

The test profession grows in new directions to support agile development.

Testing is a team effort

Agile scrum does not prescribe a dedicated test member in the team. Sometimes people say: 'agile can live without testers'. This is not true. As the whole team is responsible for a good quality product, testing is the responsibility of the whole team. It is the tester who 'leads' the rest of team in testing.

Testing from 'day one'

The short sprint duration puts new demands on the test dynamics. The available time for test preparation in agile is small and the product is under constant change. This requires efficient and lightweight test preparation with 'just enough' documentation so there is sufficient time left for test execution. Traditional testing by preparing test cases using testing techniques must be combined with exploratory testing to keep up with the dynamics of agile development.

Soft skills facilitate co-working

Testing by all members of the team and testing from 'day one' require that the tester works closely together with the rest of the team. This demands more social (soft) skills from the tester. She must be able to motivate and coach the other team members in testing and she needs to ensure that the rest of the team 'develops for testing'. This means that they deliver testable increments of code early and often.

Low level testing

Unit testing is (even) more important in Agile. The nature of Agile requires frequent code refactoring. A good set of low level unit tests enables the refactoring process because the unit tests will monitor the proper working of the refactored code. Testers support unit testing by advising clever test ideas to the software developer. This requires that the tester sets one foot into the world of software engineering.

Levels and check points for test profession

The levels for *Test profession* are typified as follows:

- **Forming:** *Proficient in testing*
- **Norming:** *Focus on soft and technical skills*
- **Performing:** *Profession includes more than just testing*

Please find the checkpoints below.

Forming

1. Testers have received specific test training and/or have sufficient experience in the field of structured testing
2. Testers can explain the rationale behind chosen techniques that have been applied
3. The organization supports professional growth of testers
4. Testers can explain their added value

Norming

1. Testers have received training(s) regarding soft skills
2. Technical activities are part of the testing job (e.g. working with drivers/stubs, code reviews)
3. Testers provide support to testing activities of other team members
4. Testers use exploratory testing in addition to using structured techniques

Performing

1. Testers are proficient in at least one programming language
2. Testers are proactively gathering relevant information to minimize waiting time
3. Testers strive to continuously improve their testing

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