



INSTITUTE
FOR THE
PUBLIC SERVICES

IPS POLICY FRAMEWORK

**BINDING STANDARDS GOVERNING
CUSTOMISED TRAINING REQUESTS MADE TO
IPS**

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Binding Standards governing Customised Training Requests made to IPS

1.0 Preamble

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to formalise the internal and external stakeholder responsibilities in relation to training requests for training programmes and courses which do not form part of the normal schedule (prospectus) offered by the Institute for the Public Services (IPS) which is the academy serving the training and development requirements of the Public Service in Malta.
- 1.2 This document aims to ensure that standards are maintained, and rigour is ensured in the type, form and method of Customised Training requests made by Ministries, Departments and Public Entities to IPS and then how these are processed and administered internally within IPS. The need for these binding standards has arisen in order to give structure and guidance in the form, method and clear outcomes to the varying types of requests made to IPS by ministries, departments and entities.
- 1.3 These binding standards are part of a wider policy framework which covers the activities, operations and administration of IPS and therefore have to be considered within that context in terms of scope, interpretation, application and eventual review which all remain at the discretion of the Principal and management of the IPS.
- 1.4 This document is to be considered as binding and mandatory unless otherwise derogated or amended in part or in full under the authority of the Principal of IPS.
- 1.5 For the purpose of this document, the term 'requesting entity' refers to ministries, departments or entities which submit requests for customised training to IPS.

2 Applicability

- 2.1 These binding standards govern all categories of non-Prospectus training requests made to IPS. This document outlines the obligations and responsibilities of IPS and the external stakeholders lodging customised training requests.
- 2.2 This document is supplementary to any other agreement, contract, directive, letter of engagement or other formal arrangement governing the relationship of IPS with specific entities or ministries in relation to particular training programmes or courses.
- 2.3 The date of entry into force of these binding standards is the 15th of November 2021.

3 General Principles

- 3.1 The Public Service is firmly committed to being inclusive, people-centric, quality- and service-oriented. A fundamental element of this commitment lies in offering Public Officers and the employees of public sector entities opportunities for career progression and self-development. Training and development are,

therefore, a priority area for the Public Service and, consequently, the responsibility entrusted to IPS demands a high level of commitment and rigour.

- 3.2 **As a general principle, Customised Training entails the creation of a new course or programme – either through the adaptation of an existing IPS offering or the total development from scratch of a course or programme - to meet a specific need resulting from organisational, policy or legislative change to be offered to a specific audience identified by the requesting ministry or entity. This also includes special, event-driven training – for example, training which may be needed in instances such as Malta’s EU Presidency or other international commitments - but also training resulting from disruptive contingencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- 3.3 Furthermore – and as stipulated in IPS’s **Binding Conditions governing Participation in IPS Courses and Programmes** – under all instances of Customised Training, the requesting entity is responsible for ensuring the availability of any nominated Public Officers to attend training sessions as scheduled by IPS.

This point applies whether the Public Officers come directly from the requesting entity but also when the training programme or course requires the attendance of officers from other ministries or entities which are different from the requesting entity.

- 3.4 All requests for customised training are to be approved by the requesting entity’s Permanent Secretary and forwarded to IPS by the ministry’s Director responsible for People Management, Human Resources or Corporate Services.
- 3.5 One of the most important principles governing participation to IPS Programmes and Courses is that once programmes and courses are set and scheduled, IPS would have committed its resources – which include the commitment of trainers (who are predominantly serving public officers), the booking of facilities and the investment made in the preparation of the course or programme itself.

IPS charges pre-established rates for customised training. 60% of such charges are payable upon completion of the course design to cover the charges for incurred costs. The amount is non-refundable in the case of cancellation of the training by the requesting entity. In the event the course would be cancelled by IPS, the full amount would be refunded.

4 Defining Customised Training

- 4.1 Whilst IPS offers an ever-evolving, wide range of training programmes and courses targeting Public Officers of all grades and functional roles, Customised Training basically encompasses a range of different types of specific training requests which IPS may receive which arise from the very diverse realities spanning the remit of the Public Service and the Public Sector in Malta.

It is important to stress that the successful development and delivery of Customised Training courses and programmes which yield the desired impact demand a commitment not only on the part of IPS but of the requesting party. The commitment takes the form of lodging well structured, clear and motivated requests based on realistic outcomes and firm commitments to make available those resources needed throughout the training development and delivery stages.

This section defines the categories of Customised Training requests received by IPS.

4.2 Type A – Special sessions of existing IPS Prospectus courses or programmes:

This type of training relates to requests received for the holding of sessions outside of the normal course schedule of IPS for courses or programmes which are contained in its published Prospectus.

Though not strictly falling under the category of ‘customised training’, these ‘ad hoc’ requests must be supported by a specific need – which arises from a contingency which the requesting entity could not have anticipated or foreseen - compelling the requesting entity to require specific training for their staff. It has to be stressed that this type of request would only be entertained by IPS in extreme, justified and documented cases where prior planning would not have been possible or foreseeable.

A typical example may relate to the need to train personnel for, say, a new customer care function where the courses offered within the IPS Prospectus meet the training objectives.

The processing of similar requests can be straightforward but strongly hinges on securing the resources – in terms of the logistics of the training venue and – more critically – the availability of trainers to deliver the course or programme. Furthermore, as in all instances, the cooperation and participation of the nominated officers is crucial and this is an area where the requesting entity is responsible for.

4.3 Type B – Adaptation of existing IPS Prospectus courses or programmes:

The second type of requests involves a training need which can be met by adapting and modifying an existing IPS course or programme to meet the specific requirements of the requesting entity.

There are numerous instances across the breadth of the Public Service and Public Sector where the operational and institutional nature of the work carried out requires a specialised approach to the standards which may be present service-wide. Typical examples include areas such as GDPR or customer care in specific environments such as in healthcare, education or law enforcements.

In these instances, the processing of similar requests would need a very clear definition of the specific needs and the requesting organisation would need to be involved in not only the development of the course structure and content but may also be required to assist in the identification and make available (where these would be employed by the same entity) **area experts** which may be involved not only in providing input into the specific course content relevant to the initial request but also in the delivery of those aspects of the programme which are more specific and technical – particularly if no suitably qualified and experienced trainer is already available to IPS.

4.4 Type C – Design and delivery of customised training to be provided to the requesting entity’s staff:

The third type of requests is an iteration of Type B where the identified training need would not be based on an existing IPS Prospectus course or programme and the need would be specific to the particular mandate and operating environment of the requesting entity.

The nature of similar requests can be varied – from policy or regulatory changes to the introduction of new work practices, processes or services offered – and as stressed for Type B requests, the collaboration and involvement throughout all stages of the development, scheduling and training delivery process is crucial.

IPS has been organising customised training for a number of years and thus has vast experience in these types of requests. Whilst Type C requests may be for sporadic or ‘one off’ occurrences, IPS would consider transitioning the programme or course to an ongoing, scheduled status within its prospectus if the training would be required on an ongoing basis.

Depending on the nature and content of the training, as specified for Type B, the requesting entity would be required to help identify and make available area experts to assist not only in the design of the course content but also to act as trainers.

4.5 Type D – Design and delivery of customised training to officers beyond the requesting client entity:

The fourth type of training requests relates to cases where ministries, departments or entities which have a responsibility or remit that impacts functions across the Public Service **have identified the need to provide training to officers in other ministries**. Initially, such training programmes may form part of the ‘customised training’ programmes offered by IPS. The aim would be that should the programme gain momentum in terms of demand to transition this into scheduled training as part of the IPS Prospectus. This type of training may require the development of training programmes for practitioners, management and, eventually, refresher or top-up programmes.

The growing regulatory responsibilities resulting from local legislative amendments, national policy direction and EU Directives, the greater reliance on horizontal collaboration and service integration together with a more quality-centric approach to public services has increased the demand for similar types of training requests over the recent years and this has resulted in the development of new programmes and courses which now feature in the IPS Prospectus.

Training on procurement, EU funds, financial procedures, GDPR, HR-related topics and even the mandatory induction and preparatory programmes can all be considered as falling under this category of training. Two recent additions are the remote work and the integrity training courses.

- 4.6 Specifically for Type D requests, further and subsequently to the authorisation of the Ministry’s Permanent Secretary, the request is forwarded for the necessary endorsement on a central level by the Permanent Secretary, People and Standards Division, Office of the Prime Minister prior to it being forwarded to IPS.
- 4.7 The following sections of this document illustrate the four stages of the processing of requests, development of the training package, the scheduling and delivery of training programme and the final quality assurance and evaluation of the customised training package. The purpose of these sections is to define the deliverables and responsibilities of the various stakeholders involved in the process.

5 Compilation and Submission of Customised Training Requests

- 5.1 In order to facilitate and better contextualise Customised Training Requests, IPS has drawn up a request form – appended to this document – and which should be the instrument used to submit all similar requests. The form is designed to capture the initial information necessary for IPS to make an initial assessment and plot a way forward. It is crucial that all the requested information is provided as this will greatly assist IPS in making a more informed opinion of the request and this may prove critical in ensuring a timelier processing.
- 5.2 **Section 1 of the form details the requesting ministry’s Director responsible for People Management, Human Resources or Corporate Services through which the request is being forwarded to IPS.**
- 5.3 In Section 2 of the form, the authorisation for the request being submitted is to be registered. In addition to the level of collaboration and, indeed, partnership which has to be established between IPS and the requesting entity, **the request forwarded to IPS would have to be authorised by the Permanent Secretary of the requesting ministry.**
- 5.4 In Section 3 of the form, the requesting entity should specify the officer who would be interacting with IPS in relation to the request and who is authorised to discuss and decide on the various elements pertaining to the development of the training package and its delivery. Having an available focal point ensures that the process can move forward in a more systematic and timely manner and without any risk of fragmentation.
- 5.5 In Section 4, the requesting entity should specify which type of training is being requested – as illustrated in Section 4.0 of this document. The type of training required dictates the effort and process required to develop, administer and deliver the course but, above all, would also dictate the time-frames necessary for the whole process to be completed.

5.6 In Sections 5 and 6 of the form, the requesting entity would articulate the case for the request, specify what the request is for and provide details of the expected outcomes which the training should achieve. These elements do not just provide the context for the request but also set the objectives for the design process and, eventually, the evaluation of the programme.

5.7 In Section 7 of the form, the requesting entity is asked to provide as much detail as possible of various aspects of the training and these range from the number of officers envisaged to be nominated to receive the requested training up to details of the form and mode of delivery of the course.

Of particular importance is **Section 7e** which relates to when the requested training is to be delivered. Realistically, some types of courses cannot be provided in a matter of weeks from the lodging of requests. This is increasing so for those types of customised training where more complex programmes may need months of preparation until these are launched. It is therefore important to not only ensure the involvement of IPS as early as possible when a training need arises but also to provide full collaboration and availability throughout the process to ensure that no delays are registered.

5.8 Customised Training Requests are to be submitted to IPS through the office of the requesting entity's Director responsible for People Management, Human Resources or Corporate Services and as per Section 2 of the form, the request would have to be authorised by the relative ministry's Permanent Secretary. In case of Type D requests, these are to be further authorised by the Permanent Secretary, People and Standards Directorate, Office of the Prime Minister prior to it being forwarded to IPS.

5.9 **Once completed, forms are transmitted as detailed in the Customised Training Request for to the IPS Training Quality and Development Section by email at: customisedtraining.ips@gov.mt**

6 Training Design and Development

6.1 **Following the receipt of the request form, an initial assessment is carried out by the IPS Training Quality and Development Section to determine the appropriate way forward which would be communicated to the requesting entity following the authorisation of the Principal, IPS.**

6.2 In the event of Type A requests, these are forwarded directly to IPS's Scheduling Section in order to process the request as specified in Section 7 below.

6.3 In relation to Type B, C and D, IPS's Training Quality and Development Section shall discuss in detail the request with the officer designated as contact point by the requesting entity.

6.4 The responsibility of the Training Quality and Development Section is to develop a training package based on the request which comprises the following components:

- i. A clear definition of the course programme in terms of structure, course contents, mode of delivery, duration and outcomes.
- ii. Secure any certification where this is a specific, mandatory component of the request.
- iii. Identification of the appropriate trainers and securing their availability for the duration of the programme – In case of **area experts** identified by the requesting ministry, entity or department as specified for Type B, C and D requests, where necessary to seek the endorsement of the IPS Educators Board and make the necessary arrangement for the train-the-trainer programme where required.
- iv. Ensure the development of the necessary course material, handouts, assessments or assignment questions as may be necessary.

- 6.5 As specified in Section 3.4 above, IPS would at this point raise an invoice for the charge related to the course design and delivery which the requesting entity would have to settle in order to progress the process any further.
- 6.6 Once the training package is completed and endorsed by the requested requesting entity, this is to be forwarded to the IPS Educators Board for final review and once this is endorsed, this is to be forwarded to the IPS Principal for approval.

7 Course Scheduling

- 7.1 Once the training package is endorsed by the various stakeholders, the IPS Principal will instruct the Scheduling Section to commence the course scheduling process.
- 7.2 Course dates are set according to the availability of the trainers, the number of the participants and the availability of facilities depending on the type, form and mode of training as specified in the training package.
- 7.3 The appointed contact point from the requesting entity's side is to forward the list of nominated officers for the courses to IPS through the **requesting ministry's Director responsible for People Management, Human Resources or Corporate Services** at least two weeks prior to the commencement of the training programme. In all cases, the officers nominated would have been informed beforehand by the requesting entity that they were nominated for the training and that attendance was to be considered as mandatory.
- 7.4 All course material will be forwarded in soft copy by IPS to the appointed contact point for circulation amongst course participants prior to the training sessions.
- 7.5 IPS would co-ordinate with the contact point the issuing of invites: for classroom training the list of invites would be handled by the contact point whilst for online sessions the invites would be issued directly by IPS copying in the contact point accordingly. IPS would administer the courses in accordance with the "Binding Standards for Participation to IPS Courses and Programmes" and inform the requesting entity of the progress and participation of the nominated officers.

8 Quality Assurance and Training Evaluation

- 8.1 Following the completion of the course, IPS's Training Quality and Development Section would be carrying out an evaluation of the training provided through an analysis of whether the client had received the desired outcome. This process would also involve contacting course participants to gauge whether the course was helpful in their daily work and the outcome of this feedback would be used to affect any improvement or revision to the various elements constituting the training package.