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PRINCE2 OT Exam FAQs

14th August 2007

The format of the PRINCE2 Practitioner Exam is changing. This will mean an end of the open-ended essay style questions and will be replaced by objective testing questions. Please see below a list of Frequently Asked Questions.

Q1. Why are the exams moving to an objective testing format?

A1. The main reason that the examinations have moved to an objective testing format is to make them more acceptable to the growing international market. Other advantages that the change of format will bring include a significant time reduction in delivering results to candidates, and increased consistency of marking.

Q2. How have the exams been developed and tested?

A2. The new style exam has been in development for almost 2 years by our International Examination Panel. They have also been tested internationally on Lead Trainers, Trainers and live candidates.

Q3. When will the new exams take effect?

A3. The new style PRINCE2 Practitioner exam will go “live” from the 1st September 2007.

Q4. What is the format of the exam?

A4. The examination will comprise of 9 Syllabus Areas (questions) selected from 11 topics:

- Organisation
- Business Case
- Controls
- Change Control
- The Management of Risk
- Quality in a Project Environment
- Plans
- Configuration Management
- Processes
- Product-based Planning
- Quality Review

Q5. What type of objective questions can I expect?

A5. The questions can be made up of the following question types

- Classical multiple choice
- Yes/no
- Multiple response
- Matching
- Sequencing
- Assertion/reason

Q6. Is there reading time with the new exam?

A6. There will be no reading time allowed.

Q7. Is the new exam still open book?

A7. The exam is to be taken with the support of the PRINCE2 Manual only i.e. no other material other than the Question Booklet, the Scenario Booklet, the Answer booklet and the PRINCE2 Manual can be used.

Q8. Will the objective testing make the exam easier?

A8. The new style exam has been developed to be at the same level as the current practitioner examination. The new exam tests on 9 out of the 11 Syllabus areas and therefore requires a broad range of knowledge to be successful. The design of the examination, confirmed by feedback from pilots, is that the examination will not be an easier test for those aspiring to PRINCE2 Practitioner status.

Q9. I am concerned that in an attempt to increase the difficulty of the objective exam to match a perceived level of difficulty for an essay style exam the exam types (in particular Assertion/Reason questions) will add complexity that will confuse those a) who are not prepared or familiar with the reason or multiple response questions b) with English as a second language c) nervous or (possibly) dyslexic candidates.

A9. APMG have not developed this examination to try and be more difficult or 'match' the opinions some might hold of difficulty of an essay style examination. We simply create questions that match to the definition of the level and try to have a preponderance of Application questions, which is what the Practitioner exam is there to do. As we have provided a sample paper for trainers to use and accustom their delegates in how to understand and answer them, there should be no problem for delegates not being familiar with the various styles of question. Delegates are nervous about taking any exam, including the current style of Practitioner. We do not believe that the new style will affect this adversely. In our review of multi-choice/objective testing experiences, there is no foundation for believing that those suffering from dyslexia will be worse off with the new style, indeed we have received confirmation from the Dyslexic Association that candidates will be no more disadvantaged by objective testing than an essay. If any candidate has any handicap that makes it impossible for them to complete an exam in the normal way, APMG has always been able to find a satisfactory solution. Please click [HERE](#) to see our disability and discrimination policy.

Q10. What are the benefits of the new style exam?

A10. We believe that candidates will be able to enjoy the following benefits from the change to the examination format: -

- A significant time reduction in delivering results to candidates
- Increased consistency of marking
- There will be very little writing involved so therefore the exam will be easier for those unused to writing for extended periods of time

- Candidates who suffer from dyslexia may find the objective testing style more acceptable to their condition
- Candidates with English as their second language could benefit from the change in style as less writing is involved and therefore more emphasis based on comprehension of the question
- The format is more acceptable to international candidates who are not used to essay based examinations
- The format allows candidates to show their comprehension of PRINCE2 without having to worry about their handwriting, grammar and spelling whilst taking the examination.
- The examination is able to test a wider area of the syllabus, thus ensuring comprehension throughout PRINCE2

Q11. How long will it take for me to receive the results from the exam?

A11. It is expected that results will take a maximum of 2 weeks to be sent out after the returned examination documents are received by your local APMG office.

Q12. Will the certificate be changing?

A12. There will be no changes to the design, format and wording of the certificates.

Q13. Will I still get feedback if I fail the exam?

A13. A feedback report will be supplied to candidates to advise them how well they performed in the various Syllabus areas, enabling those who are not successful to recognise where they need to revise.

Q14. What languages will I be able to take the exam in?

A14. At the moment the exams are currently only available in English, however they are expected to be available in all the current languages by 1st September 2007; Chinese (Mandarin), Danish, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Polish and Spanish (Castilian).

Q15. What is Blooms Taxonomy?

A15. Taxonomy simply means “classification”. Many educational experts have studied the taxonomy of learning objectives and attempted to classify forms and levels of learning. Benjamin Bloom created the most popular and widely accepted taxonomy for categorising levels of abstraction of questions that commonly occur in educational settings.

The taxonomy provides a useful structure in which to categorise test questions, as questions are often asked within particular levels, and if you can determine the levels of questions that will appear on your exams, you will be able to study using appropriate strategies.

The 6 levels of Blooms Taxonomy are:

- **1 - Knowledge:** Recall data or information.

- **2 - Comprehension:** Understand the meaning, translation, interpolation, and interpretation of instructions and problems. State a problem in one's own words.
- **3 - Application:** Use a concept in a new situation or unprompted use of an abstraction. Applies what was learned in the classroom into novel situations in the work place.
- **4 - Analysis:** Separates material or concepts into component parts so that its organizational structure may be understood. Distinguishes between facts and inferences.
- **5 - Synthesis:** Builds a structure or pattern from diverse elements. Put parts together to form a whole, with emphasis on creating a new meaning or structure.
- **6 - Evaluation:** Make judgments about the value of ideas or materials.

Please note, level 5 (Synthesis) is currently not tested within PRINCE2.

- Q16. If I have taken the exam against the old style of paper and fail, which style will I be able to re-sit using?
- A16. From the 1st September 2007 you will be required to re-sit the new style exam, however special requests can be made to re-sit the old style via an ATO up until the 31st December 2008 and will be reviewed on an individual basis.
- Q17. What is the difference between Foundation exam Multiple Choice questions and Practitioner Objective Testing questions?
- A17. Foundation questions address knowledge of the terminology of the method and a high -to-medium understanding of the concepts. The Practitioner exam tests knowledge, understanding, application, analysis and evaluation of the method. It has 5 styles of question as opposed to the one style of Foundation question, but the main difference is the Practitioner exam will test the ability to apply and analyse the method.
- Q18. So, if a question tests Knowledge or comprehension it could be used in either the Foundation or Practitioner exams - is this correct?
- A18. If there is a tick in the Foundation column in the syllabus area, a Foundation question can be asked to test it the subject area, though the knowledge required to answer the question will be of a lower level than a practitioner question asked on the area.
- Q19. When I (the ATO) write a Multiple Choice/Objective Testing question how do I know it is appropriate for the Practitioner exam as opposed to the Foundation exam?
- A19. In the new syllabus an extra column has been added to the syllabus lines to show what level of question can be asked at Practitioner level. Foundation questions will be at Knowledge or Understanding levels. All Foundation level questions can be asked at Practitioner level. We have guidelines that suggest that these should score no more than about 12 in a Practitioner paper.
- Q20. If I (the ATO) create a number of draft questions in each type can I have them reviewed with suggestions of improvements, not just from a PRINCE2 perspective but from an editorial perspective?

- A20. All ATO developed questions must be assessed by APMG for inclusion in course material. Colin Bentley, the Chief Examiner has offered to review, free of charge, any ATO-developed questions. This would cover editorial and P2 perspectives.
- Q21. When will the new Syllabus be available for circulation?
- A21. The Syllabus has now been added to the Network
- Q22. Is it possible that with the classic and yes/no Objective Testing questions it is possible to earn 3 marks per question?
- A22. No. Yes/No questions will never earn more than 1 mark per answer. Classic question marks will range from 0.5 to 2 depending on what is being tested.
- Q23. Why have sequencing (classic and matching) and matching been considered not to test 'Evaluation' of Bloom's classification?
- A23. Sequencing and matching questions do test Bloom's taxonomy. 'Evaluation' in Bloom's terms relates to evaluation of the method, e.g. "Closely linked to analysis competency but builds on this by requiring the candidate to explain or justify the recommendations they have made". As such, sequencing and matching styles are considered too simple to offer an adequate test.
- Q24. Bloom's taxonomy – if marks are to be allocated to question type responses for each learning level, what does N/A mean as opposed to 'Not permitted' - i.e. is there a reason why Assertion/Reason is not considered a measure of analysis, for example?
- A24. N/A means 'not applicable', i.e. as stated in the answer above; the styles do not lend themselves to adequately testing that level of understanding.
- It has been decided that A/R questions most closely mirror the Evaluation level of Bloom's taxonomy. There has been a move to align MSP questions with the use of Bloom's taxonomy and this has resulted in a decision by MSP that they can use level 5, Synthesis. We do not feel at this time that the definition of this level matches any questions that we wish to see in Practitioner exams, so we have changed to using Evaluation as level 6, omitting level 5.
- Q25. There is a mention that risk analysis and product based planning will be tested as an application competency, however, application competency (as part of synthesis) is excluded from the Practitioner learning objectives. Will testing application competency therefore be at a higher level evaluation of application of the method?
- A25. The PRINCE2 Practitioner exam will not at present use the synthesis area of Bloom's taxonomy. But the ability to apply any part of the manual will be done under level 3, application. The ability to apply PRINCE2 has always been a Practitioner learning objective and will remain so.
- Q26. Will candidates know when a question has negative marks? It seems as though the question types in the exams will follow the sequence; classical multiple choice, multiple response,

classical sequencing, matching sequencing, matching and finally, assertion/reason for each topic. As each of these can span multiple instances within Bloom's classification of learning levels the sub-questions will likely be mixed with different marks, and therefore different negative marking.

- A26. All questions carrying negative marks will have this clearly stated in the question text. The sequence of questions within a given syllabus area will always be the lowest levels first, ascending in order of level of difficulty, so there will be no mixture and questions offering negative marks will always appear at the start of a question.
- Q27. What is the timetable for changing the PRINCE2 re-registration exam to the new format?
- A27. The PRINCE2 Re-registration exam is intended to follow suit of the new style Practitioner exam. The existing format for PRINCE2 Re-registration (1 question, essay based style) will continue until further notice, though will be amend in early 2008 to reflect the new format of practitioner exam.