MERCURY

Project Toolkit: WBS, Critical Path, Earned Value and Risk

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Project Toolkit: WBS, Critical Path, Earned Value and Risk

A project toolkit of WBS, critical path, earned value and risk methods covers the project management tools and techniques used to plan, schedule, budget and control a project. This 1-week course is for project managers, planners and team leads who need tools they can apply on live projects, and you leave with a Project Planning and Control Pack. This project toolkit course is delivered by Mercury Training Center.

About This Course

Many projects slip because plans live in someone's head, estimates are guesses and changes arrive without a record. This course gives you a short set of planning and control tools that you use on a real project. You should already take part in planning or running project work. Every tool is practiced on a case and then on your own project.

Who It Is For

- People who lead projects and answer to a sponsor for scope, time and cost.
- Planners who build and update schedules, resource loading and progress reports.
- Department heads who approve project budgets and review status each month.
- Team leads who coordinate daily tasks, suppliers and handovers inside a project.
- Project support staff who keep registers, logs and reporting packs up to date.

This course is not for managers preparing for a certification exam, who need an exam preparation course, nor for readers wanting every knowledge area in depth, who suit a longer multi-week course.

Competencies You Will Build

- Scope Definition: you break a request into a work breakdown structure that the team and sponsor sign off.
- Schedule Building: you sequence activities, find the critical path and set a schedule baseline people trust.
- Cost Estimating: you build a bottom-up budget a finance reviewer can follow.
- Risk Handling: you keep a scored risk register and assign an owner and response to each threat.
- Progress Control: you read variance, log change requests and decide what goes to the sponsor.
- Stakeholder Reporting: you send short, regular status reports that match each audience.

What You Will Be Able to Do

By the end of the course you will be able to:

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- From a sponsor's request, draft a project charter that states objectives, limits and decision rights.
- Given a list of deliverables, produce a WBS dictionary that removes overlaps and gaps in the work.
- Using three-point estimates, set activity durations that show their range of uncertainty.
- Given a cost baseline and progress data, calculate earned value indicators and explain the trend.
- From a supplier need, write vendor selection criteria and a contract closure checklist.
- Using a change log, route each scope change to an approved, rejected or deferred decision.

Course Content

Day 1: Framework and Project Charter

- Lifecycle Model Selection for Predictive and Iterative Projects
- Stakeholder Register and Power-Interest Grid for a New Initiative
- Process Groups and Knowledge Areas Mapped to a Live Project
- Project Charter Template for Authorizing Work and Naming the Sponsor
- Scope Statement and Requirements Prioritization With MoSCoW

Day 2: Scope and Schedule Tools

- Work Breakdown Structure and WBS Dictionary for Deliverable Planning
- Activity Definition and Sequencing With the Precedence Diagramming Method
- Resource and Duration Estimating With Three-Point Estimates
- Critical Path Method and Gantt Chart for Schedule Development
- Schedule Baseline and Variance Checks for Schedule Control

Day 3: Cost, Quality and Team Resources

- Bottom-Up Cost Estimating From the Work Breakdown Structure
- Cost Baseline and Time-Phased Budget for Funding Requests
- Earned Value Indicators for Cost and Schedule Control
- Quality Planning, Assurance and Control Checklists for Deliverables
- RACI Matrix and Resource Plan for Team Acquisition and Development

Day 4: Risk, Communication and Procurement

- Risk Register With Qualitative Probability-Impact Scoring
- Quantitative Risk Analysis and Response Planning for Key Threats
- Communication Plan and Performance Reports for Sponsors and Teams
- Procurement Plan, Solicitation and Vendor Selection Criteria
- Contract Management and Closure Checklist for Suppliers

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Day 5: Control Practice on a Live Project

- Exercise: Integrated Change Control Log for a Scope Change Request
- Exercise: Directing Execution and Updating Schedule and Cost Baselines
- Exercise: Team Management and Stakeholder Escalation Under Delay
- Exercise: Project Closure Report and Lessons Learned Register
- Completing the Project Planning and Control Pack for Your Own Project

Case Studies and Exercises

These are suggested activities.

- Case study: a hospital wing refurbishment falls behind schedule; you rebuild the critical path and decide which activities to crash.
- Case study: a software rollout overruns its budget halfway through; you read the earned value indicators and draft the sponsor report.
- Exercise: a manufacturing line upgrade needs two suppliers; you set selection criteria and score the bids.
- Exercise: a construction client asks for extra scope late in the project; you log the request and prepare the change decision.

What You Take Back

You return with the Project Planning and Control Pack, built around a project you run or support. In your first month back, use it to reset the baseline, hold a risk review with the team and send the first status report.

- Project charter, scope statement and WBS dictionary.
- Critical path schedule with its baseline and cost budget.
- Scored risk register and communication plan.
- Change log, earned value tracker and closure checklist.

Quick Answers FAQ

What should I know before a project toolkit course on WBS and critical path?

You should already take part in planning or delivering project work. No scheduling software is required; the tools are practiced on templates and worked examples, then on a project you bring.

How does a project toolkit course differ from an exam preparation course?

An exam preparation course follows a body of knowledge question by question. This course is about using a small set of planning and control tools on real work, so the time goes to building schedules, budgets and registers rather than practice questions.

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Which project management tools matter most for controlling a project?

The work breakdown structure, critical path schedule, cost baseline, risk register and change log do most of the work. Together they show what was agreed, where things stand and what has changed.

What do I take back from project toolkit training on earned value and risk?

You take back the Project Planning and Control Pack: a charter, WBS, baseline schedule and budget, risk register, communication plan and change log, filled in for your own project, ready for the next status meeting.

For Your Manager

After the course, the team member can turn a request into a charter and WBS, build a critical path schedule and budget, track variance with earned value and manage changes through a log. They return with a Project Planning and Control Pack for a current project, first used at the next baseline review or sponsor status meeting.

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