
Board Strategy Oversight Training Course: Challenge, Risk and Performance Reviews

21 – 25 December 2026
Amsterdam





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Ref: 421_24793 **Date:** 21 – 25 December 2026 **Location:** Amsterdam **Fees:** 4800 GBP

Programme Summary

Board strategy oversight, covering challenge, risk and performance reviews, is the subject of this one-week training course for directors, board secretaries and senior executives at strategic level, ending in a board strategy oversight plan for one organisation. Many boards receive strategy papers late and approve them without testing assumptions or tracking results. The programme moves from principles, through diagnosis of current board practice, to design of review routines, then to application on one board. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this board strategy oversight programme for boards that want a disciplined role in strategy.

The Business Case

A board that neither authors strategy nor ignores it needs a clear way to review it. Without one, discussion drifts into operational detail, assumptions go unchallenged and risks linked to the strategy surface late. Boards with defined routines for review, challenge and monitoring use meeting time on the questions that matter and can show how oversight was exercised.

- Strategic Risk Exposure: Falls as strategy assumptions and linked risks are tested before approval.
- Meeting Effectiveness: Improves as agendas and papers focus directors on direction rather than detail.
- Execution Follow-Through: Rises as performance indicators and escalation triggers are agreed in advance.

Principles and Evidence Base

- G20/OECD Principles of Corporate Governance: They frame the board responsibilities for reviewing and guiding strategy, risk policies and performance objectives in Sessions 1 and 3.
- Board oversight and challenge of strategy rather than authorship: It shapes the role clarity and questioning techniques in Sessions 1 and 4.
- Joint oversight of strategy and risk: It structures the linkage matrix and review routines in Sessions 2 and 3.

Intended Participants

- Directors who review and approve strategy on behalf of owners or stakeholders.
- Board chairs and committee chairs who set agendas and lead discussion.
- Board secretaries who prepare papers and record decisions.
- Senior executives who present strategy and results to the board.



The programme serves listed companies, state-owned entities, family businesses and public bodies, and suits mixed groups.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to evaluate the division of strategy roles between the board and management.
2. Participants will be able to diagnose weaknesses in how a board reviews strategy papers and assumptions.
3. Participants will be able to construct a strategy review calendar and a bank of challenge questions.
4. Participants will be able to prioritise strategy risks for board attention using a linkage matrix.
5. Participants will be able to justify performance indicators and escalation triggers for strategy monitoring.
6. Participants will be able to design a board strategy oversight plan suited to one organisation.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Board Strategy Oversight Principles

What is the board's role in strategy, and where does oversight end and management begin?

- Board and Management Strategy Roles Chart
- G20/OECD Board Responsibilities Map
- Strategy Oversight Cycle Model
- Reserved Matters and Decision Rights Table
- Strategy Oversight Self-Assessment Sheet

Day 2: Diagnosing How the Board Reviews Strategy Today

How well does the board currently review, challenge and monitor strategy?

- Board Paper Quality Review
- Meeting Agenda Time Allocation Audit
- Director Question Pattern Analysis
- Strategy Assumption Testing Grid
- Information Gap Register

Day 3: Designing Challenge, Risk Linkage and Performance Reviews

Which routines let directors challenge strategy and track results consistently?

- Strategy Review Calendar Design
- Challenge Question Bank
- Strategy Risk Linkage Matrix
- Performance Dashboard for Directors
- Escalation and Course Correction Protocol



Day 4: Running the Strategy Conversation Between Board and Executives

How do directors and executives hold a productive strategy discussion?

- Strategy Session Preparation Brief
- Role-Played Board Strategy Review
- Dissent and Constructive Challenge Techniques
- Minute Recording of Strategy Decisions
- Follow-Up Action Tracker

Day 5: Applying Board Strategy Oversight to One Organisation

Is the oversight plan ready for one board to adopt?

- Applying the Session 1 Role Chart to the Chosen Board
- Testing the Session 2 Paper Review on Live Board Papers
- Checking the Session 3 Review Calendar Against Its Agenda
- Rehearsing the Session 4 Strategy Conversation
- Completing the Board Strategy Oversight Plan

Methodology

The programme uses a structured exercise method built on anonymised board papers, agendas and minutes. Participants review documents in small groups, map strategy risks, draft challenge questions and role-play a board strategy discussion, with feedback from peers and the facilitator.

- Suggested activity: Reviewing a sample strategy paper and listing the assumptions a director would test.
- Suggested activity: Redesigning a meeting agenda to give strategy the time it needs.
- Suggested activity: Role-playing a challenge session between a chair, directors and a chief executive.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a board strategy oversight plan for one organisation. It holds a role chart, a strategy review calendar, a challenge question bank, a strategy risk linkage matrix, performance indicators and an escalation protocol. The plan is used to brief the chair, agree changes to agendas and papers and set expectations with executives.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is board strategy oversight suitable for executives who are not directors?

Yes. Board strategy oversight starts from the division of roles between board and management and assumes regular contact with a board, whether as a member, secretary or presenter.



Which references does board strategy oversight rest on?

Board strategy oversight rests on the G20/OECD Principles of Corporate Governance, the view of the board as overseer and challenger of strategy, and joint oversight of strategy and risk.

How is the plan from board strategy oversight used at work?

You use the board strategy oversight plan to brief the chair, agree changes to agendas and papers and set clear expectations with executives.

How does board strategy oversight differ from a programme on corporate strategy formulation?

Board strategy oversight centres on review, challenge and monitoring by directors, while a strategy formulation programme centres on how executives build the strategy itself.