Advanced Ground Handling and SLA Management Training Course



16 - 20 Nov 2026

Lisbon

4500 € (Per Person)

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Course Introduction / Overview:

Effective ground handling is the cornerstone of airline operational efficiency, safety, and passenger satisfaction. This comprehensive training course delves into the critical functions of airport ground services and the strategic management of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) that govern them. In an industry where punctuality and safety are paramount, mastering the intricacies of ground operations and contractual obligations is essential for success. This program, offered by BIG BEN Training Center, provides a holistic view, bridging the gap between operational execution and commercial management. We will explore best practices in ramp, passenger, and cargo handling, guided by international standards. The course draws on principles discussed by leading aviation experts like Dr. Rigas Doganis, whose work in books such as "Flying Off Course: The Economics of International Airlines" highlights the impact of operational efficiency on airline profitability. Participants will gain the skills to not only manage day-to-day operations but also to negotiate, implement, and monitor robust SLAs that drive performance, ensure compliance, and foster strong partnerships between airlines and service providers, ultimately enhancing the entire aviation value chain.

Target Audience / This training course is suitable for:

- Airline Station Managers.
- Airport Operations Managers.
- Ground Handling Duty Managers and Supervisors.
- Airline and Airport Contract Managers.
- Procurement and Sourcing Specialists in Aviation.
- Quality Assurance and Compliance Officers.
- Aviation Safety and Security Managers.
- Ground Service Provider Management Teams.
- Airline Ground Operations Auditors.
- Civil Aviation Authority Officials.

Target Sectors and Industries:

- Commercial Airlines.
- Airport Authorities and Operators.
- Ground Handling Service Companies.
- Cargo and Logistics Operators.
- Corporate and Private Jet Operators.
- Military Airbase Operations.
- Governmental bodies and Civil Aviation Authorities.
- Aviation Consulting Firms.

Target Organizations Departments:

- Operations Department.
- Procurement and Contracts Department.
- Quality Assurance and Control Department.
- Safety and Security Department.
- Commercial and Business Development Department.
- Finance and Auditing Department.
- Logistics and Supply Chain Management.
- Customer Service Department.

Course Offerings:

By the end of this course, the participants will have able to:

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of all facets of airport ground handling operations.
- Analyze, draft, and negotiate effective Service Level Agreements (SLAs).
- Implement Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to monitor and improve ground handling performance.
- Manage aircraft turnaround processes efficiently to minimize ground time.
- Ensure adherence to international safety, security, and quality standards.
- Optimize the use of Ground Support Equipment (GSE) and human resources.
- Conduct effective audits of ground handling services and ensure regulatory compliance.
- Manage the commercial and contractual relationship between airlines and handlers.
- Implement strategies for cost control and operational efficiency in ground services.
- Address and manage emergency situations and disruptions effectively.

Course Methodology:

The training methodology at BIG BEN Training Center is designed to be highly interactive, engaging, and practical, ensuring that participants can immediately apply their learning in a real-world context. We move beyond traditional lectures to create a dynamic learning environment that fosters collaboration and critical thinking. The course incorporates a blend of expert-led presentations, detailed case studies of real-world ground handling scenarios, and interactive group discussions where participants can share experiences and solve problems collectively. Practical exercises and simulation activities will be used to reinforce key concepts related to SLA negotiation and operational planning. Participants will work in teams on projects that challenge them to develop and present solutions to complex ground handling issues. Continuous feedback is provided by the instructor throughout the course to guide learning and development. This hands-on, participant-centered approach ensures a deep and lasting understanding of ground handling management and SLA principles, equipping attendees with both the knowledge and the confidence to excel in their roles.

Course Agenda (Course Units):

Unit One Introduction to Airport Ground Handling

- The Role and Scope of Ground Handling in the Aviation Ecosystem.
- Key Stakeholders: Airlines, Airports, Handlers, and Authorities.
- Regulatory Frameworks: IATA, ICAO, and Local Civil Aviation Rules.
- Overview of the IATA Standard Ground Handling Agreement (SGHA).
- Categories of Ground Handling Services: From Passenger to Ramp Handling.
- Economic Impact of Efficient Ground Handling on Airline Operations.
- Introduction to Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and Their Importance.

Unit Two Core Operational Functions and Safety

- Passenger Handling Services: Check-in, Boarding, and Special Assistance.
- Ramp Handling Services: Marshalling, Parking, and Servicing.
- Baggage Handling Processes and Systems from Check-in to Reclamation.
- Aircraft Turnaround Management and Coordination.
- Airside Safety and Security Procedures.
- Management of Ground Support Equipment (GSE).
- Human Factors in Ground Operations to Mitigate Errors.

Unit Three Mastering Service Level Agreements (SLAs)

- The Anatomy of an Effective Ground Handling SLA.
- Drafting Clear and Measurable Service Level Objectives.
- Defining Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Ground Services.
- Negotiation Strategies for Airlines and Ground Handlers.
- Incorporating Bonus, Penalty, and Incentive Clauses.
- Managing SLA Reviews and Performance Meetings.
- Legal and Contractual Aspects of the IATA SGHA.

Unit Four Performance, Quality, and Cost Management

- Developing a Quality Management System (QMS) for Ground Operations.
- Techniques for Monitoring and Measuring Service Performance.
- Conducting Audits and Inspections for Compliance and Quality.
- Root Cause Analysis for Service Failures and Incidents.
- Strategies for Cost Control and Financial Management in Ground Handling.
- Resource Planning and Optimization for Staff and Equipment.
- Benchmarking Performance Against Industry Standards.

Unit Five Future Trends and Advanced Challenges

- The Impact of Digitalization and Technology on Ground Handling.
- Sustainable Ground Handling Practices and Environmental Considerations.
- Emergency Response Planning and Crisis Management.
- Managing Irregular Operations (IROPS) and Disruptions.
- Security Threats and Countermeasures in Ground Services.
- Building and Maintaining Strong Airline-Handler Partnerships.
- The Future of Ground Handling: Automation, Data Analytics, and Innovation.

FAQ:

Qualifications required for registering to this course?

There are no requirements.

How long is each daily session, and what is the total number of training hours for the course?

This training course spans five days, with daily sessions ranging between 4 to 5 hours, including breaks and interactive activities, bringing the total duration to 20 - 25 training hours.

Something to think about:

How can ground handling providers and airlines collaboratively design SLAs that incentivize innovation and sustainability rather than merely penalizing performance failures?

What unique qualities does this course offer compared to other courses?

This training course distinguishes itself by offering a unique, integrated perspective that seamlessly connects the operational realities of ground handling with the strategic, commercial, and legal framework of Service Level Agreements. Unlike programs that focus narrowly on either operations or contract management, this course builds a critical bridge between the two, empowering participants to understand how operational actions impact contractual outcomes and vice versa. The curriculum is deeply rooted in practical application, moving beyond theoretical knowledge to engage participants with real-world case studies, negotiation simulations, and problem-solving workshops based on current industry challenges. Furthermore, the course adopts a forward-looking stance, dedicating significant time to emerging trends such as digitalization, sustainability, and data analytics in ground services. This ensures that attendees are not only proficient in current best practices as defined by IATA standards but are also prepared to lead and innovate in the evolving landscape of aviation. The emphasis on fostering collaborative airline-handler partnerships, rather than purely adversarial contractual relationships, provides a strategic advantage, promoting long-term operational excellence and mutual success.