CSPO vs PSPO I: which Product Owner certification is right for you?

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Short answer: **CSPO** from Scrum Alliance is course-based and suits new product owners who want guided training; **PSPO I** from Scrum.org is test-based, does not require a course and does not expire. If you already do the job and can self-study, PSPO I is the more direct way to prove it.

TL;DR The short version

- Scrum Alliance's CSPO is a course that needs renewal every two years with SEUs; Scrum.org's PSPO I is test-based and does not expire.
- Both cover the Product Owner accountability: owning the backlog, ordering it by value and working with stakeholders.
- Choose CSPO if you are new and your employer pays; choose PSPO I if you are experienced, self-funded or want no renewal.

Read online, listen to it, or change the text size: https://blogs.iictp.org/cspo-vs-pspo-product-owner-certification

How each one is earned

Scrum Alliance presents CSPO as a course that prepares you for agile product delivery, and its page says SEUs are required for renewal every two years. The page we read describes the course and does not mention a test. Scrum.org says PSPO I has an 80-question test with a 60-minute limit and an 85% pass mark, that a course is strongly recommended but not required, and that the certification is lifetime with no annual renewal fee.

	CSPO (SCRUM ALLIANCE)	PSPO I (SCRUM.ORG)
Course required?	Yes, it is a course-based certification	No, recommended but optional
Test	No test described on the page we read	80 questions, 60 minutes, 85% to pass
Expires?	Yes, renewal with SEUs every two years	No, lifetime certification

From each issuer's own page, read 20 November 2026.

What a product owner actually needs to know

Both credentials cover the Scrum accountability: owning the product backlog, ordering it by value and working with stakeholders. Day to day, a product owner in a software team also needs to write acceptance criteria, understand technical debt well enough to trade it against features, and use feature flags to release safely. Those are worth learning whichever credential you choose.

How to choose

- **New to the role, employer paying:** CSPO, for the guided course.
- **Experienced, self-funded or want no renewal:** PSPO I.
- **Moving between Scrum Master and Product Owner:** see Scrum Master vs Product Owner first.

> Facts about Scrum Alliance, Scrum.org and Scaled Agile were read on their own websites on 20 November 2026; facts about PMI were read on pmi.org on 20 October 2026. Issuers change exams and rules, so check their pages before you book.

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Sources and further reading

1. Scrum Alliance. Certified Scrum Product Owner (CSPO). scrumalliance.org/get-certified/product-owner-track/certified-scrum-product-owner. Read 20 November 2026.
2. Scrum.org. Professional Scrum Product Owner I certification. scrum.org/assessments/professional-scrum-product-owner-i-certification. Read 20 November 2026.

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