
Legal Writing Course for Opinions, Memoranda and Official Correspondence

20 – 24 December 2026
Zoom





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Ref: 151_15611 Date: 20 – 24 December 2026 Location: Zoom Fees: 1700 GBP

Programme Summary

Legal writing for opinions, memoranda and official correspondence is a one-week training course for in-house counsel and senior legal advisers at advanced level, culminating in a rewritten legal opinion with a team editing checklist. Executives act on legal advice they can read quickly, yet many opinions bury the answer under background and qualification. The approach moves from legal reasoning structure to plain language, precision and persuasive submissions, then to editing and review. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme in legal writing for advisory and official documents.

The Business Case

Unclear legal documents cost organisations time and expose them to legal and reputational risk. Boards defer decisions when advice is hard to follow, counterparties exploit loose wording in letters and notices, and tribunals discount submissions that do not reach the point. Legal teams that write to a consistent structure and plain language standard produce advice that is used, defended and reused.

- Decision Turnaround: Shortens as boards and executives find the answer and the recommended action on the first page.
- Dispute Exposure: Reduces as notices, letters and submissions are precise about facts, rights and deadlines.
- Review Effort: Falls as a shared editing checklist replaces repeated rounds of senior correction.

Principles and Evidence Base

- ISO 24495-1:2023 Plain Language: Its governing principles that readers can find, understand and use relevant information frame Sessions 2 and 5.
- IRAC Method Issue, Rule, Application, Conclusion: Structures the analysis of every memorandum and opinion written in Session 1.
- CREAC Variant: Its conclusion-first ordering shapes persuasive submissions in Session 4.

Intended Participants

- Lawyers who give written opinions and advice to executives and boards.
- Legal managers who review and sign off the writing of junior colleagues.
- Advisers who issue official letters, notices and responses to regulators or counterparties.
- Counsel who prepare written submissions for courts, arbitral tribunals or committees.

The programme serves legal departments in banking, energy, construction and government organisations.



Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to construct a legal memorandum using IRAC that separates issue, rule, application and conclusion.
2. Participants will be able to evaluate an existing opinion against plain language principles and justify each revision.
3. Participants will be able to diagnose ambiguity, inconsistent terms and unsupported assertions in legal text.
4. Participants will be able to design a board paper that states the legal risk and the decision required on its first page.
5. Participants will be able to prioritise arguments and authorities in a persuasive submission.
6. Participants will be able to apply a team editing checklist to bring documents to a consistent standard.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Legal Writing and Legal Reasoning Structure

How is legal analysis organised so the reader reaches the answer quickly?

- Objective Memoranda Versus Persuasive Submissions
- IRAC Method for Issue, Rule, Application and Conclusion
- Framing the Question Presented and the Short Answer
- Distinguishing Facts, Assumptions and Qualifications
- Baseline Review of a Participant's Own Opinion

Day 2: Plain Language and Precision

Where does legal text lose clarity, and how is it restored?

- ISO 24495-1:2023 Governing Principles for Plain Language
- Sentence Length, Active Voice and Nominalisations
- Ambiguity of Scope, Modifiers and Lists
- Defined Terms and Consistent Terminology
- Modal Verbs for Obligation, Permission and Discretion

Day 3: Opinions, Board Papers and Official Correspondence

How is legal advice written for decision-makers and external parties?

- Legal Opinion Structure, Scope and Reliance Limits
- Board Papers with Risk Rating and Decision Required
- Official Letters to Regulators and Counterparties
- Notices of Breach, Termination and Reservation of Rights
- Tone and Register for Sensitive Communications



Day 4: Persuasive Submissions and Authorities

How is a written argument built so a tribunal or committee accepts it?

- CREAC Ordering for Persuasive Argument
- Selecting and Ranking Arguments by Strength
- Citing Legislation, Precedent and Contract Clauses
- Anticipating and Answering Counter-Arguments
- Chronologies, Exhibits and Statement of Facts

Day 5: Applying Legal Writing Standards to Live Documents

Is each document ready to send and consistent with team standards?

- Rewriting the Day 1 Opinion Using IRAC and Plain Language
- Precision Check Using the Day 2 Ambiguity Tests
- Peer Review of a Board Paper or Official Letter
- Team Editing Checklist and Style Sheet Design
- Rewritten Opinion and Editing Checklist Completion

Methodology

The programme relies on structured writing exercises and peer review. Participants bring documents from their own practice, rewrite them during the week and exchange drafts in pairs for line-by-line critique. Examples are drawn from banking, energy, construction and public sector files.

- Suggested activity: Reducing a ten-page opinion to a two-page advice note without losing qualifications.
- Suggested activity: Identifying ambiguities in a termination notice and redrafting it.
- Suggested activity: Writing the opening of a submission to an arbitral tribunal.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a rewritten legal opinion drawn from their own work, set out in IRAC order with a short answer on the first page, together with an editing checklist and style sheet that their legal team can adopt for future opinions, memoranda and letters.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is legal writing training suitable for experienced in-house counsel?

Yes. It is set at advanced level for lawyers and legal advisers who already write opinions and letters, and it assumes legal training. It concentrates on structure, clarity and review.



Which standard does legal writing for opinions and memoranda rest on?

It rests on ISO 24495-1:2023 for plain language, the IRAC method for structuring analysis and its CREAC variant for persuasive submissions.

How is the rewritten opinion from legal writing training used at work?

You can use it as a model and adopt the checklist so future opinions and letters follow one standard.

How does legal writing for opinions and memoranda differ from contract drafting courses?

It covers advisory and official documents such as opinions, board papers, notices and submissions, rather than the drafting and negotiation of commercial agreements.