



Key Agile terms and concepts



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Table of contents

Contents

Introduction.....	4
Agile – adaptability is the new norm	4
The Certify To Inspire Program of the Agile Consortium.....	5
The Agile Consortium – the community	5
The Agile Consortium Annual Conference	5
The Agile Foundation Certificate	7
It starts with you.....	7
Exam structure	8
Key Agile terms and concepts	9
Exam topics and recommended literature.....	12

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.

Key Agile terms and concepts

The Agile Consortium has worked out several key terms, concepts, and definitions in the list below. You can use these definitions to support and clarify topics related to the exam. Pay attention! If you only learn these terms, then you are often not sufficiently prepared to pass the exam.

Begrip	Uitleg
Agile Manifesto	A manifesto that defines that Agile is a set of generally applicable values and principles.
Agile Project Framework (APF)	An Agile project management method, which combines a traditional, phased project management approach with the iterative approach of Scrum.
Agile Release Train (ART)	In SAFe, an Agile Release Train is the team of teams that work together on the development and maintenance of a product. The train delivers an increment of a product "at a station", takes on new work and then continues to the next station. See SAFe.
Agile Team	A team based on Agile principles that work according to an Agile process. Typical characteristics of an Agile team are autonomy and a limited number of team members. Also, Agile teams are multi-disciplinary and self-organizing.
Autonomous team	A team that can operate and deliver results without being dependent on contributions or direction from third parties.
Backlog	The backlog is the general term for the list of everything that requires the effort of the team. This includes, for example, business wishes, bug fixes, incidents, the installation and maintenance of technical systems and experiments. See also Product Backlog, Project Backlog, and Sprint Backlog.
Bug	A bug is an error in a computer program or a website, as a result of which it does not fulfill its function (entirely) according to specifications.
Burn-down diagram	A Burn-down chart shows how much work has not yet been completed at any given time. From this, you can deduce the progress and make a prediction for the expected end date for the total work.
Burn-up diagram	A Burn-up chart shows how much work has been completed at a given time and how much work needs to be done in total. You can use this to deduce the progress and make a prediction for the expected end date for the total work.
Chapter	A concept that comes from the often used "model" that was inspired by the company Spotify. A chapter is a group of people who practice the same profession or discipline and who work together on knowledge development.
Development team	The team that actually does the work. Within Scrum, the Scrum Master and Product Owner are not included in the Development Team if they do not contribute to the realization of outcomes.
Daily Scrum	A daily, time-boxed event for the Development Team to plan the work during the Sprint until the next Daily Scrum. In the Daily Scrum the best possible approach towards the Sprint goal is determined.
Definition of Done	A collection of expectations and criteria that a team's work must meet in order to declare the work is completed (done).
Empiricism	Empiricism asserts that knowledge comes from experience and making decisions based on what is known.
Executive Action Team (EAT)	In Scrum at Scale, the Executive Action Team (EAT) is responsible for the entire Agile ecosystem in the organization. The EAT implements and ensures that the Scrum values are used. It also ensures that the necessary Scrum roles are completed and supported. The EAT is "the Scrum master of the organization". See Scrum at Scale.
Executive Metascrum Team (EMT)	In Scrum at Scale, the Executive Metascrum Team (EMT) is responsible for the vision of the organization. The EMT determines strategic priorities. The EMT is "the Product Owner of the organization". See Scrum at Scale.
eXtreme Programming	See XP.
Feature	A functionality that has business value for the user or customer and that is described in terms that they can understand. Some Agile methods use the term user story or user requirement. In other methods, a feature is a larger unit of functionality, which is later split into user stories later in the process.
Gilde	A fellowship society. In the frequently used "model" inspired by the company Spotify, a guild is much more a group of people with a shared interest.
Impediment	A general term for something that hinders a team or organization from achieving its objectives.
Increment	A supplemented and/or improved version of a product, or a first attempt to make alterations, or improvements to a product.

Information radiator	A short, fixed period (usually four weeks or less) in which an Agile team works on (the next version of) a product or an increment. Scrum calls this a 'sprint'.
Iteration	A short, fixed period (usually four weeks or less) in which an Agile team works on (the next version of) a product or an increment. Scrum calls this a Sprint.
Kanban	Among other things, a widely used Agile framework. Kanban was developed by David Anderson. Important principles include: visualize the work, limit the work in progress, increase the flow of work, and continuous improvement.
Lean Start-up	A methodology for the development of companies and products, aimed at shortening product development cycles and quickly discovering whether a proposed business model is viable
Legacy system	A technically outdated computer system, often with high maintenance costs.
LeSS (Large Scaled Scrum)	A method to apply Scrum to multiple teams working together on the development of one product. One of the features of LeSS is that there is only one Product Owner for the product, regardless of how many teams work on the product. See also LeSS Area Product Owner.
LeSS Area Product Owner (APO)	Within LeSS, the Area Product Owner (APO) specializes in a sub-area of the total product and acts as Product Owner for the teams in that sub-area. An APO always works for the Product Owner. See also LeSS.
MVP - Minimum Viable Product	A first version of the product with just enough functionality for early customers to get feedback. This feedback is very important for the further development of the product.
Nexus	A framework for multiple Agile teams to work together with a few (cross-team) dependencies and integration issues as possible. The group of collaborating teams is called a Nexus.
Nexus Integration Team	In Nexus, the Nexus Integration Team is responsible for delivering the joint work of the team, each Sprint, as an integrated increment. This is according to the agreed Definition of Done. The members of the Nexus Integration Team can be simultaneously members of one of the Scrum teams in the Nexus. See also Nexus.
Planning board	The overview of work to be performed and status. Well-known examples of this are the Scrum board and the Kanban board. The planning board can be both a physical (white- or brown paper) board or a digital tool.
Project plan	See Project Initiative Document.
Planning poker	A method in which estimates are represented by a figure from the series. These are, for example, estimates of value, effort, or costs. This method uses the following numbers: 0 (none), ½ (very little), 1 (little but more than ½), 2 (more than 1), 3, 5, 8, 13, 20, 40, and 100 (very much). Estimation is based on consensus, and that the entire team determines the estimate together. See also T-shirt sizing.
Portfolio wall	A global planning overview for the mid- and long term. The Portfolio Wall shows when which work will be carried out by which teams. From this, you can deduce when the goals will be achieved or when larger chunks of work (for example a project) will be completed. A Portfolio Wall provides an overview without too many details. This overview should be updated very regularly.
PID – Project Initiation Document	The document with the most important project characteristics that were obtained during the start-up stage of a PRINCE2 project. This documentation is the reference point during the duration of the project for both the project team and the client. The PID is adjusted at every phase transition based on current insights. See PRINCE2.
Program Increment	In SAFe, a Program Increment (PI) is a fixed number of subsequent sprints. A PI usually lasts eight to twelve weeks (4-6 sprints). See SAFe.
Program Increment Planning	In SAFe, a Program Increment (PI) Planning is the planning event of an ART at the beginning of a Program Increment. All teams belonging to the ART participate in this planning meeting. This takes (standard) two days. The goal is to align teams towards a common goal and identify dependencies between teams early. See SAFe.
PRINCE2	A project management methodology. PRINCE2 is often associated with a traditional, phased project approach.
Product Backlog	An ordered list and the only source of requirements for the changes to be made to the product. In Scrum, this list includes all activities of a Scrum team. See also Scrum and Backlog.
Product Owner	The role in Scrum that is responsible for maximizing the value of the product by prioritizing the work of the Agile team. See Scrum.
Project Backlog	An ordered list of the activities required for the realization of a project. See also Backlog.
Refinement	Updating, further developing, and re-organizing a Backlog (in Scrum: the Product Backlog).
Release Any Time	A practice in which the moment of releasing solutions to users is independent of the development rhythm of the development teams. Development teams ensure that their solutions are delivered completely ready to release, and the users determine when they actually want to use the solutions.
Release planning	The planning of actually making new features or changes available to users over time.

Release Train Engineer (RTE)	The Release Train Engineer (RTE) is a servant leader and coach for the Agile Release Train (ART). The RTE facilitates the ART's processes, events, and implementation. The RTE also escalates impediments and assists in risk management, safeguarding value creation, and continuous improvement.
Scrum at Scale (S@S)	This is a method for setting up an organization based on the Scrum values. S@S applies the Scrum of Scrums principle. The organization is divided into groups of teams. Coordination over a group of teams is carried out by representatives of these teams together. The coordination over different groups is done by the representatives per group. Coordination takes place both between the Scrum Masters and between the Product Owners.
Scrum of Scrums	A Scrum of Scrums is an event similar to a Stand-up between representatives of different teams. In a Scrum of Scrums, joint planning is coordinated and the solution of impediments that teams themselves cannot solve is discussed.
SAFe (Scaled Agile Framework)	A framework to guide organizations in the application of Lean and Agile practices.
Scrum Master	The role that is responsible for Scrum being understood and properly applied. See Scrum.
Scrum values	The collection of core values that support the Scrum framework.
Scrum	The most applied Agile framework. It was developed by Jeff Sutherland and Ken Schwaber and is documented in the Scrum Guide.
SLA - Service Level Agreement	Agreements recorded in writing about the service level to be provided between a service provider and its customer (s).
Spotify approach	The approach Spotify as explained in two videos (see Recommended Literature). Several organizations have been inspired by these examples when applying Agile.
Sprint	A Sprint is a time-boxed event that includes the other Scrum events. It is a so-called container event. See also Timeboxing.
Sprint Backlog	The collection of Product Backlog items selected for a current Sprint. It includes the plan for the realization of the product increment and the Sprint goal. See Scrum.
Squad	A synonym for an Agile team.
Stand up	A synonym for Daily Scrum. See Daily Scrum.
Story Mapping	A method for breaking down and clearly displaying the work to be realized for a product. A story map looks like a matrix. The items in a row together form a logical whole. The rows are arranged in order of priority.
Test-Driven Development (TDD)	See Test First Development.
Test First Development	A way of working in which a test is first made before the functionality is programmed and/or the product is made. The test fails if the relevant functionality or product is not present or does not function adequately.
Timeboxing	Limiting the amount of time you want and are allowed to spend on a certain activity.
T-shirt sizing	A variation of planning poker where estimates are displayed in T-shirt sizes. This, for example, is to determine the amount of value, effort, or costs. The sizes used are Extra Small (XS), Small (S), Medium (M), Large (L) and Extra Large (XL). See also Planning Poker.
User Story	A short description (story) of what a user wants. User stories are used to describe the requirements when software or products are developed. A user story states who want what and why.
Velocity	A measure of the amount of work that indicates how much a team can realize per period.
Work arrange- /agreements	Agreements that a team makes in which they indicate what they consider important in their mutual cooperation.
WIP – Work in Progress	The amount of work in progress (work that has begun and has not yet been completed).
Workshop	A workshop is an activity in which participants jointly achieve a previously agreed result. Active participation of the participants plays an important role in this. The duration of a workshop can be up to several days. A workshop is prepared and supervised by a facilitator.
XP	A people-oriented discipline of software development based on the principles of simplicity, communication, feedback, and courage. XP stands for eXtreme Programming.

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>