

# The Definitive Guide to Scrum Training

By Karim Harbott

## Why take Scrum training?

Scrum may appear simple at first, but it is deceptively difficult to do well. While there is a lot of great information in the public domain, the challenge is that there is also much misunderstanding and bad practice being written about. It is often difficult to separate the myths from the truth, the dysfunction from the good practice.

Investing in high-quality Scrum training has many benefits. First, it ensures that your team members are all on the same page regarding what is expected of them in this new way of working. It ensures that they understand the why of Scrum and other Agile approaches as well as the main risks involved in product development, and that they know how to work with the Scrum framework and are using a common language.

The overwhelming empirical evidence suggests strongly that teams that have been professionally trained are significantly more likely to be effective than those that have not. A small early investment in teams will often pay for itself many times over in increased value delivered to customers over time. Will people be experts after two days of training? Of course not. But they will have grasped the fundamentals of Scrum and Agile, be speaking the same language, and have been inspired to continue their journeys by putting what they've learned into practice.

## Certified Scrum training vs uncertified Scrum training

There are two key benefits to getting certified Scrum training from one of the two large certifying bodies (see below). The first is that the trainer has been thoroughly vetted over many months or even years. It typically takes five to eight years to become a trainer with either of the credible Scrum certifying bodies. This means that you will be getting a trainer who has lived and breathed Scrum for years, has deep experience to share, and is a great trainer. The second benefit is that many organisations require Scrum Masters and Product Owners to hold credentials. This means that having attended certified training can be very good for people's careers, and they are right to be proud of their achievements. It is great for them to be able to get certificates after the training.

The benefits of uncertified training are that it tends to be a little cheaper, as it does not require a certified trainer, and that there are more opportunities to customise the agenda and course length, as it is not bound by learning objectives or minimum timings. If you need something very specific or a one-day course, uncertified would be the way to go.

As for established, credible Scrum certifying bodies, there are two, both of which have highly experienced, thoroughly vetted trainers who can deliver great-quality Scrum training.

The Scrum Alliance was founded in 2001, and as of June 2022 has certified over 1.2m people. The Scrum Alliance is a not-for-profit organisation. [Find out more about the Scrum Alliance here](#). Classes are a minimum of two days, and the most popular Scrum Alliance classes are Certified Scrum Master (CSM)

and Certified Scrum Product Owner (CSPO). Classes must be taken to achieve the certification, and the CSM class requires passing a short multiple-choice exam; we have a [free Scrum Master exam simulation](#) to help you prepare. In terms of finding jobs, the market does tend to value Scrum Alliance certifications a little more highly than those of Scrum.org, but there is not much in it. Agile Centre offer principally Scrum Alliance-certified training.

Scrum.org was founded in 2009 and as of June 2022 has certified over 700k people. Scrum.org is a for-profit organisation. [Find out more about Scrum.org here](#). Classes are a minimum of two days, and the most popular Scrum.org classes are Professional Scrum Master (PSM) and Professional Scrum Product Owner (PSPO). Both certifications can be achieved by passing an exam only, although we would always recommend taking a class before attempting the exam. Agile Centre does not provide Scrum.org-certified training; however, our [free Scrum Master exam simulation](#) will help you to prepare for the PSM exam.

## Scrum Master training vs Product Owner training

Most people start with Scrum Master training, which will be either CSM or PSM. This is great for aspiring Scrum Masters, or those who just wish to understand Scrum and Agile a little better in order to work on or with a Scrum Team. For this reason, many developers and team members, as well as project managers, take this option to start. Scrum Masters typically help teams to work more effectively; they help Product Owners work as part of the Scrum Team, and they help coach the organisation to better adopt Scrum and Agile ways of working. They tend to be people-focused and inward-looking, and love helping others be successful.

For those who are more customer-focused and outward-looking, the Product Owner training (CSPO or PSPO) may prove a better option. Product Owners love creating great products and working with the rest of the Scrum Team to get them built. They are strategic and have great product-management and business-analysis skills. Scrum Masters with a little experience may also benefit from taking a Product Owner class.

The Scrum Alliance website has [a quiz that can help](#) people decide which course would be best for them.

## Live online Scrum training vs in-person Scrum training

This one comes down to personal preference. There are pros and cons on both sides. When we at Agile Centre hastily pivoted to live online classes in April 2020, it was out of necessity, and I really did not think it would work. I am pleased to say that I was wrong. The feedback we have received from virtual classes has been just as good as that from in-person classes. We are now able to welcome people from all over the world who do not have to travel at all to join the class.

Over two years on, we are well used to running these courses online. We use Zoom to get everyone together, and a tool called [Mural](#) as our collaboration board, the combination of which works fantastically. All interactive exercises have been optimised for this medium and keep the learners highly engaged.

The benefits are clear. It's a little cheaper, there is no travel (and hence a much smaller carbon footprint), and people can see their families in the evenings. The learning and collaboration are just as strong as with in-person training.

Some people, however, will always want the personal connection and networking opportunities of being in a room together. That's great, and we still cater for that. The clear benefit of this approach is the connections and discussions forged over coffee breaks. It also tends to work well when doing in-house training of teams from the same company. This gives people a chance to see each other in person and to reinforce relationships.

Ultimately, both options are highly effective, and we have seen no dip in feedback scores since offering both.

## Public Scrum training vs in-house Scrum training

We offer public and in-house training in both in-person and live online formats, so there is an option for everyone.

Public training is open to anyone who wants to buy a ticket. We get a range of experiences, companies, and industries represented. Many people on these courses are self-funding; many others have been sent by their employers. They tend to be a great place to network and learn from what others are doing. For organisations, I would recommend sending people on public training if you have fewer than 10 people to train and you are comfortable with those from other organisations being present.

In-house training is a great option when organisations require their team(s) to be trained together without others being present. It can be an incredibly cost-effective option for training 10+ people, and the larger the number, the bigger the savings. Another advantage is the opportunity to ask context-specific questions and to benefit from the years of experience the trainer has had. In-person training of this kind is often held on the customer's premises, so travel tends to be minimal even for in-person classes.

Our [public CSM schedule can be found here](#), our [CSPO schedule here](#), and to enquire about in-house training please visit the [in-house training page on our website](#).

## Choosing a Scrum trainer

This is another highly personal choice. Some people will have specific trainers in mind because they have read their books or blogs, and that's great. Others will not know where to start. I understand that. I didn't know where to start when I got my CSM 'way back in 2008.

If you do not know where to start, the [Scrum Alliance](#) and [Scrum.org](#) websites are great places to see who is teaching in your area or time zone. While all certified trainers will be good, some will be more experienced and higher-profile than others. I would urge you to check out the profile of your trainer.

Here at Agile Centre, we use only the most experienced and high-quality trainers. Our courses are highly

rated, with consistent 70+ NPS scores. Our classes are highly engaging and interactive, and we use exercises to bring the topics to life.

We are always looking to add more value to our training. Participants in our Scrum classes will receive not only two days of high-quality training, but also access to all course materials, to our [on-demand Introduction to Agile & Scrum class](#), and to [four sets of realistic Scrum Master exam preparation questions](#); a two-year Scrum Alliance membership; and their certification. All at no extra cost.

Our core trainers are:

- 1. Agile Centre co-founder Karim Harbott** – Karim has been working in product development since 2003 and has been involved in the Scrum and Agile world since 2008. He became a Certified Enterprise Coach (the highest Scrum Alliance coaching level) in 2014 and a Certified Scrum Trainer in 2016, and served on the Scrum Alliance board of directors from 2020–2022. Karim wrote the learning objectives followed by all Scrum Alliance trainers for CSM and CSPO as well as the advanced classes, and is also the author of the best-selling book [The 6 Enablers of Business Agility](#). You can [read Karim's Scrum Alliance profile here](#).
- 2. Agile Centre co-founder John McFadyen** – John started in software development in 2002 and became involved in the world of Agile and Scrum shortly after, first as a developer and later as a Scrum Master. He became a Certified Enterprise Coach in 2015, served on the first review panel for Certified Team Coach from 2015 to 2018, and became a Certified Scrum Trainer in 2018. John's area of focus is on Scrum Master and Agile Coach development, from first steps all the way through the journey to mastery. You can [read John's Scrum Alliance profile here](#).
- 3. Jem DJelal (Jem Jelly)** – Since 2005 Jem has served well over 150+ teams using Scrum and Agile. He prides himself on being a hands-on practitioner, enjoying both coaching teams and teaching students. He specialises in Scrum Master training, and his scenario- and metaphor-based approach in the classroom helps learners truly absorb the essence of Agile. You can [read Jem's Scrum Alliance profile here](#).

Feel free to [read Agile Centre's Google reviews from our customers here](#).