# SCRUM MASTER Certification Guide

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# Chapter 13

## Sprint Retrospective

When the work is done, and the Sprint Review is complete, it's time for the Scrum Team to circle the wagons and chat a bit about what went right, what went wrong, and what they want to change when the next Spring begins.

> The purpose of the Sprint Retrospective is to plan ways to increase quality and effectiveness.
>
> The Scrum Team inspects how the last Sprint concerning:
>
> - individuals
> - interactions
> - processes
> - tools
> - the Definition of Done.
>
> Inspected elements often vary with the domain of work.
>
> — 2020 Scrum Guide page 10

## Updating the Sprint Length and the DoD

One question that comes up regularly on the Scrum Master certification exam is when should the Definition of Done be discussed or updated. This paragraph makes it clear that the Sprint Retrospective is the correct time to do so.

It's not stated explicility, but the Sprint Retrospective is also the right time to discuss changing the Sprint length if that's desired. That way if a change is agreed upon, the change can be applied to the next Sprint that starts when the retrospective ends.

The Scrum Guide also indicates that discussions about how tools are working, how people are getting along, and how well processes are implemented within the Scrum Framework are best discussed during the Sprint Retrospective.

If the certification exam ever asks when developers should talk about how well their tools are working, or how well they have applied the Scrum framework, the correct answer will be the Sprint Retrospective, not the Daily Scrum.

This is a bit counter-intuitive because you would think developers would be encouraged to talk about their tools and their processes when they're all together in the Daily Scrum, but if it's a meta-discussion about how things are working, that type of discussion belongs in the retrospective.

If a given tool is causing an immediate problem and creating a blocker or impediment that puts the Sprint Goal at risk, then the discussion would be more apt to take place during the Daily Scrum.

### Test Yourself

The developers are not happy with how the Sprint framework has been implemented. When is the best time to discuss this?

- ▢ During the Sprint Review
- ▢ During the Daily Scrum
- ▢ During the Sprint Planning
- ▢ During the Sprint Retrospective

Option D is correct.

Discussions about how things are working, how various processes are being implemented, and even discussions about how to do Scrum better should happen during the Sprint Retrospective.

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## The 80/20 Principle

> Assumptions that led them astray are identified and their origins explored.
>
> The Scrum Team discusses: - what went well during the Sprint, - what problems it encountered, and - how those problems were or were not solved.
>
> The Scrum Team identifies the most helpful changes to improve its effectiveness. The most impactful improvements are addressed as soon as possible. They may even be added to the Sprint Backlog for the next Sprint.
>
> — 2020 Scrum Guide page 10

This is a weird section. It's the most wishy-washy section of the entire Scrum Guide.

Terms like 'most helpful', 'most impactful', and 'may even be' don't provide much clarity. It's strange because the Scrum Guide is usually very precise about the terms and phrases it uses.

I think the guide is just reflecting the 80/20 principle that asserts a few of your best ideas will end up having the largest impact, so don't feel the need to include every single suggestion made during the Sprint Retrospective into the next Sprint.

The idea is to act upon the best suggestions for improvement right away.

## Adding to the Next Sprint's Backlog?

> They may even be added to the Sprint Backlog for the next Sprint.
>
> — 2020 Scrum Guide page 10

That's an interesting line.

In Scrum, we're never really supposed to look beyond the current Sprint.

We don't plan for future Sprints before they start because we never really know how conditions are

going to change. One of the Scrum values is the focus.

Here is one of the rare instances in the Scrum Guide where something generated in one Sprint is added directly to the next Sprint.

It was stated earlier in this book that in the Sprint Planning meeting, the Sprint Backlog is empty, as all unfinished Sprint Backlog items are returned to the Product Backlog when the Sprint ends.

This is the only instance I can think of where a Sprint Backlog item can be carried over from the current Sprint to the next.

### Test Yourself

Focus is an important part of the Scrum framework.

Scrum Teams are expected to stay focused on the current Sprint. When during the Sprint are developers expected to be thinking about the next Spring?

- ▢ During Sprint planning before the Sprint begins
- ▢ During the Sprint Review as they collaborate on what to do next
- ▢ During the Sprint Retrospective as the Scrum Team identifies ways to improve its effectiveness
- ▢ Scrum Teams should never look beyond the timeline of the current Sprint

Options B and C are correct.

During the Sprint Review, the Scrum Team collaborates with stakeholders and discusses what to do next, and in the Sprint Retrospective, the Scrum Team may add strategies for improvement to the next Sprint's backlog.

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### Test Yourself

The Scrum Team has come up with two great ideas on how to improve their processes during the Sprint Retrospective. What should they do with these ideas?

- ▢ Add them to the current Sprint Backlog
- ▢ Add them to the current Product Backlog
- ▢ Add them to the next Product's Product Backlog
- ▢ Add them to the next Sprint's Backlog

According to the Scrum Guide, great ideas that come out in the Sprint Retrospective can be placed in the Sprint Backlog of the next Sprint.

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## The Conclusion of the Sprint

> The Sprint Retrospective concludes the Sprint. It is timeboxed to a maximum of three hours for a one-month Sprint. For shorter Sprints, the event is usually shorter.
>
> — 2020 Scrum Guide page 10

The Sprint Retrospective is the last timeboxed event mentioned in the Scrum Guide. If you're keeping track, the length of the events in Scrum are:

- Sprint - up to 1 month
- Planning - up to 8 hours
- Review - up to 4 hours
- Retrospective - up to 3 hours

While a Sprint is given a fixed time that cannot be extended while a Sprint is in progress, the Scrum Guide never actually refers to a Sprint as a 'timeboxed' event.

And yes, I do realize this is probably the fourth or fifth time I've mentioned the duration of each of the Scrum Events in this book. That's because you're likely going to get five or six questions on the topic, so it's not a topic to treat trivally.

## After the Sprint

Once the Sprint Retrospective ends, the Sprint is over and the next Sprint begins.

Every event happens within the scope of a Sprint in Scrum. When one Sprint ends, the next one starts immediately.

### Test Yourself

Which Scrum event marks the end of the Sprint?

- ▢ Sprint Planning
- ▢ Sprint Review
- ▢ Sprint Retrospective
- ▢ Sprint Deployment

The final event in the Sprint is the Sprint Retrospective.

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### Test Yourself

A new Sprint starts:

- ▢ Immediately after Sprint Planning

- ▢ Immediately after the Sprint Review
- ▢ Immediately after the Sprint Retrospective
- ▢ Immediately after deployment of the Increment

Option C is correct.

A new Sprint begins immediately after the Sprint Retrospective is over.

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## Test Yourself

What is the order, from longest to shortest?

- ▢ Sprint, Review, Retrospective, Planning
- ▢ Sprint, Planning, Review, Retrospective
- ▢ Sprint, Planning, Retrospective, Review
- ▢ Planning, Sprint, Review, Retrospective
- ▢ Planning, Review, Retrospective, Sprint

Option B is correct.

- Sprint - up to 1 month
- Planning - up to 8 hours
- Review - up to 4 hours
- Retrospective - up to 3 hours

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## Test Yourself

In what order do the Scrum events run?

- ▢ Sprint, Review, Retrospective, Planning
- ▢ Sprint, Planning, Review, Retrospective
- ▢ Sprint, Planning, Retrospective, Review
- ▢ Planning, Sprint, Review, Retrospective
- ▢ Planning, Review, Retrospective, Sprint

Option B is correct.

Everything happens within a Sprint.

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Once the Sprint starts, planning occurs. Then work is done and a review is performed. Then a retrospective allows the team to discuss ways to improve for the next Sprint, which starts when the Sprint Retrospective ends.