
What to Include in a Project Scope Statement

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The Scope Statement is an essential element of any project. Project managers use a Scope Statement to outline the results their project will produce and the terms and conditions under which they will perform their work. The people who requested the project and the project team should agree to all terms in the Scope Statement before actual project work begins.

Your Scope Statement should include the following information:

- **Justification:** How and why your project came to be, the business need(s) it addresses, the scope of work to be performed, and how it will affect and be affected by other related activities
- **Objectives:** The products, services, and/or results your project will produce (also referred to as *deliverables*)
- **Product scope description:** The features and functions of the products, services, and/or results your project will produce
- **Product acceptance criteria:** The process and criteria for accepting completed products, services, or results
- **Constraints:** Restrictions that limit what you can achieve, how and when you can achieve it, and how much achieving it can cost
- **Assumptions:** Statements about how you will address uncertain information as you conceive, plan, and perform your project

Think of your Scope Statement, when viewed together with the other components of your project plan, as a binding agreement in which

- You and your team commit to producing certain results.
- Your project's requesters commit that they'll consider your project 100 percent successful if you produce these results.
- You and your team identify all restrictions regarding your approach to the work and what you need to support your work.
- Your project's requesters agree that there are no restrictions other than the ones you've identified and that they'll provide you the support you declare you need.
- You and your team identify all assumptions you made when agreeing to the terms of your Scope Statement.

- Your project's requesters agree that, if any of these assumptions prove to be invalid, you may have to modify some or all of your project plans.

Of course, predicting the future is impossible. In fact, the farther into the future you try to look, the less certain your predictions can be. However, your Scope Statement represents your project commitments based on what you know today and expect to be true in the future. If and when situations change, you have to assess the effect of the changes on all aspects of your project and propose the necessary changes to your Scope Statement. Your project's requesters always have the option of either accepting your proposed changes (allowing the project to continue) or canceling your project.

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