Create your product backlog

Azure Boards | Azure DevOps Server 2020 | Azure DevOps Server 2019 | TFS 2018 - TFS 2013

Your product backlog corresponds to your project plan, the roadmap for what your team plans to deliver. You create your product backlog by adding user stories, backlog items, or requirements. As shown in the following image, your backlog consists of a flat list of work items.

Note

The following image illustrates the product backlog image for a Scrum process for Azure DevOps Services. For the Agile, Basic, and CMMI process models, the **Backlog items** selection appears as **Stories**, **Issues**, and **Requirements**.

After you define it, you have a prioritized list of features and requirements to build. Your backlog also provides a repository of all the information you need to track and share with your team. And, you're able to interactively filter the backlog to focus on a subset of work items.

Note

For guidance on configuring and customizing your project and teams to support your business needs, review **Configuration and customization of Azure Boards**.

Your backlog consists of a list of work items. You use work items to share information, assign work to team members, track dependencies, organize work, and more. Because the most important work appears at the top of the list, your team always knows what to work on next.

Note

Your product backlog is one of three classes of backlogs available to you. For an overview of the features supported on each backlog and the two types of boards, see **Backlogs**, **boards**, **and plans**. If you're not seeing the work items you expect on your backlog, review **Setup your backlogs and boards**.

Prerequisites

Backlogs are automatically created when you create a project or add a team. Each team has access to their own product, portfolio, and sprint backlogs as described in About teams and Agile tools.

- You must connect to a project. If you don't have a project yet, create one.
- You must be added to a project as a member of the Contributors or Project
 Administrators security group. To get added, Add users to a project or team.
- To add or modify work items, you must be granted **Stakeholder** access or higher. For details, see About access levels.
- To view or modify work items, you must have your View work items in this node and Edit work items in this node permissions set to Allow. By default,

the **Contributors** group has this permission set. To learn more, see Set permissions and access for work tracking.

Note

Users with **Stakeholder** access for a public project have full access to backlog and board features just like users with **Basic** access. For details, see **About access levels**.

Open your backlog

From your web browser, open your product backlog.

1. (1) Check that you have selected the right project, (2) choose **Boards>Backlogs**, and then (3) select the correct team from the team selector menu.

To select another backlog, open the selector and then choose a different team or select the **View Backlog directory** option. Or, enter a keyword in the search box to filter the list of team backlogs for the project.

Tip

Choose the star icon to favorite a team backlog. Favorited artifacts (star favorited icon) appear at the top of the team selector list.

- 2. Check that you have selected **Stories** (for Agile), **Issues** (for Basic), **Backlog items** (for Scrum), or **Requirements** (for CMMI) as the backlog level.
- 3. (Optional) To choose which columns should display and in what order, choose the *** actions icon and select **Column options**. To learn more, see Change column options.

Track bugs on your backlog

You can choose how you want to manage bugs. Some teams like to track bugs along with requirements on the backlog. Other teams like to track bugs as tasks performed in support of a requirement. The bugs then appear on their taskboard.

Before deciding, review Configure and customize, Treat bugs as requirements or tasks for guidance. Or, go directly to Show bugs on backlogs and boards.

Convert ideas into backlog items

Your backlog shows work that you plan to do or have started to work on. As soon as the state of a work item is set to Done or Completed, the work item no longer shows up on your backlog. You can use the backlog controls to filter or change your view.

Tip

If you already defined a long list of items, you don't have to reenter them one at a time. Instead, use **Microsoft Excel** to quickly import them to your backlog.

Users with **Stakeholder** access can only add work items to the end of the backlog. For details, see About access levels.

- 1. Before you add work items, select the view options icon and turn the slider for **Parents** and **Forecasting** to **Off**. Optionally, turn **In Progress Items** on or off.
- 2. To add a work item, select **New Work Item** and enter a title. Then press Enter or select **Add to top**.

Note

If you have Stakeholder access, you can only add work items to the bottom of the backlog.

3. Repeat this step to capture all your ideas as work items.

Note

Depending on whether you create your project with **Basic**, **Agile**, **Scrum**, or **CMMI**, the items in your backlog might be called issues, user stories, PBIs, or requirements. All three are similar. They describe the customer value to be delivered and the work to be performed.

By default, user stories appear on Agile backlogs, issues on Basic backlogs, PBIs and bugs appear on Scrum backlogs, and requirements appear on CMMI backlogs.

Reorder your backlog

After you have some items in your backlog, you can reorder them to create a prioritized list of work. Review and prioritize your backlog frequently to help your team know what's most important to deliver next.

You can't sort your backlog on a column. To view a sorted listed, select **Create query**. Save and open the query, and then sort the query results. To learn more about queries, see **Use the query editor to list and manage queries**.

To reorder your backlog, drag the work items. Or, if you prefer to use the keyboard, hold down the Alt key and use the up and down arrows.

Note

To reorder a backlog, you must have Basic or higher level access. For details, see **About access levels**. If you have Stakeholder access, you can't reorder backlog items.

Backlogs that participate in portfolio management or that contain nested same-type child items might not allow you to reorder the items. For more information, see these articles:

- Backlogs, portfolios, and Agile project management, Work with multi-team ownership of backlog items
- Fix re-ordering and nesting issues

Add details and estimates

Building and prioritizing your backlog provides you with a high-level roadmap. Before your team can start work on any item, however, they need more details. You capture these details within the work item form.

To open each item, double-click or press Enter. Then add all the information you want to track. Change one or more field values, add a description, or make a note in the **Discussion** section. You can also choose the **Attachments** tab and drag-and-drop a file to share the file with others.

Enter as much detail as the team needs to:

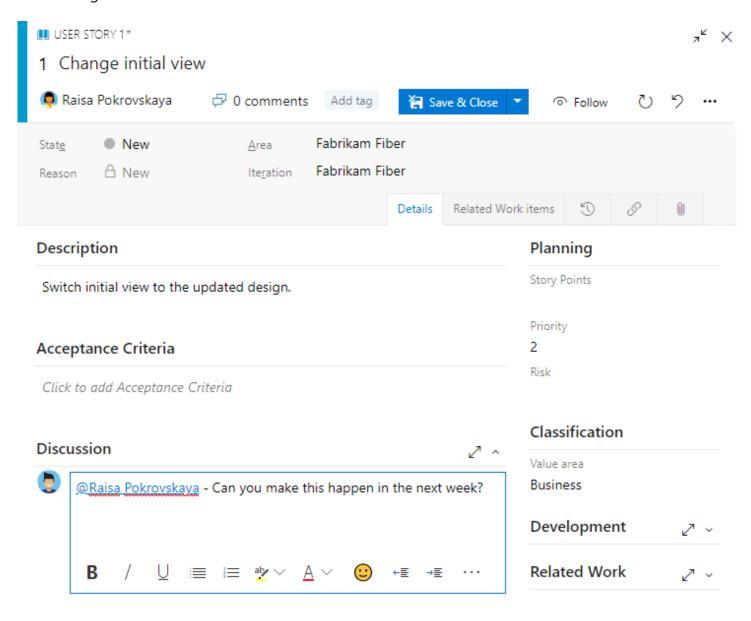
- Understand the scope.
- Estimate the work required.
- Develop tests.
- Ensure that the end product meets acceptance criteria.

Note

You can only assign work to a single user. If you need to assign work to more than one user, add a work item for each user and distinguish the work to be done by title and description. The Assigned To field only accepts user accounts that have been **added to a project or team**.

- Agile process
- Basic process
- Scrum process
- CMMI process

For example, here we assign the story to Raisa Pokrovskaya and we add a discussion note, atmentioning Raisa.



Choose Save & Close when done.

Tip

To plan a sprint, at a minimum, estimate the effort involved to implement each backlog item. To capture effort in the work item form, use **Effort** for Basic or Scrum, **Story Points** for Agile, or **Size** for CMMI.

Field

Usage

Effort, Story Points, Size

Provide a relative estimate of the amount of work required to complete a PBI. For user stories and requirements, you capture estimates in **Story Points** and **Size**.

Most Agile methods recommend that you set estimates for backlog items based on relative size of work. Such methods include powers of 2 (1, 2, 4, 8) and the Fibonacci sequence (1, 2, 3, 5, 8, etc.). Use any numeric unit of

measurement your team prefers.

The estimates you set for **Effort**, **Size**, or **Story Points** are used to calculate velocity and forecast sprints.

Business Value

Specify a priority that captures the relative value of a PBI compared to other PBIs. The higher the number, the greater the business value.

Use this field when you want to capture a priority separate from the changeable backlog stack ranking.

Description

Provide enough detail to create shared understanding of scope and support estimation efforts. Focus on the user, what they want to accomplish, and why. Don't describe how to develop the product. Do provide sufficient details so that your team can write tasks and test cases to implement the item.

Acceptance Criteria

Define what "Done" means by describing the criteria for the team to use to verify whether the PBI or the bug fix is fully implemented.

Before work begins on a PBI or bug, describe the criteria for customer acceptance as clearly as possible. Have conversations between the team and customers to determine the acceptance criteria. These criteria help ensure a common understanding within the team to meet customers' expectations. Also, this information provides the basis for acceptance testing.

Impact Assessment (CMMI only)

Describes the customer impact of not implementing the requirement. You might include details from the Kano model about whether this requirement is in the surprise, required, or obvious categories.

Show/hide In progress items

From the **View options** selector, you can choose to show or hide **In Progress items**. If you turn the **In Progress** control off, then items that are in the *Active*, *Committed*, or *Resolved* states or states that map to the **In Progress category state** won't appear in the backlog.

You usually choose to hide **In Progress items** when you want to forecast work. To learn more, see Forecast your product backlog.

Show/hide Completed child items

From the **View options** selector, you can choose to show or hide **Completed Child items**.

You usually choose to show Completed child items when you want to view rollup columns.

You usually choose to hide Completed child items when you want to forecast work. To learn more, see Forecast your product backlog.

Try this next

Now that you have a working backlog in place, your team can begin work on the top-priority items. From here, it's time to decide how you want to work as a team. Do you want to use Scrum or Kanban? You can use these methods independently or together.

Scrum: Schedule sprints or Kanban

Teams that want the least overhead in terms of tracking and estimating might prefer Kanban. Teams that like to work at a steady cadence and plot the details of their sprint plan might prefer Scrum and sprint planning.

For more information, check this out:

https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/azure/devops/boards/backlogs/create-your-backlog?view=azure-devops&tabs=aqile-process

Change sprint dates

Azure Boards | Azure DevOps Server 2020 | Azure DevOps Server 2019 | TFS 2018 - TFS 2013

With Scrum, teams plan and track work at regular time intervals, referred to as a sprint cadence. You define Iteration Paths, also referred to as *sprints*, to support assignment of work items to time-box intervals. Iteration paths are a shared resource used by all teams that select them. Many teams choose a two or three week cadence. However, you can specify shorter or longer sprint cycles. Also, you can create a release schedule which encompasses several sprints.

Tip

If all you need to do is change the iteration dates, you can do that by following the guidance provided in this article. However, if you need to define the iteration paths and tree structure, or assign team sprints, then follow the guidance provided in **Define iteration paths** (sprints) and configure team iterations.

Prerequisites

• To change sprint dates, you must be a member of the **Project Administrators** security group, or have the **Edit this node** permission for the iteration child node you want to change. By default, the user who created the project has these permissions set. To learn more, see Set permissions at the project- or collection-level or Set permissions and access for work tracking.

Quick start guide to scheduling sprints

To quickly get started, you can use the default sprints, also referred to as iterations, that were added when your project was created. Note, you must be a member of the Project Administrators group in order to add sprints and schedule sprint dates. (If you created the project, you're a member.)

1. From your web browser, open your team's sprint backlog. (1) Check that you have selected the right project, (2) choose **Boards>Sprints**, (3) select the correct team from the team selector menu, and lastly (4), choose **Backlog**.

2.	To choose another team, open the selector and select a different team or choose the Browse all sprints option. Or, you can enter a keyword in the search box to filter the list of team backlogs for the project.
3.	Choose Set sprint dates.
4.	Choose the calendar icon to select the start date, and then the end date of the sprint.

5. Choose **Save and close**. You'll see the date listed.

That's it! You can now start planning your first sprint.

Of course, if you have several teams, more complex release and sprint cadences to schedule, or want to create child iterations, then you'll need to read further. You define these through the settings context for the project. See Define iteration (sprint) paths and configure team iterations.

Note

Terminology note: Your set of Agile tools uses the Iteration Path field to track sprints and releases. When you define sprints, you define the picklist of values available for the **Iteration Path** field. You use iterations to group work into sprints, milestones, or releases in which they'll be worked on or shipped.

Add and schedule new sprints for several teams and release cadences

Note

Your sprint backlog and taskboard are designed to support your Scrum processes. In addition, you have access to product and portfolio backlogs and Kanban boards. For an overview of the features supported on each backlog and board, see **Backlogs**, **boards**, **and plans**.

Your project comes with several sprints predefined. However, they aren't associated with any dates. For Scrum and sprint planning, you'll want to assign start and end dates for the sprints your team will use.

Defining additional sprints is a two-step process. You first define the sprints for your project and then you select the sprints that each team will use—Define iteration (sprint) paths and configure team iterations. In this way, the system supports teams that work on different sprint cadences.

Each sprint that you select for your team provides access to a sprint backlog, taskboard, and other sprint planning tools for planning and tracking work.

For example, by selecting Sprints 1 thru 6, the Fabrikam Fiber team gets access to six sprint backlogs. They also get access to capacity planning tools and a taskboard for each sprint.

Try this next

Assign work to a sprint or Define iteration (sprint) paths and configure team iterations

For more information, check this out:

https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/azure/devops/boards/sprints/define-sprints?view=azure-devops

1. Assign backlog items to a sprint

Azure Boards | Azure DevOps Server 2020 | Azure DevOps Server 2019 | TFS 2018 - TFS 2013

The first step in planning your sprint is to assign work from your backlog to a sprint. Your team builds the sprint backlog during the sprint planning meeting, typically held on the first day of the sprint. Each sprint corresponds to a time-boxed interval which supports your team's ability to work using Agile processes and tools. During the planning meeting, your product owner works with your team to identify those stories or backlog items to complete in the sprint.

Note

Your project comes with several predefined sprints. You can quickly add more sprints from your backlog as needed. Or, change the dates of the predefined sprints. To learn more about sprints, also referred to as iterations, see **About areas and iterations**.

Here's an example of a sprint plan that consists of backlog items and the tasks required to complete each item. By setting team capacity and estimating tasks, the team can see when the team or a team member is at, under, or over capacity.

In this article you'll learn how to:

- Open your product backlog
- Assign backlog items to a sprint
- Use multi-select to bulk update work items

Planning meetings typically consist of two parts. In the first part, the team and product owner identify the backlog items that the team feels it can commit to completing in the sprint, based on experience with previous sprints. These items get added to the sprint backlog. In the second part, your team determines how it will develop and test each item. They then define and estimate the tasks required to complete each item. Finally, your team commits to implementing some or all of the items based on these estimates.

Note

Sprint planning doesn't need to be challenging. It can be fun and a time for the entire Scrum team to build camaraderie by working together to answer the question of "What can we commit to?" For examples and strategies to keep your sprint planning focused and effective, check out the **What is Scrum?**.

When you've completed your sprint plan, your sprint backlog should contain all the information your team needs to successfully complete work within the time allotted without having to rush at the end.

Prerequisites

Backlogs are automatically created when you create a project or add a team. Each team has access to their own product, portfolio, and sprint backlogs as described in About teams and Agile tools.

- You must connect to a project. If you don't have a project yet, create one.
- You must be added to a project as a member of the Contributors or Project
 Administrators security group. To get added, Add users to a project or team.
- To add or modify work items, you must be granted **Stakeholder** access or higher. For details, see About access levels.
- To view or modify work items, you must have your View work items in this
 node and Edit work items in this node permissions set to Allow. By default,
 the Contributors group has this permission set. To learn more, see Set permissions and
 access for work tracking.

Note

Users with **Stakeholder** access for a public project have full access to backlog and board features just like users with **Basic** access. For details, see **About access levels**.

Open your team's product backlog

Note

Your sprint backlogs are one of three classes of backlogs available to you. For an overview of the features supported on each backlog and the two types of boards, see **Backlogs**, **boards**, **and plans**.

For a beginner's guide to planning and tracking work, see **Get started with Agile tools**.

From your web browser, open your product backlog.

1. (1) Check that you have selected the right project, (2) choose **Boards>Backlogs**, and then (3) select the correct team from the team selector menu.

To select another backlog, open the selector and then choose a different team or select the **View Backlog directory** option. Or, enter a keyword in the search box to filter the list of team backlogs for the project.

Tip

Choose the star icon to favorite a team backlog. Favorited artifacts (star favorited icon) appear at the top of the team selector list.

- 2. Check that you have selected **Stories** (for Agile), **Issues** (for Basic), **Backlog items** (for Scrum), or **Requirements** (for CMMI) as the backlog level.
- 3. (Optional) To choose which columns should display and in what order, choose the *** actions icon and select **Column options**. To learn more, see Change column options.

Assign work from your backlog to a sprint

Before you start planning your sprint, you'll want to have created, prioritized, and estimated your backlog.

Also, you'll want to have set the start and end dates for your sprint.

You can quickly assign work items to a sprint through drag-and-drop from the product backlog to the sprint.

1. The next step is to open the Planning pane. Choose the view options icon and select **Planning**. While you're at it, make sure **Parents** and **Forecasting** are Off. You can choose to set **In Progress items** to On or Off.

The set of sprints selected for your team appears. If you don't see any sprints listed, you can add sprints or select existing sprints for your team's use. To learn how, see Define sprints.

2. You can drag and drop items from the **Backlog** onto a sprint.

Note

The Planning pane will only show the current sprint and the next 10 future sprints in the list, even if more have been selected for the team.

- 3. Select one or more items from the backlog and drag them to the sprint you are planning. This action will update the Iteration Path of the backlog items and any of its child tasks to the sprint you selected.
- 4. Check the level of effort displayed in the sprint window. As you assign backlog items to a sprint, the sprint window updates with a running tally of the number of backlog items and tasks, as well as the **Planned Effort**.

Planned Effort provides a sum of all Story Points or Effort defined for backlog items assigned to the sprint. This represents your initial guess at what your team will be able to complete in the sprint. Next, you'll define tasks, estimate that work, and use your team's capacity to make sure it fits in the sprint.

Use multi-select to bulk modify items

Multi-select of work items on the product and sprint backlogs works in the same way as multi-select works within query results.

With multi-select, you can perform several actions on several work items at once, such as:

- Move to a sprint
- Change the backlog priority
- Assign to a team member
- Change one or more field values
- Add links
- Map items or change the parent an item is linked to

To select several items in a sequence, hold down the shift key. To select several non-sequential items, use the Ctrl key. Then, you can either drag the selected items to a new position within the backlog, to

a different sprint, or select an option from the context () or action () menu of one of the items.

To learn more, see Bulk modify work items.

Try this next

Now that you've defined your sprint plan, your team's ready to begin work on the sprint tasks.

2. Add tasks

For more information, check this out:

https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/azure/devops/boards/sprints/assign-work-sprint?view=azure-devops