
Public Purchasing Compliance Training Course: Controls, Records and Audit Readiness

27 September – 1 October 2027
Rome





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Programme Summary

Public purchasing compliance is the subject of this one-week training course for heads of procurement, compliance officers and internal auditors, ending in a compliance control and evidence file for one purchasing process. Purchases that followed the rules can still fail an audit when approvals, exceptions and records cannot be shown. The programme moves from the rules and risk points, through control design and file standards, to testing, audit response and correction. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this public purchasing compliance programme for mixed cohorts of public and private buyers.

The Business Case

Audit findings on purchasing rarely arise from a single breach. They arise from missing approvals, unexplained exceptions, split orders and files that cannot show who decided what and why. Organisations that define the rules in testable form, hold records to a fixed standard and answer findings with agreed actions spend less time on repeated queries and give their governing bodies a clearer view of purchasing risk.

- Audit Finding Rate: Falls as controls and file standards are tested before auditors arrive.
- Exception Exposure: Narrows as waivers, urgent buys and direct awards are justified and logged.
- Response Time: Shortens as evidence is held in a standard file and findings are tracked to closure.

Principles and Evidence Base

- OECD Recommendation on Public Procurement: Its principles of integrity, transparency, accountability and risk management frame the compliance map built in Sessions 1 and 2.
- OECD integrity checklist: It guides the review of conflict, access and award safeguards used in Sessions 2 and 4.
- ISO 37001 on anti-bribery management systems: It informs the due diligence, gifts and reporting controls designed in Session 3.

Intended Participants

- Heads of procurement who answer for rules being followed across buying teams.
- Compliance officers who translate purchasing rules into checks and monitoring.
- Internal auditors who plan and report reviews of purchasing processes.
- Finance and legal managers who approve, pay for or advise on purchases.

Typical settings include government entities, utilities, healthcare providers and large industrial groups.



Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to construct a map of purchasing rules, approval limits and risk points for one process.
2. Participants will be able to diagnose where split orders, waivers and conflicts of interest can arise.
3. Participants will be able to design preventive and detective controls matched to each risk point.
4. Participants will be able to evaluate a purchasing file against a defined evidence standard.
5. Participants will be able to prioritise audit findings and justify corrective actions.
6. Participants will be able to justify a compliance control and evidence file to senior management.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Public Purchasing Compliance Rules and Risk Points

Which rules apply, and where can they be breached?

- Purchasing Rules Register
- Approval Limit Matrix
- Process Walkthrough Map
- Risk Point Heat Map
- Split Order Detection Test

Day 2: Diagnosing Exceptions and Integrity Risks

How are exceptions and conflicts identified before they become findings?

- Waiver and Urgent Purchase Log
- Direct Award Justification Review
- Conflict of Interest Declaration Check
- Supplier Access Safeguard Review
- Integrity Red Flag Checklist

Day 3: Designing Controls and File Standards

What controls and records make compliance visible?

- Preventive and Detective Control Matrix
- Segregation of Duties Grid
- Gifts and Hospitality Rule
- Purchasing File Index
- Decision Record Template



Day 4: Testing Compliance and Preparing for Audit

How is compliance tested so that weaknesses are found first?

- Sample Selection Method
- File Review Scoring Sheet
- Control Test Workpaper
- Audit Request Tracker
- Finding Response Template

Day 5: Responding to Findings and Completing the Evidence File

Does the control and evidence file hold up when tested on one process?

- Applying the Session 1 Rules Register to a Live Process
- Testing the Session 3 File Standard on Sample Files
- Rating Findings by Risk and Root Cause
- Drafting a Corrective Action Plan
- Completing the Compliance Control and Evidence File

Methodology

The programme uses a structured exercise method built on anonymised purchasing files, audit requests, exception logs and short written cases from government, utility and healthcare buyers. Participants work in small groups on one purchasing process, review each other's files as auditors would, and receive facilitator feedback on each work product.

- Suggested activity: Scoring a set of purchasing files against an evidence standard.
- Suggested activity: Spotting split orders in an anonymised transaction list.
- Suggested activity: Drafting a management response to a draft audit finding.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a compliance control and evidence file for one purchasing process. It holds a rules register, a risk and control matrix, a file standard, a test plan with scored samples and a corrective action plan. The file is used at work to brief senior management, prepare for audit requests and guide how purchasing teams record their decisions.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is public purchasing compliance suitable for managers new to audit work?

Yes. Public purchasing compliance is taught from the rules upward and assumes you work with purchasing processes or review them, not earlier experience in audit.



Which standards does public purchasing compliance rest on in this programme?

Public purchasing compliance here rests on the OECD Recommendation on Public Procurement, the OECD integrity checklist and ISO 37001.

How is the public purchasing compliance control and evidence file used at work?

You use it to brief senior management, prepare for audit requests and guide how your teams record purchasing decisions.

How does public purchasing compliance differ from a programme on supplier management?

Public purchasing compliance centres on rules, controls and evidence for how purchases are made, while supplier management centres on performance, relationships and delivery after award.