# Strategic management of public services

## Professor Elena Zuffada

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The shift toward a service-based economy in the most developed countries is a long-term trend. The issue of public services is fundamental in the development of a nation's productive systems and in boosting a nation's competitiveness.

The course is aimed at analysing:

* the main features of public service companies and the key issues involved in running them;
* the strategic options for developing service companies.

The course therefore aims to supply:

* Appropriate explanations and instruments to tackle management problems specific to public service companies.
* Knowledge and criteria for evaluating different strategic options with regard to the management of public service companies and their contribution to a country’s competitiveness
* Methods and instruments for evaluating strategies and communicating results to different stakeholders, employing a logic of transparency and accountability with respect to the public administration's action

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will develop following themes:

1. The strategy formulation process in public-sector businesses.

* The concept of strategy within the public administration.
* The leeway for making strategic decisions.
* The strategy formulation process.
* The analysis of the reference framework.

2. Strategic options for providing public services.

* Aggregation strategies.
* Privatisation.
* Contribution of private-sector companies in managing public services (outsourcing of activity and public-private partnerships).
* Technological innovation and e-government.
* The institutional strategy and the governance of networks for providing public services.

3. The evaluation of strategies and the communication of results to stakeholders.

* Strategic control: instruments, documents and indicators for the evaluation of policies and performance.
* The need for accountability and the social responsibility report.

1. Sustainability in government and public services

The syllabus with the course timetable and the list of learning materials will be posted on Blackboard.

***READING LIST***

E. Zuffada, *Scelte strategiche negli enti locali,* Giappichelli, Turin, 2006.

Other material prepared by the professor.

***TEACHING METHOD***

With an emphasis on developing a theoretical and practical understanding of the themes tackled, a combination of teaching methods is contemplated (lectures, class discussion of case studies, presentation of best practices and discussions with professionals in the field), so to enrich the analytical skills and the critical attitude of students.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Grading will be based on the results of a written test, lasting 60 minutes. The exam will be divided into two parts:

* multiple choice questions,
* 1-2 longer open questions.

The evaluation of the open questions will focus on the clarity of answers, their completeness, their adherence to the question asked, the use of an appropriate language.

Attending students are also required to prepare a group work. According to the evaluation of group work, the final mark will be increased, up to 3 points.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Information on office hours available on the teacher's personal page at <http://docenti.unicatt.it/>.

Attending class is warmly advised. Students must have read basic courses in business ecoomics, organisation, accounting, management control and marketing.