
Protocol Office Leadership: Ceremonies, Official Visits and VIP Events Course

20 – 24 September 2027
Casablanca





Protocol Office Leadership: Ceremonies, Official Visits and VIP Events Course

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Programme Summary

Protocol office leadership for ceremonies, official visits and VIP events is a one-week training course for heads of protocol and senior protocol officers at managerial level, culminating in a protocol operations manual and visit file for their own office. Protocol units handle state guests and signing ceremonies under public scrutiny, often relying on memory rather than written procedures. The approach links precedence rules and international practice to visit planning, event control and team routines. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme in protocol office leadership.

The Business Case

An incorrect precedence list, a misplaced flag or a late reception party is visible at once and can strain relations with a visiting partner. Offices that work from approved procedures, rehearsed run-sheets and clear security and media interfaces deliver occasions consistently, even when programmes change at short notice.

- Official Event Reliability: Rises as every visit and ceremony runs from a standard run-sheet with named owners.
- Protocol Incident Rate: Falls as precedence, flag and seating decisions are checked against written rules before each occasion.
- Response Time to Short-Notice Visits: Shortens as templates, contact lists and contingency options are ready in advance.

Principles and Evidence Base

- Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations: Sets diplomatic ranks and precedence among heads of mission, applied to precedence lists in Session 1.
- UNOV Protocol Manual: Illustrates how an international organisation documents visit, ceremony and flag procedures, used as a reference model for the office manual in Sessions 1 and 5.
- ISO 20121:2024 Event Sustainability Management Systems: Frames how official events are planned, controlled and reviewed as a managed process, applied to ceremony planning in Session 3.

Intended Participants

- Managers who lead protocol and ceremonial departments and approve precedence lists and visit programmes.
- Senior protocol officers who plan and accompany state, ministerial and corporate VIP visits.
- Event leaders who run national occasions, inaugurations, conferences and signing ceremonies.
- Officers who liaise with security, transport and media teams on official occasions.



The programme serves ministries and government agencies, royal and executive courts, universities and international organisations, and major corporations hosting official guests.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to construct an order of precedence list for official occasions and justify each placement.
2. Participants will be able to apply flag, invitation and seating rules to ceremonies and official dinners.
3. Participants will be able to design an official visit programme covering arrival, motorcade, meetings and departure.
4. Participants will be able to plan a signing ceremony or inauguration with a timed run-sheet and rehearsal.
5. Participants will be able to coordinate protocol arrangements with security, media and venue teams, including contingencies.
6. Participants will be able to prioritise the procedures, templates and roles a protocol office needs to operate consistently.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Protocol Office Mandate and Order of Precedence

What rules and responsibilities govern a protocol office?

- Protocol Office Mandate, Structure and Roles
- Diplomatic Ranks under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations
- Building and Maintaining Precedence Lists
- Precedence Conflicts and Their Resolution
- Protocol Procedures Benchmark against the UNOV Protocol Manual

Day 2: Flags, Invitations and Official Seating

How are flags, invitations and seating arranged without error?

- Flag Placement, Order and Display Rules
- Invitation Lists, Cards and Reply Management
- Head Table and Banquet Seating Plans
- Place Cards, Name Badges and Guest Flow
- Speeches, Toasts and Order of Speakers

Day 3: Ceremonies, Signing Events and Inaugurations

How is an official ceremony planned and controlled minute by minute?



- Ceremony Concept, Venue Layout and Stage Plan
- Signing Ceremony Table, Documents and Sequence
- Run-Sheets, Cue Calls and Rehearsals
- Event Planning and Review with ISO 20121:2024
- Gifts and Commemorative Items for Official Guests

Day 4: Official Visits, VIP Movements and Security Liaison

How is a VIP visit moved safely from arrival to departure?

- Official Visit Programme Design
- Airport Reception and Ceremonial Guard Arrangements
- Motorcade Order, Vehicles and Timings
- Security, Media and Venue Coordination Protocols
- Contingency Plans for Delays, Changes and Incidents

Day 5: Applying Protocol Office Leadership to a Live Visit

How are precedence, ceremonies and visit control combined into one office system?

- Visit File for a Forthcoming Official Guest
- Precedence and Seating Check for the Visit
- Tabletop Rehearsal of a Short-Notice Programme Change
- Post-Event Review and Lessons Log
- Protocol Operations Manual and Visit File Presentation

Methodology

The programme relies on structured exercises supported by tabletop simulation. Participants draft precedence lists, seating plans and run-sheets from government, academic and corporate briefs, then test them against injected changes such as a late arrival or a security alert.

- Suggested activity: Resolving a precedence conflict between ministers, ambassadors and corporate chairs.
- Suggested activity: Laying out flags and a signing table for a bilateral agreement.
- Suggested activity: Rewriting a visit programme after a two-hour delay.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a protocol operations manual outline and a visit file for a real upcoming guest. The pack holds office roles, the precedence list, seating rules, a ceremony run-sheet, motorcade plan and contingency options, ready for approval.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is protocol office leadership training suitable for experienced protocol officers?

Yes. It suits officers and managers who already arrange visits and ceremonies, and assumes working protocol experience.

Which conventions and standards underpin protocol office leadership in this programme?

It draws on the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations for ranks and precedence, the UNOV Protocol Manual as a model of documented practice, and ISO 20121:2024 for managing official events.

How is the protocol office operations manual and visit file used at work?

You return with a draft manual and visit file that your office can test on the next official guest and update after each occasion.

How does protocol office leadership differ from a corporate event management programme?

It centres on precedence, flags, state and ministerial visits and security liaison, rather than budgets, sponsorship and marketing of commercial conferences.