

What can I do with a degree in... **FINANCE?**

Why study **FINANCE?**

Finance is the future-oriented business function of administering and managing money in order to best position a company to be competitive with others. Western's Finance department teaches students the art and science of money management.

We promote the personal and professional development of each of our students by offering and encouraging participation in engagement opportunities and by using interactive teaching methods that develop critical thinking and decision-making abilities. Using these skills, along with knowledge of current accounting theories and practices, general business skills, and understanding of global business issues, our graduates will be prepared to make an immediate contribution to their employers and communities.

What is the **DEGREE OPTION?**

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (B.S.B.A.) in Finance

NOTE: Students may choose to earn dual degree in Accounting and Finance. Or, students may minor in Finance.

What are the **CONCENTRATIONS?**

Students may choose one of three concentrations: **Personal Financial Planning**, **Banking Finance**, or **Corporate Finance**.

Personal Financial Planning: Students who complete this concentration will be eligible to sit for the prestigious Certified Financial Planner® certification exam.

Banking Finance: The Banking concentration provides both the necessary education and the networking



opportunities to help students establish careers in middle, upper, and executive level management of banks and credit unions.

General Finance: Students who complete the general finance concentration can custom tailor their educational program to their interests and ambitions. This program is suitable for students seeking careers in any of the wide array of finance employers, including wealth management firms, brokerages, accounting firms, or the finance department of any major corporation.

What is the **UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSION PROCESS?**

Any currently enrolled student at WCU may declare Finance as an undergraduate major. Please make an appointment with your advisor via your MyWCU student portal.

What **JOBS ARE AVAILABLE?**

Depending on the concentration and other qualifications, our graduates are prepared to become a variety of professionals including certified financial planners, financial managers, bank and credit union managers, controllers, credit analysts, actuaries, auditors, budget analysts, loan counselors and officers, real estate appraisers, tax assessors, and more. *NOTE: Advanced degrees may be required for some of the above careers. Please speak with an advisor or career counselor for more information.*

Who employs **FINANCE** graduates?

Our graduates work for a variety of employers including private financial planning firms, state and local government agencies, businesses and industries, loan companies, hospitals and health organizations, and banks and other financial organizations.

MAJOR MAP

How to use this map: Review the four categories and suggestions of activities and when you should consider engaging in them. Remember, these are just suggestions! There is a fillable space for you to add in any other ideas you have to set yourself up for success in life after college.

1st YEAR

2nd YEAR

EXCEL IN ACADEMICS

Coursework your first year will focus on foundational classes within the liberal studies catalog and introductory business core classes. Check out the [8-semester plan for your concentration](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

The second year continues with additional liberal studies requirements as well as introductory Accounting and Economics courses. Check out the [8-semester plan for your concentration](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

GET HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

Check out [WCU's DegreePlus program](#) and choose which events in any of the four categories you want to attend. Categories include: Professionalism, Teamwork, Leadership, or Cultural Responsiveness.

See what on-campus employment opportunities are available by logging in to JobCat via your MyWCU.

Consider joining clubs or organizations related to your major such as the Finance Club

If you are thinking about attending a graduate school, start engaging in hands-on experiences required in graduate school admissions.

Engage deeper with [DegreePlus](#); choose an additional competency to complete

BE PART OF THE COMMUNITY

Connect with the [Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning](#) and ask about the [Lily Award](#), a program aimed to encourage and recognize students who are connected with their community.

Develop deeper relationships with the organizations for which you volunteer. Ask for special projects or responsibilities that you can highlight on a resume.

If you want to [study abroad](#), this is a good year to have that experience. The Study Abroad Office has excellent suggestions on places to go to your major specifically.

PREPARE FOR LIFE AFTER COLLEGE

Further explore your career options or career interests using the [Center for Career and Professional Development's](#) online resources, [Focus 2](#), and [Onet Online](#).

Connect with a career counselor early on to explore opportunities and experiences you can do while in college to further develop your professional resume.

Check out [CCPD's list of career-building activities](#) and participate in an activity this year, such as attending Career Fair Plus.

Start a spreadsheet of graduate schools you wish to apply to in a few years; label your spreadsheet with each school's admission requirements and application materials so that you are aware of the expectations.

Looking for a minor? Consider these options:

Business Administration and Law
Finance
Entrepreneurship

Management
Marketing
Mathematics

3rd YEAR

Courses in your third year will focus heavily on upper-level Finance and Business core requirements. Check out the [8-semester plan for your concentration](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

Complete an internship that will give you practical hands-on experience in your field. Contact the CCPD for help in your internship search.

Consider networking with professionals in your field. [The American Finance Association](#) has numerous networking events and professional development opportunities listed.

Volunteer with nonprofits that focus on your ideal career path.

Connect with alumni in your field through [LinkedIn](#)

Visit the CCPD to hone your professional resume and cover letter (Make an appointment through MyWCU)

Utilize the [Writing and Learning Commons](#) for GRE, and other professional exam preparation sessions. Take the GRE, etc. Use [Big Interview](#) to learn more about professional interviews.

Schedule a visit to tour graduate schools of your choice, if applicable.

4th YEAR

Courses in your final year will continue to focus on upper-level Finance business-related topics and finishing liberal studies requirements. Check out the [8-semester plan for your concentration](#), make an appointment with your advisor, and complete your degree audit, and [apply for graduation!](#)

Investigate requirements for full-time jobs or graduate school admissions. Assess what skills or experiences you're lacking and invest time in seeking additional opportunities such as certification programs, classes, or professional development workshops during your last year to fill that gap. Connect with your faculty advisor or career counselor.

Join professional organizations such as the [American Finance Association](#) or the [Financial Planning Association](#).

Network with employers and non-profits at the annual Career Fair Plus event, held each October and February.

Apply to graduate schools, if applicable.

Look for and apply for jobs between 4 and 6 months before graduation.

Polish your resume, cover letter, and interview skills by using the [CCPD](#).

Internships are still the number-one educational experience employers look for in a recent college graduate resume. (Chronicle of Higher Education's study on 59,000 employers)

DID YOU KNOW?

MORE INFORMATION

INTERNSHIP Information

There are numerous internship opportunities for students. In some cases internships are established through a faculty member in the student's major. Oftentimes students find part-time jobs in an area related to their field of study. When this happens, students should discuss with their academic adviser the possibility of receiving college credit. Generally, three hours of general elective credit can be earned for a minimum of 200 hours of experience.

SKILLS LEARNED in the classroom

The core competencies will center on developing skills, knowledge, and attitudes such as:

- information handling and organization
- statistical awareness
- oral and written communication
- numerical computation
- analytical and quantitative abilities
- problem solving
- technical skills
- teamwork
- working independently
- leadership

KNOWLEDGE Base

This program will prepare students to:

- learn, understand and interpret information and apply knowledge to new situations
- set priorities, meet deadlines and effectively plan/manage time, data and resources
- make well-reasoned decisions, problem-solve challenges, think creatively and search for, identify and consider all sides of an issue
- analyze and interpret a wide range of information and data to discuss, support and/or reject ideas, opinions, reports, theories and proposals.

Professional **RESOURCES**

- American Finance Association: www.afajof.org
- Financial Services Association: financialservicesassociation.com
- Financial Planning Association: www.plannersearch.org

QUESTIONS?

For questions, please call the Finance program at 828-227-7412 or visit finance.wcu.edu.

To schedule an appointment with a career counselor, contact the Center for Career and Professional Development, 828-227-7133 or careerservices@wcu.edu.