
AGRC Certificate in Legal Risk - Syllabus

About the Association of Governance, Risk & Compliance (AGRC)

AGRC is a non-profit global professional accreditation & certification organisation & networking platform. AGRC aims to facilitate the exchange of knowledge & sharing of experiences among Compliance, Risk & Governance professionals (GRC) with the goal of growing its community to ensure multi-jurisdictional regulatory compliance in the financial services & exchange values, experiences, expertise & professional opportunities.

Aim of the Certification

This certification equips professionals with the knowledge and tools to identify, assess, and manage legal risks effectively within organisations. It explores the interplay between law, governance, and enterprise risk, and demonstrates how legal risk management supports resilience, compliance, and strategic objectives. The course integrates international standards such as ISO 31000 and ISO 31022, alongside practical frameworks and case studies.

Certificate & Training Hours

The recommended number of learning and training hours is 15 to 20. This does not include additional time studying, revising, and preparing for the exam. A candidate should expect to spend an additional 15 hours of studying time to pass the exam, depending on prior knowledge and/or work experience.

Exam Information

Type of Exam	Multiple-choice questions (MCQs)
Number of Questions	50 questions
Passing Grade or Mark	70/100
Exam Duration	60 minutes
Method of Delivery	Computer-Based

Learning Objectives - Bloom Level

Based on **Bloom's Taxonomy**, AGRC's certificates prepares students to acquire knowledge that covers Bloom Levels 1, 2 and 3.

- **Level 1 – Remember:** Define key concepts of legal risk and ISO standards.
- **Level 2 – Understand:** Explain principles, frameworks, and processes for managing legal risk.
- **Level 3 – Apply:** Implement legal risk management tools and strategies in practical scenarios.

Certificate Content

Chapter 1: Introduction to Legal Risk (1.5 Hours)

Learning Objectives

The students will be able to do the following upon completion of this section:

- ✓ Define legal risk and distinguish it from uncertainty.
- ✓ Explain why legal risk matters in modern organizations.
- ✓ Understand the influence of the “risk society” concept.

1. Defining “Risk” and “Uncertainty”

- i. Risk as a Forward-Looking Concept
- ii. The Role of Uncertainty
- iii. Risk vs. Uncertainty in Legal Contexts

2. Why Legal Risk Matters (Overview of the Risk Society)

- i. Beck, Giddens, and Luhmann’s Influence
- ii. The Legal System as an Abstract System
- iii. Individualisation of Risk and Organised Irresponsibility
- iv. Why Legal Risk Is Now Front and Centre

3. The Emergence of Legal Risk as a Distinct Concept

- i. From Implicit Concern to Named Category
- ii. The Impact of International Standards (ISO 31000 and ISO 31022)
- iii. Common Challenges in Defining Legal Risk

4. Key Objectives of Legal Risk Management

- i. Protecting Assets and Reputation
- ii. Achieving Regulatory Compliance
- iii. Facilitating Informed Decision-Making
- iv. Enhancing Organisational Culture and Accountability
- v. Positioning for Competitive Advantage

Chapter 2: Foundations of Legal Risk in a Risk Society (1.5 Hours)

Learning Objectives

The students will be able to do the following upon completion of this section:

- ✓ Explain the core tenets of the “risk society,” as formulated by Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Niklas Luhmann.
- ✓ Differentiate between traditional hazards and modern “manufactured risks.”
- ✓ Analyse how the principles of reflexivity, individualisation, and organised irresponsibility shape the legal landscape.
- ✓ Describe the role of the legal system as an “abstract system” that both manages and creates risk.

- ✓ Evaluate the importance of risk communication and risk distribution in the context of legal practice.
- ✓ Apply risk society concepts to real-world scenarios in technology, finance and environmental regulation.

1. The Emergence of the Risk Society Concept

- i. Traditional Versus Modern Conceptions of Risk
- ii. The Core Theorists

2. Core Elements of a Risk Society Shaping Legal Risk

- i. Manufactured Risk and Legal Implications
- ii. Reflexivity and Ongoing Legal Reform
- iii. Individualisation and Organised Irresponsibility

3. The Legal System as an Abstract System

4. Risk Communication and Legal Risk

Chapter 3: Overview of a Principle-Based Legal Risk Definition (1 Hour)

Learning Objectives

The students will be able to do the following upon completion of this section:

- ✓ Analyse the common challenges and tensions that make a single, universal definition of legal risk difficult to achieve.
- ✓ Explain the rationale for adopting a principle-based approach to defining legal risk over a rigid, rule-based one.
- ✓ Identify and describe the three core principles for identifying a legal risk: future uncertainty, the availability of legal means, and a material impact on objectives.
- ✓ Apply the three-principle framework to practical scenarios in different sectors, including finance, technology and manufacturing.
- ✓ Evaluate the limitations of a principle-based approach and how they can be mitigated within an organisation.

1. The Challenge of Defining Legal Risk

2. The Rationale for a Principle-Based Approach

3. Proposed Guiding Principles for Identifying Legal Risk

4. Applying the Principles: Practical Examples

- i. M&A Transaction
- ii. Environmental Liability

Chapter 4: Key Concepts from ISO 31022 (1.5 Hours)

Learning Objectives

The students will be able to do the following upon completion of this section:

- ✓ Explain the purpose of ISO 31022 and its relationship to the general risk management standard, ISO 31000.
- ✓ Define legal risk according to the ISO 31022 standard, including its contractual and non-contractual sources.
- ✓ Describe the core components of the ISO 31022 framework, including leadership, integration and design.
- ✓ Outline the steps in the legal risk management process: establishing context, risk identification, analysis, evaluation and treatment.
- ✓ Identify practical tools and techniques, such as risk registers and root cause analysis, for implementing the standard.
- ✓ Analyse how ISO 31022 can be applied in different organisational contexts, such as finance and technology.

1. Background and Relationship to ISO 31000

2. The ISO 31022 Definition of Legal Risk

3. The Framework and Process

- i. The Framework: Building the Foundation
- ii. The Process: The Continuous Cycle of Management

4. Practical Implementation

Chapter 5: Identifying and Defining Legal Risk (1.5 Hours)

Learning Objectives

The students will be able to do the following upon completion of this section:

- ✓ Explain why the clear identification and definition of legal risk is a critical prerequisite for effective management.
- ✓ Identify the persistent challenges in defining legal risk, including its overlap with other risk types and the impact of subjectivity.
- ✓ Compare and contrast different approaches to identifying legal risk, such as checklist-based, taxonomy, event-centric and principle-based methods.
- ✓ Apply a systematic, step-by-step process for identifying and clarifying legal risks within an organisation.
- ✓ Analyse how factors like organisational culture, competence and external expertise influence the success of risk identification.
- ✓ Recognise how identification practices are tailored to specific industry contexts, such as finance and technology.

1. **The Importance of Clear Identification**
2. **Persistent Challenges in Defining and Identifying Legal Risk**
3. **Approaches to Identifying Legal Risk**
 - i. Checklist-Based and Taxonomy Approaches
 - ii. Event-Centric and Principle-Based Approaches
4. **A Step-by-Step Guide to Legal Risk Identification**

Chapter 6: The Legal Risk Management Process (1.5 Hours)

Learning Objectives

The students will be able to do the following upon completion of this section:

- ✓ Outline the stages of the legal risk management process that follow identification: analysis, evaluation and treatment.
- ✓ Describe various tools and techniques for analysing legal risk, such as scenario analysis and qualitative assessment matrices.
- ✓ Explain the purpose of risk evaluation and how risk criteria and heat maps are used to prioritise legal risks.
- ✓ Differentiate between the four primary risk treatment options: avoid, reduce, transfer and accept.
- ✓ Analyse the critical role of ongoing communication, monitoring and review in creating a dynamic and reflexive risk management cycle.
- ✓ Apply the legal risk management process to practical case studies in different industries.

1. **From Identification to Action: An Overview**
2. **Analysis of Legal Risk**
3. **Evaluation of Legal Risk**
4. **Treatment of Legal Risk**
5. **Ongoing Communication, Monitoring and Review**

Chapter 7: Implementation, Roles and Responsibilities (1 Hour)

Learning Objectives

The students will be able to do the following upon completion of this section:

- ✓ Describe typical governance structures for legal risk management, including centralised, decentralised and hybrid models.

- ✓ Outline the specific roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders, from the Board of Directors to frontline employees.
- ✓ Explain the importance of cross-functional collaboration and a proactive culture in overcoming organisational silos.
- ✓ Identify the core competencies and training strategies required to build legal risk management capabilities across an organisation.
- ✓ Analyse how technology and performance measurement can be used to support and reinforce the implementation process.
- ✓ Recognize common obstacles to implementation and strategies to overcome them.

1. The Importance of Implementation Design

2. Organisational Structures for Legal Risk Management

3. Key Roles and Their Responsibilities

4. Cross-Functional Collaboration and Culture

5. Building Competency and Accountability

Chapter 8: Sector-Specific Perspectives on Legal Risk (1 Hour)

Learning Objectives

The students will be able to do the following upon completion of this section:

- ✓ Analyse in depth the primary sources of legal risk in the financial services sector, including regulatory, contractual and operational drivers.
- ✓ Explain how key financial regulations (e.g., AML/KYC, consumer protection, market conduct) create significant legal risk.
- ✓ Compare the legal risk landscape of financial services with that of other major sectors like technology and healthcare.
- ✓ Evaluate how emerging trends like FinTech and ESG are reshaping legal risk for financial institutions.

1. The Rationale for a Sector-Specific Focus

2. Financial Services: A Deep Dive into Legal Risk

- i. The Regulatory Gauntlet
- ii. Contractual and Operational Exposures

3. Contrasting with Other Key Sectors

- i. Technology
- ii. Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals

Chapter 9: Contractual Strategies and Dispute Resolution (1 Hour)

The students will be able to do the following upon completion of this section:

- ✓ Explain how contracts function as primary tools for allocating and mitigating legal risk.
- ✓ Identify key contractual clauses, such as indemnities and limitations of liability, that are used to manage legal risk.
- ✓ Describe the main forms of dispute resolution, including negotiation, mediation, arbitration and litigation.
- ✓ Analyse the strategic considerations for choosing an appropriate dispute resolution mechanism.
- ✓ Outline the components of a proactive dispute management strategy, including early intervention and escalation procedures.

- 1. The Role of Contracts in Shaping Legal Risk**
- 2. Contract Negotiation and Due Diligence**
- 3. Dispute Resolution Fundamentals**
- 4. Proactive Dispute Management**

Chapter 10: Monitoring, Review and Continual Improvement (1 Hour)

The students will be able to do the following upon completion of this section:

- ✓ Explain the critical role of monitoring and review in ensuring a legal risk framework remains effective and relevant.
- ✓ Identify practical tools for monitoring, including Key Risk Indicators (KRIs) and risk dashboards.
- ✓ Describe the function of periodic and event-triggered reviews, as well as the role of internal and external audits.
- ✓ Analyse how organisations can learn from incidents and near-misses to drive continual improvement.
- ✓ Apply the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle as a model for refining legal risk management processes.
- ✓ Recognise common challenges to sustaining a robust monitoring program, such as complacency and resource constraints.

- 1. The Purpose of Monitoring and Review**
- 2. Structuring the Monitoring Process**
- 3. Conducting Reviews and Audits**
- 4. Learning from Incidents and Continual Improvement**

Chapter 11: Ethical and Professional Considerations (1 Hour)

The students will be able to do the following upon completion of this section:

- ✓ Analyse the intersection of legal risk management with ethical and professional obligations.
- ✓ Describe the lawyer's dual role as both a strategic advisor and an ethical gatekeeper.
- ✓ Identify core professional duties for lawyers, such as confidentiality and loyalty, and explain how they impact risk management.
- ✓ Evaluate how conflicts of interest and ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) considerations shape an organisation's legal risk profile.
- ✓ Apply an ethical decision-making framework to complex legal risk scenarios.

1. The Intersection of Ethics and Legal Risk

- i. Beyond Regulatory Compliance
- ii. The Lawyer's Dual Role: Advisor and Gatekeeper

2. Codes of Professional Conduct for Lawyers

3. Corporate Social Responsibility and ESG Imperatives

Chapter 12: Conclusion and Future Outlook (1 Hour)

The students will be able to do the following upon completion of this section:

- ✓ Summarise the core themes of modern legal risk management, including the influence of the "risk society" and the importance of a principle-based approach.
- ✓ Identify the key practical takeaways for professionals responsible for managing legal risk.
- ✓ Analyse the major emerging trends that are shaping the future of legal risk, such as technological disruption, ESG imperatives and regulatory change.
- ✓ Evaluate key recommendations for how organisations can adapt their legal risk frameworks to remain resilient and future-ready.

1. Recap of Core Themes

- i. The Foundations of Modern Legal Risk
- ii. A Practical Framework for Management
- iii. The Indispensable Role of Ethics and Culture

2. Future Outlook: Emerging Challenges and Trends

- i. Technological Disruptions
- ii. ESG and Human Rights Litigation
- iii. Regulatory Complexity and Stakeholder Pressures

3. Recommendations for Ongoing Adaptation