



Finance Careers

Why Major in Finance?

The finance degrees and programs offered at the Reiman School of Finance teach you not only how to use your financial acumen and leadership skills to respond to immediate challenges, but also to learn on the fly, anticipate changes and adapt to them. The program in finance is a broad area of study directed toward the financial elements of businesses and governments. You will have the opportunity to focus on investments, corporate finance, financial institutions and international finance. These experiences will prepare you for careers in business finance, financial strategy, investment and portfolio analysis and for work within financial institutions providing banking, investment and asset/wealth management services.

Note: the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) is the standard for individuals focused on investment analysis. The BSBA in Finance at Daniels is recognized as a University Partner by the CFA Institute based on inclusion of a significant portion of the CFA Program Candidate Body of Knowledge (CBOK) in our curricula. Information on CFA Programs is at: <https://www.cfainstitute.org/pages/index.aspx>

Career Tracks

- **Corporate Finance** – this function identifies and manages the money needed to run, grow and develop an organization. A key focus is on making effective corporate decisions that maximize value and minimize risk. These positions use economics, accounting and decision science to develop strategy, evaluate options, plan/budget operations, manage the balance sheet, and drive capital structure and investment.
- **Investment Banking** – engages in the structuring, capitalization, financing and investment, in corporations, institutions and governments. Investment banks help support the management of global operations, fuel growth through cost-efficient capital and investment, manage risk, optimize working capital/liquidity, and assist in making informed investment decisions that maximize value.
- **Alternative/Private Investments** – this space includes Private Equity, Hedge Funds and Venture Capital in addition to other specialized investment firms. The primary feature of these businesses is that they deal with investments that are outside of the traditional banking and securities markets. Products in this area also include managed futures, commodities, derivatives and real estate.
- **Investment/Asset Management** – these careers focus on the management of assets structured to meet particular investment goals. The largest players in this space include BlackRock, Vanguard, State Street Global Advisors, and Fidelity Investments. The market also includes mid-sized firms as well as privately managed funds. These firms provide products to investors that include asset selection and allocation, research, financial analysis, portfolio management and the monitoring of investment objectives and risk.
- **Wealth Management** – Wealth Managers create income/growth for clients through investment strategies that match earning objectives with risk tolerance. These strategies focus on a variety of decisions in addition to investing, including taxes, trusts and estates, and asset protection. Some firms provide special services related to philanthropy, agricultural estates, auction and art services, appraisal and securitization.
- **Commercial Banking** – these organizations facilitate financing between suppliers of capital (depositors) and users of capital (individuals, corporations, and government entities.) While loans and loan-related activities are primary products, these organizations also offer cash management, money transfer, account reconciliation, mortgages and asset-based/lease financing as well as letters of credit, merchant services, and credit/payment cards products and services for commercial entities.
- **Consumer Banking** – also known as Retail Banking, this is the traditional mass-market banking focused on individual customers and includes banks as well as savings banks and credit unions. Services include checking and saving accounts as well as mortgages, personal loans, debit/credit cards and deposit products such as CDs. Larger institutions offer an enhanced range of products including financial advice and investment services such a wealth management, securities accounts and individual retirement planning. Critical here is the emergence of online banking with some banks having no other structure.

- **Real Estate Finance & Investment** – these careers focus on properties that are used for business or investment purposes such as retail spaces, offices, hotels and apartments. While these positions can be part of a larger commercial bank, there are many firms that specialize in this type of finance. These positions deal with a variety of financial structures as well as specific analytics to evaluate the credit worthiness of the investor.
- **Insurance** – represents a contract for financial protection from a loss/injury. In addition to the processes designed to evaluate risk and to model policies, this area also has a focus on the management of funds needed to cover operations and any payouts. These firms include positions in Corporate Finance, Investment/Asset Management and Wealth Management as well as positions related to the structuring, issuance, marketing and sale of insurance.

Additional information for each of the above tracks as well as others is available at
<http://www.vault.com/industries-professions.aspx>
<http://www.investopedia.com/university/financial-careers/financial-careers2.asp>

Common Job Titles

Both Vault and Investopedia provide a wealth of information on common jobs in finance. One note, however, is that while career tracks are fairly standard across the industry, specific job titles vary widely. Be sure to read job descriptions carefully and look at where it fits within the firm. For example, “Financial Analysts” exist across firms with very different job responsibilities and at various levels. A primary difference in many entry level roles is whether the position is part of a training/leadership development program or is a direct hire into a particular function/department. Just like researching a stock, you want to research the firm, area, and position to ensure you are locating an appropriate fit.

Key Skills/Competencies

Key skills for financial careers include both hard and soft-skills. While firms now focus on soft-skills and cultural fit, *do not be misled into thinking that hard technical skills are not a primary advantage.*

Hard Skills	Soft Skills
• Accounting/Planning/Budgeting	• Communication
• Quantitative & Technical Analysis	• Relationship Management
• Research & Analysis	• Marketing and Persuasive Sales
• Data Presentation	• Decision Making and Problem Solving
• Project Management & Organization	• Flexibility/Adaptability/Focus
• Advanced Excel and PowerPoint	• Tenacity and Ethics

Source: Investopedia

Is a Finance major right for you?

Still unsure if you should major in Finance? Schedule a session with a Career Counselor, attend one of our “Major Workshops”, and attend career events to network with employers that hire Finance majors and engage alumni who majored in Finance. You may also schedule time through the various departments to meet with a faculty member to explore their perspectives on individual career paths.

Resources & Associations

Rankings of Banking & Financial Firms by various criteria:
<http://www.vault.com/company-rankings/banking/>

Vault Guides for Banking & Finance are at <http://www.vault.com/category.aspx?id=99027>

Top finance publications/online media: Wall Street Journal, Barron’s, Financial Times, Bloomberg