MERCURY

Strategic Payroll Leadership and Compensation Governance

27 June – 8 July 2027
Sharm El-Sheikh (Egypt)

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Ref: 121847_1054466 **Date:** 27 June – 8 July 2027 **Location:** Sharm El-Sheikh (Egypt) **Fees:** 9000 Euro

Strategic Payroll Leadership and Compensation Governance is a 2-week course for heads of payroll, reward leaders and finance partners who answer to the board for pay accuracy, controls and reward spend. You design an operating model, set governance and controls, review pay structures and incentive plans and build performance measures, and you take back a Payroll Governance Charter. Mercury Training Center delivers this strategic payroll leadership course.

About This Course

Many pay functions still run as back-office processing, so policy gaps, weak segregation of duties, uneven pay structures and unclear ownership only surface after an audit finding or an employee complaint. To follow the course you should already run or oversee pay operations or reward. You practice on policies, control matrices and pay data.

Who It Is For

- Heads of pay operations who own accuracy, timeliness and controls across entities.
- Reward and benefits leaders who design salary structures and incentive plans.
- Finance partners who approve pay budgets and reconcile labor costs.
- Shared services leaders who run or outsource pay processing.
- HR and HRIS leaders who own people data, systems and integrations.

This course is not for staff who mainly need to process monthly pay runs, who are better served by a pay administration fundamentals course, nor for readers whose main goal is applying AI tools to HR data, who suit an AI and analytics course for HR.

Competencies You Will Build

- Operating Model Design: you choose between in-house, outsourced, shared service and center of excellence models and justify the choice.
- Governance and Policy: you write pay policies, approval rules and a RACI that auditors can test.
- Control Design: you set segregation of duties, reconciliations and fraud checks and test them.
- Reward Structure Review: you analyze grades, ranges, variable pay and pay equity against the budget.
- Performance Measurement: you define accuracy, timeliness, cost and service KPIs and report them to leadership.
- Change Leadership: you lead system, process and team changes with stakeholders from HR, finance and IT.

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What You Will Be Able to Do

By the end of the course you will be able to:

- From a current process map, identify control gaps and redesign the approval and reconciliation steps.
- Given operating costs and service levels, compare in-house, outsourced and shared service options and recommend one.
- Using salary data and market benchmarks, assess grade ranges, compa-ratios and pay equity gaps.
- From an incentive plan, test its cost, payout curve and link to performance.
- Given audit and incident records, rank pay risks and build a control matrix with owners.
- Using monthly results, build a leadership dashboard with KPIs and trend commentary.

Course Content

Day 1: The Pay Function as a Business Partner

- Pay as a Strategic Function: Cost, Risk and Employee Trust
- Roles and Responsibilities of Pay Leaders
- Operating Models: In-House, Outsourced and Hybrid
- Shared Service Centers and Centers of Excellence
- Multi-Entity and Cross-Border Pay Trends and Mobility

Day 2: Governance Frameworks and Policy

- Governance Framework and RACI for Pay Decisions
- Pay Policies, Approval Limits and Documentation Standards
- Employment and Tax Rules Across Entities: Tracking and Ownership
- Regulatory Risk Register for Pay Operations
- Tax Governance and Statutory Reporting Calendars

Day 3: Controls, Audit and Fraud Prevention

- Segregation of Duties in Pay Processing
- Pre- and Post-Run Reconciliations to the General Ledger
- Ghost Employee, Overpayment and Manual Adjustment Fraud Checks
- Internal and External Pay Audits: Preparation and Follow-Up
- Control Matrix Design With Owners and Test Steps

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Day 4: Data Protection and Continuity

- Data Protection Requirements for Employee Pay Records
- Access Rights and Cybersecurity Threats to Pay Systems
- Business Continuity Planning for Pay Day
- Disaster Recovery and Manual Fallback Procedures
- Vendor Oversight for Outsourced Processing

Day 5: Reward Structures

- Job Grading and Salary Range Design
- Compa-Ratio and Range Penetration Analysis
- Market Benchmarking and Pay Positioning
- Pay Equity Analysis and Fair Pay Reviews
- Benefits Strategy and Total Reward Statements

Day 6: Variable Pay and Executive Reward

- Short-Term Incentive Plan Design and Payout Curves
- Sales Commission and Bonus Governance
- Executive Compensation Components and Approval
- Labor Cost Budgeting and Forecasting
- Reward Committee Papers and Disclosure

Day 7: Systems and Integration

- HRIS, Time and Attendance and Pay Engine Integration
- ERP Pay Solutions: SAP, Oracle HCM and Microsoft Dynamics
- API Links and Data Flows to Finance
- Cloud Pay Platforms: Selection and Migration
- Robotic Process Automation and AI-Assisted Validation Checks

Day 8: Measures and Leadership Reporting

- Accuracy, Timeliness, Cost-Per-Payslip and Service KPIs
- Labor Cost Analytics and Variance Explanations
- Leadership Dashboards and Data Visualization
- Employee Query Handling, Self-Service and Chatbots
- Ethical Use of AI and Generative Tools in Pay Operations

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Day 9: Leading Change and the Team

- Stakeholder Mapping Across HR, Finance and IT
- Pay Transformation Project Planning
- Building and Developing a High-Performing Pay Team
- Leadership Communication on Pay Errors and Changes
- ESG Reporting on Pay and Workforce Data

Day 10: Practice Building the Payroll Governance Charter

- Exercise: Operating Model Choice for a Multi-Entity Group
- Exercise: Control Matrix for a High-Risk Pay Process
- Exercise: Salary Range and Pay Equity Review
- Exercise: Leadership Dashboard and Briefing
- Completing the Payroll Governance Charter for Your Organization

Case Studies and Exercises

These are suggested activities.

- Case study: a retail group pays staff across several entities with different processes and an audit finds duplicate payments; you redesign controls and ownership.
- Case study: a hospital considers outsourcing pay processing; you compare cost, risk and service and recommend a model.
- Exercise: a bank's incentive plan pays out even in weak years; you test the payout curve and propose changes for the reward committee.
- Exercise: an engineering contractor's mobile workforce causes frequent pay errors; you build KPIs and a dashboard to track and reduce them.

What You Take Back

The Payroll Governance Charter is the document you complete for your own organization during the course. In your first month back, you use it to agree ownership and approval limits with HR and finance leaders, test the highest-risk controls and launch a monthly KPI report.

- An operating model and RACI.
- Pay policies and a control matrix with owners.
- A reward structure and pay equity review.
- A KPI dashboard and an improvement plan.

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Quick Answers FAQ

What should I know before strategic payroll leadership training?

You should already run or oversee pay processing, reward or related finance work and know your organization's pay calendar and systems. Bring your current policies and control documents if you can.

How does strategic payroll leadership training differ from an AI course for payroll and HR?

It concentrates on leading and governing the function: operating models, controls, audits, reward structures and performance measures. AI courses focus on applying automation, analytics and generative tools to pay and HR data.

What is segregation of duties in payroll governance?

It means no single person can create an employee, change pay data, run the payroll and release payment alone. Splitting these steps between people, with reviews and reconciliations, reduces error and fraud risk.

What do I take back from Strategic Payroll Leadership and Compensation Governance?

You take back the Payroll Governance Charter for your organization: an operating model and RACI, policies and a control matrix, a reward structure review and a KPI dashboard with an improvement plan.

For Your Manager

After the course, the team member can design the pay operating model, set governance and controls, review reward structures and report performance to leadership. They return with a Payroll Governance Charter, first used to agree ownership and approval limits with HR and finance and to test the highest-risk controls.