CONCEPT

Legal Interpretation: Rules of Construction for Statutes, Regulations and Contracts

21 – 25 June 2027
Amsterdam - Zuidas business district hotel



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Ref: 869_20808 **Date:** 21 – 25 June 2027 **Location:** Amsterdam - Zuidas business district hotel **Fees:** 23500 SAR

Introduction:

When a provision can bear two readings, organisations act on the wrong one: a licence condition is breached, a circular is applied beyond its reach, or a clause is enforced against its drafter. This Core Concept course builds legal interpretation skill for lawyers and regulatory counsel who construe statutes, implementing regulations, circulars and contracts. It works through the hierarchy of norms, the literal, grammatical, systematic, purposive and historical methods, the canons of construction and conflict maxims, and ends with each participant writing a Reasoned Interpretive Opinion on a disputed provision from a case file.

Course Objectives:

- Rank competing provisions by their place in the hierarchy of norms and explain why a lower instrument cannot override a higher one
- Apply literal, grammatical, systematic, purposive and historical methods to the same wording and justify the reading adopted
- Resolve apparent conflicts and gaps between provisions using lex superior, lex specialis, lex posterior and analogy
- Construe implementing regulations, circulars, guidance notes, definitions and cross-references within the limits of their enabling text
- Interpret contract terms by common intention, whole-instrument reading and contra proferentem, and test the result against the surrounding wording
- Produce a Reasoned Interpretive Opinion that sets out the disputed text, rival readings, the canons applied and a defended conclusion

Target Audience:

- In-house lawyers who advise management on the meaning and reach of statutory and contractual provisions
- Legal advisers who answer interpretive queries from business units, boards and counterparties
- Regulatory officers who draft, apply or explain implementing rules, circulars and guidance
- Compliance counsel who translate rule wording into internal controls and must defend that reading
- Legislative and policy drafters who need to anticipate how their text will be construed

Course Outline:

Day 1: Why Interpretation Matters and the Hierarchy of Norms

- Interpretive Dispute Anatomy: Ambiguity, Vagueness, Omission and Contradiction
- Hierarchy of Norms Pyramid: Constitution, Statute, Implementing Regulation, Circular and Internal Policy
- Enabling Clause Test: Whether a Subordinate Instrument Stays Within Its Delegated Power
- Clear Text Doctrine: When No Interpretation Is Needed and When It Is Unavoidable
- Interpretive Risk Scan of a Sample Regulatory Instrument Portfolio

Day 2: Methods of Interpretation and Canons of Construction

- Literal and Grammatical Method: Ordinary Meaning, Syntax and Punctuation Effects
- Golden Rule and the Absurdity Exception to Plain Meaning
- Mischief Rule and the Purposive Approach: Reading Toward the Remedy Sought
- Systematic and Historical Method: Placement, Structure and Evolution of the Provision
- Textual Canons: Ejusdem Generis, Expressio Unius, Noscitur a Sociis and the Rule Against Surplusage

Day 3: Construing Regulations, Circulars, Definitions and Cross-References

- Implementing Regulation Reading Grid: Enabling Text, Scope Article and Transitional Provisions
- Circulars, Guidance Notes and FAQs: Persuasive Weight Versus Binding Force
- Definitions Clause Analysis: Means Versus Includes, Defined Terms and Scope Creep
- Cross-Reference Tracing Map for Chained Articles, Schedules and Annexes
- Exceptions and Provisos Construed Narrowly: Burden and Scope Testing

Day 4: Conflicts, Gaps, Contract Construction and Preparatory Works

- Conflict Maxims Decision Tree: Lex Superior, Lex Specialis and Lex Posterior
- Gap Filling by Analogy, General Principles and In Pari Materia Reading
- Contract Construction: Common Intention, Whole-Instrument Reading and Contra Proferentem
- Preparatory Works, Explanatory Memoranda and Legislative History as Extrinsic Aids
- Ambiguity-Proof Drafting Checklist Derived From Recurrent Interpretive Disputes

Day 5: Case File Practice and the Reasoned Interpretive Opinion

- Case File Briefing: Disputed Licence Condition, Circular and Supply Clause
- Rival Readings Matrix: Textual, Structural and Purposive Arguments Side by Side
- Reasoned Interpretive Opinion Drafting: Question, Text, Readings, Canons and Conclusion
- Interpretive Argument Section for a Brief to a Tribunal or Regulator
- Opinion Defence Before a Peer Bench Acting as Adjudicator

Skills You Will Gain:

- Normative Hierarchy Analysis
- Canon Selection and Weighting
- Purposive Reading
- Norm Conflict Resolution
- Subordinate Instrument Vires Testing
- Contract Construction
- Extrinsic Aid Evaluation
- Interpretive Opinion Writing

Why Attend This Course:

- Leave with a Reasoned Interpretive Opinion on a disputed provision, tested before a peer bench
- Explain to management why one reading of a rule is stronger than another, with the canons that support it
- Spot circulars and guidance that reach beyond their enabling text before acting on them
- Compare interpretive practice with counsel and regulators from finance, energy, health, telecoms and public bodies

Conclusion:

Reliable legal interpretation turns a contested sentence into a defensible position. The week moves from the hierarchy of norms and the risk of misreading, through literal, grammatical, systematic, purposive and historical methods and the textual canons, to implementing regulations, circulars, definitions and cross-references, and then to conflict maxims, gap filling, contract construction and preparatory works. The final day applies these tools to a case file and produces a Reasoned Interpretive Opinion. The course explains general principles and is not legal advice.