Post-Trade Operations Course: Matching, Settlement, Safekeeping and Reconciliation

4 – 8 January 2027
London - Premier Inn Victorya

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Programme Summary

Post-trade operations is the subject of this one-week training course for operations, custody, risk and finance managers in banks, brokers and asset managers, ending in a settlement and custody control plan for one securities business line. Trades pass through matching, settlement, safekeeping and reconciliation, and a weak step in that chain turns into fails, claims and idle cash. The programme moves from the trade chain to diagnosis of breaks, then to control design and a scaled application. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme on post-trade operations to mixed-organisation cohorts.

The Business Case

Securities firms carry risk between the moment a trade is agreed and the moment ownership and cash change hands. Unmatched trades, late instructions and unreconciled positions create financing cost, client disputes and loss exposure, and shorter settlement cycles leave less time to repair errors.

- Settlement Fail Rate: Falls as matching and instruction timing are managed against agreed cut-offs.
- Operational Loss and Claims: Reduce as breaks are found early and owners are named.
- Funding and Penalty Cost: Declines as fails are aged, escalated and resolved faster.

Principles and Evidence Base

- CPMI-IOSCO Principles for Financial Market Infrastructures: Frame the risks of clearing, settlement and depository services, used in Sessions 1 and 2 to judge settlement risk.
- ISO 20022 Securities Messaging: Supplies the common data language for instructions, confirmations and statements, applied to break analysis in Sessions 2 and 3.
- Settlement Discipline Practice: Covers matching, cash penalties and buy-in style remedies for fails, applied to the escalation design in Session 3.

Intended Participants

- Operations leaders who own trade matching, settlement and the daily break queue.
- Custody and asset servicing managers who hold client assets and process corporate actions.
- Risk and control managers who set limits, review incidents and test the operating model.
- Finance managers who fund settlements, book fees and review reconciliations.

Typical settings include retail and investment banks, brokerages, asset managers and pension or sovereign investors.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to trace a securities trade from capture to settlement and name the control point at each step.
2. Participants will be able to diagnose the causes of settlement fails and reconciliation breaks from supplied data.
3. Participants will be able to construct an escalation and ageing rule for fails.
4. Participants will be able to evaluate custody arrangements for segregation, record accuracy and corporate action handling.
5. Participants will be able to prioritise operating changes needed for a shorter settlement window.
6. Participants will be able to justify a control plan to a head of operations or risk committee.

Programme Structure

Day 1: The Post-Trade Chain and Its Risks

Where does a trade carry risk between agreement and final transfer?

- Trade Lifecycle Process Map
- Matching and Affirmation Checkpoints
- Clearing and Central Counterparty Roles
- Settlement Risk Taxonomy
- Financial Market Infrastructure Principles Review

Day 2: Settlement Fails and Reconciliation Breaks

Why do trades fail to settle and positions fail to agree?

- Fail Root Cause Tree
- Instruction Timing and Cut-Off Analysis
- Three-Way Position Reconciliation
- Break Ageing Report
- ISO 20022 Message Field Review

Day 3: Controls, Escalation and Settlement Discipline

Which controls and escalation rules keep fails small and short?

- Fail Escalation Ladder
- Penalty and Remedy Cost Model
- Counterparty Chasing Protocol
- Key Control Register
- Incident Log

Day 4: Custody, Corporate Actions and Shorter Settlement

How are client assets kept safe, and what changes when settlement gets faster?

- Safekeeping and Segregation Checklist
- Sub-Custodian Oversight Scorecard
- Corporate Action Event Calendar
- Settlement Window Stress Test
- Funding and Liquidity Impact Grid

Day 5: Control Plan for One Securities Business Line

Do the earlier tools form one plan that a head of operations can approve?

- Applying the Session 1 Process Map
- Testing the Session 2 Root Cause Tree
- Checking the Session 3 Escalation Ladder
- Rehearsing the Session 4 Stress Test
- Completing the Settlement and Custody Control Plan

Methodology

The programme uses a data workshop built on a prepared file for one bank and one asset manager, each with trade records, instruction logs, custody statements and an open break list. Participants work in small groups and defend their choices to peers acting as risk and finance reviewers.

- Suggested activity: Tracing a failed trade through the lifecycle map and locating the first missed control.
- Suggested activity: Ranking an open break list by age, value and client effect.
- Suggested activity: Redrawing a settlement day timetable for a shorter window.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a settlement and custody control plan for one securities business line. It holds a lifecycle map, a fail and break priority list, an escalation ladder, a custody oversight checklist and a readiness note for shorter settlement. The plan is used at work to brief the head of operations and to agree owners with risk and finance.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is a post-trade operations course suitable for managers new to securities settlement?

Yes. Post-trade operations is taught from the trade chain upward through a prepared case file and templates. It assumes experience in operations, custody, risk or finance work in a financial firm, but no earlier knowledge of depositories.

Which standards does post-trade operations training rest on?

Post-trade operations training rests on the CPMI-IOSCO Principles for Financial Market Infrastructures, ISO 20022 securities messaging and recognised settlement discipline practice for fails and penalties.

How is the plan from the post-trade operations course used at work?

You use the settlement and custody control plan to brief your head of operations, agree owners for breaks and fails, and set the escalation and ageing rules for the business line.

How does post-trade operations differ from a securities trading course?

Post-trade operations concentrates on matching, settlement, custody and reconciliation after a deal is agreed, while a securities trading course concentrates on pricing, execution and market strategy before it.