

Policy Analysis Essentials

Course outline

Provided by: Performance Management Consultants – PMC Training



Reference no. 307-17

Duration 1.00 day(s) | 6:00 hours ¹

Website link <https://pmctraining.com/training/policy-analysis-essentials/>

Calibrating analysis to decision needs

The costliest policy mistakes usually happen early. Teams over-analyze low-risk issues or rush early analysis that misses the real decision point, leading to stalled files, rework, and frustration for decision-makers who need clarity early, not volume later.

Policy Analysis Essentials focuses on these critical initial stages, before options harden and momentum is lost. Participants leave able to frame a decision-relevant policy question, make key assumptions explicit, and justify how much evidence is “enough” for the decision at hand when discussing their work with colleagues or supervisors. The emphasis is on proportionate, decision-support analysis so work moves forward with less rework and clearer direction.

The workshop is anchored in PMC’s Q-CASE Decision Support Lens (Question, Context, Assumptions, Sufficiency, and Early Options). It is used throughout the day to help participants calibrate scope, analytical depth, and the role of provisional options in a defensible and consistent way.

This one-day workshop is designed for policy and policy-adjacent professionals who contribute to early analysis and influence direction without owning the final decision.

Learning outcomes

- Frame a clear, decision-relevant policy analysis question that defines the issue and what a decision-maker needs to decide at an early stage.
- Surface the key drivers and assumptions shaping a policy issue, distinguishing root causes from symptoms at a level appropriate for early judgment.
- Use light evidence and contextual scanning to test assumptions and identify what matters most, rather than exhaustively analyzing all factors.
- Judge whether to surface provisional early policy options or hold, based on decision context and decision-maker needs.
- Explain the role and limits of early policy options, including when further analysis may or may not be warranted before narrowing or selection.

¹ The course hours reflect teaching time that often correlate with continuing education credits (CEC) or professional development units (PDU). Please check with your profession’s governing body, as there is no universal approach.

- Use AI-supported tools selectively to support scanning and sense-making, while applying human judgment to validate relevance, sufficiency, and scope.

Workshop topics

Theme 1: Framing Initial Policy Analysis and Decision Context

- Clarifying the role of initial policy analysis in supporting decisions, not making them
- Establishing a shared decision context using PMC's Q-CASE Decision Support Lens
- Orienting analysis before evidence gathering or option development begins

Theme 2: Assumptions, Evidence, and Analytical Sufficiency

- Surfacing the key drivers and assumptions that shape early-stage policy analysis
- Using light evidence and contextual scanning to test assumptions and identify what matters most
- Judging what level of evidence and analysis is sufficient for early decision support

Theme 3: Early Options and Decision Support Boundaries

- Determining whether to surface provisional early policy options or hold, based on context and decision-maker needs
- Clarifying the role and limits of early options as inputs to direction-setting, not recommendations
- Explaining when further analysis may or may not be warranted before narrowing or selection

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this workshop

Who should attend this course?

Policy and policy-adjacent professionals who contribute to initial policy analysis by framing issues, surfacing assumptions, or shaping early thinking to support decision-making. This workshop is well suited to those who influence direction and are expected to exercise judgment, without owning final policy decisions.