BLACKBIRD FOR TRAINING

Advanced Accounts Payable, Financial Operations, Governance, Risk and Regulatory Compliance Course

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Introduction:

Advanced accounts payable, financial operations, governance, risk and regulatory compliance is the discipline of moving supplier and workforce payments through controlled, documented and lawful processes that prevent loss, fraud and regulatory breach. This one-week course is for experienced payables, accounting, compliance, procurement and internal audit specialists, and each delegate leaves with an AP Control, Risk and Compliance Assurance Plan. It is taught at expert level through case studies built on real invoices, bank files and supplier records, using the COSO Internal Control-Integrated Framework, a model for designing and testing internal controls, together with the Three Lines Model for assigning oversight roles.

Course Objectives:

- Distinguish general good practice such as COSO, the Three Lines Model and segregation of duties from jurisdiction-specific legal requirements, using UK and EU laws as clearly labelled examples
- Apply process optimisation metrics and payment terms governance to redesign a procure-to-pay workflow with fewer exceptions and clear accountability
- Compare strong customer authentication with Verification of Payee and select bank detail change and payment release controls that close payment security gaps
- Interpret payables fraud red flags with the ACFE fraud tree and forensic analytics, and distinguish failure to prevent bribery from failure to prevent fraud duties
- Apply supplier due diligence, vendor governance and contractor status checks to reduce third-party, workforce and contractual risk exposure
- Justify a prioritised AP Control, Risk and Compliance Assurance Plan with tested controls, named owners and audit-ready evidence

Target Audience:

- Payables and financial operations leads who run invoice-to-payment cycles and decide which checks a payment must clear before release
- Financial control and accounting specialists who own reconciliations and records and judge whether documentation will withstand audit
- Compliance and risk specialists who interpret bribery, fraud, anti-money laundering and data rules and decide where payables procedures must change
- Internal audit and assurance specialists who test payables controls and judge whether they operate effectively
- Procurement and supplier management leads who onboard vendors and decide what due diligence each supplier tier requires
- Finance managers overseeing contractor and cross-border workforce payments who decide how status and contractual exposure is assessed

Course Outline:

Day 1: AP Operating Model, Payment Terms and Current-State Risk Assessment

- Procure-to-Pay Cycle Mapping: Locating Control Points From Purchase Order to Settlement
- Three-Way Match vs Two-Way Match: Choosing Invoice Verification by Spend Risk
- AP Process Optimisation Metrics: Cycle Time, Cost per Invoice and First-Pass Match Rate
- Payment Terms Governance: UK Payment Practices Reporting and EU Late Payment Directive Examples
- Current-State AP Risk Assessment: Rating Workflow, Data and Control Maturity Gaps

Day 2: Governance and Control Frameworks: General Good Practice Compared With Legal Requirements

- COSO Internal Control-Integrated Framework: Applying Its Five Components to Payables Operations
- Three Lines Model: Assigning AP, Compliance and Internal Audit Accountability
- Segregation of Duties Matrix: Separating Vendor Set-Up, Invoice Approval and Payment Release
- General Good Practice vs Legal Requirement: Labelling Frameworks Apart From UK and EU Law
- Documentation Standards: Audit Trails, EU GDPR Data Handling and ViDA E-Invoicing Formats

Day 3: Secure Payments, Banking Procedures and Third-Party Governance in Daily Operations

- Bank Detail Change Controls: Independent Call-Back Verification and Dual Authorisation Steps
- Strong Customer Authentication vs Verification of Payee: EU PSD2 and Instant Payments Rules
- Payment Run Controls: Batch File Integrity, Release Limits and Bank Portal Permissions
- Supplier Due Diligence: Risk-Tiered Onboarding, Sanctions Screening and EU AMLR Cash Limits
- Vendor Governance Obligations: UK Modern Slavery Statements and EU CSDDD Supply-Chain Duties

Day 4: Fraud, Irregularities, Workforce Obligations and Emerging Payment Risks

- ACFE Fraud Tree: Billing Schemes, Shell Vendors and Corruption Red Flags in Payables
- UK Failure to Prevent Bribery vs Failure to Prevent Fraud: Corporate Prevention Procedures
- Irregularity Investigation: Forensic Analytics, Duplicate Payment Tests and Evidence Preservation
- Workforce Payment Exposure: UK IR35 Status Determination and EU Posted Workers Directive
- Emerging Payment Threats: Deepfake Payment Instructions, Business Email Compromise and Continuous Monitoring

Day 5: Case Study Practice: Building the AP Control, Risk and Compliance Assurance Plan

- Audit Readiness Walkthrough: Testing Payables Controls Against COSO Criteria With Sample Evidence
- Test of Design vs Operating Effectiveness Testing: Sampling Payables Controls for Assurance
- Multi-Sector Case Study: Supplier Bank Fraud Response Across Manufacturing and Healthcare Payables
- Risk-Based Decision Matrix: Prioritising Control Gaps by Likelihood, Impact and Legal Exposure
- AP Control, Risk and Compliance Assurance Plan: Finalising Owners, Tests and Milestones

Skills You Will Gain:

- Procure-to-Pay Control Mapping
- Segregation of Duties Design
- Payment Fraud Red Flag Analysis
- Supplier Risk Tiering
- Forensic Payables Analytics
- Contractor Status Risk Assessment
- Control Effectiveness Testing
- Regulatory Obligation Mapping

Why Attend This Course:

- From approving supplier bank detail changes on email requests to verifying every change through independent call-back and dual authorisation
- From treating frameworks and laws as one checklist to separating general good practice from UK and EU legal requirements when designing controls
- From finding duplicate or fraudulent payments after the event to running forensic tests and red flag reviews before payment release
- From scattered audit findings to an AP Control, Risk and Compliance Assurance Plan with tested controls, owners and milestones

Conclusion:

Accounts payable becomes a control function, not only a processing one, when every payment can be traced to an approved supplier, a verified bank account and a lawful obligation. The course makes three distinctions clear: general good practice versus jurisdiction-specific law, with UK and EU rules used as labelled examples; strong customer authentication versus payee verification; and the design of a control versus its operating effectiveness. It suits experienced payables, accounting, compliance, procurement and audit specialists who must strengthen payment security and governance across international operations.

Frequently Asked Questions FAQ:

What should delegates prepare before an advanced accounts payable, governance, risk and compliance course?

Delegates should bring working knowledge of procure-to-pay processes and, where possible, anonymised examples of their own payment approval rules, vendor onboarding forms and recent audit findings. These are used in the daily case studies so the final assurance plan reflects real payables operations.

How does an advanced accounts payable governance and compliance course differ from an operational accounts payable course?

Operational accounts payable courses focus on invoice processing, efficiency and reporting. This advanced course centres on governance, payment security, fraud risk, third-party and workforce obligations, and audit assurance, and separates general control good practice from jurisdiction-specific legal requirements.

Why must accounts payable governance distinguish general good practice from legal requirements?

Frameworks such as COSO and the Three Lines Model are voluntary guidance, while laws such as the UK failure to prevent fraud offence or EU payment rules create binding duties. Mixing them hides which gaps carry legal exposure and which are efficiency or maturity improvements.

What does a delegate take back to work after an advanced accounts payable, risk and regulatory compliance course?

Each delegate takes back an AP Control, Risk and Compliance Assurance Plan listing prioritised control gaps, tests of design and operating effectiveness, responsible owners and milestones, together with a segregation of duties matrix and a supplier risk tiering approach ready to apply.