



Career Guide: What Can You Do With a Finance Degree?

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The job market looks good for finance professionals. The [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts](#) that employment of business and financial operations occupations will grow 10% from 2016 to 2026, faster than the average for all occupations.¹

According to Heather Dana, department chair in the School of Business and Information Technology at Purdue University Global, a number of factors contribute to this favorable outlook for finance degree jobs.

“Baby boomers are retiring out of these professions in record numbers,” Dana says, “creating job openings that need to be filled. In addition, we can thank a healthy economy, new business development and investment opportunities, and the growth of technology and big data for creating this demand.”

If you’re contemplating earning a finance degree as a means to meet your career goals, keep reading. A [Bachelor of Science in Finance](#) can lead to a variety of interesting business careers with excellent growth potential.² In this ebook, we’re highlighting what you can do with a finance degree.





Personal Financial Advisor

Personal finance encompasses many areas, including investments, retirement planning, home loans, insurance, taxes, and saving for big future purchases such as college and dream vacations. Personal financial advisors work with individuals and families to make sure their clients' savings are on track to help them achieve their financial goals.

Financial advisors:

- Provide investment reports
- Help their clients make decisions on investments
- Plan for short- and long-term financial goals

Financial advisors who go on to complete a master's in finance may become certified financial planners by successfully completing the initial and ongoing certification requirements of the [CFP Board](#).³ These include exams on taxes, estate planning, retirement, and other financial areas.

The [BLS projects](#) that the job outlook for personal financial advisors is expected to grow 15% between 2016 and 2026, which is much faster than average for all occupations.

"As people live longer, demand for financial planning services increases," Dana says. "People are increasingly aware that they should be saving for retirement, especially as we continue to worry about there not being any Social Security."

Financial Analyst

From how individual products and services perform to how overall economic trends affect industries, there are numerous figures to keep track of in any type of business.

Financial analysts:

- Make sense of business performance and market trends
- Provide recommendations to businesses about how to grow and maintain a healthy bottom line

Financial analysts who work outside of individual companies may study specific industries, regions, or products. They can then provide financial recommendations based on their analysis to relevant companies.

Financial analysts may also work in such roles as:

- Portfolio managers
- Fund managers
- Ratings analysts
- Risk analysts

They assess the performance of investments such as stocks and bonds to provide recommendations to businesses.

The job outlook for financial analysts is expected to grow 11% between 2016 and 2026, the [BLS reports](#).



“Financial analysts are the ones who take numbers from the accounting department, and then slice and dice them—turning them into forecasts that help management make educated decisions, based on what’s happening and what you expect to happen,” Dana says. “Typically, a financial analyst works in in-house corporate finance. They may go on to be a certified financial analyst or financial controller, and you even find them going on to be the CFO of a company.”^{2,4}



Budget Analyst

Just as individuals must control their spending and saving to stay financially healthy, businesses must, too. A business requires different types of budget planning throughout its lifespan, from the startup phase and the launch of new products or services through expansion. A budget analyst makes recommendations that keep finances and spending under control at every phase.

Budget analysts:

- Review budget proposals for accuracy and completeness
- Make recommendations to optimize budgets
- Monitor spending to ensure it's on track
- Estimate future budget needs

In addition to working with businesses, budget analysts also work with governments, nonprofits, and universities. They study economic developments that may affect their clients' budgets and make recommendations to optimize budget performance.

The job outlook for budget analysts is expected to grow 7% between 2016 and 2026, about as fast as average, [according to the BLS](#).

"Companies call this role different things," Dana says. "Typically, it's 'budget analyst' if you're in a large company. They're important because they manage how a budget is allocated, so even in the face of cutbacks, employment of budget analysts should remain steady."



Financial Manager

There are many moving parts within an organization, and the financial manager is the leader who keeps all parties on track. Financial managers supervise others who work on budgeting and financial reporting. They often serve as a liaison between top executives and other financial professionals at an organization.

Typical duties of financial managers include:

- Preparing financial statements
- Reviewing company financial reports
- Making recommendations to optimize finances
- Working with management to make financial decisions

Financial managers may work in roles such as accounting, auditing, or financial analysis before moving into a manager role. The [BLS reports](#) the job outlook for financial managers is expected to grow 19% between 2016 and 2026.

“In a corporate setting, a financial manager supervises the financial analysts and staff accountants,” Dana says. “Sometimes, that’s called a controller. They serve as the gatekeeper, making sure the analysts and accountants are on the right path and doing their jobs appropriately. Due to their core functions, financial managers are likely to stay in demand as the economy grows. This is especially true as globalization continues.”

Loan Officer

Individuals and business owners need loans for all types of things. There are home loans, car loans, business loans, college loans, loans for special financial situations—you name it. A loan officer evaluates a loan request by collecting and analyzing financial documents. The loan officer can then authorize or recommend approval.

Loan officers aren't limited to working in financial institutions. For those who have a passion for finance and want to be their own boss, becoming a loan officer might be a good option.

The [BLS projects](#) that employment of loan officers will grow 11% from 2016 to 2026, faster than average.

"People have refinanced a lot in the past 15 years, and there was a boom in the need for loan officers," Dana says. "A healthy economy will keep demand strong, although employment of loan officers in the banking industry might take a slight dip as banks shut down branches."



Credit Analyst

Credit history is a major factor in determining whether a person or business can obtain a loan or credit. [Credit analysts](#) examine credit data and financial statements to gauge the level of risk that is involved with lending money or extending credit to a particular individual or business.

A credit analyst might work with a loan officer to provide recommendations on loan approval.

To make these recommendations, they:

- Look at payment history and payment trends
- Analyze spending and savings
- Investigate earnings

Not only do credit analysts play a role in whether or not credit is extended, but they may also help decide the interest rate at which money is borrowed.

“One of the benefits of being a credit analyst is that they’re needed across a variety of industries, including credit card companies, commercial and investment banks, investment companies, and any company that offers financing for its services,” Dana says. “Credit analysts aren’t limited to a particular type of company, which is a nice perk of working in this field.”



General and Operations Manager

One of the top reasons why businesses fail is a lack of capital. Without capital, employees can't get paid, products can't be developed, and businesses shrink or have to close down. With money being such a precious resource for business sustainability, [general and operations managers](#) who have backgrounds in finance can help businesses make smarter decisions that lead to long-term growth.

"People don't always connect a degree in finance to a career as a general or operations manager, but if you think about it, it's really a natural fit," Dana says. "You have to understand the numbers. Without that understanding, you could make some terrible decisions."

Dana continues, "A general or operations manager is a big-picture person, and if they have a background in understanding financial statements and implications, it can be a winning combination."

The duties of general and operations managers include:

- Creating business policies
- Hiring employees
- Making recommendations for how business teams work

Finances play an integral role in all these tasks. If you aspire to attain leadership roles in business, finance can be a solid foundation to have.

Take a Step Toward a Career in Finance

All the roles mentioned in this ebook typically require at least a bachelor's degree in finance or a related field to be considered. If you're interested in working with money and want to help organizations or individuals make better financial decisions, a career in finance could be fulfilling.

Purdue University Global offers an [online Bachelor of Science Degree in Finance](#). Enjoy the flexibility of online learning and the opportunity to achieve your career goals. [Contact Purdue Global](#) to learn more.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION: PLEASE READ

- 1 National long-term projections may not reflect local and/or short-term economic or job conditions, and do not guarantee actual job growth.
- 2 Purdue Global cannot guarantee employment or career advancement. Additional training or certification may be required. Certain finance positions may require further certification and/or licensing by individual states. This program was not designed to meet any specific state's requirements for licensure or certification, and Purdue Global makes no representations or warranties as to whether the degree or any individual courses meet such requirements. Refer to the University Catalog for additional information.
- 3 Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc. owns the certification marks CFP®, Certified Financial Planner™ and federally registered CFP (with flame design) in the U.S. Purdue Global does not certify individuals to use these marks. CFP certification is granted solely by Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc. to individuals who, in addition to completing an educational requirement, have met its ethics, experience, and examination requirements.
- 4 Students are responsible for understanding the requirements of optional certification exams. The University cannot guarantee students will be eligible to sit for or pass exams. In some cases, work experience, additional coursework beyond the Purdue Global program, fieldwork, and/or background checks may be necessary to be eligible to take or to successfully pass the exams.