
Chief Audit Executive (CAE) Leadership Programme

22 – 26 February 2027
Amsterdam





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Programme Summary

Navigating the highest level of organisational governance requires third-line leaders to balance independent oversight with constructive executive relationships. The Chief Audit Executive CAE Leadership Programme equips incumbent and aspiring departmental directors with the strategic capabilities required to steer departmental operations, engage audit committees, and maintain productive C-suite partnerships. Participants examine the political, operational, and interpersonal dynamics necessary to position the supervisory evaluation department as a valued source of systemic insight. This masterclass is delivered by Mars Training Centre UK.

The Business Case

Organisations face heightened scrutiny from stakeholders, requiring supervisory oversight that delivers more than backward-looking compliance checklists. When departmental directors lack strategic alignment with top leadership, the organisation suffers from disconnected evaluations, advisory blind spots, and friction during governance presentations. Building strategic steering capability at the top of the department ensures that third-line insights directly support organisational resilience, enhance board reporting precision, and maintain organisational credibility across complex operating environments.

- **Board Confidence:** Enhances reporting clarity and transparency during supervisory board governance sessions.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Positions supervisory evaluations to track emergent enterprise vulnerabilities and transformation initiatives.
- **Resource Optimization:** Establishes talent models that secure specialised subject-matter competencies across departmental teams.
- **Credibility and Impact:** Fosters collaborative relationships with executive leadership without compromising operational independence.

Principles and Evidence Base

- **IIA Global Internal Audit Standards:** Guides professional practice requirements, board accountability structures, and quality assessment protocols.
- **COSO Enterprise Governance Framework:** Informs oversight integration across operational units and board reporting hierarchies.
- **The Three Lines Model:** Defines managerial boundaries, independent evaluation responsibilities, and third-line leadership positioning.



Intended Participants

- Chief audit executives seeking to elevate departmental stature and supervisory board governance interactions.
- Appointed directors of evaluation and review teams preparing for C-suite navigation and boardroom reporting.
- Senior assurance practitioners transitioning into top departmental leadership roles.
- Deputies and group evaluation managers responsible for departmental strategy and talent development.

The curriculum addresses individuals operating within commercial corporations, financial institutions, public entities, and non-profit organisations.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to manage the dual reporting relationship between executive management and the audit committee.
2. Participants will be able to construct a multi-year departmental strategy aligned with corporate strategic objectives.
3. Participants will be able to conduct high-impact boardroom briefings using root-cause analysis and thematic governance reporting.
4. Participants will be able to negotiate departmental budgets, staffing footprints, and co-sourcing arrangements with financial decision-makers.
5. Participants will be able to design a quality assessment and improvement program that satisfies professional practice standards.
6. Participants will be able to resolve high-stakes organisational friction and contentious findings with executive stakeholders.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Audit Committee Governance and Boardroom Dynamics

How do departmental directors establish authority, independence, and trust with board members?

- Supervisory Board Governance Architecture and Reporting Lines
- Charter Formalisation and Authority Negotiation
- Constructing the Committee Meeting Agenda and Executive Sessions
- Managing Divergent Expectations Between Non-Executive Directors and Officers
- Reporting Protocols for Significant Control Breakdowns

Day 2: C-Suite Navigation and Strategic Stakeholder Partnerships

How do leaders influence executive peers while preserving objective distance?



- C-suite Navigation and Organisational Politics
- Establishing Productive Relationships with Finance and Operations Chiefs
- Coordination Protocols Across Second-Line Oversight Functions
- Handling Contentious Review Conclusions and Management Pushback
- Continuous Communication Strategies Outside Formal Reporting Cycles

Day 3: Departmental Strategy and Dynamic Coverage Planning

How is departmental capacity aligned to enterprise strategy and disruption?

- Designing a Departmental Strategy and Value Proposition
- Dynamic Coverage Allocation Versus Rigid Annual Schedules
- Assurance Mapping and Third-Line Leadership Prioritisation
- Budget Formulation, Business Cases, and Co-sourcing Governance
- Integrating Continuous Monitoring and Analytics into Core Workflows

Day 4: Departmental Leadership, Culture, and Talent Architecture

How do directors attract, structure, and retain specialised capability?

- Departmental Leadership Styles and Team Motivation
- Capability Mapping: Specialist Knowledge, IT Competency, and Generalist Profiles
- Guest Auditor Models, Rotation Schemes, and Retention Strategies
- Fostering Inquisitive and Psychological Safety Cultures in Review Teams
- Performance Appraisals and Career Progression Frameworks

Day 5: Quality Assessment, Innovation, and Personal Practice

How do departmental leaders sustain continuous improvement and personal resilience?

- Quality Assessment and Improvement Program Execution and Validation
- Automated Workflow Integration and Artificial Intelligence in Workflows
- Crisis Response Protocols and Emergency Investigation Governance
- Personal Leadership Resilience and Decision-Making Under Pressure
- Departmental Transition Roadmaps and Capstone Synthesis

Methodology

Instruction relies on interactive governance case analyses, peer-led diagnostic evaluations, and strategic simulation scenarios. Participants engage with realistic boardroom dilemmas, examine communication breakdowns, and refine leadership frameworks through structured peer exchange.



- Suggested activity: Simulating an in-camera executive session with an audit committee chair addressing sensitive management deficiencies.
- Suggested activity: Formulating a multi-year departmental transformation strategy using baseline capability scorecards.
- Suggested activity: Reconstructing an escalated evaluation dispute into a collaborative remediation roadmap.

Capstone Output

Every participant creates a strategic departmental leadership portfolio, including a tailored governance charter blueprint, an audit committee communication protocol, and a formal quality assessment roadmap. This tangible asset equips leaders to implement institutional improvements immediately within their sponsoring organisations.

Frequently Asked Questions

How does this programme differ from technical methodology courses?

This masterclass concentrates exclusively on governance, board relations, political positioning, and organisational leadership rather than the mechanical execution of fieldwork testing.

Is this syllabus relevant for newly appointed departmental directors?

Yes. The material addresses the exact transitional hurdles experienced when stepping into the primary leadership position, including executive presence and committee engagement.

Does the content address both private and public governance structures?

Yes. The principles of independent oversight, stakeholder management, and team leadership apply across corporate boards, ministerial oversight bodies, and multilateral institutions.

What materials are produced for immediate workplace implementation?

Delegates leave with completed action plans, committee communication structures, departmental strategy outlines, and quality assurance assessment tools ready for operational deployment.