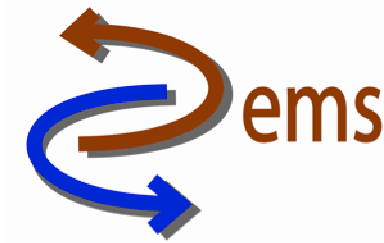


MASTER IN PUBLIC MANAGEMENT



Syllabus

Planning & Control Systems (10 ECTS)

1. Course Description

The course aims to provide students the fundamental concepts related to the design and implementation of Planning and Control (P&C) systems. A specific focus is given to the implications of designing P&C systems in public sector organizations. The goal of the course is also to allow students to gain a systemic perspective on how to design and implement P&Cs which are capable to support organizations to act across several disciplines or professional specializations, such as: Accounting/Planning/Reporting; Strategy; Organization & Human Resources; Systems Analysis.

Designing responsibility areas, linking them to performance measures, and understanding behavioral implications associated to formal and informal performance management systems are an important issue that is focused in this course. A “learning-oriented” perspective in P&C systems design and implementation is adopted.

2. Learning Outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

Students gain knowledge about the fundamentals of designing P&C systems to support the steering and management processes of different organizations operating in the public management context. They gain a systemic and design-oriented view of P&C.

Students specifically learn about the factors of complexity particularly influencing and characterizing the planning, policy design and management in the public sector. They will also know how to apply the fundamentals of P&C design to public sector organizations, in order to support their governance and management processes.

They also learn to analyze and diagnose organization's solvency and liquidity, and to draw up plans that reflect the dynamics of the public and private sectors.

Applying knowledge and understanding

The students will engage in real life case-study analyses that will be conducted, in which they will apply their knowledge and understanding acquired from the field of P&C, facilitated through the use of system dynamics mapping. These applications will extend into the courses: "Dynamic Performance Management in the Public Sector" and "System Dynamics for Business Strategy".

Making judgements

Students should be able to reflect on the method to use while adopting planning and control systems as a viable means to foster empowerment, accountability, communication and learning, particularly in organizations operating in a complex and dynamic environment.

Communication

Students will present and discuss relevant literature as well as the result of their case studies in class.

Learning skills

Students will acquire skills that are required for self-studies of the literature on the subject and to investigate the relationship between Planning & Control and systems performance.

3. Course Content

The course is divided into three parts:

a) Principles and techniques for P&C Systems Design

- Planning & Control as a System;
- Different levels of control;
- Levers of control - Organizational control
- Designing P&C systems vs. Organizational Design
- Defining performance – Outlining goals objectives and performance indicators.
- Linking objectives & performance indicators to strategic resources, policy levers, responsibility areas, and management processes
- Designing P&C systems: Common errors

b) Contextual and Behavioral Implications of P&C Systems in the Public Sector

- Specific complexity factors in public sector organizations. The applicability of management principles to public sector organizations

- Development levels of strategies in public sector organizations: government and management
- From a bureaucratic to a managerial view of Planning & Control in the public sector (input; process; output; outcome): The New Public Management vs the New Public Service view.
- Designing Planning & Control Systems in the Public sector: from a structured to a learning-oriented approach
- On Responsibility centres, information tools, and the control process in the public sector.
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- Legislation frameworks concerning planning & control in the public sector
- Cultural constraints in implementing Planning and Control Systems in Public Administrations
- Benchmarking Public Services
- Formulating objectives, activities and performance indicators: the strategic and operational plans – Case-study analysis
- Designing P&C in the Public sector: from an organizational (institutional) to an inter-institutional perspective
- Behavioral implications of performance management systems in different industry areas (e.g. police and public safety, health care)

c) Tools for business solvency & profitability analysis: an introduction

- Financial analysis: ratios
- Profitability & Solvency analysis
- Financial analysis: flows
- Assessing solvency, liquidity and profitability in relation to sustainable growth.
- Cost analysis
- Contribution margin analysis
- Budgeting and variance analysis

4. Course Design

The course is comprised of lectures, seminars, group discussions, students' presentations, modeling sessions and individual assignments/papers. An overall attendance rate of 80% in scheduled sessions is required, and attendance is mandatory in the group discussions, students' presentations, and seminars, and active participation is required in those sessions.

5. Student's Evaluation

Assessment is carried out by means of evaluation of individual and group assignments. For a passing grade the student must (a) have pass marks on all the assignments; (b) have participated in the mandatory sessions; (c) have an adequate overall attendance rate. In addition, the grade is based on a project report and its presentation.

An ECTS grade is provided to the student at the end of the course according to the A–F scale. Students not successfully fulfilling all the course requirements within the regular time frame have the option of a re-sit the following semester.