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PRINCE2 Practitioner Exam Tips

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Contents

Introduction

This hints and tips booklet has been produced to assist delegates who will be taking the PRINCE2 Practitioner examination.

In this booklet you will find some helpful hints on how to manage the booklets and read the information you are provided with as well as how to manage your time and some techniques you can use for answering certain styles of questions.

We hope that this will be a helpful guide for completing the sample practitioner papers you will be provided with, and if you have any tips you would like to add, we would welcome your feedback.

The Manual

As you will no doubt be aware, the practitioner exam is an open book exam. You may bring only your OGC PRINCE2® manual with you.
You **are** allowed to tab your book to make navigation a little easier, but you **cannot** under any circumstances paste or insert any additional material into the book. You **may** however write as much additional information into the manual that you wish.

When it comes to using the manual during the exam, you will find that your time is quite tight, so there will not be much time for you to refer to the book for every question. Here are some tips to help you use your manual in the most efficient way.

- Ensure your manual is tabbed clearly so that you can navigate easily
- Too many tabs or over tabbing your manual may result in confusion
- Only use the manual when you don't know the answer but know exactly where to find it.
- DO NOT use the manual to double check answers you think you already know.
- If you have no idea of the answer to a question and no idea where to find it in the manual – don't bother looking – guess – you will only waste valuable time.

The Booklets

You will receive a sealed plastic bag in which you will find three booklets:

- **The scenario booklet** – this will be stapled and will comprise of a single page project scenario and additional information for some of the questions – there will be approximately 10 or so pages in this booklet.

- **The question booklet** – this contains the 9 questions for the project, each question could comprise of up to 3 or 4 parts (A, B and C for example) and will total 12 marks per question.

- **The answer sheets** – No – these are not the answers, but the sheets onto which you will fill in your answers.

The scenario booklet

Our first tip with this booklet is to remove just the single scenario page from this booklet, as you will quickly discover that the project scenario is relevant for every question that you answer, so having it in front of you during the exam is crucial.

Secondly, you are allowed to write and highlight on this booklet, so our next tip is to ensure that as you are reading through the project scenario, underline or highlight relevant information and write next to it in the paragraph what that information is. If you see a statement that you think is explaining a benefit of the project, underline or highlight and annotate in the column next to it "BENEFIT". This will help tremendously when you are answering a question and remember reading something about a benefit but cannot find it quickly.

Another very important thing to note about the additional information provided in the scenario booklet is that you **DO NOT** read any of it until you have been directed to do so by a particular question. You will note that the additional information is clearly indicated to be relevant to only one particular question, so it will not be relevant at all until you reach that question. Please **DO NOT** make the mistake of reading all the additional information and thinking it is relevant for all questions as it is not.

The Question booklet

You may answer the questions in any order you like – there is no build up of a story or information – each question is completely stand alone.

However, if you do choose to start with question 5 for example, it is recommended that you complete all parts associated with Question 5 (for example Part A, Part B and Part C). If you do not complete all parts of the question, you may find that you forget which parts you have not completed and overlook these when you are going back over the paper.

Please pay very careful attention to any words that are in **bold.** These are there for a reason – some examples may be as follows:

- **True Statements -** this means that any information provided must be considered to be true – you do not need to verify this with the scenario, just take the information as additional information as read.
- **2 –** normally all questions only have one answer, except in the case of multiple response questions, in these questions, it will clearly have a number 2 in bold indicating how many selections you should make.
- **First –** Some questions ask which might be the first actions someone might take or the first product to be updated – in these cases, you need to consider only the first.

The Answer booklet

Please note: this booklet must be completed in **pencil ONLY.** It is best not to write notes or highlight in this booklet, reserve it only for your answers.

You will notice that the answer booklet clearly states which question and part of the question you are completing. It would help to be very aware of where you are completing the answers as some delegates have found themselves completing the incorrect question or part – so be alert to this.

When you begin answering your questions, it is **strongly advised** that you fill the answers directly into the answer booklet. Some delegates have tried filling the answers in on the question booklet and then transposing the answers to the answer sheets, only to make errors in transposing. You will receive **NO MARKS** for incorrect transposing as it is only the answer sheets that are marked!

At the end of the exam, **all three** booklets must be returned to the invigilator, with just the answer sheets sealed in the plastic bags provided. Your candidate number, which will be provided to you for the examination MUST appear on all three booklets in the allocated place. If you do not return any parts of the booklets, you exam may not be marked by the APM group.

Types of questions

There are five different types of questions. These are as follows with some examples and tips on how to answer them.

1. Classic multiple choice questions

This question style is very similar to the foundation style questions with only **one** answer. The answer you select may be from 3 or 4 different options:

Example:

When preparing the next stage Plan, the Project Manager identified the Project time and cost tolerances. Is this appropriate application of PRINCE2?	
A	Yes, because the Project Manager should document the time and cost tolerances for the project in the Stage Plan.
B	Yes, because the Project Manager defines the tolerances for the Project.
C	No, because Project tolerances are defined in the Project Plan.
D	No, because the Project Board define and set Project Tolerances.

Although the style of these multiple choice questions vary, the above example is one style they may give you. Once you have read the question, decide if the statement is correct or not and then you have a 50/50 chance of getting the answer correct. In the above example, the answer would be C.

2. Multiple Response

This is the only style of question where you will select **two** answers in your answer booklet. Typically your answers would be selected from 5 options.

The best approach to this style of question is to read the question and then select the first most obvious answer. There is usually one answer which does stand out more than the others. Once you have selected your first answer, re-read the question and then look for the next most likely answer.

Another possible approach is to read each answer and put a tick, question mark or cross next to each selection and then see what you have. You might find that you only have to select between three possible answers. Make sure when this is the case, you re-read the question in case any key words jump out which make one option more likely than another.

Example:

Answer the following question about the change control procedure.	
1	**Examine:** When carrying out an impact analysis for an issue, which **2** of the following would be considered? A. The project performance targets in terms of time, cost, quality and scope. B. The Communications Management Strategy to determine who should be informed of the issue. C. The risk register to determine if any risks are impacted by the issue. D. The exception report which raised the issue. E. The Project Business Case, especially in terms of the impact on the benefits.

In the above example the answer is A and E as per page 95 section 9.3.3.2.

3. Matching

These questions are great for catching up on time. They typically involve matching a statement in column 1 with a selection from column 2.

Please note that there is only ever **one** answer to these questions although the options in column 2 can sometimes be used only once, more than once or some not used at all.

Example:

Column 1 is a list of **True Statements** about Initiating a Project. For each statement in Column 1, select from Column 2 the PRINCE2 theme being used. Each selection from Column 2 can be used once, more than once or not at all.

Column 1	Column 2
1. The Project Manager has prepared the Project Plan. 2. Identifying which stakeholders should be communicated with during the project. 3. Setting up the risk register 4. The Project Manager identified two end stage assessments in the Project Plan.	A. Business Case B. Quality C. Risk D. Plans E. Change F. Progress G. Organisation

In the above example the answer is for 1 is D, 2 is G, 3 is C and 4 is F.

4. Sequencing

These questions sometimes require you to either determine just a sequence of events or sometimes even to determine if some of the statements are part of the sequence and then to sequence the remainder of the statements.

Example:

Column 1 is a list of decisions to be made within the project. For each decision in Column 1, decide whether or not it is made in Starting up a Project Process and indicate in which order the decisions which are made should occur.	
Column 1	Column 2
1. Approval of the feasibility study by the Project Board before any work on the project can commence. 2. Decide if the source of funding is sufficient to fund the project's objective. 3. Assess which parties should be involved during the project, as suggested by previous development projects. 4. Evaluate two possible candidates for Project Manager and decide which should be appointed.	A. Not made in the Starting up a project process B. First C. Second D. Third E. Fourth

In the above example the answer is for 1 is A, 2 is D, 3 is C and 4 is B.

5. Assertion/Reason

These questions are sometimes the hardest level of question and can take up a lot of your time in answering. There is however a very good technique you can use which should make it much easier to answer these questions.

The first tip we advise is for you to read each assertion statement and each reason statement as a completely standalone question. To ensure that you do this, it is strongly recommended that you read the questions on a column by column basis. All of the assertion statements will relate in some way to the scenario. All of the reason statements are generally Prince 2 statements. You will need to read each statement and determine if they are TRUE or FALSE first. As you read down each column, use a pencil to indicate T or F for each statement.

Once you have completed each column look at the combinations you have of True and False for each line and then determine your answer.

If you have any combinations with a False, your answer will either be C, D or E from the indicated table within the question.

Things get a little trickier when you have two answers which are both True. You will now need to apply an additional test to determine if the statements are A or B. The best way to do this is to read the Reason statement first placing the word therefore in the middle and then reading the Assertion statement.

If the Reason statement explains why the Assertion statement is TRUE then the answer will be A.

If the Reason statement does not explain why the Assertion statement is true, then the answer will be B.

Example:

Using the Project Scenario, answer the following question.
Lines 1 to 2 in the table below consist of an assertion statement and a reason statement. For each line identify the appropriate option, from options A to E, that applies. Each option can be used once, more than once or not at all.

Option	**Assertion**	**Reason**
A	True	True AND the reason explains the assertion
B	True	True BUT the reason does not explain the assertion
C	True	False
D	False	True
E	False	False

	Assertion		**Reason**
1	The expected benefits from increasing staff flexibility should be included in the business case.	**BECAUSE**	All known business case benefits should be described clearly in measurable terms.
2	The expected benefits from increasing staff flexibility should be included in the business case.	**BECAUSE**	Information about expected project benefits forms part of the justification for undertaking a project.

In the above example both assertion and reason statements are true, but in line 1, the reason statement is stating that all benefits should be described in measurable terms, but the assertion statement does not describe a measurable benefit, it only states that expected benefits should be included. For this reason, the answer for the first line is B.

In the second line, the reason statement is explaining that expected benefits help to justify the project starting and continuing which does in fact explain why expected benefits should be included in the business case so therefore the answer to the second line is A.

Other tips for answering questions:

Another type of question that is often asked in the exam is where a sample management product is provided for example a Quality Management Strategy, and you are provided with a draft which contains errors. When you get this type of question, do not attempt to read all the additional information as it will not necessarily all make sense.

A good technique you can use is as follows:

- Start by finding the correct management product in Appendix A to use as reference while answering the question
- Next read only the first question, but do not look at the answers yet
- Then read each entry in the section you are directed to look at and decide whether you feel that statement is correct and fits there. If you don't think it is appropriate, circle the item or put a mark against it
- When you have finished reading each of the entries under that heading, look at the proposed answers – you should be able to match up the items you found to be incorrect with the answers pretty easily.

This technique will be demonstrated by your trainer, but it generally works most of the time.

Timings

As most of you will probably gather, time is going to be your enemy during the exam. You cannot afford a leisurely pace as the suggested timings are as follows:

- 10 Minutes to read the scenario
- 15 Minutes for each of the 9 questions
- 10 Minutes tolerance for additional reading

These are really tight and most delegates finish with little time to spare. It is strongly recommended that you fill in your answer book as you go along and try to keep up a steady methodical pace.

Good luck with your sample papers and of course with the Practitioner exam – we hope that this guide goes some way to helping you with your success.