

**VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
PADM 691 (Ref. #1678)
ASSESSING/AUDITING THE PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
Summer 1994**

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OVERVIEW

Public managers are increasingly being called up to perform assessments/audits that go beyond the traditional determination of whether funds were spent in accordance with legal and financial requirements. These new assessments seek to determine whether monies were consumed in an economic manner and whether desired program results were achieved. Whether these assessment/audit responsibilities are referred to as performance audits, management audits, or operations audits, their aims are the same: to determine how well government operations, activities, departments and programs are working. In many instances, existing public management staff will require new skills to respond effectively to the great demands placed on the agency that is introducing these new assessing/auditing concepts. This course is designed to meet this staff development need.

PROGRAM LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this program, participants can expect to:

1. Have a thorough understanding of the concepts and practices of performance auditing/assessment.
2. Be able to plan, design, and implement performance audits/assessments as individual assessors.
3. Achieve knowledge and skills that will enhance their ability to determine:
 - a. whether the entity is managing and utilizing its resources economically and efficiently,
 - b. the causes of any inefficiencies or uneconomical practices whether the desired results or benefits established are being achieved, and
 - c. whether the agency has considered alternatives that might yield desired results at a lower cost.

Course resource materials will include case materials and training packages developed by the U.S.

General Accounting Office for management development programs in performance auditing.

COURSE WORK

- Module I Introduction to Performance Auditing
- Module II Economy and Efficiency Auditing
- Module III Special Topics in Economy and Efficiency Auditing: Operations Assessment and Setting Performance Standards
- Module IV Program Audits (Effectiveness Auditing)
- Module V Special Topics in Program Audits (Effectiveness Auditing): Cost Effectiveness Analysis and Establishing Measures of Effectiveness

SPECIAL RESOURCES THAT WILL BE USED IN THIS COURSE

Texts:

Melton, Kim, Introduction to Statistics for Process Studies

Wooldridge, Assessing the Performance of Government (Campus Copy, 913 W. Grace St., 804-353-2113)

Class participants are urged to read the daily papers and other current journals for relevant articles. Materials of importance should be brought to class for discussion. Students should make themselves aware of the various journals of interest published by the professional associations and universities. Examples include:

Public Administration Review
Public Policy
The American Political Science Review
Policy Sciences
Administrative Science Quarterly
Policy Analysis
Government Accountants Journal
Public Interest
State Government
Public Management
Government Finance Review
Urban Finance Quarterly
Municipal Yearbook
Policy Studies Journal
Nation's Cities
Industrial Relations
Public Productivity Review
Public Administration Quarterly
Administration and Society
Public Personnel Management

Sage
Public Administration Abstracts
Personnel Journal
National Productivity Review
The various publications from the Urban Institute
International Journal of Government Auditing

Be sure to be familiar with the endnotes and references in your readings.

I am sure that you will use the various computerized databases in the library, such as Psych Lit, Wils (a social science database), ABI (a business/management database) and ERIC (an education database), useful in carrying out your research.

Be sure to discover the resources available in Government Documents section of the library as well.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Since it is expected that you will actively participate in the class discussion, it is necessary that assigned readings be completed prior to class time. **YOU SHOULD DEVELOP QUESTIONS THAT WILL HELP YOU BETTER UNDERSTAND THE READING MATERIAL.** Class sessions will be spent responding to your questions and presenting new material. You are advised to use the syllabus as an aid in doing the readings. I might even throw in a "pop quiz" just to see if the readings are understandable. The results of such a quiz will not count towards your grade. I also recognize that there is a large amount of reading required and that the educational value of this experience to you is a function of your preparedness so please read each assignment closely. **SINCE THE GRADED ASSIGNMENTS WILL REQUIRE REFERENCES TO THE LITERATURE YOU MIGHT FIND IT USEFUL TO TAKE COMPLETE NOTES AS YOU DO THE READINGS.**

Experience from previous classes leads me to expect that you will probably spend an average of 4-6 hours per session doing the work for this course. I would like feedback from you as to the amount of time required to successfully complete the work for this course so please keep track as you do the assignments/readings.

Please make sure that you are clear as to the expectations of in-class and written assignments and that you obtain adequate feedback on your performance. Since an additional goal of this class is the fostering of adequate communication skills, you are urged to examine your written work for deficiencies in clarity of presentation. Specific minimum learning objectives have been identified for each class session. You should achieve those objectives through the readings, class discussions, lecture or any other means. Let me know if you feel that these objectives have not been met.

IT IS EXPECTED THAT CLASS PARTICIPANTS WILL ATTEND EVERY SESSION.