

Understanding and mastering contracts

Learn the basics of contracting law and principles and be prepared to apply best practice in your business.

Course Leader: Richard Stephens, the Law Office of Richard Stephens

Who is it for?

Managing directors, commercial directors, commercial managers, sales personnel, marketing professionals, procurement personnel – in fact, anyone who comes into contact with a contract as part of their working life. Many either don't care – and take unwarranted risks with their business – or they just don't know what they are doing. This course is designed both for complete newcomers to the area and as a refresher of the latest thinking for those who haven't perhaps looked at it for a little while.

What is it about?

Most people in business come into contact with contracts – whether verbal or written agreements and they need to negotiate their terms. How can you do that if you don't understand the basics? Sometimes, it can all seem so abstract – so how can you separate out the essential from the nice-to-have? What are the key risk areas in a contract?

In an environment which is turning increasingly to litigation or other forms of dispute resolution it is more important than ever to have some understanding of these crucial issues.

This course is designed to give you a thorough grounding in the practical aspects of commercial law – not fusty legal textbook stuff, but practical, hands-on demonstrations through worked examples taken from the cases designed to give you the essential information you need to make the most out of contracting.

How do you benefit?

This course will enable to make value judgments about key provisions commonly found in contracts, understanding the difference between when something is acceptable and knowing when to call in specialists. You will learn about proper usage of the core words and phrases – you won't become an instant lawyer, but you will know enough to make more sensible decisions about what is acceptable risk management for your business.

Course overview

There is much to cover – not just covering basic legal principles but also practical examples taken from real life – aimed at giving you the most practical understanding of the basic principles. It is also a chance to ask questions and deepen your understanding.

Subjects include:

- Why have a contract – and what happens when you don't – starting work without a contract or with just "heads" – can you "accidentally" find yourself in a contract you haven't signed? – can you protect yourself from this?
- The effect of negotiations – what should you say and what can you hide?
- How does a court go about interpreting contracts? What does that tell us about how we should draft?
- Which parts of a typical IT contract are the likeliest to go wrong?
- What are reasonable or best endeavours – and when do you act unreasonably?
- What happens if you miss out something important from the contract? Will the court provide the missing clauses for you? Understanding implied terms – and their limitations
- Understanding the principles behind limitations and exclusions of liability – why are they important? What is the Unfair Contract Terms Act 1977 and why are IT suppliers worried by it?
- Why is termination of a contract one of the most difficult decisions you will ever make?
- What is the small print or boilerplate? Do you need to bother with it, or can you sign it and forget it?

Course Leader

Richard Stephens runs his own practice as a lawyer in the IT sector and also provides Alternative Dispute Resolution services by acting as mediator and arbitrator in IT cases. Richard is very well known in the IT Law arena, being recognised as a leader in his field by Chambers Guide to the Legal Profession. He served for some 7 years as a trustee of the Society for Computers & Law (the last two as Chairman). He is now a Fellow of the Society for Computers & Law as well as a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators.

Testimonials

"I have been on many courses since university but this was the best course I have ever been on"
Commercial manager attending a similar in-house seminar run by the speaker

“Richard's seminar was, in truth, a master class. Absolutely superb. Rich in content and delivered with humour too. Well done Richard. Only problem.....it gets me thinking about all those exclusion clauses, indemnities etc. etc. Ah well.”

Private practice lawyer after attending the speaker's annual contracts update for the Society for Computers & Law

Venue	Intellect Conference Suite, Russell Square House
Max	12
Duration	Half day
Time	13:30-17:00
Fee	Intellect members £249+VAT non-member £449+VAT