

Public Sector Board and Trusteeship Skills

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Public sector board and trusteeship skills are the abilities that let board members and trustees of public bodies set direction, oversee management and answer for the use of public resources. This one-week course is for trustees, board members and senior officials of public bodies, and its final deliverable is a board oversight and accountability plan containing a charter outline, a risk oversight calendar and a reporting matrix.

Introduction

Three references frame the course. ISO 37000:2021 sets out principles for the governance of organisations, including purpose, accountability and stewardship. The International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector describes principles for the governing bodies of public entities. The OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises set expectations for state ownership and for the boards of enterprises the state controls. The level is senior practitioner, focused across one week on board duties rather than wider leadership development. Teaching uses case studies and a simulated board meeting.

Course Objectives

- Distinguish governance from management and define the duties trustees hold over public assets
- Compare the OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises with the International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector and select what each offers a board
- Apply ISO 37000 governance principles to draft board charters, delegations and codes of conduct
- Interpret management information and dashboards to judge whether strategy and services are on track
- Compare board risk appetite with operational risk registers and justify the board's role in crisis governance
- Apply accountability and transparency duties to design a board reporting matrix for a public body

Target Audience

- Board members and trustees of public bodies and authorities, who must decide what the board approves and what it delegates
- Chairs and vice-chairs of public sector boards and committees, who must judge whether board information is sufficient for a decision
- Senior officials heading agencies that report to a board, who must choose how to present performance and risk to that board
- Board secretaries and governance advisers, who must determine which charters, policies and delegations a board needs
- Audit and risk committee members, who must assess whether management's risk and continuity arrangements are adequate

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Course Outline

Day 1: Public Sector Governance and the Trustee Role

- Governance vs Management: Board Oversight Compared with Executive Running of Services
- Trustees in Public Institutions: Duties of Care, Loyalty and Stewardship of Public Assets
- Governance Models in Public Bodies: Ministerial, Board-Led and Hybrid Arrangements
- Ethical Leadership: Integrity, Conflicts of Interest and Declarations in Government
- ISO 37000 Governance Principles: Purpose, Value Generation and Accountability in Organisations

Day 2: Governance Frameworks and Accountability

- OECD State-Owned Enterprise Guidelines vs Public Sector Governance Framework: Two References Compared
- Compliance, Accountability and Transparency: Reporting Duties Trustees Owe the Public
- Governance Policies: Drafting Board Charters, Delegations and Codes of Conduct
- Board Committees: Audit, Risk and Nomination Roles in Public Bodies
- Governance Case Study: Practices of Well-Governed Public Bodies Analysed

Day 3: Strategic Oversight and Board Decision-Making

- Setting Direction vs Approving Plans: Where Trustee Influence on Strategy Is Greatest
- Strategic Planning Oversight: Testing Plans Against Mandate, Resources and Public Value
- Board Decision Quality: Information, Constructive Challenge and Recording of Decisions
- Leading Change Through the Board: Overseeing Transformation Without Managing It
- Data and Analytics for Oversight: Dashboards and Indicators Trustees Should Request

Day 4: Risk Oversight and Crisis Governance

- Risk Appetite vs Risk Register: Board-Level Choices Compared with Operational Lists
- Public Sector Risk Identification: Service, Financial, Reputational and Compliance Exposures
- Crisis Governance: Board Roles, Escalation and Communication During Disruption
- Resilience and Continuity of Government Services: Questions Boards Should Ask Management
- Crisis Leadership Case Study: How a Public Board Responded to a Service Failure

Day 5: Board Practice: Innovation Oversight and the Accountability Plan

- Innovation vs Control: Balancing Experimentation with Stewardship of Public Funds
- Overseeing Digital Transformation: Applying Risk and Decision Tests to Technology Initiatives
- Sustainable Development Goals Oversight: Applying Strategic Review to Public Body Commitments
- Board Simulation: Applying Charters, Risk Appetite and Dashboards to a Case Meeting
- Board Oversight and Accountability Plan: Finalising Charter Outline, Risk Calendar and Reporting Matrix

Skills You Will Gain

- Board Charter Drafting
- Delegation Frameworks
- Conflict-of-Interest Management
- Strategic Oversight
- Board Information Review
- Risk Appetite Setting
- Crisis Governance
- Accountability Reporting

Why Attend This Course

- From boards that discuss operations to boards that set direction, delegate clearly and hold management to account
- From board packs read on the day to information and dashboards specified in advance for each decision
- From risk handled only by management to a board-approved risk appetite and a defined crisis role
- From informal governance habits to a board oversight and accountability plan with charter, risk calendar and reporting matrix

Conclusion

Good public sector governance depends on boards that know which decisions are theirs, ask for the right information and answer openly for results. The course clarifies three distinctions: governance versus management, setting direction versus approving plans, and board risk appetite versus operational risk registers. It suits trustees, board members and senior officials who want five focused days on board duties and oversight, rather than a longer course on public sector leadership in general.

Course FAQs

What are public sector board and trusteeship skills?

Public sector board and trusteeship skills are the capabilities board members and trustees use to set a public body's direction, delegate to management, scrutinise information, oversee risk and account to the public and its representatives for results.

What is the difference between governance and management in a public body?

Governance is the board's work of setting direction, approving major decisions, overseeing performance and risk and holding executives to account. Management is the executive's work of running services, staff and resources within the limits the board has set.

A graphic of a chessboard with several chess pieces (a king, a queen, a rook, and a pawn) positioned on it. The board is white and black, and the pieces are gold and silver.

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Which frameworks does public sector board and trusteeship training follow?

The course follows ISO 37000:2021 for governance principles and the International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector, and refers to the OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises for boards of state-controlled enterprises.

Is public sector board and trusteeship training right for a newly appointed board chair?

Yes. A new board chair shapes agendas, board information and the relationship with the executive, and the sessions on charters, decision quality, risk appetite and crisis governance address those responsibilities directly.

What do delegates produce in public sector board and trusteeship training?

Delegates produce a board oversight and accountability plan for a case public body, containing a board charter outline with delegations, a risk oversight calendar for the year and a matrix showing what is reported, to whom and when.