
Pension Governance Frameworks for Trustees and Supervisors Training Course

1 – 12 March 2027
Rome





Pension Governance Frameworks for Trustees and Supervisors Training Course

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Programme Summary

Pension governance frameworks for trustees and supervisors are the subject of this two-week training course for senior trustees, board members and regulators, ending in a governance and supervision review of one pension scheme. Pension schemes hold long-term promises to members, and those promises depend on clear duties, sound funding and independent oversight. The programme moves from principles, through diagnosis of a scheme's governance, to design of controls and reporting, then to application on one scheme. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme on pension governance frameworks.

The Business Case

When pension governance is weak, boards approve funding plans they cannot test, investment risks go unreported and members learn of problems only when benefits are threatened. Trustees and supervisors who can question evidence, assign accountability and require timely reporting protect the scheme, defend their decisions and detect trouble while there is still room to act.

- Funding Resilience: Improves as deficits and contribution plans are challenged against stated assumptions.
- Risk Exposure: Falls as investment and operational risks are reported against agreed limits.
- Member Confidence: Rises as communications and complaints handling become consistent and transparent.

Principles and Evidence Base

- OECD Guidelines on Pension Fund Governance: They structure the review of governing bodies, accountability, suitability and reporting in Sessions 1 to 3.
- OECD Core Principles of Private Pension Regulation: They frame the assessment of regulatory design, funding and member protection in Sessions 4 to 6.
- IOPS Principles of Private Pension Supervision: They guide the design of risk-based pension supervision in Sessions 7 and 8.
- IORP II Directive: It informs the treatment of key functions, own-risk assessment and member information in Session 9.



Intended Participants

- Trustees and board members who carry fiduciary responsibility for scheme decisions.
- Pension supervisors who assess governance, funding and conduct in regulated schemes.
- Heads of pensions who prepare papers, reports and recommendations for governing bodies.
- Legal, risk and internal audit leaders who advise on scheme controls.
- Policy advisers who shape rules for private and public pension arrangements.

The programme serves employer schemes in banking, energy and manufacturing, public sector funds, social security institutions and supervisory authorities.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to evaluate the structure, composition and accountability of a pension governing body.
2. Participants will be able to construct a statement of pension fund trustee duties and a conflict management routine.
3. Participants will be able to diagnose weaknesses in pension funding and solvency, using stated assumptions.
4. Participants will be able to prioritise investment and operational risks for board oversight.
5. Participants will be able to design a risk-based supervisory programme with proportionate actions.
6. Participants will be able to justify decisions on member protection in pension schemes to a board or supervisor.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Pension Governance Frameworks and Purpose

Why do pension schemes need their own governance model?

- Scheme Types and Risk Allocation Map
- Governing Body Roles Matrix
- OECD Governance Guidelines Overview
- Stakeholder Interest Register
- Governance Maturity Self-Assessment

Day 2: Trustee Duties and Accountability

What may a governing body decide, and who answers for the outcome?

- Fiduciary Duty Statement
- Delegation and Reserved Powers Schedule
- Conflict of Interest Register
- Trustee Suitability and Skills Matrix
- Board Minutes and Decision Log



Day 3: Internal Control and Key Functions

Which functions give a governing body independent assurance?

- Three Lines Model Adaptation
- Risk Management Function Charter
- Internal Audit Plan for Schemes
- Actuarial Function Reporting Line
- Outsourcing and Adviser Oversight Checklist

Day 4: Regulatory Design and Core Principles

How do rules and licensing shape scheme behaviour?

- Core Principles Gap Analysis
- Licensing and Registration Criteria
- Proportionality Rules for Small Schemes
- Mandatory and Voluntary Coverage Design
- Legal Framework Comparison Grid

Day 5: Funding and Solvency Diagnosis

Is the scheme funded well enough to meet its promises?

- Liability Valuation Assumptions Review
- Funding Level and Deficit Analysis
- Contribution Adequacy Test
- Sponsor Covenant Assessment
- Recovery Plan Challenge Template

Day 6: Investment Oversight and Risk Limits

How does a governing body direct and monitor investment without managing it?

- Investment Policy Statement
- Asset Allocation Risk Budget
- Manager Selection and Monitoring Scorecard
- Liquidity and Stress Test Review
- Responsible Investment Policy Wording

Day 7: Risk-Based Supervision Design

How does a supervisor decide where to look first?



- IOPS Supervision Principles Mapping
- Risk Rating Model
- Off-Site Data Return Design
- On-Site Inspection Plan
- Enforcement Ladder

Day 8: Member Protection and Disclosure

What must members be told, and how are their rights defended?

- Member Information Standards
- Complaints and Redress Procedure
- Benefit Payment Accuracy Controls
- Guarantee and Insolvency Protection Options
- Vulnerable Member Communication Plan

Day 9: Reporting, Own-Risk Assessment and Reform

How do governing bodies and supervisors evidence good practice?

- Own-Risk Assessment Template
- IORP II Key Function Comparison
- Annual Governance Report Outline
- Cross-Border Scheme Supervision Issues
- Reform Proposal Impact Table

Day 10: Applying Pension Governance Frameworks to One Scheme

Is the governance and supervision review ready for a board or authority?

- Applying the Session 2 Duty Statement to the Chosen Scheme
- Testing the Session 5 Funding Findings Against Stress Cases
- Matching the Session 7 Risk Ratings to Supervisory Actions
- Setting Review Dates and Reporting Measures
- Completing the Scheme Governance Review

Methodology

The programme uses a case-analysis method built on anonymised scheme documents, trustee papers, funding reports and supervisory returns. Participants work in teams as trustees, advisers and supervisors, challenge each other's assumptions, and record which evidence would change a decision. Each session ends with a short written position that feeds the final review.

- Suggested activity: Reviewing a board pack and listing the questions a trustee should ask.
- Suggested activity: Rating a scheme under a risk-based supervision model and defending the rating.



- Suggested activity: Presenting a recovery plan to a panel acting as a supervisor.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a governance and supervision review of one pension scheme. It holds a governance assessment, a duty and conflict statement, a funding and risk diagnosis, a member protection plan and a set of reporting measures. The review is used to brief a board, prepare a supervisory discussion and track improvements after decisions are taken.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are pension governance frameworks suitable for trustees without legal or actuarial training?

Yes. Pension governance frameworks are taught in plain language for trustees, board members and supervisors who take decisions, and the programme assumes no actuarial or legal qualification.

Which standards do pension governance frameworks rest on in this training?

Pension governance frameworks here rest on the OECD Guidelines on Pension Fund Governance, the OECD Core Principles of Private Pension Regulation, the IOPS Principles of Private Pension Supervision and the IORP II Directive.

How is the review from pension governance frameworks used at work?

You use the governance and supervision review to brief a board, prepare a supervisory discussion and track whether agreed improvements to a pension scheme are delivered.

How do pension governance frameworks differ from a pension investment programme?

Pension governance frameworks centre on duties, controls, supervision and member protection, while a pension investment programme centres on building and managing portfolios.