MERCURY

Planning and Scheduling Professional for Project Managers

19 – 23 July 2027
London (UK)



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Planning and Scheduling Professional for Project Managers

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Planning and Scheduling Professional for Project Managers is a 1-week course for project managers and project controls leads who must read, challenge and act on schedules. You move from WBS to approved baseline, apply CPM and PERT, measure progress, analyze delays and choose recovery options, and you leave with a Schedule Control Pack for your project. Mercury Training Center delivers this planning and scheduling course for project managers.

About This Course

Many project managers receive schedules they cannot test, so late warnings arrive only when a milestone is already lost. This course gives you the questions and checks to trust or reject a schedule and steer from it. You should already manage or coordinate projects. You practice on sample schedules, progress updates and delay scenarios.

Who It Is For

- Staff accountable for delivering projects on time and reporting status to sponsors.
- Staff who run project controls, baselines and change control across a portfolio.
- Staff in a project office who review contractor schedules and progress claims.
- Engineering and construction leads who coordinate design, procurement and site work.
- Staff preparing to take on senior project leadership responsibilities.

This course is not for planners who need hands-on scheduling software training, who are better served by a tool-specific scheduling course, nor for maintenance planners organizing work orders and shutdowns, who need a course on maintenance planning and scheduling.

Competencies You Will Build

- Schedule Review: you test a schedule's logic, float and constraints before accepting it as a baseline.
- Critical Path Reading: you identify driving and near-critical paths and explain them to sponsors.
- Baseline and Change Control: you approve baseline changes only with documented scope or risk reasons.
- Progress Measurement: you set status rules and judge planned-versus-actual performance.
- Delay and Variance Analysis: you trace a slipped milestone to its cause and quantify its impact.
- Recovery Decision Making: you choose between crashing, fast-tracking and resequencing with cost and risk in view.

What You Will Be Able to Do

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

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- Given a project scope statement, build a WBS with control accounts, work packages and key milestones.
- Using an activity network, perform forward and backward passes and calculate total and free float.
- From three-point estimates, apply PERT to give a completion range with stated confidence.
- Given a contractor schedule, run a quality check on logic, constraints, durations and float and list required corrections.
- Using a progress update, calculate schedule and cost performance indicators and forecast completion.
- From a delayed project, prepare a recovery plan and a short schedule narrative for senior management.

Course Content

Day 1: From Scope to Schedule Structure

- Planning And Scheduling Roles Across The Project Lifecycle
- WBS, Control Accounts And Work Package Definition
- Activity Attributes, Calendars And Coding Structures
- Precedence Diagramming Relationships, Leads And Lags
- Contract Milestones, Interfaces And Schedule Governance

Day 2: Critical Path and Resources

- Forward And Backward Pass Calculations For Early And Late Dates
- Total Float, Free Float And Driving Path Identification
- PERT Three-Point Estimates For Duration Uncertainty
- Resource-Loaded Schedules, Leveling And Smoothing
- Schedule Quality Checks And Scheduling Software Outputs

Day 3: Baselines, Integration and Earned Value

- Baseline Approval And Change Control Procedures
- Procurement Lead Times And Supplier Milestones In The Schedule
- Cost-Loaded Schedules And Budget Alignment
- Earned Value Management With SPI And CPI
- Integrating Contractor And Stakeholder Schedules

Day 4: Risk, Delay and Recovery

- Schedule Risk Identification And Probability-Impact Assessment
- Delay Causes, Impact Assessment And Critical Path Shifts
- Crashing, Fast-Tracking And Activity Resequencing
- Recovery Plans And Their Resource Implications
- Status Dates, Remaining Durations And Completion Forecasts

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Day 5: Schedule Control Practice

- Exercise: Building And Analyzing A Network For An Engineering Project
- Exercise: Reviewing A Contractor Baseline Before Approval
- Exercise: Delay Analysis And Recovery Options For A Late Milestone
- Schedule Narratives, Dashboards And Sponsor Reporting
- Schedule Control Pack Completion And Peer Review

Case Studies and Exercises

The following are suggested activities used during the course:

- Case study: a building contractor reports a major slip on a hospital project; you identify the driving activities and decide which recovery option to approve.
- Case study: an oil and gas facility upgrade waits on late equipment deliveries; you assess the procurement impact on the critical path.
- Exercise: for an IT system rollout, you rebaseline the schedule after an approved scope change.
- Exercise: for a road project, you compare progress against plan and write a forecast for the steering committee.

What You Take Back

You return with a Schedule Control Pack built around your own project. In your first month back, use it to review the current baseline, set progress measurement rules with your planners and issue the first monthly schedule narrative to your sponsor.

- A schedule quality checklist for baseline acceptance.
- Progress measurement and status update rules.
- A variance, delay and forecast worksheet.
- A schedule narrative and dashboard template.

Quick Answers FAQ

What should I know before a planning and scheduling course for project managers?

You should already manage or coordinate projects and be familiar with Gantt charts and milestones. No advanced scheduling software skill is needed, as the course focuses on reading, checking and controlling schedules rather than building them in a tool.

How does a planning and scheduling course for project managers differ from a scheduler's software course?

A software course teaches how to enter and update activities in a tool. This course teaches project managers to judge schedule quality, read critical paths, measure progress and decide on recovery using the schedule as a management tool.

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What is the difference between total float and free float in project scheduling?

Total float is how long an activity can slip without delaying project completion. Free float is how long it can slip without delaying the next activity. Activities with zero or negative total float sit on the critical path.

What do I take back from planning and scheduling training for project managers?

You take back a Schedule Control Pack for your project: a baseline quality checklist, progress rules, a variance and forecast worksheet and a template for schedule narratives and dashboards.

For Your Manager

After this course, the team member will be able to check schedule quality, read the critical path, control baselines, measure progress, analyze delays and choose recovery options. They return with a Schedule Control Pack for their project, first used to review the current baseline and issue a clearer monthly status report to sponsors.