Electronic Contracts and E-Signatures Training Course: Validity, Evidence and Control

5 – 9 April 2027
Vienna

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Programme Summary

Electronic contracts and e-signatures are the subject of this one-week training course for contracts, procurement and legal leaders at managerial level, ending in a control file for one electronic signing process. Many organisations moved agreements onto signing platforms faster than they set rules for validity, approval and records. The programme moves from recognition rules to evidence, platform control and cross-border dealings. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme on electronic contracts and e-signatures to mixed-organisation cohorts.

The Business Case

An agreement signed on screen is only as strong as the proof behind it. Where signature levels, approval routes and record keeping are left to individual teams, disputes turn on missing logs, unclear authority or a foreign counterparty that does not accept the signature. Clear rules set before signing cost little beside a contested contract, and they let sponsors approve faster digital routes with confidence.

- Contract Cycle Time: Falls as approved signing routes replace paper circulation and email chasing.
- Dispute Exposure: Reduces as signature level, authority and audit trail are matched to contract risk.
- Record Reliability: Improves as stored contracts carry evidence that can be produced on request.

Principles and Evidence Base

- UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Commerce: Supplies the principle of functional equivalence between paper and electronic records, applied in Sessions 1 and 2.
- UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Signatures: Frames the reliability test for a signature method, used when choosing signature levels in Sessions 2 and 3.
- eIDAS Regulation: Distinguishes simple, advanced and qualified electronic signatures, used as a reference scale for risk-based selection in Sessions 3 and 4.

Intended Participants

- Contracts managers who decide how agreements are formed, signed and stored.
- Procurement heads who run supplier signing through electronic platforms.
- Legal and commercial directors who judge whether an electronic signature will hold in a dispute.
- Governance and records leads who must produce contract evidence on request.

Typical settings include public procurement, construction, telecommunications, banking and logistics.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to evaluate whether an electronic contract and its signature are valid for a given transaction.
2. Participants will be able to prioritise signature levels according to contract value and risk.
3. Participants will be able to construct approval workflows and authority rules for a signing platform.
4. Participants will be able to diagnose gaps in the evidence held for a signed electronic contract.
5. Participants will be able to justify an approach to cross-border recognition with a foreign counterparty.
6. Participants will be able to assemble a control file that a sponsor can approve.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Electronic Contracts and the Rules of Recognition

When does an agreement made on screen carry the same weight as paper?

- Functional Equivalence Test
- Offer and Acceptance Online Map
- Click-Wrap and Exchange-of-Messages Review
- Excluded Document Checklist
- Contract Portfolio Triage Sheet

Day 2: E-Signature Validity and Signature Levels

Which kind of signature should be demanded for which contract?

- Signature Reliability Test
- Simple, Advanced and Qualified Signature Scale
- Signatory Identity and Authority Check
- Signature Level Selection Matrix
- Counterparty Acceptance Log

Day 3: Platform and Workflow Control

How is a signing platform set up so that approvals and authority hold?

- Approval Route Design Template
- Delegation of Authority Register
- Platform Access and Role Review
- Template and Version Control Rules
- Supplier Onboarding Signing Protocol

Day 4: Evidence, Storage and Enforcement

What proof will exist if a signed electronic contract is challenged?

- Audit Trail Reading Guide
- Evidence Gap Diagnostic
- Retention and Retrieval Schedule
- Dispute Evidence Bundle Outline
- Cross-Border Recognition Grid

Day 5: Control File for One Signing Process

Do the earlier tools form one file that a sponsor can approve?

- Applying the Session 1 Portfolio Triage Sheet
- Testing the Session 2 Signature Level Selection Matrix
- Checking the Session 3 Approval Route Design Template
- Rehearsing the Session 4 Evidence Gap Diagnostic
- Completing the Electronic Signing Control File and Sponsor Note

Methodology

The programme uses case analysis built on a prepared file for one supplier framework and one cross-border sale, each with draft agreements, platform settings, audit trail extracts and a counterparty query. Participants work in small groups, test signing routes against the file and defend their choices to peers.

- Suggested activity: Matching signature levels to a set of contracts of differing value.
- Suggested activity: Reading a supplied audit trail and listing what it fails to prove.
- Suggested activity: Answering a foreign counterparty who rejects an electronic signature.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a control file for one electronic signing process in their own organisation. It holds a signature level matrix, an approval route and authority register, an evidence and retention schedule, a cross-border recognition note and a sponsor summary. The file is used at work to brief the sponsor and to brief the platform owner who sets up the process.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is a course on electronic contracts and e-signatures suitable for leaders without legal training?

Yes. Electronic contracts and e-signatures are taught through prepared cases, matrices and templates. The programme assumes experience in contracts, procurement or commercial work, but no earlier legal qualification.

Which models do electronic contracts and e-signatures rest on?

Electronic contracts and e-signatures rest on the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Commerce, the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Signatures and the signature scale of the eIDAS Regulation.

How is the control file from electronic contracts and e-signatures training used at work?

You use the control file to brief your sponsor, agree approval routes with the platform owner and set the evidence and retention rules for signed agreements.

How do electronic contracts and e-signatures differ from a contract management course?

Electronic contracts and e-signatures concentrate on validity, platform control and proof of signed agreements, while a contract management course concentrates on performance, variation and renewal after signing.