

## 7.11 Quality in project management: PRINCE2 vs PMBOK

*People, more than any other resource, make the difference in quality for a project.*

Lewis R. Ireland

PMI and PRINCE2 restrict reproduction of their intellectual property, so I have not quoted from their documentation.

Accordingly, the comments on this page are my own overview interpretation of the comparative quality approaches of PMI's *PMBOK Guide* and PRINCE2, and do not attempt to convey the richness or detail of either.  
– Ed.

The PMBOK Guide requires QM as an integral part of PM, as does PRINCE2. PMBOK identifies three main headings under Project Quality Management; *quality planning*, *quality assurance*, and *quality control*.

Like almost everything else in the PMI approach, and reflecting PMI's process model, information below these categories is organized under headings of *inputs*, *tools and techniques*, and *outputs*. As you might expect, planning inputs include quality policy, project scope and standards; outputs include the QM plan and identification of suitable QC measures such as checklists.

The QM plan becomes a key input to QA, whose output is quality improvement. It is also a key input to QC, where the outputs include further quality improvement, rework, verification records, and adjustments to processes.

By comparison, the PRINCE2 structure deals with quality in several ways. First, *Quality in a project environment* is one of the eight basic components of the method, which embrace QM, QA, quality planning and QC. In a project, these elements are managed within a *quality path*, which begins with client expectations and results in a quality log, which is checked at each stage of the project.

Besides the eight components, PRINCE2 defines six processes, including IP: Initiating a Project. There are six sub-processes to IP, the first of which is IP1, Planning Quality. Similar to the PMI methodology, inputs to this sub-process are quality standards, the project brief, and the project approach. The principal output is the project *quality plan*; other outputs are templates for the *quality log*, an *issues log*, and a *lessons learned report*.

Process QC is managed through the maintenance of the quality log. Corrective action is handled as a separate function, not part of QM.

PRINCE2 revisits all key documents at each project stage, updating them as required. Hence, there is a *Stage Quality Plan*, which is an update of the original Quality Plan.

**A comparison of PRINCE2 against PMBOK, by Peter Whitelaw**

The following table is excerpted From Key Resource Peter Whitelaw's paper for this chapter. You can download his complete report, in two documents, from the handbook website: [www.mqia.com](http://www.mqia.com) > Projects > 7.11a *PRINCE2 and ISO 9000* and 7.11b *A Comparison of PRINCE2 Against PMBOK*.

**Table 7.11** Comparison of quality management provisions

Function	PMBOK Summary	PRINCE2	Comments
<b>General</b>	Includes the processes required to ensure that the project will satisfy the needs for which it was undertaken. Covers the quality policy, objectives, responsibilities, QA, QC and QI within the quality system. Intended to be compatible with ISO 9000, TQM and Continuous Improvement.	Quality considerations are embedded in all of the eight processes and many of their sub-processes. There is also a component providing guidance on quality in a Project Environment and a technique describing a Quality Review procedure. PRINCE2 is fully ISO 9001 compatible.	Both methods recognise customer expectations, prevention over inspection and management responsibility.
<b>Quality planning</b>	Involves identifying what quality standards are relevant to the project and determining how to satisfy them. The main output is a quality management plan.	Fully covered in IP1, Planning Quality. PRINCE2 also offers a process, SU4, where the customer's quality expectations are sought and recorded. The Project Quality Plan is the equivalent of the quality management plan.	PMBOK does not formalise the customer's quality expectations.
<b>Quality Assurance</b>	PMBOK uses the phrase to cover 'all the planned and systematic activities implemented within the quality system to provide confidence that the project will satisfy the relevant quality standards.' It covers reviews of quality results and audits of the other quality management activities.	Separates the organisation-wide quality assurance role – setting and monitoring the use of standards – from aspects of the Project Assurance role, the planning of resources for quality work and monitoring the results for a single project. PRINCE2 offers a quality file for all quality documents, which can be used for quality audits.	PRINCE2 accepts that there may be audits from an organisation-wide quality assurance group, independent of the project, but also offers a role for this group as part of Project Assurance.
<b>Quality Control</b>	Involves monitoring specific project results to determine if they comply with relevant quality standards.	Covers the need in products and techniques such as the Quality Log and quality reviews.	Both cover the quality of products and project management. PMBOK includes a description of Pareto diagrams.