

Backlog Grooming

Grooming User Stories

Select members of the POT and Delivery team collectively are responsible for ensuring that user stories in the release are groomed sufficiently and in time to support planning and execution of development, which means that:

- Stories are prioritized. An important aspect of grooming is value driven prioritization, which includes MoSCoW, Kano, Value/Risk approaches. It's about sequencing work to create options, limiting WIP, working on the highest priority feature 1st, working on the highest priority stories within the highest priority feature 1st, reducing risk early, facilitating early feedback, and making trade-offs.
- Stories have acceptance criteria and generally comply with the 'INVEST' attributes of well-written stories
- Stories are estimated* in relative size (story points), using planning poker
- Stories have a UX/UI design, if applicable, and/ or comply with the feature's overall UX/ UI design
- Detailed data design should strive for minimal data sets stories to ensure connectivity to components followed by stories enhancing the build out of data to satisfy the acceptance criteria of the feature.
- Stories are small enough to be developed within an iteration; slice stories if not
- Dependencies identified and resolved to be ready for estimation and for an iteration
- The stories are ready to be translated into technical tasks.
- Stories should be estimated by the POT or some small enhancement of the POT at detailed planning and the stories mapped to iterations. This is generally known as the planning estimate

Neither the whole POT nor whole delivery team is required to participate in all grooming activities. The recommended list of attendee roles is provided in "Performers" section below.

Timing: Story grooming needs to occur prior to iteration planning for the respective stories, to ensure the stories are ready. There should be enough stories fully groomed for the next 2 iterations. The story grooming team should therefore have a regularly scheduled meeting during every iteration to groom stories. Mid-iteration is good timing, so for example the meeting could be called "Mid-iteration Backlog Grooming Meeting".

Performers:

- Select members from POT and Delivery Team: BA, Lead Developer, Lead System Tester

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Inputs for User Story Grooming:

- List of pre-groomed user stories coming from feature slicing process, enough for at least 2 iterations.

Process for User Story Grooming:

- Grooming should advance the readiness of the stories to the “Ready for Estimation” state. Then the stories may be estimated which advances their readiness state to “Ready for Sprint”.
- The Performers meet on a regular basis (at least once every iteration) to groom stories for the n+2 or n+3 iteration (depending on whether we are grooming 2 or 3 iteration ahead, tbd). Note, before first iteration, the pipeline needs to be primed with enough stories to supply 2-3 iteration. Thereafter, only 1 additional iteration of groom-ahead is required.
- The team grooms the stories by:
 - Ensure stories are prioritized by MoSCoW, Kano, and/or Value/Risk based approach.
 - Creating acceptance criteria incl. for any non-functional requirements
 - Create or refine design specifications as needed, e.g., UX/UI design (story board, wireframe)
 - Estimate the relative size of stories in story points (extend participation to include whole delivery team)
 - Split any stories which are too big to complete in one iteration
 - Document any assumptions with the story
 - Itemize any risks and dependencies as work items for planning and tracking

Outputs of Story Grooming:

- A supply of user stories which are “Ready for sprint” - size is estimated, have acceptance criteria, have design as needed, are small enough to complete in an iteration, impacted apps identified, external resources defined (security, etc.), - always enough for 2-3 iterations ahead.