Bank Operations Improvement Training Course: Lean Six Sigma, Automation and Resilience

12 – 16 April 2027
Cape town

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Programme Summary

Bank operations improvement is the subject of this one-week training course for chief operating officers, heads of operations and process owners in banks and financial institutions, ending in an operations improvement plan for one end-to-end process. Many banks carry rework, handoffs and manual checks that raise cost, while automation is added to processes nobody has simplified first. The programme moves from process mapping and measures to Lean waste removal, Six Sigma variation analysis, automation choices and resilience. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme on bank operations improvement to mixed-organisation cohorts.

The Business Case

Banks, insurers, asset managers and payment firms all run on repeatable work. When processes grow by accretion, errors are fixed downstream and queues build. Leaders who measure the flow of work, remove waste before automating and design for disruption can lower cost and keep critical services running when systems fail.

- Cost per Transaction: Falls when waste, rework and manual handoffs are removed from the process.
- Cycle Time: Shortens when queues and approvals are redesigned around the flow of work.
- Operational Resilience: Improves when critical processes, dependencies and fallback routes are mapped and tested.

Principles and Evidence Base

- Lean: Identifies and removes waste from the flow of work, applied in Session 2 to approvals, queues and rework loops.
- Six Sigma: Reduces variation and defects through data, applied in Session 3 to error and exception analysis.
- DMAIC: Gives the define, measure, analyse, improve and control cycle, applied in Sessions 3 and 4 to structure improvement projects.
- Straight-Through Processing Logic: Treats a transaction as automated end to end only when no manual touch is needed, applied in Session 4 to automation choices.

Intended Participants

- Chief operating officers who set operating priorities and cost targets across the institution.
- Heads of operations who run processing, servicing and settlement teams.
- Process owners who are accountable for one end-to-end process and its results.
- Transformation leads who sponsor improvement projects and track benefits.

Typical settings include retail and corporate banks, insurers, asset managers and payment firms.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to evaluate an end-to-end process using cycle time, error rate and cost per transaction.
2. Participants will be able to diagnose waste, rework and handoff delays in a banking process.
3. Participants will be able to analyse variation and exceptions to find the causes of errors.
4. Participants will be able to prioritise improvement and automation options by value and effort.
5. Participants will be able to design critical process fallbacks that support operational resilience.
6. Participants will be able to justify an operations improvement plan and a daily management routine to executive colleagues.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Bank Operations Improvement Foundations and Process Mapping

What does a bank process really cost, and where does the work wait?

- End-to-End Process Map
- Process Measure Set
- Cost per Transaction Build-Up
- Customer and Control Requirements Table
- Baseline Performance Sheet

Day 2: Lean Waste Removal in Banking Processes

Which steps add value, and which only add delay?

- Value-Adding Step Analysis
- Handoff and Queue Review
- Rework Loop Diagram
- Approval Layer Test
- Future-State Process Sketch

Day 3: Six Sigma Variation and Error Analysis

Why do errors and exceptions occur, and how often?

- Defect and Exception Log
- Pareto Chart of Error Causes
- Control Chart for Process Variation
- Root Cause Tree
- DMAIC Project Charter

Day 4: Automation Choices and Operational Resilience

Which steps should be automated, and what keeps services running when something fails?

- Automation Candidate Screen
- Straight-Through Processing Rate Review
- Critical Service Dependency Map
- Disruption Scenario Walkthrough
- Fallback Route Table

Day 5: Operations Improvement Plan for One End-to-End Process

Do the earlier tools join into a plan that executives can approve?

- Applying the Session 1 Baseline Performance Sheet
- Testing the Session 2 Future-State Sketch
- Checking the Session 3 Root Cause Findings
- Reviewing the Session 4 Fallback Route Table
- Completing the Operations Improvement Plan

Methodology

The programme uses a data workshop built on prepared process records for two institutions, a retail bank handling account servicing and an insurer handling claims payments. Participants map the work, compute measures, rank options and defend a plan to peers acting as an executive committee.

- Suggested activity: Recalculating cost per transaction after removing an approval step that adds no control value.
- Suggested activity: Building a Pareto chart from a month of payment exceptions and choosing the first cause to fix.
- Suggested activity: Setting a daily management board for a servicing team.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes an operations improvement plan for one end-to-end process. It holds a baseline of measures, a Lean waste review, an error cause analysis, ranked improvement and automation options, a fallback design and a daily management routine. At work it supports a funded project and monthly review.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is a bank operations improvement course suitable for executives without a Lean or Six Sigma background?

Yes. Bank operations improvement is taught through prepared process records and templates. The programme assumes accountability for operations or a process, but no earlier training in Lean or Six Sigma.

Which methods does bank operations improvement rest on in this programme?

Bank operations improvement rests on Lean for waste removal, Six Sigma for variation and defects, the DMAIC cycle for project structure and straight-through processing logic for automation.

How is the plan from bank operations improvement study used at work?

You use the operations improvement plan to make the case for a funded project, set fallback routes and run a daily management routine.

How does bank operations improvement differ from a programme on digital banking strategy?

Bank operations improvement concentrates on cost, cycle time, errors and resilience in existing processes, while a digital banking strategy programme concentrates on products, channels and partnerships.