
Project Performance Control Training Course: Baselines, Variance and Corrective Action

2 – 6 November 2026
New York





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Programme Summary

Project performance control is the subject of this one-week training course for project directors, PMO leaders and project controls managers, ending in a performance control pack for one live project. Projects drift from plan quietly, and reports that arrive late or in mixed formats hide the drift until recovery is costly. The programme moves from the purpose and structure of control, through diagnosis of baselines and variances, to the design of reporting, forecasting and corrective action, and then applies each to one project. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme in project performance control for leaders from mixed organisations.

The Business Case

When a baseline is unclear, progress is measured in different ways and variances are explained after the fact, directors learn of problems from the client or the sponsor, not from their own reports. Organisations that fix the baseline, measure progress by a consistent rule and agree who acts on which variance find drift earlier and recover with smaller changes to scope, cost and schedule.

- Forecast Accuracy: Improves as progress is measured against one integrated baseline.
- Time to Corrective Action: Shortens as variances carry named owners and agreed thresholds.
- Report Reliability: Strengthens as data, formats and review cycles are standardised across projects.

Principles and Evidence Base

- ISO 21508 on earned value management: It supplies the measures of planned value, earned value and actual cost applied in Sessions 2 and 4.
- Integrated baseline review, described in an annex of ISO 21508: It guides how scope, schedule and budget are tested together in Sessions 1 and 3.
- ISO 21502 on project management guidance: It frames the monitoring, control and change practices that the performance control pack supports in Sessions 3 and 5.

Intended Participants

- Project directors who answer to sponsors for cost, schedule and scope results.
- PMO leaders who set reporting standards and review cycles across several projects.
- Project controls managers who build baselines, measure progress and prepare forecasts.
- Programme managers who consolidate project performance for executive review.

Typical sectors include construction, energy, telecommunications and public infrastructure.



Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to distinguish the purposes of planning, monitoring and control within a project.
2. Participants will be able to diagnose weaknesses in a baseline and in the measurement of progress.
3. Participants will be able to construct an earned value analysis and interpret cost and schedule variances.
4. Participants will be able to design a reporting routine with thresholds, owners and review cycles.
5. Participants will be able to evaluate forecasts and prioritise corrective actions by their effect on outcomes.
6. Participants will be able to justify a performance control pack to sponsors.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Project Performance Control: Purpose and Baselines

What must be fixed before performance can be controlled?

- Control Cycle Model
- Scope and Work Breakdown Check
- Integrated Baseline Review Checklist
- Control Account Plan
- Control Maturity Self-Assessment

Day 2: Measuring Progress and Diagnosing Variance

How far has the project moved from its baseline, and why?

- Earned Value Measures Sheet
- Progress Measurement Rules Table
- Cost and Schedule Variance Analysis
- Performance Index Chart
- Variance Root Cause Tree

Day 3: Designing Reporting and Change Control

How do reports and change decisions keep the baseline reliable?

- Reporting Hierarchy Map
- Variance Threshold Matrix
- Dashboard Layout Brief
- Change Request Register
- Baseline Re-Approval Protocol



Day 4: Forecasting and Corrective Action

What will the project cost and when will it finish, and what should be done?

- Estimate at Completion Methods
- Schedule Forecast Comparison
- Recovery Option Appraisal
- Contingency Drawdown Log
- Corrective Action Tracker

Day 5: Applying and Completing the Performance Control Pack

Does the control design hold when tested on one live project?

- Applying the Control Maturity Self-Assessment to the Project
- Recalculating Variances with the Rules Table
- Stress-Testing the Forecast
- Rehearsing the Sponsor Review
- Completing the Performance Control Pack

Methodology

The programme uses a data workshop method built on anonymised baselines, progress records, cost reports and short written cases from construction, energy and telecommunications projects. Participants work in small groups on one project, defend variance explanations and forecasts to peers acting as sponsors, and receive facilitator feedback on each work product.

- Suggested activity: Recalculating earned value from a set of conflicting progress reports.
- Suggested activity: Setting variance thresholds and owners for a portfolio of projects.
- Suggested activity: Presenting a forecast and recovery option to a sceptical sponsor.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a performance control pack for one live project. It holds a baseline check, an earned value analysis, a reporting and threshold design, a forecast and a corrective action plan. The pack is used at work to brief sponsors, agree reporting standards with project teams and guide how drift is detected and answered on later projects.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is project performance control suitable for managers who have not worked in a controls team?

Yes. Project performance control is taught from first principles and assumes responsibility for project results or reporting, not earlier experience in a controls team.

Which standards does project performance control rest on in this programme?

Project performance control here rests on ISO 21508 on earned value management, including its integrated baseline review, and on ISO 21502 on project management guidance.

How is the performance control pack used in project performance control at work?

You use the pack to brief sponsors, agree reporting standards with project teams and guide how drift is detected and answered on later projects.

How does project performance control differ from a programme on project planning and scheduling?

Project performance control centres on measuring, forecasting and correcting against a baseline, while a planning and scheduling programme centres on building the plan and the schedule itself.