

Advising and Briefing

Knowing how best to communicate with busy people is a vitally important skill in government. After all, ministers and senior officials are unlikely to know all the finer details of every single project or policy that they're typically trying to juggle. It's a civil servant's job to provide the most relevant, pertinent information that helps ministers and senior officials to better understand a particular topic and, if needed, to publicly talk about or make a decision on it.

Doing this effectively requires you to think of your audience as an intelligent non-expert who needs you to communicate with clarity and brevity. In turn, this demands a strong understanding of who you're providing information to, why you're advising or briefing them and how you can best do this.

Description

This course is aimed at civil servants of all grades whose work involves briefing ministers and senior officials in a way that enables effective decision-making and helps them to shape and deliver policy. It has been designed to help you advise and brief effectively and to the expected standard.

It explores the different types of briefings – both written and oral – that you might need to give and what they require. These can range from ministerial submissions and policy papers through to pre-meeting briefings or responses to Parliamentary questions. The course explores the different points to consider for different types and briefings and how to ensure that what you provide is accurate, brief and clear.

What does it involve?

This course comprises an all-day workshop (delivered either virtually or face to face), ahead of which you're expected to work through a preparatory handbook. The handbook outlines the context for the course, exploring the most common forms of briefings, the policy profession standards and the Civil Service Code. It also introduces you to topics such as understanding your audience, how to prepare an effective brief and how best to engage with ministers' private offices.

The subsequent workshop explores all these topics in greater detail, using several case study scenarios as an opportunity to put your new advising and briefing skills into practice. After the workshop, you're encouraged to spend time with your line manager, discussing how to apply what you've learned within your day to day work.

What's the outcome?

Having completed this course, you'll understand the role that civil servants play in advising and briefing ministers and senior officials. You'll know how to generate concise information and policy options while taking into account considerations such as audience, purpose, desired outcomes and the wider strategic and political landscape.

Aware of the pressures that ministers and senior officials face and the factors that influence their decision making, you'll also know when to engage with ministers' private offices to make sure their needs are met. You'll know how to sift and present information in a way that helps your audience make informed and balanced decisions, as well as how to prepare and deliver an effective oral briefing.

Learning activities



Handbook



Workshop

Delivery method:

F2F

VLE

Estimated learning time:

8 hours

How to book

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