

The Power of Persuasion: Professional Debate & TED Talk Excellence Programme

1. Introduction

The ability to communicate ideas clearly, think critically, and present persuasive arguments has become an essential competency for professionals across all sectors. Whether proposing new initiatives, defending recommendations, participating in meetings, engaging stakeholders, or delivering presentations, individuals are expected to communicate with confidence, credibility, and clarity.

Despite possessing strong technical knowledge and professional expertise, many individuals face challenges in organising their ideas logically, responding effectively to opposing viewpoints, managing presentation anxiety, and delivering impactful messages that influence audiences. As a result, valuable ideas are often overlooked because they are not communicated persuasively.

Debating is more than a competitive activity. It is a structured platform that develops analytical thinking, critical reasoning, strategic communication, teamwork, active listening, and persuasive speaking. Likewise, TED Talk-style presentations enable participants to transform complex ideas into inspiring narratives that educate, motivate, and influence audiences. Together, these competencies strengthen participants' ability to communicate professionally in both formal and informal settings.

This programme has been specifically designed to combine structured learning with extensive practical application. Participants will learn internationally recognised debate formats, debate preparation strategies, argument development techniques, and effective rebuttal methods before applying these skills through guided debate simulations. In addition, participants will develop impactful presentation skills through a TED Talk competition that allows them to demonstrate their communication abilities while receiving professional evaluation and constructive feedback.

Unlike conventional communication programmes that focus primarily on theory, this workshop emphasises experiential learning, continuous coaching, real-time performance evaluation, and personalised feedback. Participants will leave the programme with practical techniques, greater confidence, and actionable recommendations that can be immediately applied in the workplace, professional engagements, and future public speaking opportunities.

2. Programme Objectives

This programme aims to:

1. Develop participants' confidence and competence in structured debating and persuasive communication.
2. Equip participants with practical techniques to prepare, organise, and deliver convincing arguments based on recognised debate standards.
3. Strengthen participants' critical thinking, analytical reasoning, rebuttal skills, and teamwork during debate sessions.

4. Enhance participants' public speaking and presentation effectiveness through TED Talk-style presentations and professional evaluation.

3. Learning Outcomes

After completion of this programme, participants should be able to:

1. Explain the principles, rules, and Terms of Reference (TOR) governing formal debates.
2. Develop logical, evidence-based, and persuasive debate arguments.
3. Apply effective rebuttal and questioning techniques during debates.
4. Demonstrate confidence and professionalism when communicating before an audience.
5. Deliver engaging TED Talk-style presentations using persuasive communication and storytelling techniques.
6. Evaluate personal communication strengths and areas for improvement through structured feedback.
7. Apply practical strategies to continuously improve debate, presentation, and public speaking performance.

4. Methodology

- Interactive lectures
- Group discussions
- Demonstrations
- Debate simulations
- Individual presentations
- TED Talk practice
- Coaching and mentoring
- Video review
- Peer learning
- Professional evaluation and feedback

5. Programme Outline

Day 1

Module 1: Foundations of Effective Debating

- The importance of debating in professional environments
- Characteristics of effective debaters
- Principles of persuasive communication
- Building confidence as a speaker
- Common mistakes in debates and presentations

Module 2: Understanding Debate Rules, Formats and Terms of Reference (TOR)

- Introduction to the Terms of Reference (TOR)
- Roles and responsibilities of debate participants
- Debate rules and etiquette
- Debate formats and structures
- Time management during debates
- Judging criteria and scoring system

Module 3: Preparing Winning Debate Arguments

- Understanding assigned debate motions

- Research and evidence gathering
- Constructing persuasive arguments
- Logical reasoning techniques
- Anticipating opposing arguments
- Preparing effective rebuttals
- Team preparation strategies

Module 4: Practical Debate Simulation

- Team preparation
- Opening speeches
- Rebuttal sessions
- Closing arguments
- Facilitated coaching
- Performance review
- Individual feedback

Day 2

Module 5: Advanced Debate Strategies

- Advanced rebuttal techniques
- Strategic questioning
- Critical listening skills
- Managing pressure during debates
- Persuasive language techniques
- Voice projection and body language
- Influencing judges and audiences

Module 6: Delivering Impactful TED Talk Presentations

- Understanding the TED Talk presentation approach
- Structuring compelling presentations
- Storytelling techniques
- Audience engagement strategies
- Presentation delivery skills
- Stage presence and confidence
- Managing presentation anxiety

Module 7: TED Talk Competition

- Individual TED Talk presentations
- Professional judging based on established evaluation criteria
- Assessment of content quality
- Presentation structure
- Storytelling effectiveness
- Delivery and communication style
- Audience engagement
- Overall presentation impact

Module 8: Performance Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

- Individual performance review
- Identification of strengths
- Areas for improvement
- Professional feedback from judges
- Personal development recommendations

- Strategies for continuous improvement
- Reflection and programme conclusion