MERCURY

Financial Planning & Analysis FP&A Course

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Introduction

The Financial Planning & Analysis FP&A course connects financial information with business strategy, operational performance, and management decision-making. It develops an understanding of budgeting, forecasting, financial modeling, variance analysis, performance management, and strategic financial planning. Participants examine how FP&A professionals transform historical and operational data into forward-looking financial insights that support organizational growth and resource allocation. The program addresses driver-based planning, rolling forecasts, scenario analysis, management reporting, and financial storytelling as core components of modern FP&A practice. It emphasizes interpreting financial performance, identifying business drivers, evaluating risks and opportunities, and communicating meaningful conclusions to decision-makers. Participants will support stronger financial control, business performance, and strategic decision-making.

Targeted Groups

This Financial Planning & Analysis FP&A training targets professionals seeking knowledge and skills:

- Finance managers responsible for planning and performance analysis.
- FP&A analysts developing budgeting and forecasting expertise.
- Accountants supporting management reporting and financial planning.
- Controllers evaluating financial performance and cost movements.
- Financial analysts interpreting business and financial data.
- CFO office professionals supporting strategic financial decisions.
- Business managers involved in budgets and resource allocation.
- Professionals transitioning into FP&A and corporate finance roles.

Course Objectives

Participants will achieve the following objectives by completing the Financial Planning & Analysis FP&A course:

- Explain the strategic role and core responsibilities of FP&A functions.
- Analyze financial statements to identify performance trends and business drivers.
- Develop structured budgets aligned with organizational objectives and operating plans.
- Apply financial forecasting techniques to estimate future business performance.
- Construct driver-based forecasts using relevant operational and financial assumptions.
- Evaluate actual results against budgets, forecasts, and prior-period performance.
- Analyze revenue, cost, profitability, and cash-flow variances systematically.
- Apply rolling forecasts to improve planning responsiveness and decision quality.
- Develop scenario models for evaluating risks, opportunities, and strategic alternatives.
- Interpret financial KPIs and management performance indicators.
- Assess the financial impact of changing business assumptions and market conditions.
- Prepare concise management reports that highlight significant financial movements.
- Connect financial analysis with operational performance and strategic priorities.
- Evaluate resource allocation decisions using financial and business evidence.
- Communicate financial insights clearly to executives and business stakeholders.
- Support evidence-based decisions through structured financial planning and analysis.

Targeted Competencies

Participants will gain the following competencies during the Financial Planning & Analysis FP&A program:

- Financial planning and budgeting expertise.
- Forecasting and rolling forecast capabilities.
- Driver-based financial modeling skills.
- Budget-versus-actual variance analysis.
- Revenue and cost performance analysis.
- Financial KPI interpretation.
- Scenario and sensitivity analysis.
- Cash-flow forecasting capabilities.
- Management reporting proficiency.
- Strategic financial analysis.
- Business partnering and stakeholder communication.
- Financial storytelling and executive insight development.
- Critical evaluation of financial assumptions.
- Performance management and decision-support capabilities.

Real-world Case Studies

In this Financial Planning & Analysis FP&A training, participants develop skills through the following cases:

- Analyze a company facing revenue shortfalls and identify the financial and operational drivers behind the unfavorable variance.
- Evaluate a rolling forecast after changing demand, pricing, and cost assumptions.
- Assess alternative investment and resource-allocation scenarios using financial projections.
- Interpret management performance reports and develop concise recommendations for improving profitability, cash flow, and operating efficiency.

Course Content

Unit 1: Foundations of Financial Planning & Analysis

- Define the FP&A role in corporate finance.
- Link FP&A with strategy and operations.
- Distinguish planning, budgeting, forecasting, and reporting.
- Identify key FP&A roles and responsibilities.
- Examine budgets, forecasts, dashboards, and reports.
- Link financial statements with business drivers.
- Explain FP&A's role in value creation.

Unit 2: Budgeting, Planning, and Financial Modeling

- Explain annual budgeting principles.
- Structure revenue and cost budgets.
- Examine top-down and bottom-up budgeting.
- Apply driver-based financial planning.
- Build structured financial models.
- Evaluate cost drivers and profitability.

- Assess budget assumptions and alignment.
- Examine Excel-based financial modeling.

Unit 3: Forecasting and Scenario Analysis

- Explain financial forecasting principles.
- Develop revenue and expense forecasts.
- Forecast profitability and cash flow.
- Apply rolling forecast techniques.
- Evaluate trends and business drivers.
- Build base, upside, and downside scenarios.
- Apply sensitivity analysis.
- Assess forecast accuracy and risks.

Unit 4: Performance and Variance Analysis

- Compare actual and budgeted results.
- Analyze favorable and unfavorable variances.
- Assess price, volume, and mix variances.
- Analyze cost and margin variances.
- Apply materiality thresholds.
- Identify root causes of variances.
- Develop variance bridges.
- Translate findings into corrective actions.

Unit 5: Management Reporting and Strategic Decision Support

- Identify strategic financial KPIs.
- Design focused management reports.
- Interpret financial dashboards.
- Link financial and operational insights.
- Develop concise financial narratives.
- Evaluate resource allocation decisions.
- Communicate forecasts and recommendations.
- Strengthen FP&A business partnering.

Final Insights & Key Takeaways

The course turns financial data into insights for better planning and strategic decisions. Participants build skills in budgeting, forecasting, modeling, variance analysis, and reporting.