



Government  
Commercial  
Function

# CONTRACT MANAGEMENT FOR SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OWNERS



April 2025

# About the programme

## ■ Background and context

Leading teams that manage government contracts calls for precise, top-level skills. Development support programmes for leads in this niche area can be quite limited, so the newly-refreshed 'contract management for senior responsible owners' course offers tailored learning to support these specific needs.

This is a new course of five individual modules that has been developed with the scope, seniority and time constraints of the senior responsible owner's role in mind. It focuses on the management of public sector contracts.

## ■ About the programme

Developed initially in conjunction with the Infrastructure and Projects Authority and now the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority, the course is a dynamic set of stand-alone e-learning modules that will aid decision-making and judgement in key areas such as; risk, governance, team dynamics and contract deliverables - ensuring business objectives are met.

It focuses on the strategic and tactical aspects of contract management to enable senior responsible owners to effectively manage contracts through their contract management teams. It offers development in areas including:

- contract management fundamentals
- strategy and risk
- governance and decision making
- commercial awareness
- supporting your team

Concise, sharp and relevant modules will enable:

- a stronger understanding of the fundamentals of managing key contracts
- awareness of the challenges faced by a senior responsible owner
- enhanced strategic thinking within the field of contract management
- the challenges of leading and managing diverse project teams
- high-level knowledge of contract resourcing and governance

## ■ Who will this programme appeal to?

This programme will strengthen leadership, governance, and risk management expertise, along with building commercial acumen within the very specific field of managing public sector contracts and suppliers throughout the lifecycle of a contract.

The **whole programme** will be suitable for:

- senior responsible owners working in the field of contract management
- leads who oversee contract managers delivering on contract portfolios

The **first module** of the programme, as a stand-alone session, will be suitable for:

- senior commercial leaders
- contract managers on a career ladder aspiring to reach these roles in the short to medium term

## ■ How the programme aligns with the resources currently available to senior responsible owners

This new course forms part of a package of resources available to both senior officers within the contract management environment specifically and anyone holding a senior responsible owner role within the wider commercial profession.

The five modules align with the Government Functional Standard for Commercial activity, take into account both the Infrastructure and Projects Authority and the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority guidance on the scope of the role and the expectations placed on the senior contract managers working on the 235 major projects - valued at more than £650bn.

Given the focus on contract management in this programme, senior responsible owners may want to gain the baseline understanding of contract management before coming on board. Knowledge of the fundamental principles and practices of managing government contracts and suppliers can be gained through the [foundation accreditation](#), also provided by the Contract Management Capability Programme.

For access to wider learning materials outside of contract management for senior responsible owners, you can also access the senior responsible owner fundamental course at the Major Projects Leadership Academy (known as the “MPLA”).

# Benefits of the programme

## ■ For you

Benefits include:

- this is the only programme that focuses specifically on the senior responsible owner role within management of public sector contracts
- the updated programme focuses on topical issues
- it is flexible and accessible; modules last 60 to 120 mins, you can slot these into your schedule at a convenient time - and even pause mid-session and return to it if an urgent matter arises
- modules are self-select with no advance booking needed
- this is a senior-level development programme, pitched accordingly
- the programme modules attract CPD points to further develop your career
- case studies bring the principles to life
- a focus on the '16 questions' a senior responsible owner must ask - this is a recognised valuable resource that can be taken away

## ■ For your organisation

Benefits include:

- the brand new programme has been designed to include all of the latest strategic issues and challenges for organisations right across the sector
- participating in the programme demonstrates a commitment to 'top-down' training & development
- reinforces an organisation's commitment to setting and maintaining contract management professional standards
- modules 2 to 5 can be undertaken in any order - based upon your organisational needs

# Programme format

All 5 modules on the programme are delivered through e-learning.

## ■ Module 1

The first module is an 'Introduction to contract management for senior responsible owners.' It is suitable for senior responsible owners as well as any senior leader in any contract management based role, or those moving upwards on the career ladder.

## ■ Modules 2 to 5

Having undertaken the first module, modules 2 to 5 are suitable for in-post senior responsible owners working in contract management. They delve into more detail on each of the subject areas covered in module 1 and more.

# Modules

## **Module 1:** **Introduction to contract management** **for senior responsible owners**

### **Overview**

The essentials of contract management as a senior responsible owner, including contract terminology and processes, risk, and managing a contract management team. It covers a case study and '16 questions' which prompt challenges on different areas of their commercial, strategic and managerial reach.

### **Module content**

This includes:

- senior responsible owner; role, responsibilities and the standards
- contract terminology and processes; contract lifecycle clauses and procedures
- risk; mindset, appetite and mechanisms to manage risk
- overseeing a contract management team and their capabilities

### **Module outcomes**

On completion you'll be able to recognise the practical things you should be doing as a senior responsible owner to ensure contracts are properly managed. You'll be able to use the '16 questions' to ask the right questions of your contracts and teams.

## Module 2: Strategy and risk

### Overview

Through a case study, this module explores risk management, the need for an awareness of the top risks and mitigations, and a consistent risk appetite. It introduces tools to help a senior responsible owner understand what a strategic contract management approach looks like, and how to deliver and communicate this - with both time and resources considered.

### Module content

This includes:

- risk management, mindset and appetite; producing risk statements and alignment to organisational risk appetite
- strategic tools and templates; to align contracts with organisational objectives and consider time and resources when developing strategy

### Module outcomes

On completion you'll be able to identify key contract risks, issues and mitigation plans, challenge behaviours that don't align with the organisational risk appetite and apply strategic tools to create and communicate clear objectives aligned with your organisation.

## Module 3: Governance and decisions

### Overview

This module looks at the senior responsible owner's role in ensuring governance aligns with the contract needs so the organisation can fulfil its obligations - particularly in terms of the specialist skills required. Decision making will also be covered, along with the complexities surrounding the exit and transition phase of the contract management lifecycle.

## Module content

This includes:

- governance; aligning governance to a contract's requirements, seeking specialist disciplines and challenging advice.
- decision making; assessing options and impact of change, balancing time, making key decisions prior to contract exit and transition

## Module outcomes

On completion, you'll be able to ensure that appropriate governance proportionate to the contract has been implemented, seek specialist advice but challenge it with confidence, recognise the key nuances that may affect your decision-making (including time, quality and cost).

## Module 4: Commercial awareness

### Overview

This module has a commercial focus and looks at the different tools and tactics available to a senior responsible owner to understand contracts' environments and enable supplier efficiency and improvement. Using this knowledge, the module will look at how an SRO can influence procurement processes and inform contract management decisions.

## Module content

This includes:

- commercial awareness tools; Porter's Five Forces, SWOT and Delta SWOT
- using knowledge of market dynamics and competition to make decisions and influence the procurement process
- working with data to improve supplier efficiency and performance

## Module outcomes

On completion, you'll be able to use market knowledge and insight into supplier strengths and weaknesses will help inform contract management decisions and use contractual levers to achieve intended outcomes. You'll also be able to use data to enable supplier efficiency and improvement.



## Module 5: Supporting your team

### Overview

This module will look at how to build an effective contract management team - and support them. It will explore how a senior responsible owner can provide operational support but also structural support through considering capability and capacity and the factors affecting these.

### Module content

This includes:

- supporting your team with contract knowledge - understanding clauses and testing team readiness
- building an effective contract management team; measuring team maturity, factors that affect team size and capability requirements, assigning roles to match contract requirements, and assessing risk with any team vulnerabilities

### Module outcomes

On completion, you will be able to provide support for your team by being able to identify the primary obligations and performance measures of your contract(s). You'll be able to recognise the capabilities and capacity required within your team and assign responsibilities based on individual capability and capacity to ensure key milestones are met.

# Essentials



## Entry pre-requisite:

- Module 1 is suitable for anyone with an interest in leadership within public sector contract management
- Modules 2 to 5 are for in-post senior responsible owners with responsibility for contract management, having completed module one firstly



## Delivery method:

All modules are e-learning and delivered through Government Commercial College.



## Cost:

There is no cost - this programme is fully funded.



## Duration:

- Module 1 is 120 mins (minimum)
- Modules 2 to 5 are 60 mins each (minimum)



## Technology:

You'll need a strong high-speed wired or wireless internet connection. Plus, speakers or headphones compatible with your computer.



## To register:

Register on the '[SRO home page](#)' on the Government Commercial College, then the modules can then be self-selected.

## Need more information?

Find the [senior responsible owner designated page on the Government Commercial College](#).

You'll need to register and create a short profile to access the pages and then the modules.