

UEP Policy and Planning Competency Grid

Course Name/Number: UEP 253 – Financial Analysis & Management

Instructor: Kelley

Semester: Spr 09

a) Knowledge Competencies	Specific sub-competencies or examples as developed in this course
1. History, structure, function of urban and metropolitan settlements	
2. Economic influences on policy and planning (e.g. 'market' and 'polis' relationships)	
3. Environmental, social and cultural influences on policy and planning	
4. Understanding different roles in policy and planning	
i) Levels of government	
ii) Governance structures	
iii) Citizens and residents	
iv) NGOs	
5. History, theory and processes of policymaking	
6. History, theory and process of planning	
7. Implementation of policy and planning	Very Minor – we discuss any pending or proposed accounting, nonprofit management policy initiatives that might be pending and consider implications.

8. Evaluation of policy and planning	
9. Administrative and legal aspects of policy	Aspects of public policy that relates to nonprofit management practices in the area of financial management and compliance – minor focus.
10. Administrative and legal aspects of planning	
11. Politics of policy and planning	

b) Skills Competencies	Specific sub-competencies or examples as developed in this course
1. Critical thinking	
i) Defining problem	Evaluating financial results, identifying issues and problem areas in financial data, as well as areas of key strength. The focus on this information is to relate it to the operational and programmatic functions of the organization. Relating money to the mission.
ii) Documenting the extent of a problem	Use quantitative data to analyze impacts and the extent of financial issues in an organization/budget.
iii) Documenting the political and social context	
iv) Documenting the environmental and spatial context	
v) Identifying possible analysis strategies and their implications	
vi) Identifying criteria for proposing solutions	Through data analysis and benchmarking data, we compare financial results and use the information to propose solutions and suggestions for improving financial performance, particularly for weak organizations.
vii) Identifying criteria for selecting solutions	
viii) Evaluating the development and results of policies and plans	

2. Research skills	
i) Understanding research design	
ii) Collecting relevant literature	Students are asked to obtain financial information from nonprofits that they are interested in and use that to analyze their financial condition – minor focus, but important for understanding what to ask for and why its important.
iii) Analyzing relevant literature	Fianncial statements and programmatic information is analyzed – more focus on data analysis and building quantitative skills.
iv) Identifying and assessing data sources and limitations	
v) Developing data collection instruments and tools	
3. Data Analysis skills	Major focus. Much of the course is devoted to preparing, interpreting and synthesizing financial data – budgets, cash flow, audit reports, etc.
i) Interpreting and synthesizing data	
ii) Drawing inferences from specific observations to make	Strong focus - Utilizing data and analysis tools students are encouraged to predict future trends/operations, particularly if the organization’s health is improving or deteriorating. And then discuss ways to improve conditions when possible.
iii) More generalizable findings	Implications for a segement of the nonprofit industry is discussed- what are the trends in housing vs human services, or for environmental organizations. Their trends and the nature of their business models are different and impact financial behavior and areas of risk.
iv) Comparative analysis	Significant focus - Reviewing multiple years of financial data for an organization allows students to analyze organizational financial trends, as well to compare organizations to one another more effectively – particularly with ratio analysis and comparing organizations with substantially different budget sizes and scales.
v) Longitudinal analysis	
vi) Recognizing and accounting for limitations to findings	Some focus - Accounting data is generally historic data governed by specific principles. Those principles create limitations on one’s ability to fully analyze the financial condition or to infer too much in certain areas – such as the market value of assets.
4. Qualitative Analysis skills	
i) Direct observation	
ii) Analysis of primary qualitative data	
iii) Analysis of secondary qualitative data	

5. Quantitative Analysis skills	
i) Descriptive statistics	Primary emphasis in the course on building quantitative analysis skills in financial management– tools for analyzing and describing financial information, ratio analysis, trend analysis, variance analysis, budgeting, cash management.
ii) Inferential statistics	We use ratio analysis and trend analysis to inform and attempt to predict future financial behavior and assess overall organizational strength and ability to withstand difficult economic conditions/fiscal setbacks.
iii) Basic forecasting	Heavy focus in the course – we use these skills to translate program ideas into budgets, cashflow analyses, and analyze organizational data to review program and organizational performance
iv) Use of spreadsheets and statistical software	Heavy focus on spreadsheets but none with statistical software. We are particularly focused on basic spreadsheet skills and financial analysis tools.
6. Spatial Analysis skills	
i) Understand how to identify spatial problems and frame spatial questions for analysis and research	
ii) Use Geographic Information System for basic spatial analysis and mapping	
7. Communication skills	
i) Writing skills	Very little – students write analyses, modest grant proposal information, and complete assignments reviewing financial data.
ii) Speaking skills	The final project is a group presentation, and class participation around financial analysis is emphasized
iii) Graphic presentation skills	
iv) Presentation strategies and methods	Modest – we discuss ways to present financial data to those who might not be as experienced in financial analysis and data presentation, as well as to present data to those who understand financial information.

c) Policy and Planning in Practice Competencies	Specific sub-competencies or examples as developed in this course
1. Collaboration skills i) Negotiation	Minor focus – students negotiate group project assignments in class. Externally, we discuss tips/suggestions for negotiating financial terms potentially for loans or grants – but it is a minor focus.
ii) Group project management	The group project at the end of the course helps provide students with the opportunity to work in groups/teams
iii) Group problem solving	In the group project students compare organizations studied to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, identify the weakest organization and, utilizing the information about the other groups studied, recommend solutions or suggestions as to how the weakest organization can improve performance.
iv) Perspective-taking	Students must be able to take a position regarding the financial condition of an organization and provide quantitative data to support their position.
v) Adaptability, flexibility	
vi) Networking	
2. Organizational management skills i) Decision making	Early in the course we focus on the key financial documents and analyses that aid in organizational decision making – what programs sustain themselves, which do not,
ii) Strategic problem solving and adapting to change	The focus of the financial tools we discuss is to identify potential problems as early as possible, and have maximum opportunity for taking corrective action and keeping the organization healthy and strong financially. We discuss warning signs, potential corrective action, short term and long term solutions.
iii) Human resource development	We touch on human resources as human resource policies and employee practices impact/aid financial results. Can an organization afford its benefits, what are staffing implications, how to maintain stability and therefore a stable staffing structure.
iv) Financial management and resource development	Key component. The full course focuses on organizational financial management with a strong emphasis in nonprofit community organizations. The course is divided into three sections – internal management tools, accounting basics, and external information that tells external audiences about the organization.
3. Political and economic power mapping skills i) Understanding political and economic power structures and dynamics	
ii) Modes of influencing their use	

4. Ethical and professional behavior skills

i) Understanding and upholding the role of ethics and accountability in professional policy and planning processes, practices, and behavior

Ethics, internal controls, and accountability is a focus of the course – as it relates to financial management, fiduciary responsibilities and accountability.