



AGILE METHODE REFRENCES



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Introduction

In this document you can find Agile Methods references by the Agile Consortium based on the Agile Foundation Certification. This is the basic certification level of the Certify To Inspire program. This program is a collaboration between the Agile Consortium and Van Haren Learning Solutions.

Agile – adaptability is the new norm

In this new millennium, the world is not only changing at lightning speed; it's still increasing. New technology streaming has already had a significant impact on the way we communicate with one another. It also affects how we look at new products or how we come up with new products. Robotics, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, quantum computing, biotechnology, the internet of things, and 3D printing are now becoming irreplaceable in our daily lives. Customer expectations have changed completely. Traditional products and markets have become increasingly digitized. Generations growing up in this world are going to look at loyalty towards employers and brands differently than previous generations. Companies are being confronted in the market with new entrants with deeper pockets or start-ups with a huge popularity factor. Organizations must be able to respond efficiently and quickly to new developments and needs should they wish to compete successfully in this world. Agility has rapidly become a core competence and competitive advantage in business.

Agile is still relatively young. Several methods with Agile characteristics emerged at the end of the last century - think of DSDM, XP (eXtreme Programming), RAD (Rapid Application Development), and Scrum, to name a few. Agile really only became well-known after the Agile Manifesto was published in 2001. Scrum became particularly popular and was used in fast-growing, successful companies such as Google, Apple, Amazon, and Spotify. Traditional organizations could not allow themselves to stay behind. Nowadays, Agile is widely represented. Basic knowledge about Agile has become a necessity for every employee.

The Certify To Inspire Program of the Agile Consortium

The Agile Consortium – the community

The Agile Consortium is a community for its members. It's a strong community because of members who share a passion and conviction about the importance of working in an Agile manner. We do not view Agile as a goal in itself but as a means to be and remain successful in an increasingly complex world. Successful as a person, in team collaboration, within the organization, and also in society.

The Agile Consortium also organizes various events throughout the year to facilitate the community in sharing this passion. Not only does the Consortium have its own certification program – Certify To Inspire, it has been active in the field of events and certification since the mid-'90s.

The Agile Consortium serves as a platform of knowledge where organizations and professionals within those organizations can meet to share their knowledge and experiences within the field of Agile. The purpose of this is to ensure that organizations can enjoy the benefits of Agile quicker by having direct access to this level of knowledge and experience.

Membership of the Agile Consortium is very diverse and can range from students and freelancers to multinationals, from members with extensive knowledge and experience to newcomers in the field. The Agile Consortium works based on a system of self (re) organizing communities. The initiative for sharing knowledge and experience comes entirely from the members themselves. Our goal is to support others by sharing this extensive network of contacts and knowledge. We also try and facilitate get-togethers within the community whenever possible. Communities around specific topics such as HR, leadership, or Marketing & Communication have already been formed. The more established communities of Agile Practitioners and Agile Masters also actively organize meetings and workgroups. Participants of the Certify To Inspire program quickly learn the importance and value of these fixed communities and see them as a unique added-value to certification. Gaining knowledge and sharing experiences both before and after certification is also a way to inspire others to continue on a journey of learning and self-development.

The Agile Consortium signals the emergence of a growing number of Agile networks that innovate and share knowledge. We strive to be the connecting factor between these organizations to maximize sharing, learning, and innovation within the domain of Agile.

The core values of the Agile Consortium are:

- Connection
- Independence
- Inspiration
- Optimism
- Experimentation

For more information and activities concerning membership of the Agile Consortium, click on www.agileconsortium.nl. For those who inspire others – or want to be inspired!

The Agile Consortium Annual Conference

For the past 20 years, the Agile Consortium's annual congress has been a household name in the Netherlands (in autumn) and Belgium (in spring). The congress offers a platform for internationally recognized thought leaders, new talent, and new developments from various working groups. The emphasis is on experiences drawn from practice and learning and inspiring one another. It is also the driving force behind a growing community upon which the certification is built. You are welcome to join as a participant or speaker.




Conference dates, participation details, and call for presentations will be announced on www.agileconsortium.nl.

Certify to Inspire

Are you someone who wants to be inspired? Are you looking for a way to be more creative and achieve more valuable results? Certify To Inspire can do just that - the Agile certification program of the Agile Consortium is all about inspiring others.

Choosing to participate in Certify To Inspire means you wish to become proficient in Agile or maintain your level of proficiency in Agile. Not only will you be gaining a valuable certificate, but you will also be joining a community of inspirational Agile Practitioners and Masters.

The Certify To Inspire program has three different levels: Foundation, Practitioner, and Master. The Agile Consortium works closely with Van Haren Learning Solutions to ensure further development and implementation of the Certify To Inspire program.

	Agile Foundation	<p>The Agile Foundation certificate is intended for those new to Agile and those curious to know what are the principles and methods of Agile. The idea behind the Agile Foundation exam is that you immerse yourself in knowledge about Agile by reading books or articles, attending Agile events, observing Agile behavior in their organizations, or by being trained.</p> <p>Testing Agile basic knowledge is based on multiple-choice questions.</p>
	Agile Practitioner	<p>Are you an Agile leader who already practices an Agile Mindset? Do you inspire people with both words and actions to achieve tangible results? Then the Agile Practitioner exam will inspire you to discover better ways to do what you do! This experience can prove to be a valuable tool as you will be challenged to take a serious look at your mindset, knowledge, actions, and results. This certificate does not necessarily require you to have a managerial position.</p> <p>The exam consists of an oral test in which we see if you can apply Agile successfully and feasibly at the team- and cross-teams levels. To pass this exam, you must also write a synopsis.</p>
	Agile Master	<p>The Agile Master Certificate is the highest level in the Certification Series. The certificate is intended for those who have experience in taking their organization to the next level. It is for those who wish to practice Agile on a larger scale than just a team level, meaning not only scaling up teams, processes, and tools. An Agile Master also shows leadership in improving knowledge, attitude, and results.</p> <p>You will need to undergo a series of interactive challenges on the day of the exam to obtain the certificate. We will be looking to see throughout the day if you can apply Agile successfully and feasibly at an organizational level. You must also work out a case as part of the exam.</p>

Take a look at the full range of Certify To Inspire at www.certifytoinspire.org.

The Agile Foundation Certificate

It starts with you

The Agile Foundation certificate is intended for those who are relatively new to the concept of “Agile” and would like to discover what it exactly entails.

The idea behind this exam is that you are serious about delving into the theory of Agile. How you decide to do that will be up to you. You can read books, articles, or blogs. You can also watch videos, listen to podcasts, attend events, or observe others who are working with Agile in practice. Or another possibility is to follow a course in Agile.

Even though we talk about this being a “Foundation” exam, it does not mean that the exam will be easy. Being Agile and understanding Agile is often challenging. So prepare well!

Naturally, a genuine interest in the subject helps if you want to pass the Agile Foundation exam. The Agile Foundation exam will help you to determine if you are going to be able to stand your ground in an Agile world.

A certificate is useful when submitting a job application or doing an interview. Though, we firmly believe that the knowledge gained during your preparation for the exam is what will truly make a difference.

The next level on the Agile Certification Roadmap is the Agile Practitioner certificate. You don’t need an Agile Foundation certificate to sign up for that, but it will certainly help you.

Click here for more information: www.certifytoinspire.com

Exam structure

The exam specifications describe the topics in the subject matter of the Agile Foundation exam, and their relative importance. Questions can be asked during the exam about the following subjects.

Module	Subject	Question Weights*	% questions in the exam
1.	Agile Manifesto	Heavy	16%
2.	Agile Culture and Leadership	Medium	14%
3.	Scrum	Heavy	24%
4.	Methods and frameworks	Superficial	8%
5.	Agile Way of Working	Medium	18%
6.	Value and Continuous delivery	Superficial	8%
7.	Empiricism and improvement	Medium	12%
			100%

*Weight of the questions in this module:

Superficial – you know the most common basic concepts and characteristics

Medium – you know the basic concepts and characteristics

Heavy – you understand the material in detail

In the following sections, you can find more details about what is expected regarding your knowledge of the various topics.

AGILE METHODE REFFRENCES

In this section, you can read about how the Agile Foundation Exam is structured and which subjects you will be tested on as a candidate. It is also a tool that you can use to prepare yourself for the test.

During the exam you will be tested on your general knowledge about:

- The Agile Manifesto
- Agile Culture and Leadership
- Scrum
- Methods and frameworks
- Agile way of working
- Value and Continuous delivery
- Empiricism and improvement

Module 1 Agile Manifesto

The values and principles of the Agile Manifesto for Software Development that was drawn up in 2001 are the most important reference points on which an Agile organization is based. You can find more information about the Manifesto at www.agilemanifesto.org. Although the Manifesto was initially drawn up for software development projects in mind, the values and principles can be applied more widely than that.

Agile is not a silver bullet approach solution for all problems. The correct application of Agile starts with understanding what we mean by Agile and what impact Agile can have on an organization. An Agile Foundation candidate is expected to have a solid understanding of the Agile Manifesto.

- Why Agile and what are the benefits
- Agile Manifesto – Values and Principles

Module 2 Agile Culture and Leadership

The values and principles of the Agile Manifesto can only be successfully adhered to if the organizational structure is open to it. For example, if an employee doesn't dare to let on how work is going, then it makes it difficult for the organization to determine how to make any changes. The leaders in an organization influence to a large extent how people interact with one another, the level of initiative employees are willing to take, and how motivated they are to committing themselves to the organization. Agile is based on intrinsically motivated employees. How an organization is organized and therefore managed directly impacts how employees make use of their talents

It goes behind the simple execution of an Agile method. The key lies in truly understanding the importance of knowing what is expected of you within an Agile work environment. This concept is extensively tested in the Agile Foundation exam.

- Agile Culture – Values
 - The culture of an Agile organization is based upon a high level of commitment to the goals and to each other. Mutual trust is strongly present. Employees dare to be open up and be transparent. They are willing to take the initiative and to offer their opinions. This lays the foundation for continuous improvement (inspect & adapt'), personal growth, and autonomy. For example, compare and check the similarities between the values of Scrum and Spotify.
- Agile Leadership – Characteristics/ Styles of leadership
 - The role of a leader is to create the prerequisites for the organization that ensures an employee's talents can be used to their full potential. Often, the term 'servant leadership' is used. Note that this means both a serving and a leading aspect. Leadership means providing the direction and the goal towards which the employees can self-organize.
- Agile Team values and Team dynamics, including the Tuckman model
 - Cooperation within a team is the engine that drives an Agile organization. So, it's essential to pay attention to the creation and development of these teams. If the team can agree on what the values of that team are going to be, then it creates the basis for openness and transparency.

- Bruce Tuckman published an article in 1965 which describes the 5 phases of team development as Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and Adjourning.

Module 3 Scrum

Scrum is, by far, the most applied framework that is based on Agile. Scrum was developed and is maintained by Jeff Sutherland and Ken Schwaber. Scrum is best described in the Scrum Guide at www.scrumguides.org. The Scrum Guide has been updated roughly every two years in the last decade. Many translations can also be found on the website, although the latest version is not available in every language.

The thoughts behind Scrum, the division of roles, and working methods in Scrum form an important basis for most Agile organizations. Both at a team level and an organizational level.

Naturally, there are quite a few questions about Scrum on the Agile Foundation exam. Therefore, you are advised to study the complete Scrum Guide. Fortunately, it is only around 20 pages.

- Scrum - Values
 - Commitment, Focus, Openness, Respect, and Courage
- Scrum - Process and Meetings
 - Sprint Planning
 - Daily Scrum
 - Sprint Review
 - Sprint Retrospective
 - Sprint
 - Refinement
- Scrum Team
 - Product Owner – Characteristics and responsibilities
 - Scrum Master – Characteristics and responsibilities
 - Development Team – Characteristics and responsibilities, DevOps team
- Scrum Artifacts
 - Product Backlog
 - Sprint Backlog
 - Increment

Module 4 Methods and Frameworks

Scrum is not the only Agile framework. Kanban is the best-known method outside of Agile and is often used in operational environments where the content of the workload is less predictable. Many Scrum teams and organizations also apply working methods from Kanban. Sometimes a mixed form arises, which is then called Scrumban. Product Owners and Portfolio Managers also regularly use Kanban methods to manage their work. Various frameworks offer tools for organizing multiple Agile teams and organizational units together in an Agile manner. Well-known methods are SAFe, LeSS, and Spotify, although the latter is not a formal method. Instead, it refers to the way the company Spotify organized itself. If you read carefully, you can recognize a lot of Scrum in these methodologies. Agile teams work together in a team of teams that we call ART, Tribe, or Product group, depending on the method used. Such a 'team of teams' often has a Scrum Master and Product Owner-like roles and has a work process with events that we also see with Scrum.

The Agile Foundation tests mainly your understanding of the most important concepts.

- Kanban - Principles
 - Visualize workflow
 - Limit Work in Progress (WIP-limit)
 - Manage flow
 - Improve collaboratively, evolve experimentally
- Agile Project Framework – Entire whitepaper

- Several organizations combine traditional project management with Scrum. This is often done in a way that is comparable to the Agile Project Framework. If you (already) work in such an environment, then we recommend you read this full document. However, you will only need to know the following for the Agile Foundation exam:
 - Understand the difference between traditional and Agile approaches to project management. More specifically you will need to know the key parameters of the iron triangle of project management.
 - Understand the roles of the Project Manager and Agile Coach.
 - Know the Agile Project Framework techniques of facilitated workshops and modeling.
- Lean Startup, Product Development Principles, and Design Thinking
 - Agile has long focused on the realization phase of products. In the preceding phase it is determined which product must be realized. Also in this phase, it is important that you quickly collect feedback to gain insight into whether your product idea will be successful. The following concepts may come up in the exam:
 - Minimum viable product (MVP)
 - Get-out-of-the-office: find real customers and users 'outside on the street' and ask them what they think is valuable.
 - Validated-Learning: learn by validating early versions of your product with real customers and users. Check the similarities with the Sprint Review in Scrum.
 - Pivot-or-persevere: each feedback moment is a moment to determine whether you should continue on the chosen path (persevere) or stop (pivot). In many organizations, this choice is not made explicit enough. "Persevere" is automatically chosen, also while the signals point to "pivot".
- SAFe – Roles and Meetings from the Essential SAFe configuration
 - SAFe is a richly filled framework, with a user-friendly, extensive website. Each icon in the framework is linked to an explanatory article. Obviously you don't need to know everything about SAFe. The following may be asked in the exam:
 - The most important responsibility of the following roles: Release Train Engineer (RTE), Product Manager, System Architect/Engineer, and Business Owner
 - What is a Program Increment and what is the PI Planning event
- LeSS - Roles and meetings
 - You will only need to understand the roles of:
 - The Product Owner (on the LeSS website in the sections: Scaled Product Owner and Prioritization over Clarification)
 - The Area Product Owner (on the LeSS website this is part of LeSS Huge)
- Scrum at Scale
 - Scaling Scrum framework by Jeff Sutherland
 - Based on recursive Scrum of Scrums principle, from the bottom to the top of the organization
 - Basic principle is that coordination over teams is done by putting representatives of the teams together. No need for a coordinator or manager.
 - This Scrum of Scrums principle is implemented for Scrum masters, with the EAT at the top
 - Main focus is the way of working
 - This Scrum of Scrums principle is implemented for Product Owners, with the EMT at the top
 - Main focus are strategy and priorities
- Nexus - Roles and meetings
 - Agile organizations frequently have a team with responsibilities similar to those of the Nexus Integration Team. You will have to show that you understand the role of such a team in the exam.
- Spotify - Roles, organizational structure, and values
 - Spotify has introduced new terms for building an organizational model. These terms have now been adopted by several other organizations:
 - Tribe
 - Squad

- Chapter
- Guild
- Core Values: passionate, innovative, sincere, collaborative, and playful

Module 5 Agile way of working

Often, a number of working methods (practices) reoccur in an Agile organization. These practices ensure transparency concerning planned work or work in progress and their status. Another shared feature is that they are all based on collaboration.

It is important to be able to place these methods and understand what you can use them for in order to orientate yourself within an Agile organization. The Agile Foundation exam will test this.

- Scrum board
 - What a Scrum board is used for?
 - How is a Scrum board used?
- Kanban board
 - What a Kanban board is used for?
 - How is a Kanban board used?
- Planning poker and T-shirt size estimates
 - What is planning poker and how does it work?
 - What are T-shirt estimations in an Agile context?
- Story mapping
 - What can story mapping be used for?
 - What is the structure of a story map?
- Workshops
 - What is a facilitated workshop?
 - What is the role of the workshop facilitator?
- User stories
 - What is a user story?
 - What information is contained in a user story?
- Portfolio wall
 - What is a portfolio wall used for?
- Release planning
 - What is a release planning?
- Burn-up / Burn-down diagrams
 - What are burn-up and burn-down diagrams used for?
 - How to read a burn-down diagram?
- XP (Extreme Programming) practices
 - You can expect questions about the following XP practices which are also applied outside of software development environments:
 - ✓ Collective Ownership
 - ✓ Test-driven development
 - ✓ Refactoring
 - ✓ Pair programming
 - ✓ Continuous integration
 - ✓ Coding standards
- Agile testing
 - In an Agile environment making a product is inextricably linked to testing the product. Every small piece of product or single adjustment made is immediately tested to determine whether it is the right one and does it fit into the bigger picture. In this way, you can manage to achieve the goal of regularly delivering subsequent versions. This is not the case with phased approaches. In this approach, the product is first fully developed and then all

adjustments are tested together in the next phase. As a result, errors are found late in the process which can often lead to high repair costs.

- Test-driven development is an approach where realization and testing are integrated. In fact, before the adjustment is built it is first determined how the adjustment will be tested.
- The role of the tester in the Agile team changes regularly. Testers will be involved in the realization process and work closely with the developers. Therefore, they will need to build skills in test automation.
- Automated testing is an important enabler of Agile product development. If every minor adjustment is immediately tested then testing will need to be repeated more often. If these tests are performed manually it can lead to higher costs and longer lead times. Moreover, there is the added risk of human error with every test round. Automation of the testing process can then be the solution.
- Stakeholder management
 - Involving stakeholders *as opposed to* informing stakeholders

Module 6 Value and Continuous delivery

Agile organizations strive to deliver a constant stream of valuable results that customers are willing to pay (extra) for. Results that can solve problems, annoyances, or results that save time or money. What the term “value” means can be different in every environment and for every team. Regular delivery of results ensures that you can continuously validate if you are indeed delivering (any) value. First, it’s important to understand what “value” means to each person. It will help to break down products into smaller, valuable parts to be able to deliver value on a regular basis. And finally, your production line must be able to actually deliver these parts to the customer.

It is important to understand that there are several ways of how you can influence the value delivered. The Agile Foundation exam will test you on this:

- Prioritization – Relationship with value and continuous delivery
 - One of the Product Owner 's tasks is to understand which work delivers the most value and to prioritize it.
 - By not making the work packages too large, work is completed and delivered more regularly. So, which work should be given the highest priority at that time is also more frequently examined.
- Continuous delivery - the importance of it
- Value – the meaning of it (what is value?)
- Customer – who is the customer and what is their role
 - The customer ultimately determines the value. Traditionally, customers used to be represented by employees in the organization who ‘knew what customers wanted’. In recent decades, customers have become increasingly involved in the development of products. Hearing firsthand from customers what they mean by ‘value’ and involving them at an early stage helps an organization to serve its customers better. So, it is crucial to know who the customers are.
- Flow – the meaning of flow and why is it important
 - Flow refers to the total lead time for all steps required to make a product. By increasing the flow, and thus reducing the lead time, the value can be delivered faster.
- Focus – why is it important
 - A clear focus leads to faster completion of work. Focusing clearly on one task at a time and closing yourself off to the distractions of other projects will help to ensure quicker delivery of work that is also of higher value.
 - Regular delivery forces one to focus on the completion of work in progress..
- MVP – the concept and why is it important
 - MVP stands for Minimal Viable Product. The delivery of an MVP has a number of advantages. For example, delivering faster allows you to test whether or not the users appreciate the product earlier. Moreover, you will know quickly whether or not you’ll

actually be able to make the product. You may even be able to sell early versions and start generating income.

- Agile organization – Component- and Feature teams
 - An Agile organization is designed to deliver value to customers. Multiple disciplines are required to deliver value which is why multi-disciplinary feature teams are formed. Such a feature team is the opposite of a component team. These are teams organized around a specific discipline or part of the product. Dependencies are built into this organizational form because multiple component teams will have to work together to deliver a "feature".

Module 7 Empiricism and Improvement

The ability to continuously learn and improve is perhaps the most important characteristic of an Agile organization. Agile advocates empiricism. Empiricism asserts that knowledge comes from experience and making decisions based on what is known. Agile organizations regularly create learning moments where they open themselves up to feedback. By doing so, they can then consider how to convert what they've learned into actual improvements. And, preferably ones that can be realized in the short term.

Learning and improving is, to a large extent, a mindset. So, it's important to be open to wanting to improve. That means it's unacceptable to hear comments like "but yes, that's the way we do it here". In Agile organizations, different concepts are used concerning the improvement process.

The Agile Foundation exam tests your understanding of:

- Looking for Feedback – the importance of feedback and from whom does it come?
- Impediments, learning, reflection, short-cyclical
 - Learning instead of judging
 - What are impediments?
 - In an Agile method, the product (under development) is regularly assessed. In Scrum, this occurs during the Sprint Review meeting, both from a functional user point of view as from a product technical point of view.
- Inspect & Adapt - Product
 - Short-cycle work ensures multiple and earlier evaluation moments. Traditionally, the evaluation was done afterward when all work was completed. In an Agile environment, evaluations take place during the work, and the result of the evaluation can be applied to the remaining part of the work.
- Inspect & Adapt – Process and way of working
 - The Scrum Sprint retrospective meeting is an example of a meeting aimed at evaluating, improving, or strengthening the process and method.

Exam topics and recommended literature

A solid understanding and an Agile mindset are central to the successful application of Agile. As a result, a personal amount of exploration of different opinions and different environments is important to achieve this. To help newcomers on their journey in Agile, we have included an extensive list of key terms and concepts and a literature list in this syllabus.

In the table below, you will find the link between the exam subjects and the items in the list of recommended literature.

Subject		Recommended Literature
1.	Agile Manifesto <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values and Principles 	[A] Agile Manifesto website
2.	Agile culture and leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agile culture • Agile leadership • Agile team values and team dynamics 	[C] Agile Pocket Guide > Ch. 1,2,3 [B] Scrum Guide: Scrum Values [S] Spotify Core Values [H] Daniel Pink: Drive [T] Tuckman: Team phases
3.	Scrum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values • Team and roles • Process and Events • Artifacts 	[B] Scrum Guide
4.	Methods and frameworks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kanban • Agile project framework • Lean Startup • LeSS • Nexus • SAFe • Spotify • eXtreme Programming 	[I] Essential Kanban > p. 13-23 [J] Kanban-vs-Scrum > Ch. 1-7 [F] Agile Project Framework [G] Agile Project Framework: Timeboxing [K] Lean Startup MVP, [K] Lean Startup wiki [L] Introduction to LeSS, [L] Framework Introduction and Product Owner [N] Nexus Gids: Nexus Roles [O] SAFe Introduction [P] SAFe – Agile Release Train [R] Spotify: Tribes, Chapters, and Squads part I + II [U] eXtreme Programming article
5.	Agile Way of Working <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boards in Scrum & Kanban • Estimations • Story Mapping • Workshops • User Stories • Portfolio wall • Release planning • Burn-up / Burn-down • Agile testing 	[C] Agile Pocket Guide [J] Kanban-vs-Scrum > Hfd 16 [F] Agile Project Framework [D] Scrum and XP from the trenches > Foreword + Hfd 6 [U] eXtreme Programming article Also, see the list of key terms and concepts
6.	Value and continuous delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritization • Continuous delivery • Value • Customer 	[C] Agile Pocket Guide [D] Scrum and XP from the trenches [M] LeSS Feature Teams

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flow • Focus • MVP • Agile organization 	
7.	<p>Empiricism and Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback • Impediments • Inspect & Adapt; product, process & way of working 	<p>[C] Agile Pocket Guide [B] Scrum Guide</p>