

Legal English Seminar: *Understanding the Language of Commercial Contracts*
Written / taught by ANNA McKEOWN – legal English consultant, Dublin, Ireland

Participants: lawyers and trainee lawyers who deal with commercial contracts in English in their work.

Aim of the course: to increase the participants' awareness of the significance and function of language in the context of commercial contracts and to enable them to read, interpret and discuss such texts with increased accuracy and confidence. It is **not** a course in English law.

Level of the course: A good working knowledge of English is required. Participants should be able to understand spoken English with few problems. The use of English will involve reading and discussing legal documents.

Content of the course: The course is offered on an in-company basis. The program is short (12 hours contact time) and highly intensive. The materials have been specially developed for the course and focus on the following:

The Language of Contracts

- Typical format and structure of a commercial contract
- Identification of typical commercial provisions and standard boilerplate clauses found in contracts, as well as analysis of the language found in them
- Awareness of the function and possible interpretation of particular legal terms and technical language used in commercial contracts.
- Avoidance of unnecessary legal jargon and old-fashioned language.
- Significance and possible interpretation of particular non-legal words, when used in commercial contracts.
- Use and possible interpretation of time expressions in commercial contracts.
- Sentence structure, word order and use of punctuation in commercial contract clauses.

Legal English consultant Anna McKeown *is an Irish lawyer with extensive language teaching experience. She holds an RSA Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language and a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics from the University of Edinburgh.*

For more than 12 years, she has taught legal and business English in Paris, Edinburgh, Prague, Rome, London, Vienna and Cambridge, both with the British Council and with a number of prestigious institutions and universities.