
Project Review and Gate Assurance Course: Alignment, Evidence and Corrective Action

7 – 11 December 2026
Cape town





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Ref: 545_29020 **Date:** 7 – 11 December 2026 **Location:** Cape town **Fees:** 4800 GBP

Programme Summary

Project review and gate assurance is the subject of this one-week training course for senior managers, PMO heads and project assurance leads, ending in a project review pack for one live project. Reviews often turn into status meetings that confirm what the team already believes, so drift from the strategic plan goes unseen until funds are spent. The programme builds a repeatable review method, from alignment checks and health checks to gate decisions and corrective action. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme on project review and gate assurance to mixed-organisation cohorts.

The Business Case

Projects rarely fail in one moment. They drift, and the drift is missed when reviews rely on self-reported status and lessons are written down but never used. Leaders who review against the strategic plan, test evidence independently and follow findings to closure can stop weak projects early and protect the ones that matter.

- Strategic Fit of the Portfolio: Improves as every project is checked against the aims it was approved to serve.
- Decision Quality at Gates: Improves as go, hold and stop decisions rest on tested evidence and recorded conditions.
- Recovery Speed: Improves as findings carry owners, deadlines and a visible closure route.

Principles and Evidence Base

- Phase gate review process: The programme uses its pre-set criteria and decision points to structure the gate work in Session 3.
- Project assurance: The programme applies independent assurance activities, as carried out by project offices, to the evidence work in Session 2.
- Project health check: Scoring delivery areas against stated criteria gives the delivery confidence rating built in Session 2.
- Lessons-learned review: Capturing causes and carrying them into later projects frames the follow-up work in Session 4.



Intended Participants

- Senior managers who sponsor projects and judge whether they still serve the strategic plan.
- PMO heads who set review standards and schedule reviews across a portfolio.
- Project assurance leads who test evidence and report independently to sponsors.
- Gate panel members who decide whether projects proceed.
- Executives who receive findings and agree recovery action.

Typical functions include construction and infrastructure, energy, public administration and technology delivery teams.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to evaluate a project's alignment with the strategic plan and its approved benefits.
2. Participants will be able to construct a health check that scores delivery areas against stated criteria.
3. Participants will be able to diagnose weak evidence behind status reports and confidence claims.
4. Participants will be able to design gate criteria and a decision record that support go, hold and stop choices.
5. Participants will be able to prioritise review findings by severity and root cause.
6. Participants will be able to justify a corrective action plan and lessons-learned review to sponsors.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Project Review Purpose and Strategic Alignment

What should a project review prove, and against which strategic aims?

- Review Purpose Statement
- Strategic Alignment Check
- Benefits Linkage Map
- Review Scope Charter
- Reviewer Independence Test

Day 2: Health Checks and Evidence Gathering

How is the real state of a project established without relying on status reports?

- Project Health Check Scorecard
- Evidence Request List
- Document Sampling Plan
- Interview Guide
- Delivery Confidence Rating



Day 3: Gate Reviews and Decision Quality

How does a gate review reach a clear go, hold or stop decision?

- Phase Gate Criteria Sheet
- Gate Panel Terms of Reference
- Go-Hold-Stop Decision Record
- Conditional Approval Log
- Challenge Question Bank

Day 4: Findings, Lessons Learned and Corrective Action

How do review findings become action that is carried through to closure?

- Findings Severity Scale
- Root Cause Trace
- Corrective Action Plan
- Lessons Learned Review Template
- Action Tracking Board

Day 5: Applying the Tools to One Project Review Pack

Do the alignment, evidence, gate and action tools form one working review pack?

- Applying the Session 1 Strategic Alignment Check
- Using the Session 2 Project Health Check Scorecard
- Testing the Session 3 Go-Hold-Stop Decision Record
- Checking the Session 4 Corrective Action Plan
- Completing the Project Review Pack

Methodology

The programme uses a case analysis method built on anonymised health check reports, gate papers, status reports and recovery plans from infrastructure, energy and public programmes. Participants work in peer groups on a project of their own and receive written facilitator feedback on every exercise set.

- Suggested activity: Comparing a cheerful status report with the evidence behind it.
- Suggested activity: Chairing a mock gate panel that must choose between go, hold and stop.
- Suggested activity: Tracing a repeated lesson back to the action that was never closed.



Capstone Output

Each participant completes a project review pack for one live project. It holds a strategic alignment check, a health check scorecard, a go-hold-stop decision record, a corrective action plan and a lessons learned review. The pack is used at work to brief the sponsor, support the next gate decision and track recovery actions to closure.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is project review and gate assurance suitable for managers who have not led a review before?

Yes. Project review and gate assurance assumes some experience of sponsoring or delivering projects and builds alignment, evidence, gate and action skills step by step.

Which models does project review and gate assurance rest on?

Project review and gate assurance here rests on the phase gate review process, project assurance, project health checks and lessons-learned reviews, applied to a project of your own.

How is the review pack from project review and gate assurance used at work?

You use the project review pack to brief your sponsor, support the next gate decision, agree conditions and track corrective actions until each one is closed.

How does project review and gate assurance differ from project risk management training?

Project review and gate assurance tests whether a project is on track and still worth funding, at set points. Project risk management training centres on identifying and treating risks continuously.