

Course Syllabus
OPS: Fundamentals of Operations Management and Organizational Effectiveness

Week 1. Nonprofit Operations Management: What Is It and Who Does It?

In Week 1 we will begin by identifying the typical scope of activities that constitute nonprofit operations, discussing how operations are different for nonprofit and for-profit entities, and exploring various ways in which operations management can be staffed. In reading about the role of the chief operating officer (COO), do not be discouraged if your organization is too small to have such a role. We will use the term here to refer more to the function of managing operations than the specific person who is responsible for doing it.

Week 2. Managing Human Resources

In Week 2 we will proceed to examine four aspects of human resource management: organizational readiness for HR management, the hiring process, managing generations in the workplace, and the legal foundations of HR in the U.S. The learning resources here are both rich and varied.

Week 3. Managing Information Technology

In Week 3 we will be managing information technology. For many, this subject is more than a little intimidating. In the first reading, the emphasis is on the alignment of technology with the organizational mission, an approach that sheds light on what is important and what is not. We will continue with an overview of hardware and software considerations. If you are one of the lucky ones who has already mastered these basics, please stick around to help your colleagues on the discussion board.

Week 4. Managing Organizational Performance (Benchmarking)

In Week 4 we will discuss the performance management process. Readings will explain what performance management is and why it is important. We will identify various tools available to nonprofits for performance measurement then discuss the strengths and weaknesses of one or more of the performance measurement tools.

Week 5. Macro Perspectives on Nonprofit Operations: What Thought Leaders are saying.

In Week 5 we will look at finding the right balance between practical information that practitioners need today and the critical thinking competencies that those same practitioners need to prepare for tomorrow. For this reason, Week 5 will turn from hands-on knowledge and toward different ways of thinking about and understanding nonprofit operations. We will explore perspectives that challenge conventional assumptions about nonprofit operations as one example of the need to think differently.