
Fact Sheet – 5101

Medical Advisors / MSLs On-Boarding Training
Programs: Key Metrics on Time Allocation and
Methodologies



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Medical Science Liaisons On-Boarding Training: Key Metrics on Time Allocation and Methodologies

Foreword

Establishing proven and rigorous on-boarding training programs ensures that new hires quickly acquire the knowledge and ability to conduct their assigned tasks. Companies also benefit from having new employees very well prepared to execute their job because they not only contribute to the organization in a timely fashion, but also ensures new MSLs take on their responsibilities with higher confidence.

In this article, Arx Research reveals key on-boarding training time allocation and methodologies used by more than 35 medical affairs executives.

Medical Science Liaisons (MSLs) need to uphold higher standards, and develop and maintain quality relationships with thought leaders. Thought leaders often sense “green” and stale MSLs and will give more time to those who are up-to-date on recent publications, product features and industry highlights than to those who rehash the same content from one meeting to another or simply are not “on the ball.” Therefore, the need for well-trained first-class MSLs is imperative to the success of both the MSLs and their organizations.

Though formal training programs have long been in place, many of them have not adapted as the MSL function evolved. Even as recently as a few years ago, a handful of companies still didn’t have established processes in place to provide on-boarding and continuous training to their MSLs; instead these companies frequently scrambled to assemble *ad hoc* trainings when major changes affected their MSLs’ roles.

While the [full study](#) presents best practices, gather insights and develop benchmarks for on-boarding and continuous training programs provided to MSLs, this article zeroed in on the time allocated and methodologies used to provide training.

Key Metrics on Hours of On-Boarding Training

The number of total hours allocated to on-boarding training varies significantly by company.

Figure A below shows programs' total number of training hours provided to new hires, arranged by group of hours.

Total Hours of On-Boarding Training Programs by Group

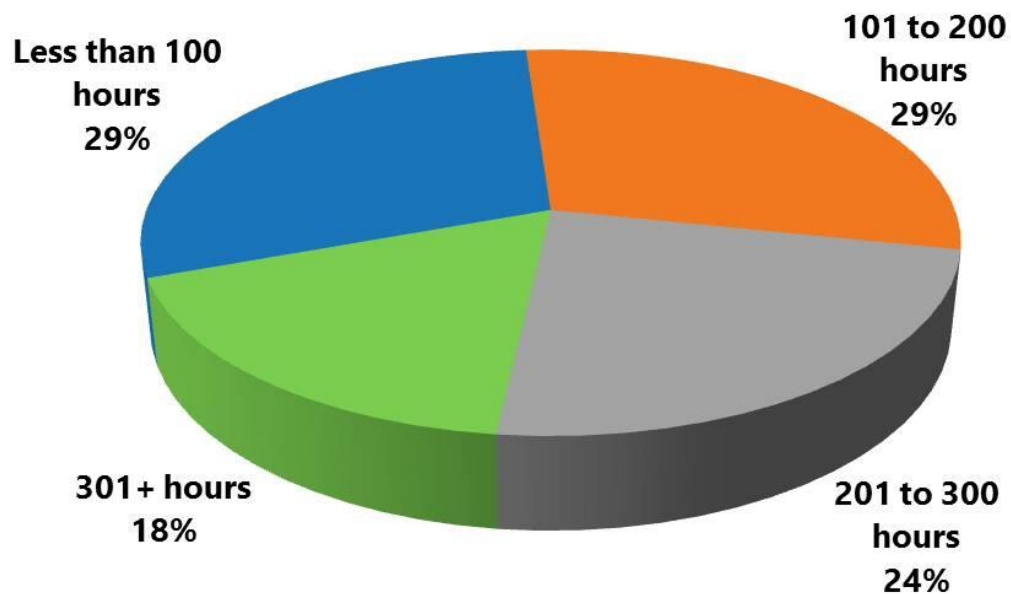


Figure A: Total Hours of On-Boarding Training Programs by Group

Most surveyed companies provide less than 200 hours of training (58%), while close to a quarter require between 200 and 300 hours of on-boarding training. Companies providing less than 100 hours, average 51 hours of training, while the companies providing more than 300 hours average 455 hours of training, or about nine times the peer group with the lowest average.

Methodologies Used for On-Boarding Training

On-boarding training comes in several forms. The most popular method employed for on-boarding training is through online resources. Of the total number of hours dedicated to on-boarding training, online training accounts for 68% and classroom training 16%, while one-on-one training with peer MSLs and MSL managers accounts for 9% and 7%, respectively.

While online programs prove the most popular training method, 88% of surveyed companies also provide on-site classroom-style training (**Figure B**). To make up for not providing online training to their new hires, the 6% of surveyed companies that do not provide online training opt for providing a higher number of hours of on-site training, as well more training time with a MSL manager or a peer MSL during initial KOL and HCP visits.

Methods of On-Boarding Training Provided by Percentage of Companies

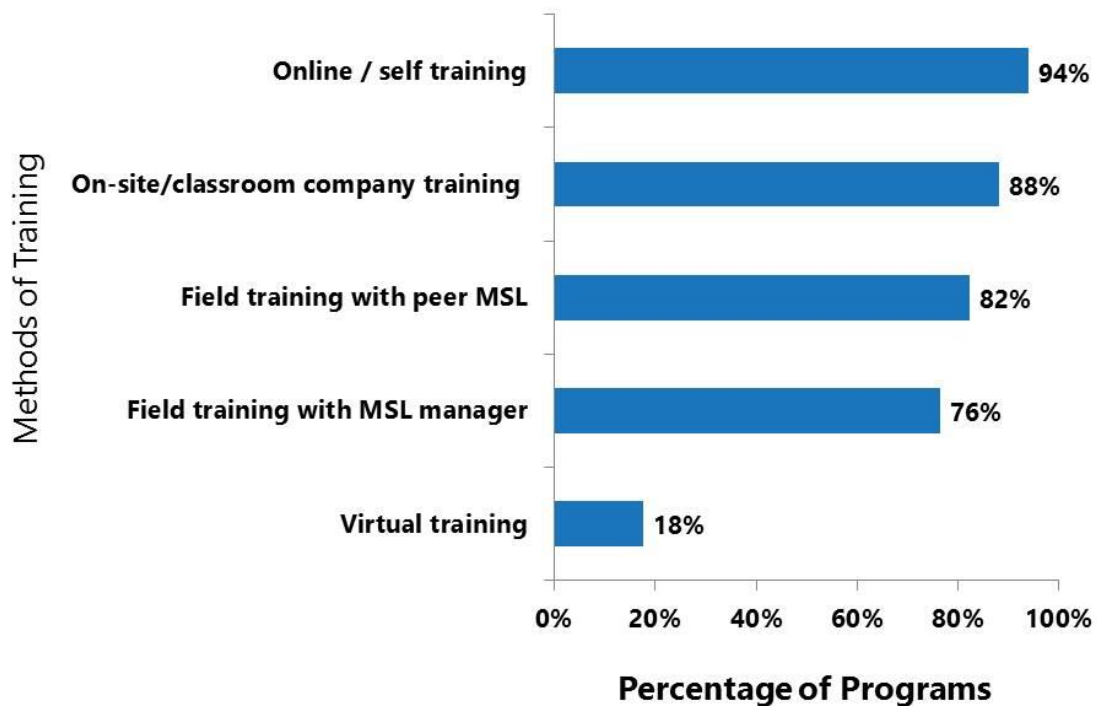


Figure B: Methods of On-Boarding Training Provided by Percentage of Companies

Not counting virtual methods of training (which are similar to online training), 65% of surveyed organizations utilize every training method. The remaining organizations provide programs that pair either classroom or online training with field training supervised by a peer MSL or MSL manager.

Hours of Training Provided Through Each Method

On average for each individual method and for companies that provide training through these methods, new hires clock in 143 hours of online and virtual instruction, attend 35 hours of coaching in classrooms and spend 38 hours in field preparation, training for their new job. This accounts for a total of 216 hours of training during the on-boarding process, or close to five and one-half weeks.

Hours of On-Boarding Training by Methods

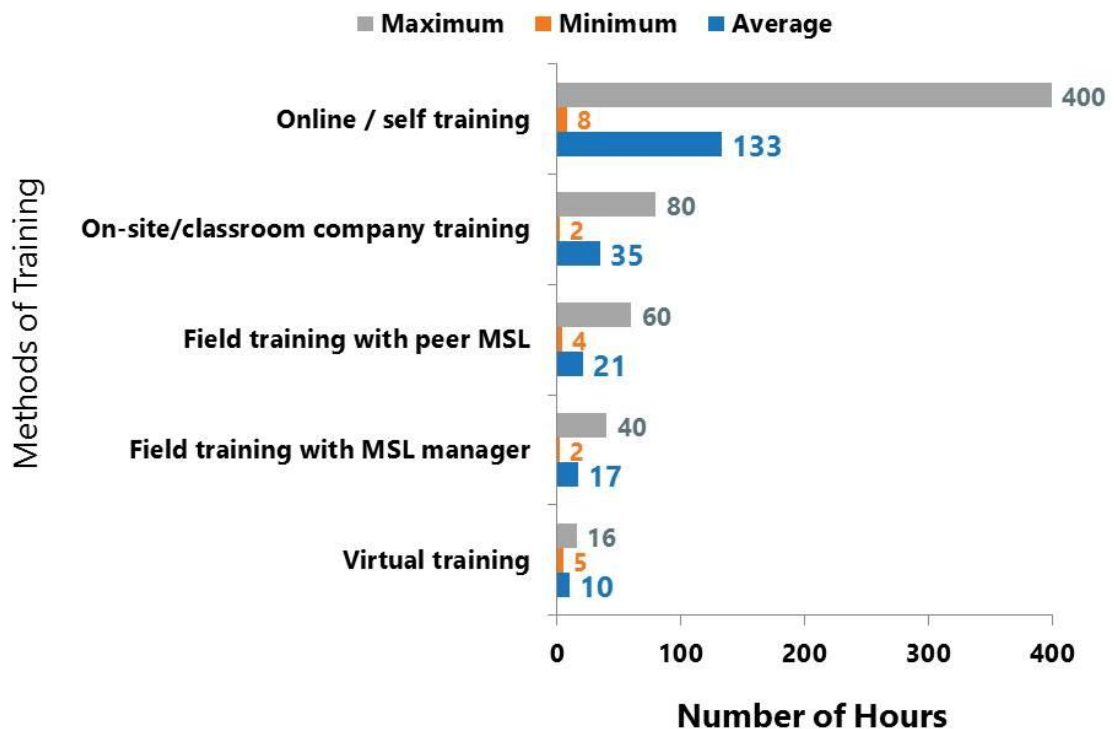


Figure C: Hours of On-Boarding Training by Methods

Figure C presents minimum, maximum and average number of hours, as reported by study participants. When looking across individual company without taking into account different content in training modules, new hires average 188 hours of training. One company sits at the top of the chart, providing at total of 530 hours of training that includes 400 hours online, 40 hours of classroom and 90 hours of field training with MSL managers and peer MSLs.

From the above input and full analysis conducted during the research, and additional input provided by the surveyed medical affairs executives, we developed models for on-boarding and continuous training programs which are available in our full study report through the link at the bottom. Analysts combined all the data points from this research to render “mid-ground” training programs that companies can use as templates. These templates take into account the various averages produced from the analysis, as well as the typical training patterns for number of hours and stakeholders involved.

Obviously, each organization has its own specific needs that require some customization to their training program but according to our research, on-boarding training programs should consist of 200-215 hours of training time. We provide these training models as a research summary and benchmark tool that can serve as a baseline guide to supplement existing programs or spin-off new training programs.

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Full Study

The findings presented in this Fact Sheet are extracted from the following study:

Medical Science Liaison Training: Developing First-Class MSLs through Proficient On-Boarding and Continuous Training Programs

(report code MSL-510)

This study presents a review, analysis and best practices of current on-boarding and continuous Medical Science Liaison training programs. Training programs are critical to the success of the MSL role and their organization. The analysis provides executives with benchmarks, number of hours, methods used to conduct training, typical functions involved (trainers), five real-world training program profiles, as well as a the development of on-boarding and continuous training program model outlines .

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WEBLINK: <http://www.arxresearch.com/reports/msl-training/>

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