



Why you should read ITIL ®

by Stephen Hewitt

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How do you prepare for the ITIL® Intermediate and advanced level exams? Do you attend the obligatory classes, memorize the terminology and acronyms, study the syllabus points and have a go at the practice exams. But how many of you actually open one of the OGC's ITIL books?

Even the best lecturer in the world cannot cover all the points in the book!



The Basics

As all ITIL practitioners know, ITIL® is an acronym for the IT Information Library, a set of five books covering the IT Service Management (ITSM) lifecycle – Service Strategy, Service Design, Service Transition, Service Operation or Continual Service Improvement.

The ITIL V3 qualification scheme makes available to practitioners more intermediate- and advanced-level courses than any of its past qualification schemes. For those on the managerial track, there are Lifecycle courses, and for hands-on practitioners there are Capability courses.

These courses pull their presentation and exercise material directly from the ITIL books, and they employ experienced instructors with at least two levels of certification – ITIL Service Manager Expert and the qualification of the course being taught.

However, there is one more important element in the mix – you, the student and your commitment to becoming familiar with and understanding the principles of the course.

Reading the ITIL Manual

Yes the ITIL books are expensive but they are necessary. We have all tried to get through a college course without purchasing the textbooks. However, most of us do that only once as we soon realize that passing the course requires completing all of the requirements, including attending the lectures, doing the homework, and reading the book/s.

It is the same with ITIL and similar to an academic textbook, an ITIL book is not an easy read and should not be read cover-to-cover like a novel, not unless you have trouble sleeping.

However, when used within the context of your advised course reading instructions then the ITIL books are rich in guidance and content. They contain the accumulated wisdom of organizations of all types and ages and within all industry sectors.



Your ITIL instructor and course material help explain and structure the guidance in the ITIL books according to the learning objectives of the different courses, but they cannot substitute for your actual familiarity with the material in the book.

Experience has shown that classes in which students have read the underlying OGC material quickly move to a higher level of discussion and learning accomplishments, not to mention passing the exam. Everyone benefits!

Gaining ITIL Literacy

Fortunately Advance ITSM provides guidance on how to read the guidance in the ITIL books. Our recommended reading list which we send out prior to any course states which ITIL books are appropriate for the course.

Lifecycle classes reference the actual Lifecycle books as shown below:

- Service Strategy Lifecycle – Service Strategy
- Service Design Lifecycle – Service Design
- Service Transition Lifecycle – Service Transition
- Service Operation Lifecycle – Service Operation
- Continual Service Improvement Lifecycle – Continual Service Improvement

Depending on which Lifecycle processes they rely on, Capability courses may reference more than one Lifecycle book as follows:

- Operational Support & Analysis (OSA) – Service Operation – Continual Service Improvement
- Release, Control & Validation (RCV) – Service Transition, Service Operation
- Planning, Protection & Optimization (PPO) – Service Design, Service Strategy
- Service Offerings & Agreements (SOA) – Service Design, Service Strategy

The Service Manager V2-V3 Bridge course and Managing Across the Lifecycle reference the complete library.

As the ITIL exams directly match the concepts contained in the syllabus, and the syllabus directly references the particular sections of the ITIL books, this is almost like knowing what the questions will be before you sit down to take the exam!

Because your days in class will be packed with lectures and exercises, it is always best to come to class prepared, having read through the relevant sections of the ITIL books at least once. Once you are in the class, you will want to reread each section in light of the day's lecture topics. You will have achieved two objectives – a greater understanding of each topic the lecturer presents, and a deeper understanding of the guidance presented in the ITIL book.

You can reduce this guidance down into a simple 5-step progression.

1. Prior to class – obtain appropriate ITIL books
2. Prior to class – read section as noted in class syllabus
3. During class – reread sections in concert with class agenda
4. Exam preparation – skim through sections that are noted on the syllabus
5. After class – reread sections as needed to guide your daily activities.

Overcoming the money Objections

The ITIL books represent worthwhile investments and additions to your professional library. However, in today's economy, individuals and organizations must carefully watch every pound they spend.



As far as individuals are concerned, it is a bit awkward and cumbersome, but you may consider sharing the book purchase with a friend or colleague and purchasing your own dedicated copy later.

Summary

Now that you are familiar with the ITIL book, you will find that after the class is over it will occupy a cherished spot, not on your bookshelf of other reference materials, but on your desk as you frequently refer to how its guidance can help you respond to the challenges you face each day.

Visit [our online bookstore](#) to purchase your copy of an ITIL book or license.

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