

PRINCE2[®] roles and responsibilities

Author: Simon Buehring



Copyright © 2008-2023 whatisprince2.net
PRINCE2[®] is a registered trademark of AXELOS Limited, used under
permission of AXELOS Limited. All rights reserved.



Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Project board](#)

[Executive](#)

[Senior user](#)

[Senior supplier](#)

[Project manager](#)

[Team manager](#)

[Project assurance](#)

[Change authority](#)

[Project support](#)

[Corporate, programme management or the customer](#)

Introduction

PRINCE2 defines nine distinct project management team roles, each with its own set of responsibilities. It is expected that practitioners will tailor these responsibilities to suit the needs of their projects and organisation. The most typical ways in which tailoring takes place is by sharing a role amongst two or more individuals, or by combining multiple roles together ^[1].

The project management team roles collectively are responsible for applying the [7 PRINCE2 principles](#) during the [themes](#) and [processes](#) on a PRINCE2 project.

Students learn about the project management roles during a [PRINCE2 training course](#). For the [PRINCE2 exams](#), [PRINCE2 Foundation](#) students are required to describe the roles and responsibilities of the project management team, including responsibilities for creating, approving and maintaining the [management products](#). [PRINCE2 Practitioner](#) students are required to demonstrate an understanding of the roles and responsibilities within each of the processes and themes so they may be [tailored](#) accordingly.

Which roles can be shared in PRINCE2?

The roles that can be shared in [PRINCE2](#) include the senior user, senior supplier, project assurance, change authority, project support and team manager roles.

Which roles can be combined in PRINCE2?

Roles which cannot be combined include the executive or project assurance combined with project manager, team manager, or project support roles.

Project board

The project board has the responsibility for the project's success. It has the authority to lead the project within the boundaries set by the corporate, programme management, or the customer as recorded in the project mandate.

The project board oversees the communication between the project management team and stakeholders external to that team, such as corporate entities, programme management, or the customer.

Depending on the project's size, complexity, significance, and risk, members of the project board may delegate certain project assurance tasks to specific individuals. Moreover, the project board has the capacity to delegate decision-making regarding changes to a designated change authority.

Main responsibilities

1. Confirm project tolerances with corporate, programme management or the customer.
2. Authorize project startup and initiation, each management stage, project closure.
3. provide overall guidance and direction to the project.
4. Approves the project brief, stage plans (with tolerances), exception plans, project initiation documentation, changes (unless delegated to a change authority), completed products, end project report, the supplier contract (if the relationship between the customer and supplier is a commercial one).
5. Make decisions on escalated issues.
6. Communicate with stakeholders as outlined in the communication management approach.
7. Give advice to the project manager when requested.
8. Ensure that risks are being tracked and effectively managed.
9. Provide assurance that all products have been satisfactorily delivered, and that acceptance criteria have been met.
10. Confirm acceptance of the project product.
11. Authorize follow-on action recommendations to be distributed to corporate, programme management or the customer.
12. Transfer responsibility for the updated benefits management approach to corporate, programme management or the customer.

Competencies and skills

- Has the authority to make decisions, approve plans and authorise deviations from stage plans.
- Has the authority to allocate resources to the project.
- Must be capable of representing the business, user and supplier interests.
- Ideally be able to stay with the project throughout its life.
- Decision-making.
- Delegation.
- Leadership.
- Negotiation.
- Conflict resolution.

Executive

The executive bears the ultimate responsibility for the project, backed by the senior user and senior supplier. Their role involves maintaining the project's focus on accomplishing its objectives and delivering a product that aligns with the projected benefits throughout its life. In projects not conforming to PRINCE2, this role is often called the sponsor.

The executive's duty is to ensure that the project delivers a return on investment, promoting a cost-efficient approach to the project, and balancing the needs of the business, user, and supplier.

The executive maintains the responsibility for the business case across the life of the project. The project board does not operate based on majority rule. The executive, as the key decision-maker, draws on the support of the senior user and senior supplier in the decision-making process.

Main responsibilities

1. In addition to the project board's collective responsibilities, the executive will:
2. Design and appoint the project management team.
3. Oversee the development of the project brief and the outline and detailed business cases.
4. Ensure the project is aligned with corporate, programme management or customer strategies.
5. Secure the funding for the project.
6. Hold the senior supplier to account for the quality of specialist products.
7. Hold the senior user to account for realizing the expected benefits defined in the business case.
8. Transfer responsibility for post-project benefits reviews to corporate, programme management or the customer.
9. Monitor and control the progress of the project at a strategic level.
10. Escalate issues and risks if project tolerance is forecast to be exceeded.
11. Ensure that risks associated with the business case are identified, assessed, and controlled.
12. Make decisions on issues escalated by the project manager.
13. Ensure overall business assurance of the project so that it remains on target to deliver the right products to achieve the expected benefits, and so that the project will be completed within its agreed tolerances.

Senior user

The senior user is charged with articulating the needs of those who will employ the project's products, establishing user communication with the project management team, and overseeing that the solution aligns with these requirements within the confines of the business case regarding quality, functionality, and user-friendliness.

This role embodies the interests of all those who will use the project's products (inclusive of operations and maintenance), those for whom the products will fulfil a goal, or those who will utilize the products to reap benefits.

The senior user pledges user resources and scrutinizes products against the stipulated requirements. Depending on the spectrum of user interests, more than one individual may be needed to fulfil this role. However, for the sake of efficiency, this role should not be divided among too many individuals.

The senior user outlines the benefits and is held responsible for showcasing to the corporate, program management, or the customer that the projected benefits, which served as the basis for project approval, have indeed been achieved. This likely involves a commitment that extends beyond the lifespan of the project.

Main responsibilities

- Provide the customer's quality expectations and define project acceptance criteria.
- Specify the desired project outcomes.
- Ensure the project produces products required to deliver the desired outcomes and meet user requirements.
- Ensure the expected benefits are realized.
- Resolve conflicts amongst user requirements.
- Ensure that user resources for the project are made available when required.
- Decide about escalated issues, focusing on safeguarding the expected benefits.
- Brief and advise user management about the project.
- Maintain business-as-usual performance during the transition from the project to operations.
- Perform user assurance and delegate user project assurance activities appropriately.

Senior supplier

The senior supplier embodies the interests of those engaged in the design, development, procurement, and implementation of the project's products. This role is responsible for the quality of products furnished by the supplier(s) and upholds the project's technical integrity. If required, multiple individuals may represent the suppliers.

Depending on the specific customer-supplier context, the customer may opt to assign an independent individual or team to provide assurance on the quality of the supplier's products. This is particularly relevant if the relationship between the customer and supplier is commercially oriented.

Main responsibilities

- Assess and confirm the viability of the project approach.
- Ensure that proposals for design and development of products are realistic.
- Advise on the selection of design, development, and acceptance methods.
- Ensure that supplier resources for the project are made available when required.
- Decide about escalated issues, focusing on safeguarding the integrity of the solution.
- Resolve supplier requirements and priority conflicts.
- Brief non-technical management on supplier aspects of the project.
- Ensure quality methods are used correctly, so that products adhere to requirements.
- Undertake supplier assurance and delegate project assurance activities appropriately.

Project manager

The project manager reports to the project board and ultimately to the executive and possesses the authority to manage the project daily within the limits established by them.

The core responsibility of the project manager is to ensure the project delivers the requisite outputs within the defined tolerances of time, cost, quality, scope, benefits, and risk. In addition, the project manager is responsible for ensuring the project's outcome is positioned to deliver the benefits outlined in the business case.

Main responsibilities

- Prepare all baseline management products (except team plans), in conjunction with project assurance.
- Prepare all reports (except checkpoint reports).
- Maintain all registers and logs.
- Tailor the method to suit the project's environment and document it in the PID.
- Liaise with external suppliers.
- Lead the project management team.
- Manage information flows between the three management levels.
- Manage the production of products.
- Monitor overall progress and use of resources and initiate corrective actions when needed.
- Establish and manage the project's procedures.
- Establish and manage the project controls for monitoring and reporting.
- Authorize work packages.
- Advise the project board of any deviations from the plan.
- Perform the team manager and project support roles unless appointed to another person(s).
- Implement the agreed change control approach.

Competencies and skills

- Planning.
- Time management.
- People management.
- Problem-solving.
- Attention to detail.
- Communication.
- Negotiation.
- Conflict management.

Team manager

The main responsibility of the team manager is to ensure the creation of products specified by the project manager, adhering to the necessary quality, within the agreed timeline, and at a cost satisfactory to the project board. The team manager reports to and follows guidance from the project manager.

Main responsibilities

- Prepare team plans for approval by the project manager.
- Create checkpoint reports and send to the project manager.
- Plan, monitor and manage the work of their team.
- Monitor the team's progress, use of team resources, and take corrective action, when needed.
- Identify, and advise the project manager of, any issues and risks associated with the work.
- Advise the project manager of any deviations from the team plan, and recommend appropriate corrective actions.
- Handover completed and approved products to the project manager.
- Liaise with project assurance and project support roles.
- Ensure that quality activities are planned and performed correctly, and are within tolerance.
- Ensure the quality register is updated correctly.
- Manage issues and risks as directed by the project manager.
- Assist the project manager to examine issues and risks.

Project assurance

Project assurance assures the principal stakeholder interests, namely, business, user, and supplier that the project is being managed correctly. It necessitates an independence from the project manager; hence the project board cannot assign any of its assurance responsibilities to the project manager.

Main responsibilities

- Ensure liaison is working effectively between the business, user and supplier.
- Ensure risks are controlled.
- Ensure the right people write product descriptions.
- Ensure the right people, properly trained, are involved in quality activities at the right time, and that these methods are being applied correctly.
- Ensure any tailoring of the method is suitable to the project environment.
- Ensure quality control follow-up actions are dealt with correctly.
- Ensure an acceptable solution is being developed, and that project scope is not changing unnoticed.
- Ensure internal and external communications are working.

- Ensure applicable standards are being used.
- Ensure the needs of specialist interests (e.g. security) are being observed.

Competencies and skills

- Be capable of adequately representing the business, user or supplier stakeholders.
- Have sufficient credibility to ensure that advice and guidance are followed.
- Have sufficient knowledge of the business, user or supplier stakeholder areas.
- Be available for the project throughout its duration.
- Diplomacy.
- Thoroughness.
- Attention to detail.
- Good communication.

Change authority

The project board has the capacity to delegate the approval authority for responses to change requests or off-specifications to an individual or group designated as a change authority. The project manager may be appointed as the change authority for certain facets of the project, for instance, amending baselined work packages provided it doesn't impact management stage tolerances.

Main responsibilities

- Review, approve or reject requests for change and off-specifications within its delegated limits of authority and change budget set by the project board.
- Refer to the project board if any delegated limits of authority or allocated change budget are forecast to be exceeded by approval of an issue.

Competencies and skills

- Be able to adequately represent the business, user and supplier stakeholder interests.
- Have sufficient credibility to ensure that advice and guidance are followed.
- Have sufficient knowledge of the business, user or supplier stakeholder areas.
- Decision-making.
- Planning.
- Attention to detail.
- Problem-solving.

Project support

The establishment of project support on a formal basis is discretionary. If it's not assigned to a distinct individual or role, the responsibility falls onto the project manager.

One crucial support function to contemplate is change control. Depending on the magnitude and context of the project, formalizing this may become necessary, and it may evolve into a task that overextends the project manager without additional support.

Project support roles can be delivered by a project office or by designated resources for the project.

Main responsibilities

- Set up and maintain project files.
- Establish document control procedures.
- Collect actuals data and forecasts.
- Update plans.
- Administer or assist the quality review process and project board meetings.
- Assist with compiling reports.
- Provide expertise in specialist tools and techniques (e.g. planning).
- Maintain records including all registers and logs.
- Administer the change control procedure.

Competencies and skills

- Administration and organization skills.
- Knowledge of specialist tools and techniques.
- Knowledge of corporate, programme management or customer standards applicable to the project.

Corporate, programme management or the customer

Corporate, programme management or the customer provides the project mandate which triggers the PRINCE2 process starting up a project. It appoints the executive role and approves the appointment of the other project board members. It sets project-level tolerances and takes decisions about project-level exceptions escalated by the executive.

It also has the responsibility after the project closes to disseminate and distribute lessons learned and follow-on action recommendations that are applicable to others within the organization. It also accepts responsibility for the updated benefits management approach after the project closes.

As mentioned earlier, this role is not considered a part of the PRINCE2 project management team.

FAQ

How many roles are there on a PRINCE2 project?

In a PRINCE2 project, there are 9 recommended roles within the project management team. These are:

1. Project board.
2. Executive.
3. Senior user.
4. Senior supplier.
5. Project manager.
6. Team manager.
7. Team manager.
8. Project assurance.
9. Change authority.
10. Project support.

Although corporate, programme management or the customer commissions the project, the role itself is outside of the PRINCE2 project management team.

Reference

^[1] Stationery Office (2017) Managing Successful Projects with PRINCE2. 6th edn. Stationery Office.