
Cutting Red Tape: Simplifying Approvals and Administrative Procedures Course

9 – 13 November 2026
Madrid





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Programme Summary

Cutting red tape and simplifying administrative procedures is a five-day training course for directors and senior officials at strategic level, culminating in a procedure simplification roadmap for one priority service or internal process. Many organisations accumulate approvals, forms, signatures and handoffs that once had a reason and now only add delay. The approach measures the burden each procedure imposes, removes or merges steps that add no value, and redesigns approval chains around risk. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme in cutting red tape and procedure simplification.

The Business Case

Every unnecessary approval, duplicate form or repeated data request consumes staff time and frustrates customers, citizens and suppliers. Spread across many small steps, the cost rarely appears in any budget line. Leaders who measure administrative burden and redesign procedures around risk release capacity and shorten service times.

- End-to-End Cycle Time: Falls when waiting, rework and sequential sign-offs are removed from the critical path.
- Administrative Burden on Staff and Service Users: Reduces as forms, data requests and visits are eliminated or combined.
- Decision Accountability: Improves when approval levels are matched to risk and each signature has a defined purpose.

Principles and Evidence Base

- OECD Standard Cost Model: Quantifies the time and cost that each information obligation imposes, used in Sessions 1 and 2 to rank procedures for simplification.
- Lean Waste Identification: Classifies waiting, over-processing, duplication and unnecessary movement in Session 2.
- ECRS Principle Eliminate, Combine, Rearrange, Simplify: Provides the redesign sequence applied to each procedure step in Session 3.
- SIPOC and Value Stream Mapping: Define procedure boundaries and expose delay between steps in Sessions 1 and 2.



Intended Participants

- Leaders who own service delivery or internal procedures and answer for their speed and quality.
- Senior officials responsible for administrative reform, government excellence or regulatory simplification.
- Heads of excellence and transformation offices who sponsor improvement portfolios.
- Executives who set delegation of authority and approval limits.

The programme serves government and public services, banking and insurance, healthcare and utilities.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to diagnose where approvals, forms and handoffs add delay without adding control.
2. Participants will be able to quantify the administrative burden of a procedure using the Standard Cost Model.
3. Participants will be able to redesign a procedure by eliminating, combining, rearranging and simplifying its steps.
4. Participants will be able to construct a risk-based approval and delegation matrix.
5. Participants will be able to prioritise simplification opportunities by burden, risk and ease of change.
6. Participants will be able to justify a governance routine that stops new red tape from returning.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Why Red Tape Accumulates

Where does administrative burden come from, and who carries it?

- Sources of Procedural Complexity and Control Creep
- SIPOC for Setting Procedure Boundaries
- Procedure Inventory and Ownership Register
- Voice of the Service User and Staff Pain Points
- Standard Cost Model Principles and Information Obligations

Day 2: Diagnosing Administrative Burden

How is the waste inside a procedure made visible and measured?

- As-Is Swimlane Mapping of Approvals and Handoffs
- Value Stream Mapping of Waiting and Touch Time
- Lean Waste Classification for Office Procedures
- Burden Measurement: Time, Cost and Frequency
- Value-Added and Non-Value-Added Step Analysis



Day 3: Simplifying Procedures and Approval Chains

How are steps, signatures and forms removed without weakening control?

- ECRS Redesign of Procedure Steps
- Risk-Based Approval Levels and Delegation Matrix
- Form and Data Request Rationalisation
- Once-Only Data Principle and Shared Records
- Parallel Processing and Single Point of Contact Design

Day 4: Digital Enablers and Sustaining Simpler Procedures

How do simpler procedures stay simple once rolled out?

- Digitising and Automating Routine Approvals
- Service Standards and Cycle-Time Indicators
- Simplification Review Gate for New Procedures
- Stakeholder Resistance and Change Communication
- Procedure Documentation in Plain Language

Day 5: Applying Procedure Simplification

How are the tools combined into a roadmap ready for sign-off?

- Applying Burden Measurement to a Participant Procedure
- Building the To-Be Map and Approval Matrix
- Impact, Effort and Risk Prioritisation Grid
- Peer Challenge of Proposed Simplifications
- Procedure Simplification Roadmap Presentation

Methodology

The programme is built around structured exercises on real procedures that participants bring, such as permit applications, purchase approvals or customer claims. Each tool is applied in small groups, and redesign proposals are challenged by peers acting as risk owners, auditors and service users.

- Suggested activity: Measuring the burden of a licence application with the Standard Cost Model.
- Suggested activity: Removing signatures from a purchase approval chain while preserving segregation of duties.
- Suggested activity: Redesigning a patient referral procedure around a single point of contact.



Capstone Output

Each participant completes a procedure simplification roadmap containing the burden baseline, current and future maps, the revised approval matrix, the forms and steps to be removed, target cycle times and a review routine, ready to present to the executive committee or reform board.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is this cutting red tape programme suitable for senior leaders without a process improvement background?

Yes. It is designed for directors and senior officials who own procedures or reform agendas. It assumes management experience but no prior training in Lean or process mapping.

Which models underpin cutting red tape and procedure simplification in this programme?

It rests on the OECD Standard Cost Model for measuring administrative burden, Lean waste identification, the ECRS redesign principle, SIPOC and value stream mapping.

How is the procedure simplification roadmap used at work?

It becomes a ready proposal for one procedure, with a measured baseline, redesigned steps and approval levels, and the indicators to track after go-live.

How does procedure simplification differ from business process modelling?

It concentrates on removing approvals, forms and handoffs and measuring burden reduction, while business process modelling courses focus on notation, analysis and documenting processes in detail.