Unconscious Bias Training Course: Fair Hiring, Promotion and Performance Decisions

12 – 16 July 2027
Cape town

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Ref: 846_39255 **Date:** 12 – 16 July 2027 **Location:** Cape town **Fees:** 4800 GBP

Programme Summary

Unconscious bias is the subject of this one-week training course for senior leaders, HR directors, hiring managers and panel chairs, ending in a fair decision protocol for one people process. Bias enters hiring, promotion and rating decisions quietly, and awareness sessions alone change little because the decision steps stay as they were. The programme moves from how bias arises to diagnosing where it affects decisions, then to redesigning interviews, panels, ratings and data checks. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme on unconscious bias to mixed-organisation cohorts.

The Business Case

Banks, hospitals, public bodies and manufacturers all depend on selecting, rating and promoting people well. When decisions rest on first impressions and unwritten criteria, strong candidates are missed, capable staff leave and challenges multiply. Leaders who write criteria in advance and check outcome data can defend their choices and widen the pool of talent they draw on.

- Selection Quality: Improves when criteria and questions are fixed before candidates are seen.
- Voluntary Turnover: Falls when ratings and promotions are seen to follow evidence.
- Challenge and Complaint Volume: Declines when decisions are documented and consistent.

Principles and Evidence Base

- Structured Interviewing: Uses set questions and scoring against agreed criteria, applied in Session 3 to hiring and promotion interviews.
- Blind Review: Removes identifying details from applications before assessment, applied in Session 3 to shortlisting.
- Rating Calibration: Compares ratings across managers before they are final, applied in Session 4 to performance decisions.
- Outcome Data Checks: Examine results for patterns across groups, applied in Session 4 to hiring, rating and promotion records.

Intended Participants

- Senior leaders who approve appointments, promotions and talent reviews.
- HR directors who own selection methods and rating processes.
- Hiring managers who interview and score candidates.
- Panel chairs who run assessment panels and sign off decisions.

Typical settings include banks, hospitals, public authorities and manufacturing groups.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to explain how common biases affect judgements about people.
2. Participants will be able to diagnose points in a hiring or promotion process where bias is most likely to enter.
3. Participants will be able to construct structured interview questions and scoring guides tied to written criteria.
4. Participants will be able to design panel and rating routines that limit the influence of first impressions.
5. Participants will be able to prioritise data checks that reveal patterns in selection and rating outcomes.
6. Participants will be able to justify a fair decision protocol to colleagues and challengers.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Unconscious Bias Foundations and Decision Psychology

How do quick judgements about people form, and when do they mislead?

- Bias Types Reference Sheet
- Fast and Slow Judgement Model
- Own Decision Reflection Log
- Case Review of a Biased Appointment
- Awareness Versus Process Evidence Summary

Day 2: Mapping Bias Risk in People Processes

Where in hiring, promotion and rating does bias have most room to act?

- People Decision Process Map
- Bias Risk Heat Grid
- Job Description Language Check
- Criteria Clarity Review
- Unwritten Rule Inventory

Day 3: Fair Hiring and Promotion Design

How are interviews, shortlists and panels built to limit bias?

- Written Criteria Template
- Structured Interview Question Set
- Scoring Guide and Anchors
- Blind Review Protocol
- Panel Composition and Chair Brief

Day 4: Ratings, Calibration and Data Checks

How are performance and promotion decisions tested before they are final?

- Rating Calibration Meeting Format
- Evidence Notes Standard
- Outcome Data Pattern Check
- Decision Challenge Routine
- Review and Appeal Record

Day 5: Fair Decision Protocol for One People Process

Do the earlier tools join into a protocol that leaders can approve?

- Applying the Session 2 Risk Grid
- Testing the Session 3 Interview Set
- Stress Testing the Session 4 Calibration Format
- Briefing Chairs and Managers on Use
- Completing the Fair Decision Protocol

Methodology

The programme uses case analysis built on prepared records from two organisations, a hospital group filling clinical posts and a bank running a promotion round. Participants trace decisions, rewrite criteria, score sample candidates and defend a protocol to peers acting as an appointments committee.

- Suggested activity: Scoring the same sample application with and without identifying details and comparing results.
- Suggested activity: Rewriting a vague promotion criterion so that two assessors would score it alike.
- Suggested activity: Reading a table of ratings by team and deciding what to ask before accepting it.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a fair decision protocol for one people process, such as external hiring or annual promotion. It holds written criteria, interview questions and scoring guides, a panel brief, a calibration routine and a data check schedule. At work it is issued to managers and chairs and used to review the next decision round.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is an unconscious bias programme suitable for leaders who have not led selection panels before?

Yes. Unconscious bias is taught through prepared cases and templates. The programme assumes responsibility for hiring, rating or promotion decisions, but no earlier experience of structured interviewing or data review.

Which methods does unconscious bias reduction rest on in this programme?

Unconscious bias reduction rests on structured interviewing, blind review, rating calibration and outcome data checks, all of which change the decision process rather than relying on awareness alone.

How is the protocol from unconscious bias study used at work?

You use the fair decision protocol to brief managers and panel chairs, run structured interviews, calibrate ratings and review each decision round against outcome data.

How does unconscious bias differ from a programme on workplace diversity strategy?

Unconscious bias concentrates on redesigning individual decisions such as hiring, rating and promotion, while a workplace diversity strategy programme concentrates on representation goals, policy and culture across the organisation.