APMP for PRINCE2® Practitioners

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Introduction

The main purpose of this White Paper is to explain why any individual who has the PRINCE2 Practitioner qualification, or any organization which employs PRINCE2 Practitioners, should consider the merits of the APMP qualification.

The paper also explains how any individual who has already studied for the APMP qualification, or any organization which has prepared its project management staff for the APMP qualification, could also benefit from using the PRINCE2 method.

To do this, the paper sets out to answer the following key questions:

- What is the APMP? In writing this paper I am assuming that the majority of readers will be aware of the PRINCE2 Practitioner qualification, but may never have heard of the APMP qualification

- How does the APM Body of Knowledge compare to the PRINCE2 method? This question needs to be answered because the APMP qualification is based on the APM Body of Knowledge and the PRINCE2 Practitioner Qualification is based on the PRINCE2 method

- How does the APMP qualification compare to the PRINCE2 Practitioner qualification? Having addressed the previous question, it is possible to compare what is offered by each of the qualifications

- How to bring together the APMP and PRINCE2 qualifications? The answers to the previous two questions identify a number of similarities and differences between the APM Body of Knowledge / APMP qualification and PRINCE2. These are important, because it is these differences and similarities that make the two compatible with each other

- What next? Finally, I consider the steps that individuals and organizations can take to actually bring together the APMP with the PRINCE2 Practitioner.

What is the APMP?

Many PRINCE2 Practitioners have never even heard of the term "APMP". For example, a training company that I know, recently sent out a mail shot for their APMP course to people who had recently passed the PRINCE2 Practitioner exam. Of those that responded, the most frequently asked question was "What is the APMP?"

So this is probably the first and most fundamental question that needs to be addressed.

The APMP is a qualification offered by the Association for Project Management, who describe it as follows:

- "APMP is a knowledge based qualification. Successful candidates are able to participate in projects from individual assignments through to large capital projects. APMP is a qualification recognized both nationally and internationally that successful candidates can carry from one job to another or from one industry to another"

And furthermore:

- "APMP is aimed at project managers and aspiring project managers who wish to demonstrate their knowledge of project management at a foundation level. APMP covers 37 knowledge areas from the APM Body of Knowledge. Knowledge of these areas is considered fundamental to the professional management of projects".

How does the APM Body of Knowledge compare with the PRINCE2 Manual?

Before we can compare the APM Body of Knowledge with the PRINCE2 Manual, we need to understand what each of them consists of. First of all I will provide a description of the APM Body of Knowledge and will then follow this with a description of the PRINCE2 Manual.

The PRINCE2 manual has recently been refreshed and a new edition was published in June 2009. My description of PRINCE2 is based on this new edition, and will accordingly provide anyone more familiar with the previous edition with an overview of the changes that were introduced in 2009.

What is the APM Body of Knowledge?

Quoting from the publication, "The APM Body of Knowledge is a well-established collection of project management knowledge…it provides introductions and common guides to those areas considered essential to the discipline of managing projects, and it is clearly structured with definitions, explanations and suggested further reading material. This information will direct and assist those interested in project management in their work, studies and learning for recognized qualifications".

Extract from the APM Body of Knowledge 5th Edition, reproduced with the permission of the Association for Project Management.

What does the APM Body of Knowledge consist of?

The knowledge referred to above, is structured into seven sections, with each section covering a number of separate topics. In total there are 52 topics, as listed on the next page:

- Project management in context
  - Project management*
  - Programme management*
  - Portfolio management *
  - Project context*
  - Project sponsorship*
  - Project office*
- Planning the strategy
  - Project success and benefits management*
  - Stakeholder management*
  - Value management
  - Project management plan*
  - Project risk management*
  - Project quality management*
  - Health, safety and environment management*
- Executing the strategy
  - Scope management*
  - Scheduling*
  - Resource management*
  - Budgeting and cost management*
  - Change control*
  - Earned value management*
  - Information management and reporting*
  - Issue management*
- Techniques
  - Requirements management*
  - Development
  - Estimating*
  - Technology management
  - Value engineering
  - Modelling and testing
  - Configuration management*
- Business and commercial
  - Business case*
  - Marketing and sales
  - Project financing and funding
  - Procurement*
  - Legal awareness
- Organization and governance
  - Project life cycles*
  - Concept
  - Definition
  - Implementation
  - Handover and closeout*
  - Project reviews*
  - Organization structure*
  - Organizational roles*
  - Methods and procedures*
  - Governance of project management*
- People and the profession
  - Communication*
  - Teamwork*

- Leadership*
- Conflict management*
- Negotiation*
- Human resource management
- Behavioural characteristics
- Learning and development
- Professionalism and ethics.

In addition to the above, the Body of Knowledge also includes a Glossary of project management terms and a list of project management acronyms.

(*These topics form part of the APMP syllabus – more on that to follow later).

What is PRINCE2?

Again, quoting from the manual, "PRINCE2 is a structured project management method based on experience drawn from thousands of projects – and from the contributions of countless project sponsors, project managers, project teams, academics, trainer and consultants".

What does PRINCE2 consist of?

The PRINCE2 method is made up of four integrated elements:

- **Principles**. These are the guiding obligations and good practices which determine whether the project is genuinely being managed using PRINCE2. There are seven principles and unless all of them are applied, it is not a PRINCE2 project. The seven principles are:

  - Continued business justification
  - Learn from experience
  - Defined roles and responsibilities
  - Manage by stages
  - Manage by exception
  - Focus on products
  - Tailor to suit the project environment.

(The 2009 edition was the first to state these principles so overtly, but there is nothing in this list that cannot be recognized from the earlier editions of PRINCE2).

- **Themes**. These describe aspects of project management that must be addressed continually and in parallel throughout the project. The seven themes explain the specific treatment required by PRINCE2 for various project management disciplines and why they are necessary. The seven themes are:

  - Business Case
  - Organization
  - Quality
  - Plans
  - Risk
  - Change
  - Progress.

(These used to be called "Components." A couple of them have unfamiliar names and Configuration Management is no longer listed. They are no longer called components, because a set of components make up the whole, but these do not make up the whole of PRINCE2, and they certainly don't cover the whole of project management. Most of the name changes have been made to make them single word titles (apart from Business Case that is), and Progress replaces the old Controls component. Configuration Management is now part of the Change theme, because, as the previous editions of PRINCE2 made clear, "there must be a close liaison between configuration management and change control").

- **Processes**. These describe the step-wise progression through the project lifecycle, from getting started to project closure. Each process provides checklists of recommended activities, products and related responsibilities. There are seven processes which are:

  - Starting up a Project
  - Directing a Project
  - Initiating a Project
  - Controlling a Stage
  - Managing Product Delivery
  - Managing a Stage Boundary
  - Closing a Project.

(In the previous editions of PRINCE2 there were eight processes. The old Planning process is now covered by the

Plans theme. PRINCE2 also no longer has a separate section on techniques. Product-based planning is covered by the Plans theme, so everything you need to know about plans and planning is in the one chapter. Quality Review is covered by the Quality theme, so again, all quality-related topics are in the same chapter. And the Change Control technique can now be found in the Change theme, for the same reason).

- **Tailoring**. Or to give it its full title "Tailoring PRINCE2 to the project environment". This chapter addresses the need to tailor PRINCE2 to the specific context of the project. PRINCE2 is not a 'one-size-fits-all' solution; it is a flexible framework that can readily be tailored to any type or size of project.

(This may sound like a brand new chapter, and it is. But much of the content has been carried over from the "Scalability" and "Hints and Tips" sections that permeated much of the earlier editions of PRINCE2. The real improvement is that these are now presented in a much more structured and accessible fashion).

In addition, PRINCE2 also has a set of Appendices that provide Product Description outlines (for what PRINCE2 calls its management products) and detailed Roles and Responsibilities (for the various roles described in the Organization theme). It also contains quite an extensive Glossary (of terms used throughout the manual).

APM Body of Knowledge and PRINCE2 Compared

There are many similarities that can be found when comparing the APM Body of Knowledge with PRINCE2. For example, they both:

- Describe generic approaches to project management that can be applied regardless of the type of project
- Can be applied across geographical and cultural boundaries, even though they both originate within the United Kingdom
- Recognize that they cannot provide a 'one-size-fits-all' formula to project success
- Cover the topics of Business Case, Organizational Roles, Quality Management, Risk Management, Change Control, Issue Management, Configuration Management, and aspects of Planning and of Progress Control.

The key differences between the APM Body of Knowledge and PRINCE2 are summarized in Figure 1 below.

Taking each of these differences in turn:

Body of Knowledge versus Method

"Body of Knowledge" is the term used to describe the definition of the current best practice in a profession. In the case of the APM Body of Knowledge, it describes some 52 topics, which together make up the discipline of project management.

In contrast, "Method" is the term used to describe a documented approach for the management of projects, consisting of processes, procedures and defined roles and responsibilities. A method provides a consistent framework within which project management is performed.

The key point here is that PRINCE2 provides a structured framework for the successful management of projects, however, a PRINCE2 project is more likely to be successful if those responsible for the management of the project also have sound project management knowledge.

Broad Discipline-based versus Narrow Process-based

Broad discipline-based refers to the fact that the APM Body of Knowledge describes 52 project management knowledge areas and organizes these into sections within which, each topic is closely related to the others within that section.

Narrow process-based refers to the fact that the PRINCE2 method describes the application of just seven themes according to where the project is within its lifecycle, and which level of management is involved.

The key point here is that whilst PRINCE2 provides a step-wise framework within which its themes are applied, it does not describe the detailed techniques and leadership capabilities that will need to be applied during the project lifecycle for the project to be successful. Also, whereas PRINCE2 explains what needs to be done, the APM Body of Knowledge provides more guidance to how it is done.

The nature of these similarities and differences means that the APM Body of Knowledge and PRINCE2 make ideal partners. They have sufficient similarities to make them compatible, and they have sufficient differences for each to benefit from the strengths of the other.

APM Body of Knowledge	PRINCE2
Is a body of project management knowledge	Is a structured project management method
Provides descriptions and explanations of a broad range of project management topics And Takes a discipline-based approach to project management	Provides detailed descriptions of specific approaches that PRINCE2 has for a fairly narrow range of project management topics And Takes a process-based approach to project management

Figure 1 - Key differences between the APM Body of Knowledge and PRINCE2.

How does the APMP qualification compare with the PRINCE2 Practitioner qualification?

So far I have concentrated on describing the differences between the APM Body of Knowledge and PRINCE2, but the main topic of this paper is the APMP. So how do these two qualifications compare?

In the same way that the PRINCE2 Practitioner qualification requires a candidate to have a good understanding of the PRINCE2 Manual, so the APMP qualification requires a good understanding of 37 topics of the APM Body of Knowledge (marked with an asterisk in the list on page 3).

The most significant differences though, are that:

- PRINCE2 assesses whether a candidate is able to apply the method; whereas

APMP assesses whether the candidate has the requisite project management knowledge

- PRINCE2 covers **what** needs to be done (the Themes), **when** it needs to be done during the project lifecycle (the Processes), and **how this may vary** depending on the nature of the project (Tailoring); whereas APMP includes a far greater coverage of **how** the things that need to be done are actually done.

By way of illustration, PRINCE2:

- Explains what plans are required
- Describes a planning process
- Lists the composition of a typical plan
- States when during the processes plans are created and updated.

However, PRINCE2 does not explain:

- How to produce a schedule
- How to allocate resources to this schedule
- How to produce a budget and apply cost management
- How to estimate the time and cost associated with the plan.

All of these topics are, however, covered as part of the APMP qualification.

There are a number of differences in the exams (see Figure 2 below).

There are also a number of similarities, for example:

- The pass mark for both exams is 55%
- Courses leading to both exams are provided by accredited organizations (PRINCE2 – Accredited Training Organizations; APMP – Accredited Providers)
- Open exams are available for those who wish to self-study.

Bringing together the APMP and PRINCE2 Qualifications

The simplest way of thinking about bringing together APMP with PRINCE2 is that the APMP knowledge enables a PRINCE2 Practitioner to do the things that are not covered by the PRINCE2 manual.

There are a number of questions that PRINCE2 leaves unanswered, for example:

- PRINCE2 tells me that I need to include an Investment Appraisal within my Business Case, but how do I undertake an Investment Appraisal?

APMP	PRINCE2
The APMP syllabus addresses 37 of the 52 topics included in the AMP Body of Knowledge	The PRINCE2 syllabus covers all of the Principles, Themes, Processes and the Tailoring of PRINCE2
Assesses the candidate's breadth of knowledge in all areas of project management, from the strategic and commercial implications of their role, to the technical, commercial, organizational and people management skills required to successfully participate in a project team	Assesses whether the candidate could apply PRINCE2 to the running and managing of a non-complex project within an environment supporting PRINCE2
Lasts three hours, in which the candidate must answer ten questions from a selection of sixteen	Lasts two and a half hours, in which the candidate must answer all nine question
The exam is closed book	The exam is open book, i.e. the candidate is allowed access to their own copy of the PRINCE2 manual
The questions require essay-based answers, providing either lists, descriptions, explanations or calculations	Uses objective test questions which require a candidate to choose a response to a question from a set of choices, only one of which is correct

Figure 2 - Key differences between the exams.

- PRINCE2 describes the structure, roles and responsibilities involved in the Project Management Team, but how do they relate to the organization's own structure, roles and responsibilities?

- PRINCE2 insists that the Project Board manage by exception and set tolerances for the project, but how can I forecast whether or not these tolerances are going to be exceeded?

- PRINCE2 describes a risk management procedure, but what about other areas of risk such as health and safety?

- PRINCE2 tells me how to plan and control quality, but are there any techniques that I could use other than the Quality Review Technique?

In the sections that follow, I describe

- What PRINCE2 provides within each of its seven themes, and then identify the added value that the APMP qualification would provide to a PRINCE2 Practitioner

- How the PRINCE2 processes align to the APMP view of the project lifecycle

- The additional project management topics that are only addressed by the APMP.

Themes

Business Case
PRINCE2
Describes the purpose of the Business Case, outlines the typical content of a PRINCE2 Business Case, explains how the Business Case is developed, verified, maintained and confirmed during the project lifecycle, and lists the roles and responsibilities in respect of the Business Case.

It also explains the difference between a project's output (any of the project's specialist products), an outcome (the result of change derived from using the output) and a benefit (the measurable improvement from an outcome).

APMP
In addition to the above, explains how different types of investment appraisal can be used to analyze, in quantitative terms, the value of the investment to be made in the project. In particular, it explains the use of payback, Internal Rate of Return (IRR) and Net Present Value (NPV) as investment appraisal techniques.

PRINCE2 identifies Investment Appraisal as one section of the Business Case, lists a range of techniques that are available, but does not explain how to use any of these techniques.

Organization
PRINCE2
Describes the roles and responsibilities within the three levels of the PRINCE2 project management team that are responsible for directing, managing and delivering aspects of the project. It puts the project management team into context with corporate or programme management and with the customer/supplier environment.

It also introduces some of the challenges faced in working with the project team, with the corporate organization and with stakeholders. In particular, it describes a stakeholder engagement procedure. This includes the creation of the Communication Management Strategy for the project.

APMP
In addition to the above, distinguishes between functional, matrix and project organizations and explains the advantages and disadvantages of each.

It also explains the governance of project management and describes the principles of governance of project management.

Quality
PRINCE2
Describes the PRINCE2 approach to quality planning and quality control, and explains the role of quality assurance. This includes establishing a Quality Management Strategy and Quality Register for the project.

It also describes the PRINCE2 quality review technique.

APMP
In addition to the above, explains several additional quality techniques and also describes the related topic of requirements management and explains the importance of this topic.

Plans
PRINCE2
Explains the levels of plan required for a project (project, stage and team). Then describes the PRINCE2 approach to producing these plans, from defining and analyzing products (using the product-based planning technique), through to identifying activities and dependencies, preparing estimates, preparing the schedule and documenting the plan, whilst analyzing risks throughout these steps.

APMP
Provides a how-to approach to each step of the above approach, explains scope management and describes the Product Breakdown Structure (PBS), the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), the Cost Breakdown Structure (CBS), and the Organization Breakdown Structure (OBS), and explains the reasons for using a Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RAM).

Explains how a project schedule is created and maintained by using techniques such as precedence diagramming, critical path analysis, Gantt charts, the Program Evaluation Review Technique (PERT) and milestone progress charts. Also explains the advantages and disadvantages of using software tools for scheduling.

Describes resource management, distinguishing between resource smoothing and resource levelling, and demonstrates the use of different resource management techniques such as resource histograms and cumulative S-curves.

Explains budgeting and cost management and the benefits of this topic.

Describes the practical problems of estimating across the project lifecycle and explains bottom-up, comparative, parametric and three-point estimating.

Risk
PRINCE2
Explains what a risk is (threat or opportunity), and what is at risk?

Then describes the PRINCE2 approach to the management of risk. This includes establishing a Risk Management Strategy and Risk Register for the project, and following a five step risk management procedure which consist of Identify, Assess, Plan, Implement and Communicate.

APMP
In addition to the above, covers tools and techniques for risk identification and the use of a probability and impact grid (matrix) to assess risks.

Also explains the importance of health, safety and environmental management, as these can be considered as specialist aspects of risk management. This includes topics such as the purpose of regulations, the duty of care for and responsibilities of a Project Manager.

Change
PRINCE2
Explains the need for a systematic and common approach to issue and change control that incorporates configuration management.

Then describes the PRINCE2 approach to issue and change control. This includes establishing a Configuration Management Strategy for the project and the necessary records and reports required by the PRINCE2 configuration management procedure and its issue and change control procedure.

APMP
Does not include anything in addition.

Progress
PRINCE2
Explains the purpose of progress and the concepts of tolerance and exceptions. Then describes the PRINCE2 approach to progress, which includes delegating authority, the use of management stages, event-driven and time-driven controls, and raising exceptions.

APMP
In addition to the above, describes Earned Value Management (EVM) as a means of progress monitoring, explains the advantages and disadvantages of EVM, and explains how to perform earn value calculations and interpret earned value data.

Also explains information management systems covering the collection, storage, dissemination, archiving, and appropriate destruction of information.

Processes

Whereas PRINCE2 describes the project lifecycle using its process model, the APM Body of Knowledge describes different phases of the project lifecycle. These different approaches are broadly compatible as is shown in Figure 3 overleaf.

Project Management Topics only covered by the APMP
PRINCE2 does not address any of the following topics:

Stakeholder Management and Communication
Whilst PRINCE2 mentions the importance of engaging with stakeholders, provides an example of a stakeholder engagement procedure and explains the content of a typical Communication Management Strategy, the APMP also:

- Describes a stakeholder process in more detail, for example by explaining tools and techniques that can be used in stakeholder analysis
- Explains the importance of effective communication in project management

and explains the typical barriers to communication and how they may be overcome.

Procurement
Whilst PRINCE2 suggests that procurement may be one of the approaches taken by the project, the APMP also:

- Describes procurement, explains the typical contents of a procurement strategy, explains a supplier selection process, and distinguishes between different methods of supplier reimbursement and different contractual relationships
- Describes a negotiation process and explains each stage within this process.

People Management
Whilst PRINCE2 identifies the roles and responsibilities of those people involved in the direction, management and delivery of the project, the APMP also:

- Describes typical leadership qualities, explains the principles and importance of motivation, and describes a situational leadership model
- Explains the importance of team development and describes both a team development model, and a social roles model
- Explains sources of conflict in the project lifecycle and explains a conflict resolution model.

What Next?

By now, I hope that any PRINCE2 Practitioners, who do not already have the APMP qualification, will be seriously considering extending their studies.

Health Warning
However, before I describe what that might involve, it's time for the health warning. I did mention earlier that APMP and PRINCE2 are sufficiently compatible to be considered ideal partners. But no partner is ever totally compatible with the other, and this is true of APMP and PRINCE2.

APM Lifecycle Phase	Description	Alignment to PRINCE2 processes
Concept	During this phase the need, opportunity or problem is confirmed, the overall feasibility of the project is considered and a preferred solution identified	Starting up a Project
	Output: Business Case	Output: Project Brief (which includes an outline Business Case)
Definition	During this phase the preferred solution is further evaluated and optimized. Often an iterative process, definition can effect requirements and the project's scope, time, cost and quality objectives.	Initiating a Project
	Output: Project Management Plan	Output: Project initiation Documentation
Implementation	Where the Project Management Plan is executed, monitored and controlled. During this phase the design is finalized and used to build the deliverables.	Controlling a Stage, Managing Product Delivery, and Managing a Stage Boundary
	Output: Deliverables	Output: Specialist Products
Handover and Closeout	During this phase the final project deliverables are handed over to the sponsor and user. Closeout is the process of finalizing all project matters, carrying out final project reviews, archiving project information and redeploying the project team.	Closing a Project
	Output: Post-Project Review	Output: End Project Report

Figure 3 - Descriptions of Lifecycle Phases

You should, therefore, be warned of some of the challenges that you may face in applying APMP to your PRINCE2 environment. The most notable amongst these is:

- **Language**. The APM Body of Knowledge and PRINCE2 have been developed by people with different backgrounds, and as a result there are differences in some of the language used. For example:
  - **PRINCE2 refers to its Project Initiation Documentation**; the equivalent in the APM Body of Knowledge is the Project Management Plan
  - **PRINCE2 refers to a 'post-project benefits review'**, which sounds very similar to what the APM Body of Knowledge refers to

as a 'post-project review'. However, the post-project benefits review is held some time after the project has been closed, whereas the post-project review is held after the project deliverables have been handed over but before the project is closed

- **Business Case composition**, The PRINCE2 and APM Body of Knowledge Business Cases include much of the same information, but the APM Body of Knowledge also includes much of what PRINCE2 calls the "Project Definition" part of the Project Brief and Project Initiation Documentation
- **Issue Handling**, In PRINCE2 there is a common approach to issues, requests for change and problems/

concerns. In the APM Body of Knowledge, there are different approaches taken to each of these three topics.

None of these challenges should, however, cause any real problems. Indeed, PRINCE2 itself suggests that the tailoring of PRINCE2, where an organization is aligned to any particular body of knowledge, should include:

- Agreeing a single set of terms to apply
- Aligning PRINCE2's management products with any management products recommended by the body of knowledge.

So, back to the main question of this section – what next?

The answer to this question will depend on whether you are looking for an answer from an individual perspective or from an organizational perspective.

Individuals

As an individual looking to study for and take the APMP examination, you have a number of options:

- Enrol for an APMP course run by one of the Accredited Providers. There are around 30 organizations listed on the Association for Project Management (APM) web site **www.apm.org.uk**. You may be familiar with some of these, as several of them also deliver PRINCE2 Practitioner courses. It is usual for delegates to take the APMP exam in the same week as the course, with everything arranged for you in this respect

- Prepare yourself for the exam by undertaking private study. The easiest way to do this would be to buy the TSO publication "APMP for PRINCE2 Practitioners". The purpose of this publication is to provide a study guide for PRINCE2 Practitioners to prepare for the APMP examination. It describes and explains the APMP topics in the context of PRINCE2, and at the end of each chapter there are several sample questions to help you prepare for the APMP examination. If you chose to self-study, you would have to arrange to take the exam at one of the open examinations, which are run once a quarter. Again, more details can be found at www.apm.org.uk

- Alternatively, you could enrol for the Open University's project management short course M865. This covers much of the APMP syllabus, but enables you to study over an extended period of time and anywhere in the world. But, as with the self-study option, you would need to arrange your own APMP examination.

Organizations

As an organization looking to adopt the APMP qualification alongside PRINCE2, all of the above options would be available to your staff.

However, in addition, you would also need to make some decisions regarding how best to integrate the APM Body of Knowledge with your implementation of the PRINCE2 method.

Summary and Conclusions

You should now appreciate the differences between the APMP qualification (based on the APM Body of Knowledge) and the PRINCE2 Practitioner qualification (based on the PRINCE2 manual). You should also recognize the complementary nature of these two qualifications. And hopefully, if you are a PRINCE2 Practitioners, you will be seriously considering improving your project management knowledge by studying for the APMP. And if you work in an organization that has adopted PRINCE2 as its chosen project management method, you will be thinking about how to incorporate the APMP knowledge into your application of the PRINCE2 method.

Trademarks and Acknowledgements

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