



Effective legal drafting

What's it about?

Clients expect their law firms (and businesses expect their internal legal teams) to deliver high-quality agreements on ever-tighter budgets. As a former dispute resolution partner in a global law firm, Cathy understands the importance of managing legal risk by drafting clearly, succinctly and unambiguously. She developed this course after analysing the skills needed to be an excellent transactional drafter. You'll learn how to draft confidently and flexibly to create user-friendly agreements that achieve their objectives.

What does it cover?

The course is flexible in length and scope. The full course is four modules, ideally attended in order, but we can tailor it to your organisation's needs. Modules 1 and 3 are most suitable for more junior lawyers. Modules 2 and 4 are suitable for all. We like, where possible, to reinforce your house style. There are practical exercises throughout, taken from real agreements, to stretch delegates and to embed the learning.

Module 1 – Taking the right approach

- Our role as lawyers drafting agreements
- The importance of asking the right questions
- Identifying and allocating risks
- The structure of a typical agreement
- How might the court interpret your drafting? Lessons from case law

Module 2 – User-friendly drafting

- What does effective legal drafting look like?
- Structuring a clause
- Six principles of a user-friendly drafting style (with exercises):
 - Choose the active voice.
 - Keep your sentences short, particularly by dividing into sub-clauses.
 - Don't use a long word if there's a shorter one that means the same.
 - Don't use three words if one would do.
 - Avoid (or explain) jargon, including legal jargon and the word "shall"
 - Don't turn verbs into nouns.

Module 3 – Drafting confidently “from scratch” and using precedents wisely

- Using a four-stage approach to draft clauses or whole agreements when there's no template or precedent
- Some pitfalls with precedents and templates
- Making best use of precedents and templates

Module 4 – “White-water drafting”

- Language that causes more than its fair share of disputes
- Drafting flexibly to reduce legal risk
- Quiz on standard “boilerplate” language clarifying the English legal meaning of some common legal words and phrases

What do people think of the course?

“Cathy is a spectacular lecturer and a fantastic teacher. Her exercises are both engaging and thought provoking. I am very grateful to have attended her drafting sessions as it has exposed me to new tools and ways of looking at language. Cathy’s tips are insightful and relevant, and she often employs memorable and useful examples. Highly recommended.”

“I undertook Cathy’s effective legal drafting course as part of my law firm’s development programme for associates and trainees. Cathy is a great communicator and has put together a fantastic, interactive and engaging course. The materials were very well pitched and Cathy’s delivery was excellent. I thoroughly enjoyed attending each session and left having learnt something new. I would strongly recommend Cathy’s effective legal drafting course.”

“This course perfectly matched the theory of legal drafting with practical exercises, which is key when drafting. Cathy is an excellent trainer and has a lovely delivery style. I couldn’t recommend this course more to any lawyer in the firm.”

“Cathy is excellent – her expertise is second to none and she always makes what could be a really dry topic interesting, engaging (and eye-opening!); all the more impressive given the technological constraints we are working under.”

“There is nothing better than interactive, targeted learning. This ticked all the boxes and is one of the best training sessions I have been to since I joined the firm. More please.”

Interested?

Email cathy@cathywilcoxtraining.com or call us on +44 7771 842830.