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COURSE BROCHURE

Public Sector Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Course

22 – 26 November 2026
Muscat

Public Sector Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Course

Ref: 1503_55629 **Date:** 22 – 26 November 2026 **Location:** Muscat **Fees:** 5500 GBP

Public Sector Critical Thinking and Problem Solving is a 1-week training course for managers, analysts and supervisors in public agencies, and it ends with a decision brief each participant prepares on a live service problem. Tighter budgets and closer scrutiny from auditors mean reasoning must now stand up to public challenge. Jupiter Prime Training offers this public sector critical thinking and problem solving course.

Why Public Sector Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Matter Now

Three pressures shape public sector critical thinking and problem solving today. Citizens complain quickly when queues or errors persist. Oversight bodies and audit offices expect every recommendation to show its evidence, assumptions and alternatives. Policy problems such as hospital waiting times or municipal permit backlogs cross several agencies, so no single unit owns the cause. Agencies that reason carefully spend public money on causes rather than symptoms; those that jump to familiar fixes repeat failures. The course draws on the Paul-Elder critical thinking framework, argument mapping, the 5 Whys and Ishikawa cause-and-effect analysis, and multi-criteria decision analysis MCDA.

Who Gains Most from Public Sector Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

- Officers who prepare recommendations and briefing notes for directors and committees
- Analysts who examine service performance figures and citizen complaints
- Supervisors who resolve recurring operational problems in front-line service units
- Policy staff who compare options for new rules, schemes or service changes
- Middle managers who must defend decisions in front of audit and oversight reviewers

Cross-agency working groups gain most when several members attend together, sharing one language for defining problems.

Public Sector Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Capabilities

Participants practise separating claims from evidence, tracing service failures to their causes and choosing options that can be defended in public.

- Assess the reasoning behind a policy proposal using the elements of thought — director briefings
- Build argument maps that expose premises, objections and gaps — committee recommendations
- Test assumptions for cognitive bias such as anchoring and confirmation — audit challenges
- Apply 5 Whys and fishbone analysis to recurring service failures — operational fixes
- Weigh options against explicit criteria with a decision matrix — budget and resource choices

- Communicate a reasoned recommendation in a concise decision brief — senior officials and oversight bodies

Key Public Sector Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Terms

- Critical thinking — Disciplined evaluation of information, arguments and assumptions to reach well-reasoned conclusions that others can examine.
- Argument map — A diagram showing a conclusion, the reasons that support it, the objections against it and how they connect.
- Cognitive bias — A systematic pattern of error in judgement, such as anchoring or confirmation bias, that distorts decisions.
- Root cause — The underlying condition which, if removed, stops a problem from recurring rather than only easing its symptoms.
- Problem statement — A short, specific description of the gap between current and desired performance, free of assumed solutions.
- Multi-criteria decision analysis MCDA — A method for scoring options against weighted criteria to make trade-offs explicit and comparable.

Public Sector Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Day by Day

Day 1: Reasoning in a Public Accountability Setting

- Paul-Elder Elements of Thought — Testing the Logic of Policy Proposals
- Claims, Evidence and Inference — Separating Opinion from Verified Facts
- Public Value Lens — Framing Problems Around Citizen Outcomes
- Stakeholder Perspective Mapping — Seeing Issues From Several Agencies
- Problem Statement Drafting — Defining Gaps Without Assumed Solutions

Day 2: Arguments, Evidence and Bias

- Argument Mapping Technique — Exposing Premises, Objections and Gaps
- Source Credibility Checks — Judging Reports, Statistics and Testimony
- Cognitive Bias Catalogue — Spotting Anchoring, Confirmation and Groupthink
- Logical Fallacy Recognition — Challenging Weak Reasoning in Meetings
- Pre-Mortem Exercise — Surfacing Hidden Assumptions Before Commitment

Day 3: Finding Root Causes of Service Failures

- 5 Whys Questioning — Moving From Symptoms to Underlying Causes
- Ishikawa Fishbone Diagram — Organising Causes Across People and Process
- Process Walk and Service Blueprint — Locating Delay and Error Points
- Pareto Analysis of Complaints — Prioritising the Causes That Matter
- Issue Tree Decomposition — Breaking Cross-Agency Problems Into Parts

Day 4: Generating and Choosing Options

- Structured Brainstorming and SCAMPER — Widening the Range of Remedies
- Option Appraisal Criteria — Agreeing Cost, Equity, Feasibility and Risk
- MCDA Decision Matrix — Weighing Trade-Offs Transparently
- Sensitivity Testing of Weights — Checking How Robust a Choice Is
- Implementation Risk Screening — Anticipating Resistance and Side Effects

Day 5: Practising the Public Service Decision Brief

- Case Problem Definition — Applying Day 1 Problem Statements
- Cause Analysis on a Live Case — Applying Day 3 Fishbone and 5 Whys
- Option Scoring Panel — Applying Day 4 Decision Matrix
- Peer Challenge Round — Defending Reasoning Against Day 2 Bias Checks
- Public Service Decision Brief — Presenting a Reasoned, Evidence-Based Recommendation

Applying Public Sector Critical Thinking and Problem Solving After the Course

- Run a fishbone and 5 Whys session with colleagues on the most frequent citizen complaint in the unit.
- Rewrite one pending recommendation as an argument map and decision matrix before it goes to a director.

Public Sector Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Questions FAQ

What is public sector critical thinking and problem solving, and why does it matter now?

It is the disciplined use of evidence, logic and structured methods to define and resolve public service problems. It matters now because citizens, auditors and elected officials expect every recommendation to show its reasoning and alternatives.

Which roles gain most from public sector critical thinking and problem solving training?

Managers, analysts and supervisors in government bodies gain most, especially those who write briefing notes or fix recurring service failures in areas such as health services and municipal licensing.

How does public sector critical thinking and problem solving differ from a general creative problem-solving course?

It centres on accountable reasoning in a public setting: evidence quality, bias checks and transparent option appraisal. A creative problem-solving course stresses idea generation instead.

What do you bring back from public sector critical thinking and problem solving training?

You bring back a decision brief on a real problem from your agency, with cause analysis and a scored option comparison.

Public Sector Critical Thinking and Problem Solving: The Way Forward

The public service decision brief sets out a defined problem, its causes, the options considered and the reasoned choice. Its first use is supporting a director or committee decision on a live service issue. After the first decision, revisit whether the criteria weights reflected what citizens and oversight reviewers actually valued.