Meeting Skills Course for Executives: Chairing, Facilitation, Decisions and Follow-Up

21 – 25 December 2026
Vienna

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Ref: 923_41864 **Date:** 21 – 25 December 2026 **Location:** Vienna **Fees:** 5500 GBP

Programme Summary

Meeting skills for executives are the subject of this one-week training course for directors, senior managers and heads of function who chair meetings, taught at strategic level and ending in a meeting charter. Senior time is often spent in meetings that circle without deciding, then end without clear owners. The programme moves from purpose and agenda design to facilitation, decision records and follow-up, in person and hybrid, and closes with an application to one leadership forum. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme on meeting skills to mixed-organisation cohorts.

The Business Case

Leaders who set a clear purpose, control participation and record decisions turn meeting hours into agreed actions. Where meetings lack a decision rule, issues return week after week and attendees leave unsure who owns what. Recording who decided what, and by when, gives a leadership team evidence to review rather than recollection to dispute. The programme works on the measures below.

- Decision Cycle Time: Shortens when meetings state the decision sought and who takes it.
- Leadership Time Spent in Meetings: Falls when forums without a purpose are merged or closed.
- Action Completion: Improves when owners and dates are recorded and reviewed.

Principles and Evidence Base

- Time-boxed agenda design: A method of allotting a fixed time and an intended outcome to each item, applied in Sessions 1 and 2 to build agendas that finish.
- RACI responsibility assignment matrix: A matrix of who is responsible, accountable, consulted and informed, applied in Session 3 to state decision rights.
- Nominal group technique: A structured way of gathering individual input before discussion, applied in Session 2 to balance dominant and quiet voices.
- Psychological safety: Edmondson's concept of a team climate where members can speak up, applied in Sessions 2 and 4 to open contribution.

Intended Participants

- Directors who chair executive committees and steering groups.
- Senior managers who run recurring cross-functional meetings.
- Heads of function who convene teams and report decisions upward.
- Chiefs of staff and board secretaries who prepare and record leadership meetings.

Typical settings include banking, government agencies, healthcare organisations, manufacturing and professional services.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to evaluate whether a meeting is needed and what it must decide.
2. Participants will be able to construct a time-boxed agenda with a desired outcome for each item.
3. Participants will be able to apply facilitation techniques that balance dominant and quiet contributors.
4. Participants will be able to design decision records that state the choice, the owner and the date.
5. Participants will be able to adapt chairing practice for hybrid and remote attendance.
6. Participants will be able to justify a meeting charter for one leadership forum.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Meeting Purpose and Agenda Design

Is a meeting needed, and what must it decide?

- Meeting Audit Inventory
- Purpose and Decision Statement Template
- Time-Boxed Agenda Builder
- Pre-Read Brief Format
- Invitation List Test

Day 2: Facilitation and Participation

How does a chair draw out contribution without losing control of time?

- Opening and Framing Script
- Nominal Group Technique Round
- Dominant Voice Redirect Phrases
- Quiet Participant Invitation Methods
- Psychological Safety Check-In

Day 3: Decisions and Records

How are choices reached, recorded and owned?

- Decision Rule Selection Guide
- RACI Matrix for Meeting Decisions
- Decision Log Format
- Minutes and Action Sheet Layout
- Disagreement Parking and Escalation Rule

Day 4: Hybrid Meetings and Follow-Up

How are remote attendees and later actions kept in step with the room?

- Hybrid Room and Screen Protocol
- Remote Turn-Taking Rules
- Action Tracker Review Routine
- Recurring Meeting Health Check
- Feedback Pulse for Chairs

Day 5: Meeting Charter for One Leadership Forum

Do the findings join into a charter that a forum can adopt?

- Applying the Session 1 Purpose Statement
- Testing the Session 2 Facilitation Script
- Checking the Session 3 Decision Log
- Reviewing the Session 4 Hybrid Protocol
- Completing the Meeting Charter

Methodology

The programme is a simulation built on recorded meeting scenarios from a bank, a public agency and a manufacturer. Participants take turns as chair, observer and attendee, practise the techniques on prepared agendas, and then defend their charter to peers acting as the members of a leadership forum.

- Suggested activity: Rewriting a crowded agenda into a time-boxed one.
- Suggested activity: Chairing a short discussion that includes a dominant voice.
- Suggested activity: Writing a decision record from a recorded discussion.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a meeting charter for one leadership forum. It holds a purpose statement, an agenda standard, facilitation rules, a decision log format, hybrid protocol and a follow-up routine. At work it goes to the forum members for adoption and sets the standard for later meetings.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is a meeting skills course suitable for executives who already chair meetings daily?

Yes. This meeting skills course is taught at strategic level and builds on daily practice. You need to chair or convene meetings, but no facilitation qualification.

Which models does the meeting skills course rest on?

The meeting skills course rests on time-boxed agenda design, the RACI matrix, the nominal group technique and Edmondson's concept of psychological safety.

How is the charter from a meeting skills course used at work?

You take the meeting charter to the members of your forum, adopt its agenda standard and decision log, and review attendance and actions against it at later meetings.

How does a meeting skills course differ from a course on presentation skills?

A meeting skills course concentrates on purpose, participation and decisions across a group, while a presentation skills course concentrates on delivering a message to an audience.