
Operations Planning and Control for Executives: Bottlenecks, Capacity and Service Levels Course

19 – 23 October 2026
Vienna





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Programme Summary

Operations planning and control is the subject of this one-week training course for senior managers who run production, service or logistics operations, ending in an operations planning and control plan for one operation. Many operations run fixed routines while demand and constraints shift, so capacity sits in the wrong place and service slips. The programme moves from the principles of operations management through diagnosis of bottlenecks and capacity to design of plans and control routines, then applies them to one site. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this operations planning and control programme for managers from mixed sectors.

The Business Case

When the real bottleneck is unknown, capacity is added where it does not raise output and queues build where nobody is looking. Service levels are then defended with overtime, expediting and buffer stock that nobody has sized. Managers who locate the constraint, match capacity to demand scenarios and review performance on a fixed rhythm hold service with less rework and fewer emergency decisions.

- Throughput: Rises as the bottleneck is located and protected from interruption.
- Service Level: Holds steadier as capacity and buffers are sized against demand scenarios.
- Cost of Operations: Falls as overtime, idle time and expediting are traced to their causes.

Principles and Evidence Base

- Theory of Constraints: Its focusing steps guide the bottleneck diagnosis in Session 2 and the protection rules in Session 4.
- Lean: Its view of waste and flow shapes the process maps in Session 1 and the waste review in Session 2.
- ISO 9001: Its process approach structures the process charts of Session 1 and the control routines of Session 4.

Intended Participants

- Operations managers who answer for output, cost and service across a site or network.
- Production and service delivery managers who schedule people, equipment and materials.
- Logistics and supply managers who balance stock, transport capacity and customer commitments.
- Planning and performance leads who prepare the numbers behind operating decisions.

Typical sectors include manufacturing, logistics, utilities and healthcare services.



Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to distinguish the priorities an operation must serve from the measures that track them.
2. Participants will be able to diagnose the bottleneck and the main sources of delay in a process.
3. Participants will be able to evaluate capacity against demand variation and service commitments.
4. Participants will be able to construct a capacity plan with sized buffers and clear scheduling rules.
5. Participants will be able to prioritise control routines and escalation triggers for daily performance.
6. Participants will be able to justify an operations planning and control plan to senior colleagues.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Operations Planning and Control Principles

What must an operation deliver, and which limits shape how it is planned and controlled?

- Operations Priorities Map
- Process Flow Chart
- Value Stream Map
- Capacity Terms Sheet
- ISO 9001 Process Approach Chart

Day 2: Diagnosing Bottlenecks and Flow

Where does work wait, and which step limits the output of the whole operation?

- Bottleneck Identification Table
- Theory of Constraints Focusing Steps
- Queue and Wait-Time Chart
- Waste Walk Observation Sheet
- Throughput Loss Pareto Chart

Day 3: Diagnosing Capacity and Demand

How well does available capacity match the demand and service levels the operation has promised?

- Demand Variability Chart
- Capacity Utilisation Table
- Overtime and Idle Time Review
- Forecast Error Review
- Service Level Gap Analysis



Day 4: Designing Capacity Plans and Control Routines

Which capacity choices and control routines keep service steady at an acceptable cost?

- Capacity Options Matrix
- Buffer Placement Plan
- Schedule Freeze Rules
- Daily Performance Review Layout
- Escalation Trigger Chart

Day 5: Applying Planning and Control to One Operation

Does the plan hold when it is tested on one operation?

- Applying the Session 2 Bottleneck Table to Live Data
- Testing the Session 3 Capacity Review on Demand Scenarios
- Rehearsing the Session 4 Daily Review
- Revising the Plan after Peer Feedback
- Completing the Operations Planning and Control Plan

Methodology

The programme uses a data workshop method built on anonymised throughput records, demand histories, schedules and short written cases from manufacturing, logistics and service operations. Participants work in small groups on one operation, defend capacity and control choices to peers who act as finance, sales and site colleagues, and receive facilitator feedback on each work product.

- Suggested activity: Locating the bottleneck in a set of cycle-time records.
- Suggested activity: Comparing three capacity options against a demand surge.
- Suggested activity: Running a mock daily review with an escalation trigger.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes an operations planning and control plan for one operation. It holds a bottleneck diagnosis, a capacity review, a capacity and buffer plan, scheduling rules, a daily review layout and escalation triggers. The plan is used at work to brief senior colleagues, agree service commitments with sales and guide how the operation is scheduled and reviewed.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is operations planning and control suitable for managers who have not run a whole operation before?

Yes. Operations planning and control is taught from first principles and assumes responsibility for people, equipment or schedules, not earlier experience as head of an operation.

Which models does operations planning and control rest on in this programme?

Operations planning and control here rests on the Theory of Constraints, Lean and the ISO 9001 process approach.

How is the operations planning and control plan used at work?

You use the operations planning and control plan to brief senior colleagues, agree service commitments with sales and guide how your operation is scheduled and reviewed.

How does operations planning and control differ from a programme on operational excellence?

Operations planning and control centres on bottlenecks, capacity and daily control, while operational excellence centres on a continuous improvement culture across the organisation.