

# AgilePM/DSDM or PRINCE2 Agile – what is the difference and which one should I choose?

 Agile, AgilePM/DSDM, Governance, PRINCE2, PRINCE2 Agile

 Knowledge Base

At agileKRC we regularly get asked about these two frameworks, so we have put together some guidance that we hope will help people with their decision.

## What is AgilePM/DSDM?

AgilePM® or DSDM® is a project management framework created by the DSDM Consortium and it has two exam qualifications that are managed/supervised by the accrediting body APMG International. The two exams are known as [AgilePM Foundation](#) and [AgilePM Practitioner](#). The framework was originally created in 1995 and was significantly overhauled in 2007.

In simple terms AgilePM (which stands for Agile Project Management) can be seen as the name of the qualification focusing on the role (or view) of the Project Manager. The framework itself is known as DSDM which in the past stood for 'Dynamic Systems Development Method'.

The terms AgilePM and DSDM are often used interchangeably.

There are no pre-requisites for taking the [AgilePM exams](#).

At the end of 2016, the DSDM Consortium renamed itself to the Agile Business Consortium.

## What is PRINCE2 Agile?

PRINCE2 Agile® is an extension product to PRINCE2 and describes how to apply PRINCE2 in an agile context. It was produced by AXELOS in 2015 and has one exam qualification which is [PRINCE2 Agile Practitioner](#). Examinations are managed by several accrediting bodies (known as Exam Institutes or EIs) such as APMG, PeopleCert, Exin, BCS and several others. From 1st January, 2018, there will only be one EI and this will be PeopleCert.

PRINCE2 Agile is not used in isolation, it is used in conjunction with PRINCE2. Therefore, when using PRINCE2 Agile you are using PRINCE2 configured and tailored for an agile context.

To take the PRINCE2 Agile Practitioner exam you must hold one of the following **(this is new since October 2016)**:

- PRINCE2® Foundation
- PRINCE2® Practitioner
- Project Management Professional® (PMI/PMP)
- Certified Associate in Project Management® (CAPM)
- IMPA Levels A, B, C and D® (Certified Projects Director)
- PRINCE2 Agile Foundation **(new since July 2018)**

## What is the difference between AgilePM/DSDM and PRINCE2 Agile?

Although they are different, they are essentially similar in that they are addressing the need to manage projects in today's world where agile has become mainstream.

They both contain a process/lifecycle, defined roles, products to be delivered and guidance on a variety of tools and techniques. Each has an overarching set of principles or values that allows agile to function.

## Which one do I choose?

Both frameworks are tried and tested and have built up a lot of credibility in the agile market place where project management is the focus of attention. They are not alternatives to some of the popular agile methods such as Scrum and Kanban as these methods perform a different role (see later).

If you are an individual and looking to improve you CV or develop your own skillset, then at agileKRC we advise you to do the following:

- If you have passed a PRINCE2 exam (either Foundation or Practitioner and even if lapsed) – go for PRINCE2 Agile as this will build on your exiting knowledge and make your PRINCE2 much more versatile and relevant
- If you do not have any PRINCE2 qualifications (or the other 3 PM qualifications mentioned above) – it is probably best to go for AgilePM as this is the quickest route to getting a widely recognised qualification (i.e. approximately 4 days as opposed to approximately 6 days)

Prior to October 2016 there we complicated scenarios for lapsed PRINCE2 Practitioners or those who only had PRINCE2 at Foundation level. This complication has now been removed by AXELOS altering the pre-requisite.

If you are an organisation, it is very important that when you choose between these two you make the decision based on where you are now and what you are looking to achieve. It is not possible to say one is better than the other because you must take in to account your own situation before deciding.

If you are an organisation you need to look at what your prevailing way of working is based on:

- If you are a 'PRINCE2 Shop' you would be best to adopt PRINCE2 Agile.
- If you have your own agile project management process, then you would be advised to look at both in order to see if either offers you options to update your own best practice.
- If you are looking to adopt an agile project management framework from scratch, then AgilePM/DSDM is marginally the quickest and cheapest option for a credible framework that has been around since the mid-nineties. You can still opt to go for PRINCE2 and PRINCE2 Agile instead as it is a more recognisable 'brand' worldwide and the PRINCE2 Agile guidance is more comprehensive and up to date in its coverage of agile (describing such things as Scrum, Kanban, Lean Startup and Cynefin). However, it will take a little longer to become accredited and is slightly more expensive. Before the pre-requisite was lowered, it took a lot longer and was much more expensive.

## Are there alternatives to AgilePM/DSDM and PRINCE2 Agile?

Yes. In North America, in particular, a very popular project management approach is PMI (or PMBOK). They have their own agile 'add-on' called PMI-ACP. There are many other agile project management frameworks that exist although many do not have independently supervised accreditations.

## Where does Scrum and Kanban fit into this?

Well they do, and they don't! Firstly, Scrum and Kanban are not project management frameworks so you cannot manage a project with either of them in isolation. However, you can incorporate them into both AgilePM/DSDM and PRINCE2 Agile.

## Where does agileKRC fit in?

We have been at the forefront of training and consultancy in both frameworks, along with the actual creation of the training materials used for both courses. We were the first training organisation to offer DSDM exams and we also helped

to create the **PRINCE2 Agile exams**. We have run regular monthly courses for the agile project management marketplace for over 5 years and we have extremely high pass rates.

Keith Richards the CEO of agileKRC was the lead author for the rewrite of DSDM in 2007 and was the lead author for PRINCE2 Agile in 2015 (so we should know what we are talking about! :))

### Have we answered your questions?

This is intended as a guide and we really do hope it helps. Please let us know if there are more things you would like to know about these frameworks. This will help us to improve this guidance about AgilePM/DSDM and PRINCE2 Agile.

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