

The logo for AGL Academy is a red square with a white geometric pattern of interlocking cubes. The text "AGL Academy" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font in the center of the square.

**AGL Academy**

**Agile for the Government Product Owner**

# Agile Government Leadership



# AGL Academy

A community effort by Agile government professionals to help educate and empower those who seek to implement Agile processes into their own agencies

# Outcomes for today

[www.AgileGovLeaders.org/Academy](http://www.AgileGovLeaders.org/Academy)

# Agile for the Government Product Owner

## Description

## Get Started

### **If you're a Product Owner in government and want to learn the basics of practicing Agile methods with your team, this study track is for you.**

In the Scrum framework for practicing Agile, the Product Owner is the person who represents the business and user community, and is responsible for determining what features will be in the product release. This person is typically the project's key stakeholder and is responsible for maximizing the business value of the product.

Here you will find a step-by-step course to get started. It includes readings, videos, general introductory info, advice specific to government settings, and exercises that will empower you to start providing the benefits of Agile development to your stakeholders.

### **Curriculum**

You will work through a series of tasks each week. These start out as simple readings for you to discuss with colleagues, then progress to exercises you must perform that model the Agile process on a small scale to give you hands-on experience. With a little effort and cooperation from Project Managers on your team, in a few weeks you will be ready to begin a serious Agile project. You can complete the lessons right here on our website, or access this [PDF of the course](#).

### **Lessons**

[Lesson 1: Introduction To Agile ›](#)

[Lesson 2: How to be a Product Owner ›](#)

[Lesson 3: Creating and Managing a Backlog of User Stories ›](#)

[Lesson 4: Interpreting the Burndown Chart ›](#)

**Why you should do this course**

# **Lesson 1: Introduction To Agile**



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## Lesson 1: Introduction To Agile

### Your journey to Agile excellence begins here.

During this lesson, your team will gain a basic understanding and shared terminology for the Agile and Scrum methodologies, along with the motivations for using them in government projects. You will read materials, watch videos, and perform an “Agile Assessment” — then graduate from the first week and start practicing what’s been learned.

### Requirements

- ☐ Read all items on reading list (share what you've learned with team members!)
  - ☐ Watch all videos on watch list
  - ☐ Perform Agile Assessment
  - ☐ Move on to Lesson 2
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# Lesson 1: Reading List

- What Is Agile?
- Why Agile In Government?
- Agile Government Handbook
- Government Challenges To Using Agile
- The Scrum Guide
- Agile Terms

# Lesson 1: What to Watch

## Agile 101 Case Study Discussion

- Live conversation with panelists from both the Federal and private sectors about Agile and its role in the context of government

## Scrum Training Series

- Scrum helps us practice Agile effectively. The Scrum Training Series above is divided into several videos

## **Lesson 2:**

# **How to Be a Product Owner**

# What is Product Ownership?

- Role not a title
- How a PO relates to other roles
- Inward responsibilities to the scrum team
- Outward responsibilities to the rest of the world
- Necessary skills and abilities
- Common backgrounds

# Product Owner Responsibilities

- Role not a title
- How a PO relates to other roles
- Inward responsibilities to the scrum team
- Outward responsibilities to the rest of the world
- Necessary skills and abilities
- Common backgrounds

# Product Ownership is Different in Government

- Day job
- Too many stakeholders
- Legacy process drag
- Long planning cycle
- Plan ahead of procurement process
- Value tradeoffs within contractual constraints

# Common PO Challenges

- How to balance short term and long term priorities
- Executives think we bought “x” with a timeline of “y”
- I don’t know anything about software design
- Convincing stakeholders to accept an MVP approach
- Receiving clear explanations from engineering team
- What to do when things don’t go as expected
- I solved the immediate problem, now what?



## Read

### What Is A Product Owner?

Find out what Product Owners do, where they come from, and what makes a good one. (Study time: 10 min)

### Product Ownership In The Government Context

As a Product Owner in government, you will face some unique situations. (Study time: 10 min)

### How The Product Owner Relates To Other Roles

Learn how to fulfill your role properly in cooperation with executives and other team members. (Study time: 10 min)

### Common PO Challenges

Here are some challenges you may face as a government PO — and how to handle them. (Study time: 20 min)

### Scrum Alliance CSPO Learning Objectives

The Scrum Alliance offers a Certified Scrum Product Owner credential to individuals who, among other qualifications, have been trained to meet these learning objectives. (Study time: 30 min)

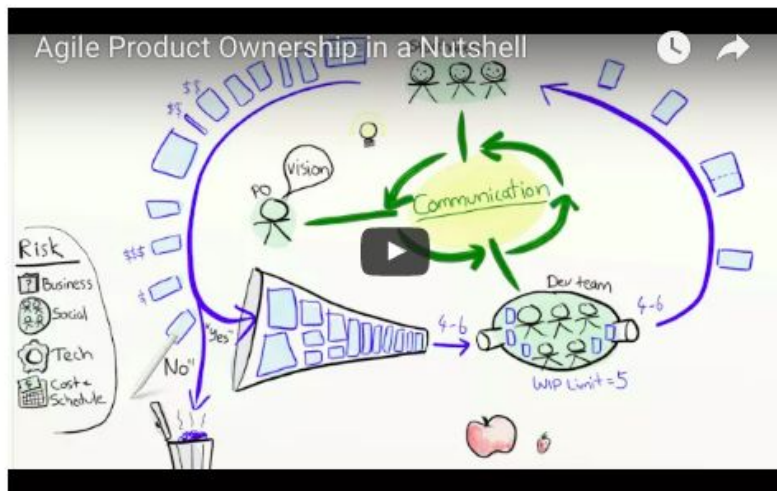
### U.S. Digital Services Playbook

The federal government provides 13 key “plays” drawn from successful practices that help agencies build better services. This is not exclusively relevant to the PO, but provides a broader context for how projects should run. (Study time: 30 min)

### The TechFAR Handbook

A guide to the flexibilities in the U.S. Government Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) that can help agencies implement “plays” from the U.S. Digital Services Playbook that would be accomplished with acquisition support. This is not exclusively relevant to the PO, but provides a broader context for procurement activities leading up to the project. (Study Time: 60 min)

## Watch



### Agile Project Ownership In A Nutshell

High-level summary of Agile from a Product Owner's perspective.

(Study Time: 15 min)

The video frame shows a presentation slide titled "A Tapestry that Includes Threads for...". The slide content includes:

- Things to do...
  - Features
  - Value increments
  - Architecture
  - Design
  - Process
  - Quality
  - Testing
- In a Context-Based fashion...
- Deployment
  - Regulatory
  - Dependency
  - Risk
  - Feedback
  - Custom timing
  - Tempo
- ... Guiding us towards customer value

The slide also features a small image of a tapestry and the R/Galen logo. A play button is overlaid on the slide. In the background, a man (Bob Galen) is visible on stage.

### The Essential Product Owner: Partnering With The Team

Even the best POs struggle to meet the demands of their "regular business-focused job" while providing sufficient team guidance.

Agile expert Bob Galen shares real-world situations where he's observed product owners who deliver truly balanced value for their business stakeholders. (Study Time: 75 min)

# **Lesson 3:**

## **Creating and Managing a Backlog of User Stories**

## Lesson 3: Creating And Managing A Backlog Of User Stories

**Stories are the basic units by which all tasks are built and tracked in an Agile project.**

The ability to write solid user stories and prioritize them into a backlog of work to be done is fundamentally important to your team's progress toward Agile — and it takes practice. By the end of this lesson and after completing the two exercises, your team should be able to write user stories and you will understand how to keep your backlog fresh and refined.

### Requirements

- ☐ Perform Exercise 1: Writing User Stories
- ☐ Perform Exercise 2: Backlog Refinement
- ☐ Move on to Lesson 4

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### Read

These exercises help you and your team learn by doing. We'll walk you through what you need, how to prepare, and how to complete each exercise. Now that you've learned the basics of Agile and Product Ownership, it's time to roll up your sleeves, whip out your Sharpies, procure a pack of index cards or Post-It notes and get to work:

[Start the "Writing User Stories" Exercise ›](#)

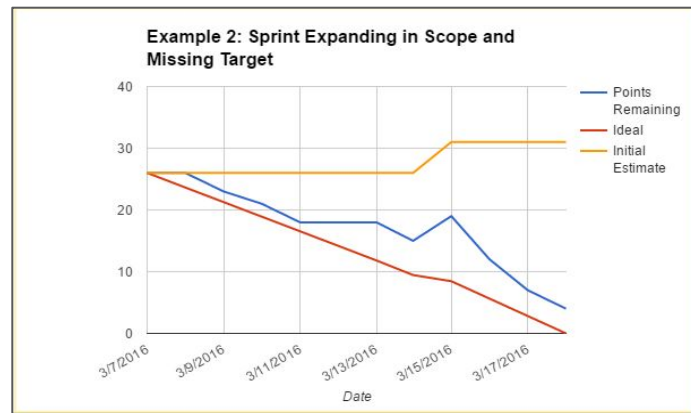
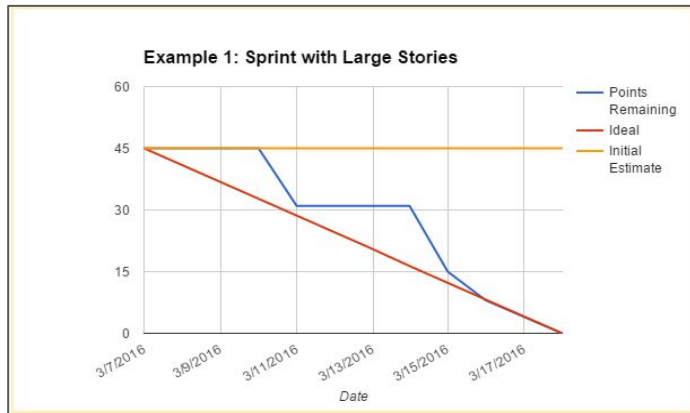
If your team has completed the above workshop, you're ready to practice backlog refinement:

[Start the "Backlog Refinement" Exercise ›](#)

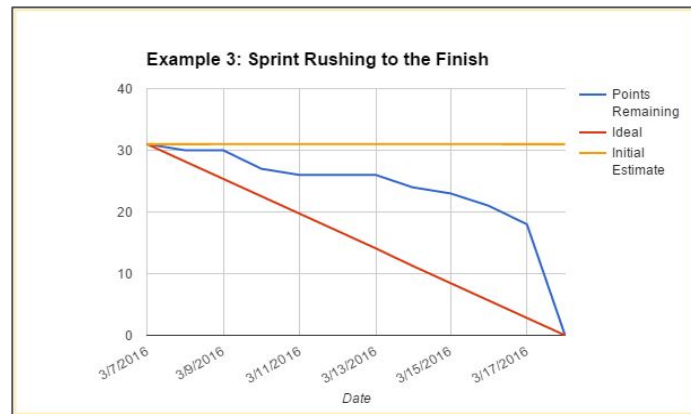
## **Lesson 4:**

# **Interpreting the Burndown Chart**

# Lesson 4: Burndown Charts



- What is it?
- Why is it valuable?
- What can it tell you?



# Next Steps

Take the course: [www.agilegovleaders.com/Academy/Product-Owner](http://www.agilegovleaders.com/Academy/Product-Owner)

## Stay in Touch:

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# Open discussion