

# Communication and Report Writing for Auditors

## A Two-Day Programme



## Aims and Objectives

The aim of this course is to give auditors some guidance on improving their communication and report writing skills. The course will cover all aspects of an auditor's job right from the planning stage of the task through to writing up conclusions in a report.

An auditor's role can be varied and will encompass a wide range of different communication methods including meetings, interviewing, telephoning, e-mailing and report writing. Our course will cover the essential skills for the auditor who will be performing tasks using these communication methods. The purpose of the course will be to make sure that the auditors are able to develop an action plan to improve the way that they communicate with others and the reports that they write in order to enhance their performance day-to-day.

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Identify the different ways in which they communicate with others
- Identify their strengths and areas for development in their communication skills
- Understand how to communicate effectively with different types of people and in different situations
- Practically improve communication skills
- Write a clear and effective report for audit purposes
- Conclude on their main areas of focus in order to improve their writing skills

## Methodology

The programme will consist of lectures, supported by exercises, quizzes and group case study work.

We will ensure that this course is as practically useful as possible through involving the participants at all times and ensuring that they are encouraged to reflect on what they can do to improve their skills.

The style will be interactive, with the participants encouraged to contribute their views and questions.

## Pre-course Reading

The participants will be provided with some pre-course reading to familiarise themselves with the audit case study that will be used on the course. It will be helpful for the participants to have read this before the course.

## Day One

### Session 1

#### The Ways Auditors Communicate

- An overview of the audit process
- Different communication methods
- Suitability of different methods for different occasions
- Problems for auditors resulting from poor communication

**Exercise:** Group discussion on the audit process, the ways in which the auditors communicate and the problems associated with poor communication

### Session 2

#### Communicating and Planning Your Auditing Work

- E-mail communications and audit work
- Telephone communications and audit work
- The benefits of brainstorming and methods in which to do this
- Time and project management skills and communications

**Exercise:** Using the case study provided before the course, the participants will provide a communications plan for the audit work that will be required

### Session 3

#### Interviewing

- Listening Skills
- Effectively and efficiently gathering information and providing feedback to executive management
- Questioning techniques
- Common problems auditors face when asking questions as part of the audit work
- How to avoid these problem areas

**Case Study:** Using the case study, the participants will take part in an interviewing process to determine whether they are able to put some suggested skills into place in order to come to the correct conclusion about the “issues” that have arisen on the audit

**Exercise:** The participants will work together to brainstorm a problem and to work out how they will need to collaborate and communicate to solve a problem

### Session 4

#### Gaining Acceptance of Your Findings and Recommendations

- Documenting your findings and communicating them to the “client”
- Anticipating and preparing for hot issues and resistance
- How to gain rapport with the client
- How to improve your persuasive skills

**Exercises:** As part of the case study, participants will be asked to plan how to communicate the findings of the audit work. Their approaches will be scored to ensure that they have thought about all aspects of the communications needed

## Session 5

### How to Run Effective Audit Meetings

- Planning for the meeting
- Running the meeting effectively
- Steps to ensure that the outcome of the meeting is what you wanted

**Exercises:** The case study includes details of a meeting that has been set up to discuss audit findings, participants will take part in a group discussion about how this meeting could be improved

## Day Two

### Session 1

#### Planning and Preparing to Report on Audit Work

- Gathering your evidence
- Thinking about the user focus
- Prioritising the points

**Exercises:** The participants will review the work prepared by another auditor and will work to create a plan for the communication of the findings to the “client”

### Session 2

#### Language and Style when Writing Reports and Memos

- Business language as opposed to literary style
- Matching language to the user

**Group exercise:** Using some set scenarios the participants will be asked to contribute their ideas on how to communicate simply, concisely and clearly

### Session 3

#### Formatting Reports

- Different report layouts for auditors
- Headings and signposts
- Executive summaries

**Exercise:** The participants will have the opportunity to produce an executive summary for users of audit reports in a number of different scenarios

### Session 4

#### Analysis of Reports

- Critiquing reports written by others
- Spotting errors and proofreading

**Exercise:** Using reports written by others the participants will come up with some improvement points and will have a chance to test their proofreading skills

### Session 5

#### Developing a Personal Action Plan

- A personal SWOT analysis regarding communication skills
- Writing a plan and identifying ways to improve communications

#### Course Summary and Evaluation

- Summary of the key learning points
- End of course test to check learning
- Participants’ evaluation of the course
- Report-writing in the workplace - Personal Action Planning