
Legislative Drafting and Policy-to-Law Training Course for Government Officials

22 – 26 February 2027
New York





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Ref: 168_16205 Date: 22 – 26 February 2027 Location: New York Fees: 7900 GBP

Programme Summary

Legislative drafting and the policy-to-law process is a one-week training course for government legal advisers, drafters and policy officials at advanced level, culminating in a draft bill or regulation with its drafting brief and impact summary. Many laws fail in practice because policy intent was never fixed before drafting began, or because the text is unclear, inconsistent or impossible to implement. The approach follows a measure from drafting instructions through structure, wording and consultation to enactment and review. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme in legislative drafting.

The Business Case

Poorly drafted legislation generates litigation, amending laws and uneven enforcement, and it erodes public trust in the institutions that issue it. Governments that link policy, drafting and impact assessment produce texts that regulators can apply, courts can interpret consistently and citizens and businesses can follow.

- Legislative Quality: Improves as drafts are tested for clarity, consistency and enforceability before submission.
- Amendment and Litigation Rate: Falls as gaps, ambiguities and conflicts with existing law are resolved at drafting stage.
- Implementation Speed: Rises as implementing regulations, transitional provisions and responsibilities are planned alongside the primary text.

Principles and Evidence Base

- OECD Recommendation on Regulatory Policy and Governance: Its expectations for impact assessment, stakeholder engagement and ex post review frame Sessions 4 and 5.
- OECD Legislative Drafting Guidance for Better Policy: Its model structure of a law guides the bill architecture in Session 2.
- ISO 24495-1:2023 Plain Language: Its governing principles shape the drafting style work in Session 3.

Intended Participants

- Legal advisers who turn ministerial or board policy decisions into draft laws and regulations.
- Drafters who prepare bills, implementing regulations and amending instruments.
- Policy officials who write drafting instructions and steer measures through approval stages.
- Parliamentary and council staff who scrutinise draft legislation and propose amendments.

The programme serves ministries, regulatory authorities, legislative councils and public enterprises.



Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to construct drafting instructions that fix policy intent, scope and enforcement choices.
2. Participants will be able to justify whether a measure belongs in primary or secondary legislation.
3. Participants will be able to design the structure of a bill from preliminary provisions to final provisions.
4. Participants will be able to diagnose ambiguity, inconsistent definitions and faulty cross-references in legislative text.
5. Participants will be able to evaluate a draft through consultation feedback and regulatory impact assessment.
6. Participants will be able to prioritise commencement, implementation and post-legislative review arrangements.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Legislative Drafting and the Policy-to-Law Cycle

What must be settled before a single provision is written?

- Stages of the Legislative Cycle from Policy Decision to Enactment
- Primary Legislation Versus Implementing Regulations
- Drafting Instructions and the Policy Brief
- Legal Powers, Vires and Compatibility with Existing Law
- Choosing Between Legislation and Non-Legislative Options

Day 2: Structuring a Bill or Regulation

How is a legislative text organised so that it can be navigated and applied?

- OECD Model Structure for a Law
- Preliminary Provisions, Purpose and Scope Clauses
- Substantive, Administrative and Enforcement Provisions
- Offences, Penalties and Appeal Mechanisms
- Transitional, Savings and Final Provisions

Day 3: Drafting Technique and Plain Language

How is legislative wording made precise, consistent and readable?

- ISO 24495-1:2023 Principles Applied to Legislative Text
- Definitions, Defined Terms and Consistent Usage
- Cross-References, Amendments and Repeals
- Obligations, Powers, Prohibitions and Discretion
- Avoiding Ambiguity in Lists, Conditions and Exceptions



Day 4: Consultation, Impact Assessment and Approval

How is a draft tested before it is adopted?

- Stakeholder Consultation Design and Response Analysis
- Regulatory Impact Assessment and Cost-Benefit Evidence
- Review by Legal and Legislative Committees
- Parliamentary or Council Stages and Amendment Handling
- Explanatory Memoranda and Briefing Notes

Day 5: Applying Legislative Drafting from Enactment to Review

Is the measure ready to commence, implement and evaluate?

- Commencement Provisions and Implementation Planning
- Redrafting a Day 2 Bill Structure with Day 3 Techniques
- Day 4 Impact Findings Reflected in Final Text
- Post-Legislative Review and Ex Post Evaluation Design
- Draft Bill, Drafting Brief and Impact Summary Completion

Methodology

The programme relies on structured drafting exercises with peer review. Participants work from realistic policy decisions in fields such as health, energy, digital services and commerce, write instructions, draft provisions and exchange texts for critique against drafting and plain language checklists. Short briefings introduce each technique before it is applied.

- Suggested activity: Converting a cabinet policy note into drafting instructions.
- Suggested activity: Redrafting an ambiguous licensing provision.
- Suggested activity: Preparing an impact summary for a new regulatory requirement.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a draft bill or regulation on a subject from their own institution, with the drafting brief, a structure map, key definitions, an impact summary and a commencement and review plan, ready for internal legal review.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is legislative drafting training suitable for policy officials without a law degree?

Yes, if they prepare or steer legislation. It is set at advanced level and assumes experience of government decision-making; legal concepts are explained as they arise.



Which frameworks does legislative drafting and policy-to-law training rest on?

It rests on the OECD Recommendation on Regulatory Policy and Governance, OECD guidance on legislative drafting for better policy and ISO 24495-1:2023 for plain language.

How is the draft bill from legislative drafting training used at work?

You can use it as a working draft for internal legal review and as a model for drafting briefs and impact summaries in your institution.

How does legislative drafting training differ from public policy design courses?

It concentrates on turning settled policy into enforceable legal text and steering it through adoption, rather than on choosing between policy options.