Oil and Gas Law Training Course for Counsel and Commercial Managers: Licences and Disputes

28 December 2026 – 1 January 2027
Cape town

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Programme Summary

Oil and gas law is the subject of this one-week training course for in-house counsel, commercial managers and government officers, ending in a legal framework brief for one licence or asset. Rights, licence terms, operating duties and dispute routes differ between jurisdictions, yet decisions are often taken from one familiar model. The programme builds a comparative method for reading a legal regime, allocating risk between parties and choosing a dispute route, applied to a case the participant selects. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme on oil and gas law to mixed-organisation cohorts.

The Business Case

Petroleum projects run for decades and depend on legal terms agreed at the outset. Where rights, duties and liabilities are read loosely, partners and governments meet disputes over cost recovery, access, decommissioning and change in law long after investment is committed. Teams that map the legal framework before negotiation can allocate risk deliberately, and brief decision makers with clarity before commitments are made.

- Contract Risk Exposure: Falls as duties and liabilities are mapped to a named party before signature.
- Dispute Cost: Falls as dispute clauses are matched to the likely type of disagreement.
- Negotiation Time: Falls as teams agree a shared reading of the legal regime early.

Principles and Evidence Base

- Comparative Legal Method: It structures the reading of different regimes across Sessions 1 and 2.
- Licence and Contract Regime Models: The concession, production sharing and service models frame the allocation work in Session 2.
- Risk Allocation Principle: It guides how duties and liabilities are placed on the party best able to manage them in Session 3.
- International Arbitration Practice: It frames the dispute route choices and enforcement checks in Session 4.

Intended Participants

- In-house counsel who advise on licences, contracts and regulatory duties.
- Commercial managers who negotiate and administer petroleum agreements.
- Government officers who administer licensing and oversee operator duties.
- Project and asset managers who must understand the legal limits on their decisions.

Typical sectors include upstream operators, pipeline and midstream companies, state energy bodies and law firms.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to construct a map of legal sources and rights over petroleum in a chosen regime.
2. Participants will be able to evaluate how concession, production sharing and service regimes allocate rights and risk.
3. Participants will be able to diagnose operating, access and decommissioning duties that follow from a licence or contract.
4. Participants will be able to assess liability allocation between operators, partners and the state.
5. Participants will be able to justify a dispute route and enforcement approach for a given contract.
6. Participants will be able to prioritise legal risks in a brief for decision makers.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Legal Foundations of Oil and Gas Law

Who owns petroleum, and who may explore for and produce it?

- Resource Ownership Map
- Legal Source Hierarchy Chart
- Comparative Regime Grid
- Host Government Role Matrix
- Licensing Pathway Diagram

Day 2: Licences and Contract Regimes

How do concession, production sharing and service regimes allocate rights and risk?

- Concession Terms Comparison
- Production Sharing Contract Clause Map
- Service Contract Structure Review
- Fiscal Term Allocation Table
- Local Content Obligation Register

Day 3: Operations, Regulation and Liability

What duties follow once operations begin, and who bears liability?

- Joint Operating Agreement Duty Map
- Regulatory Duty Register
- Pipeline Access Rule Review
- Decommissioning Obligation Schedule
- Environmental Liability Allocation Chart

Day 4: Disputes and Enforcement

Which route resolves a dispute, and what makes the result enforceable?

- Dispute Clause Audit
- International Arbitration Route Map
- Expert Determination Option Sheet
- Change-in-Law Clause Review
- Award Enforcement Checklist

Day 5: Applying the Tools to One Licence or Asset

Do the source, regime, duty and dispute tools support one legal framework brief?

- Applying the Session 1 Legal Source Hierarchy Chart
- Using the Session 2 Production Sharing Contract Clause Map
- Testing the Session 3 Decommissioning Obligation Schedule
- Checking the Session 4 Dispute Clause Audit
- Completing the Legal Framework Brief

Methodology

The programme uses a case analysis method built on anonymised licence terms, contract extracts, regulatory duty lists and dispute summaries from upstream, pipeline and state-led settings. Participants work in mixed legal, commercial and government teams on a shared case, compare readings of the same clause and receive written facilitator feedback on every exercise set.

- Suggested activity: Comparing the same risk across a concession and a production sharing contract.
- Suggested activity: Listing the decommissioning duties that follow from a sample licence.
- Suggested activity: Choosing a dispute route for three differing contract disagreements.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a legal framework brief for one licence or asset. It holds a source and rights map, a regime comparison, a duty and liability register, a dispute route recommendation and a ranked list of legal risks. The brief is used at work to advise a negotiating team, prepare a board paper and plan the next contract review.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is oil and gas law suitable for managers without a legal background?

Yes. Oil and gas law is taught through clause extracts and case summaries in plain language, so commercial and technical managers need no legal training, only familiarity with petroleum projects.

Which methods does oil and gas law draw on?

Oil and gas law draws on comparative legal method, the concession, production sharing and service contract models, risk allocation principles and international arbitration practice.

How is the brief from oil and gas law used at work?

You use the legal framework brief to advise a negotiating team, prepare a board paper and plan the next contract or licence review.

How does oil and gas law differ from a petroleum contract negotiation programme?

Oil and gas law covers rights, regimes, duties, liability and disputes across the whole framework, while a negotiation programme concentrates on bargaining skills within one deal.