Preparation Guide

Edition 202601

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1. Overview

EXIN Agile Scrum Product Owner (ASPO.EN)

Scope

The EXIN Agile Scrum Product Owner certification confirms that the professional can function as a Product Owner by leading a Scrum project in a way that adds value for the customer.

This certification includes the following topics:

- Agile way of thinking
- Product Owner accountability
- Managing the product backlog
- Complex projects
- Adding value

Summary

Agile and Scrum are about working together to successfully reach the goal. Agile principles are popular in software development and are increasingly being used in other areas. The Scrum framework includes establishing cross-functional and self-managing teams, producing a working increment at the end of each iteration or sprint.

The Product Owner provides direction, makes final decisions, and ensures that the team knows the product goals. The Product Owner is actively engaged with, communicates well with, and listens carefully to arguments from the team. Within the context of the larger organizational objectives, the Product Owner provides the vision, but also the boundaries within which this vision must be realized. This is achieved by creating, refining and ordering the business' value-driven product backlog. It is the Product Owner's responsibility to make sure the project creates the intended customer value and supports organizational objectives.

A good Product Owner understands the business and the market, is the voice of the customer (internal or external), manages the product or service lifecycle and balances the need for both functional and non-functional requirements.

The EXIN Agile Scrum Product Owner certification focuses on adopting Agile principles and the Scrum framework in the workplace and on assuming the accountability of the Product Owner. It ensures that a candidate can successfully lead Agile Scrum projects in the context of an overall service and product lifecycle, in a way that adds the most value possible for the customer.

Context

The EXIN Agile Scrum Product Owner certification is part of the EXIN Agile Scrum qualification program.

Target group

In particular, this certification is suitable for professionals working in an Agile context and who have the ambition of taking on the Product Owner accountability.

Requirements for certification

- Successful completion of the EXIN Agile Scrum Product Owner exam.
- Accredited EXIN Agile Scrum Product Owner training, including completion of the Practical Assignments.

Knowledge of Scrum terminology, for instance through the EXIN Agile Scrum Foundation exam, is strongly recommended.

Examination details

Examination type:	Multiple-choice questions
Number of questions:	40
Pass mark:	65% (26/40 questions)
Open book:	No
Notes:	No
Electronic equipment/aides permitted:	No
Exam duration:	90 minutes

The Rules and Regulations for EXIN's examinations apply to this exam.

Bloom level

The EXIN Agile Scrum Product Owner certification tests candidates at Bloom levels 2, 3 and 4 according to Bloom's revised taxonomy:

- Bloom level 2: Understanding – a step beyond remembering. Understanding shows that candidates comprehend what is presented and can evaluate how the learning material may be applied in their own environment. This type of questions aims to demonstrate that the candidate is able to organize, compare, interpret and choose the correct description of facts and ideas.
- Bloom level 3: Application – shows that candidates have the ability to make use of information in a context different from the one in which it was learned. This type of questions aims to demonstrate that the candidate is able to solve problems in new situations by applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques and rules in a different, or new way. These questions usually contain a short scenario.
- Bloom level 4: Analysis – shows that candidates have the ability to break learned information down into its parts to understand it. This Bloom level is mainly tested in the Practical Assignments. The Practical Assignments aim to demonstrate that the candidate is able to examine and break information into parts by identifying motives or causes, make inferences and find evidence to support generalizations.

Training

Contact hours

The recommended number of contact hours for this training course is 14. This includes practical assignments, exam preparation and short breaks. This number of hours does not include lunch breaks, homework and the exam.

Indication study effort

112 hours (4 ECTS), depending on existing knowledge.

Training organization

You can find a list of our Accredited Training Organizations at www.exin.com.

2. Exam requirements

The exam requirements are specified in the exam specifications. The following table lists the topics of the module (exam requirements) and the subtopics (exam specifications).

Exam requirements	Exam specifications	Weight
1. Agile way of thinking		**10%**
	1.1 Agile concepts	10%
2. Product Owner accountability		**17.5%**
	2.1 Tasks and responsibilities	12.5%
	2.2 Other accountabilities (Scrum Master, Developers)	5%
3. Managing the product backlog		**40%**
	3.1 From vision to product backlog	10%
	3.2 User stories (including epics, non-functional and functional requirements)	10%
	3.3 Creating sprint backlogs	2.5%
	3.4 Tracking and communicating progress	10%
	3.5 Staying in control and delivering value	7.5%
4. Complex projects		**20%**
	4.1 Scaling Agile projects	7.5%
	4.2 Suitability of Agile for different types of projects	5%
	4.3 Managing complex product backlogs	7.5%
5. Adding value		**12.5%**
	5.1 Adding business value to the project	7.5%
	5.2 Acting as the voice of the customer (VoC)	5%
	Total	**100%**

Exam specifications

1 Agile way of thinking

1.1 Agile concepts

The candidate can…

1.1.1 explain the Agile way of thinking.

1.1.2 explain how Agile brings predictability and flexibility.

1.1.3 describe how to establish continuous improvement.

1.1.4 differentiate other Agile frameworks and methodologies: Crystal, Extreme Programming (XP), DSDM, LeSS, SAFe and Kanban.

2 Product Owner accountability

2.1 Tasks and responsibilities

The candidate can…

2.1.1 explain which tasks and responsibilities belong to the Product Owner.

2.1.2 analyze a scenario for the best solution to a problem typical to Product Owners.

2.1.3 explain the accountabilities of the Product Owner in the different Scrum events.

2.2 Other accountabilities (Scrum Master, Developers)

The candidate can…

2.2.1 explain all accountabilities within the Scrum framework.

3 Managing the product backlog

3.1 From vision to product backlog

The candidate can…

3.1.1 explain how to create the product goal.

3.1.2 explain how to create a product roadmap for either a service or a product.

3.1.3 explain why a good definition of done (DoD) is so important.

3.2 User stories (including epics, non-functional and functional requirements)

The candidate can…

3.2.1 explain how to write good user stories.

3.2.2 analyze a product backlog to identify epic stories (large, unrefined items).

3.2.3 analyze a scenario for non-functional requirements.

3.2.4 explain how to manage non-functional requirements.

3.3 Creating sprint backlogs

The candidate can…

3.3.1 explain how to create a sprint backlog.

3.4 Tracking and communicating progress

The candidate can…

3.4.1 identify deviations, roadblocks and other impediments that influence the progress.

3.4.2 explain how to create information radiators, how to interpret them and how to act on the results.

3.4.3 explain how to interpret commonly used tracking methods (burn-down chart, velocity, et cetera).

3.5 Staying in control and delivering value

The candidate can…

3.5.1 explain how to manage issues and bugs and how to inform stakeholders.

3.5.2 explain how to establish continuous delivery.

4 Complex projects

4.1 Scaling Agile projects

The candidate can…

4.1.1 explain how to use the product backlog in a scaled environment.

4.1.2 explain how to scale Scrum using Nexus.

4.1.3 explain how to scale the Product Owner function.

4.2 Suitability of Agile for different types of projects

The candidate can…

4.2.1 explain in which cases it is not possible to use Agile.

4.2.2 explain why having a small team is beneficial for any project.

4.3 Managing complex product backlogs

The candidate can…

4.3.1 explain different ways to manage complex product backlogs.

4.3.2 propose a way to manage a complex product backlog in a given scenario.

5 Adding value

5.1 Adding business value to the project

The candidate can…

5.1.1 explain what business value is.

5.1.2 explain the relationship between business value and product goal.

5.1.3 explain the relationship between business value and improved profitability.

5.2 Acting as the voice of the customer (VoC)

The candidate can…

5.2.1 explain how to work with customers, users and other stakeholders.

3. List of basic concepts

This chapter contains the terms and abbreviations with which candidates should be familiar.

Please note that knowledge of these terms alone does not suffice for the exam. The candidate must understand the concepts and be able to provide examples.

accountability[1]
ADAPT (awareness, desire, ability, promotion and transfer)
affinity estimation
Agile Manifesto
Agile planning
burn-down (bar) chart
burn-up chart
business value
chief Product Owner
coach
coarse-grained user story
collocated team
commitment
continuous delivery
continuous improvement
continuous integration
customer
customer/user needs
daily scrum
definition of done (DoD)
Developers
distributed team
epic user story
estimation
feedback
fine-grained user story
functional requirement
Gantt chart
ideal days
ideal hours
impediment
increment
information radiator
Kanban board
minimal marketable product (MMP)
minimum viable product (MVP)
MoSCoW
non-functional requirement
other Agile frameworks:
- Crystal
- Extreme Programming (XP)
- DSDM
- LeSS
- SAFe
- Kanban
- pair programming

planning poker
potentially shippable
product backlog
product backlog item
product goal
Product Owner
product roadmap
refinement (of the product backlog)
release
release planning
responsibility[2]
return on investment (RoI)
roadblock
scaling
Scrum board
Scrum Master
Scrum team
servant leader
splitting teams
sprint
sprint backlog
sprint backlog item
sprint goal
sprint planning
sprint retrospective
sprint review
story point
task board
test-driven development
timebox/timeboxing
user story

[1] The Scrum Guide makes a distinction between accountability and responsibility. Accountability means 'making sure something happens'. A person who is accountable may delegate the task.
[2] The Scrum Guide makes a distinction between accountability and responsibility. Responsibility means 'doing a certain task'. A person who is responsible executes the task as part of their work.

value
velocity
voice of the customer (VoC)
waste
Waterfall
work-in-progress (WIP)

4. Literature

Exam literature

The knowledge required for the exam is covered in the following literature:

A. Johann Botha
The EXIN Handbook for Scrum Masters and Product Owners
EXIN (2024)
ISBN: 9789076531137
Go to www.exin.com. Click on 'Professionals' and then on 'Certifications' to find the certification. The free download can be found under 'Required reading'.

Additional literature

B. Ken Schwaber & Jeff Sutherland
The Scrum Guide
(most recent version)

Comment

Additional literature is for reference and depth of knowledge only.

Literature matrix

Exam requirements	Exam specifications	Reference
1. Agile way of thinking		
	1.1 Agile concepts	Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10 Appendix A
2. Product Owner accountability		
	2.1 Tasks and responsibilities	Chapters 5, 6, 7, 10
	2.2 Other accountabilities (Scrum Master, Developers)	Chapter 5
3. Managing the product backlog		
	3.1 From vision to product backlog	Chapters 5, 6, 12
	3.2 User stories (including epics, non-functional and functional requirements)	Chapters 6, 7
	3.3 Creating sprint backlogs	Chapters 5, 7
	3.4 Tracking and communicating progress	Chapters 5, 7, 10, 14
	3.5 Staying in control and delivering value	Chapters 1, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13 Appendix B
4. Complex projects		
	4.1 Scaling Agile projects	Chapters 2, 6, 12, 14
	4.2 Suitability of Agile for different types of projects	Chapters 1, 2, 5, 13
	4.3 Managing complex product backlogs	Chapters 9, 12
5. Adding value		
	5.1 Adding business value to the project	Chapters 5, 6
	5.2 Acting as the voice of the customer (VoC)	Chapters 1, 5, 6

Contact EXIN

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