which also contributes to the sustainability goals of the city council. Construction of the centre is likely to span two years and the business case and initial plan have already been approved.	

The case-study exercises will be based on the shopping centre's construction, covering the five key stages of the project:

1. Initiation
2. Design
3. Site preparation and construction
4. Test and inspect
5. Demobilisation

9 Digital Courseware Guidance

Your MyQA account also contains an additional three PDF assets that you can look at before and during your course.

Accessing the digital manual	Details of how to access your personal eBook from the PeopleCert website when you receive your exam code (approximately 5 days before your course starts).
Digital manual tips	This PDF has information on how you can navigate and annotate the eBook, and make it available for offline study through the Bookshelf app. We also explain how the eBook can be used during the PRINCE2 Practitioner exam (this is forbidden on the Foundation exam as it is a closed book exam).
Booking your exam	This final asset provides full details on how, and when, you can book your exam (as well as changing the date and time).

Your course trainer will be happy to support you with any of the logistics described in the above three assets if you have questions or issues.





10 Quick Quiz (30min)

Have a go at the multiple-choice questions below that are all based on the content of your pre-course learning. The correct answers can be found at the end. Good luck!



1. Which of the following characteristics distinguish projects from business-as-usual	
a) Unique, temporary, agile	
b) Unique, change, agile	
c) Change, unique, cross-functional	
d) Predictable, temporary, cross-functional	

2. Which of the following aspects of project performance is NOT managed by PRINCE2?	
a) People	
b) Scope	
c) Costs	
d) Sustainability	

3. Establishing limits of authority by defining tolerances is the key message of which PRINCE2 principle?	
a) Focus on products	
b) Manage by stages	
c) Manage by exception	
d) Tailor to suit the project	

4. Which PRINCE2 principle ensures that the project only performs work that directly contributes to delivery?	
a) Define roles, responsibilities, and relationships	
b) Ensure continued business justification	

c) Focus on products	
d) Learn from experience	

5. To successfully lead a project team, which of the following do you <u>not</u> need to necessarily be aware of?	
a) Authority level of the project manager	
b) The team members' personal priorities	
c) Reporting lines of the team members	
d) How much each team member costs the project	

6. When establishing a project culture, the project manager must ensure that it remains aligned with the…	
a) Organisational ecosystem	
b) Project ecosystem	
c) Stakeholder register	
d) Company's standard operating procedures	

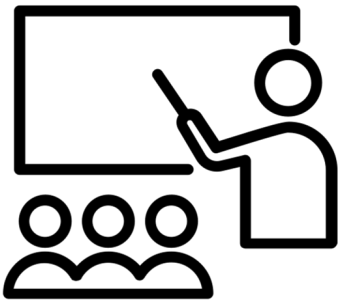
7. The answer to 'what if' is addressed by which PRINCE2 practice?	
a) Issues	
b) Risk	
c) Business case	
d) Progress	

8. In PRINCE2, the _____ are matched to the needs of the different project management layers?	
a) Risks	
b) Issues	
c) Business case	
d) Plans	

9. The project brief is assembled in which PRINCE2 process?	
a) Initiating a project	
b) Starting up a project	
c) Directing a project	
d) Managing a stage boundary	

10. Which PRINCE2 process is the primary focus of the project team?	
a) Controlling a stage	
b) Managing a stage boundary	
c) Managing product delivery	
d) Directing a project	

If you're struggling with this exercise, try to find where the question is discussed in your pre-course learning. Don't worry if you don't yet understand all the answers – your training course will make all these points clear!



Quiz Answers

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
C	A	C	C	D	A	B	D	B	C

Bibliography and Useful Assets

PeopleCert Supporting Resources

https://peoplecert.org/products/prince2-certification-family

PRINCE2 Textbooks

PeopleCert (2023). *Managing Successful Projects with PRINCE2®7.* PeopleCert International Limited Publishing

