Operational Planning and Follow-Up: Departmental Action Plans and Variance Review

5 – 9 April 2027
Paris - Right Bank business hotel



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Introduction:

Operational planning often breaks down at department level: the strategic plan is approved, yet departments keep running on routine, activities have no named owner, staff time is booked twice and monthly meetings review activity instead of results. Deviations then surface only at year end. This Core Concept course equips department heads and planning and performance staff to cascade objectives into a departmental operational plan, schedule and resource activities, assign ownership, set operational KPIs and run monthly follow-up with variance analysis and corrective action. Participants produce an Annual Departmental Operational Plan and Follow-Up Dashboard for a case department.

Course Objectives:

- Cascade corporate objectives into departmental objectives and a structured annual operational plan
- Convert departmental objectives into initiatives, projects and recurring activities with milestones, workload and resource estimates
- Assign single-point ownership with a RACI matrix and link each plan line to its budget allocation
- Set operational KPIs with baselines, targets and leading and lagging measures for each departmental objective
- Run monthly follow-up meetings that analyse plan-versus-actual variance and agree corrective actions
- Produce an Annual Departmental Operational Plan and Follow-Up Dashboard ready for management approval

Target Audience:

- Heads of departments accountable for delivering annual objectives and departmental results
- Section and unit managers who schedule activities, staff and resources within a department
- Planning and performance staff who consolidate departmental plans and prepare progress reports
- Strategy office coordinators who track how departmental plans support corporate objectives
- Operations and support function managers who reconcile workload, capacity and budget during the year

Course Outline:

Day 1: From Corporate Direction to Departmental Operational Plans

- Strategic Plan Versus Operational Plan: Horizon, Detail and Ownership Comparison
- Objective Cascade Tree from Corporate Goals to Departmental Objectives
- Departmental Mandate and Service Catalogue Review
- Operational Plan Maturity Check of the Current Planning Cycle
- Planning Calendar from Planning Kick-Off to Plan Sign-Off

Day 2: Operational Plan Architecture and Planning Models

- Operational Plan Template: Objectives, Initiatives, Activities, Owners and Milestones
- Objective-to-Initiative Mapping Matrix for Projects and Recurring Activities
- Logic Model of Inputs, Activities, Outputs and Outcomes
- Operational KPI Hierarchy with Leading and Lagging Measures
- KPI Definition Sheet: Formula, Baseline, Target and Data Source

Day 3: Scheduling, Resourcing and Ownership of the Plan

- Activity Breakdown and Gantt Scheduling of the Annual Work Programme
- Staff Capacity and Workload Balancing with a Resource Loading Chart
- Linking Plan Lines to Budget Codes and Cost Centre Allocations
- RACI Matrix with a Single Accountable Owner per Activity
- Plan Approval Pack and Communication Briefing for Department Teams

Day 4: Follow-Up, Variance Review and Plan Revision

- Monthly Follow-Up Meeting Agenda, Roles and Decision Log
- Plan-Versus-Actual Variance Analysis for Milestones, KPIs and Spending
- Corrective Action Register with Root Cause Notes and Due Dates
- Delivery Risk Log for Resource, Dependency and Supplier Risks
- Mid-Year Plan Revision: Re-Phasing, Re-Prioritisation and Change Approval

Day 5: Case Department and the Annual Operational Plan

- Case Department Brief: Customer Services and Facilities Units Compared
- Annual Departmental Operational Plan Build for the Case Department
- Follow-Up Dashboard Design with Traffic-Light Status and Trend Lines
- Quarterly Progress Report Template Drafting
- Plan and Dashboard Defence Before a Mock Management Committee

Skills You Will Gain:

- Goal Alignment Analysis
- Operational Plan Design
- Activity Scheduling
- Workload and Capacity Balancing
- Performance Measure Design
- Variance Review
- Corrective Action Tracking
- Progress Reporting

Why Attend This Course:

- Leave with an Annual Departmental Operational Plan and Follow-Up Dashboard built and defended on a case department
- Turn monthly progress meetings into decision sessions with a variance log and named corrective actions
- Stop activities sliding between sections by giving each one a single accountable owner and a due date
- Compare planning and follow-up practice with department managers from government, service and industrial organisations

Conclusion:

An operational plan earns its place when each department knows what it will deliver, who owns each activity and how progress is checked every month. The course moves from the objective cascade and the departmental mandate, through plan templates, logic models and KPI definitions, to scheduling, workload balancing, budget links and RACI ownership, then monthly follow-up, variance analysis, corrective actions, delivery risk and mid-year revision. The final day produces an Annual Departmental Operational Plan and Follow-Up Dashboard for a case department.