
Leading Through VUCA Conditions Training Course: Strategic Agility, Decisions and Adaptive Teams

17 – 21 May 2027
Cape town





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Programme Summary

Leading through VUCA conditions is the subject of this one-week training course for executives and senior leaders steering strategy, portfolios and change under volatility and uncertainty, ending in a VUCA leadership plan for one organisation or portfolio. Volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity make fixed plans fragile and slow decisions costly. The programme moves from reading the environment, through decisions under uncertainty and strategic agility, to adaptive teams, then applies each tool to one portfolio. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme on leading through VUCA conditions for mixed-organisation cohorts.

The Business Case

Executives are asked to commit budgets and people while markets, technology and regulation shift beneath them. Leaders who separate volatility from true uncertainty, set clear triggers for revisiting decisions and give teams defined room to act respond sooner, waste less on abandoned plans and keep portfolios aligned with changing priorities. Without that discipline, plans are defended long after the conditions that justified them have changed.

- Decision Speed: Improves as triggers and decision rights are agreed before pressure arrives.
- Portfolio Alignment: Strengthens as priorities and funding are reviewed on a regular cycle.
- Change Absorption: Rises as teams work within guardrails and learn from short feedback loops.

Principles and Evidence Base

- ISO 22316 on organizational resilience: It frames the attribute review of the organisation in Session 1 and the adaptive team work in Session 4.
- ISO 31000 risk management guidelines: It structures the risk appetite statement and the decision tripwires in Sessions 2 and 3.
- The volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity framing: It guides how conditions are sorted and matched to leadership responses in Sessions 1 and 2.

Intended Participants

- Executives who set strategy and approve major commitments under changing conditions.
- Portfolio and transformation leaders who reprioritise funding and capacity across initiatives.
- Heads of function who lead teams through reorganisation, new technology or market shifts.
- Programme directors who balance delivery commitments with changing sponsor demands.

Typical sectors include financial services, energy, public services and technology.



Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to diagnose which conditions an organisation faces and sort them by type.
2. Participants will be able to construct a scenario set with decision triggers for a live decision.
3. Participants will be able to prioritise portfolio changes against capacity and funding.
4. Participants will be able to evaluate team guardrails and decision rights for adaptive working.
5. Participants will be able to justify a VUCA leadership plan to a board or sponsor.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Leading Through VUCA Conditions: Reading the Environment

What kind of turbulence is the organisation facing, and what does it demand of its leaders?

- VUCA Condition Diagnostic Map
- Volatility and Uncertainty Signal Register
- Complexity and Ambiguity Sorting Grid
- Organisational Resilience Attribute Review under ISO 22316
- Leadership Style Self-Assessment

Day 2: Decisions Under Uncertainty

How are decisions made, tested and revisited when information is incomplete?

- Scenario Planning Canvas
- Decision Trigger and Tripwire List
- Risk Appetite Statement Draft under ISO 31000
- Assumption Challenge Log
- Reversible and Irreversible Choice Matrix

Day 3: Strategic Agility and Portfolio Steering

How do priorities and funding move quickly without losing control?

- Portfolio Reprioritisation Board
- Rolling Quarterly Planning Cycle
- Funding Release Gate Table
- Dependency and Capacity Map
- Stop, Start and Continue Review

Day 4: Adaptive Teams and Change Leadership

How do leaders build teams that absorb change and keep delivering?



- Team Autonomy and Guardrail Charter
- Decision Rights Map
- Change Impact Heat Map
- Feedback and Learning Loop Routine
- Leadership Communication Cadence Plan

Day 5: Applying the Tools and Completing the Leadership Plan

Do the tools hold together when applied to one organisation or portfolio?

- Applying the Session 1 Diagnostic Map to the Organisation
- Testing the Session 2 Scenario Canvas on a Live Decision
- Running the Session 3 Reprioritisation Board on the Current Portfolio
- Checking the Session 4 Guardrail Charter Against Team Reality
- Completing the VUCA Leadership Plan

Methodology

The programme uses a case analysis method built on anonymised strategy papers, portfolio lists, scenario sets and short written cases from financial services, energy and public services. Participants work in small groups on one organisation or portfolio, defend their decisions to peers acting as boards, and receive facilitator feedback on each work product. The emphasis is on executive judgement rather than tooling.

- Suggested activity: Sorting a list of current pressures into volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity.
- Suggested activity: Building three scenarios and agreeing the signals that would trigger a change of course.
- Suggested activity: Reprioritising a portfolio after a sudden loss of funding.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a VUCA leadership plan for one organisation or portfolio. It holds a condition diagnosis, a scenario and trigger set, a reprioritisation approach, a guardrail charter and a communication cadence. The plan is used at work to brief boards, steer portfolio reviews and set the operating rhythm for leadership teams.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is leading through VUCA conditions suitable for leaders with no agile background?

Yes. Leading through VUCA conditions assumes executive responsibility for strategy, portfolios or change, not experience of agile methods, and builds from first principles.



Which guidance does leading through VUCA conditions rest on in this programme?

Leading through VUCA conditions here rests on ISO 22316 on organizational resilience, ISO 31000 on risk management and the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity framing.

How is the plan for leading through VUCA conditions used at work?

You use the plan to brief boards, steer portfolio reviews and set the operating rhythm for your leadership team.

How does leading through VUCA conditions differ from a programme on agile project delivery?

It centres on executive decisions, portfolio steering and adaptive teams, while agile project delivery centres on sprints, backlogs and team-level ceremonies.