

What can I do with a degree in Finance?

Finance.



What is Finance?

Finance is primarily the art of managing money, and more specifically it examines the acquisition and allocation of financial resources.

Finance as a discipline is forward-focused, whereas financial accounting measures past performance. Finance is largely about future planning for businesses, investors, government agencies, non-profits, and more.

Finance consists of three interrelated areas:

- Corporate finance studies how firms raise and efficiently utilise funds obtained from lenders and shareholders
- Financial markets and institutions explore how the financial system facilitates the transfer of funds from savers and lenders to borrowers
- Investment analysis studies how investors choose securities and asset classes for their investment portfolios.

All of these areas assess the trade-off between risk and reward and the valuation of financial and capital assets.

Learn more

It is important to do some research when planning for your future career. Speak with, ask questions of, and follow relevant professional bodies, organisations, companies, thought leaders and industry professionals.

This will help you learn about career options, work environments, education and training requirements, and salary information.

Examples of professional bodies

- Institute of Finance Professionals New Zealand www.infinz.com
- CFA Institute www.cfainstitute.org
- Financial Services Institute of Australasia www.finsia.com
- Accounting and Finance Association of Australia and New Zealand www.afaanz.org
- Professional Risk Managers International Association www.prmia.org

Career and study information

Some study pathways and degrees have a recommended school background, and some careers may require further study beyond a first degree or additional experience.

Gather information from:

- Finance study details
www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/academic-study/subjects/finance
- Job profiles on career websites like
www.careers.govt.nz
- Job adverts/vacancy descriptions
- Industry professional bodies.

This resource is part of a set of brochures focused on subject majors; many can also be studied as minors.



What skills can graduates gain?

Through studying a degree in Finance, graduates develop a valuable set of skills that are transferable to a range of careers. These skills can include:

- Practical application of financial concepts and principles
- Computing techniques
- Numerical confidence
- Logical and quantitative thinking
- Lateral and strategic thinking
- Analytical thinking
- Problem solving skills
- Teamwork, resilience and adaptability.

Applied learning

Opportunities to apply your learning are available through a UC campus-based trading room/lab that offers firsthand experience with financial markets. Work-integrated learning can also be pursued through activities such as internships with potential employers.

What do employers look for?

Many employers look for generic skills such as communication, client/customer-focus, bicultural competence, cultural awareness, teamwork and initiative.

With technology, globalisation, and other drivers changing society, skills such as resilience, problem solving, and adaptability are important.

Skills that are likely to grow in importance include analytical and creative thinking, systems thinking and technological literacy.*

*World Economic Forum: www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/05/future-of-jobs-2023-skills

How can these skills be developed?

- Some skills are gained through studying
- Extra-curricular activities can help, such as getting involved in clubs, mentoring, cultural groups, part-time work or volunteering
- Be open to professional and personal development opportunities, whether it is undertaking work experience, overseas exchange, skills seminar, or joining an industry group.

Where have graduates been employed?

Graduates in Finance find employment in many areas. UC graduates have worked in:

- Government e.g. Treasury, MBIE, Reserve Bank of New Zealand, Stats NZ
- Banking
- Financial advisory services
- Management consultants and financial services
- Investment advisors
- Mortgage brokers
- Trading firms
- Telecommunications
- Oil and gas
- Construction
- Recruitment
- Retail
- IT and software
- Manufacturing
- Insurance
- Research institutes
- Legal firms
- Not-for-profit agencies
- Cyber security.

What jobs and activities might graduates do?

A strong grounding in finance is needed to pursue the position as a chief financial officer (CFO). There are also many other career opportunities, from insurance or mortgage broker to hedge fund manager – see some job examples below.

Note: This list is not exhaustive, and some jobs may require further study, training or experience. It is recommended to start with the section 'How can I gain a sense of career direction?'

Finance / commercial manager

- Facilitates collaboration between finance and other business functions
- Presents recommendations to leadership boards and contributes to strategic planning
- Oversees financial management, including reporting, analysis, budgeting, forecasting, modelling, and risk minimisation

Financial advisor / associate / analyst

- Gathers financial data
- Analyses trends using models
- Advises clients on finances, plans, and issues
- Protects an organisation's economic interests

Investment analyst / advisor

- Does fundamental analysis for securities
- Advises clients on their financial goals
- Provides buy/sell recommendations

Product manager, financial market analyst

- Analyses production costs to set sale prices
- Advises how to lower costs and increase profits

Personal financial planner / advisor

- Identifies a client's financial goals
- Prepares financial and/or investment plans
- Provides households and individuals with help on decisions such as retirement planning, budgeting, insurance

Investment broker, investment trader, share broker, financial trader, quant trader

- Develops systems, algorithms, relationships and strategies to maximise assets/minimise risks
- Specialises in stock, bond or other markets
- Makes investment transactions and may offer advice to a client or organisation

Capital investment manager

- Analyses financial details of capital projects
- Undertakes cash flow analysis and opportunity cost of capital assessment
- Makes recommendations regarding projects

Business development manager

- Identifies and develops new markets/business
- Builds and manages client relationships
- Develop sales messages and gives presentations

Portfolio manager / consultant

- Determines risk-return parameters for clients
- Designs portfolio to maximise returns and minimise risks

Risk analyst / manager

- Identifies and manages strategic, operational and other (e.g. credit or regulatory) risks
- Develops risk management policies, procedures
- Oversees staff engagement and compliance

Consumer banker

- Manages customer queries
- Advises individuals and businesses on their financial needs and what services are available

Examples of other job titles and careers include:

- Data / statistical analyst, Actuary, Academic lecturer or researcher, Accountant, Banking consultant, Consumer banker, Tax associate, Policy analyst, Service consultant.

Further study options

Finance graduates can progress into postgraduate programmes from honours through to master's and PhD level in the subject. UC also offers the Master of Applied Finance and Economics.

Further study may facilitate career benefits such as specialist skills, entry into a specific occupation, higher starting salary, faster progression rate, and advanced research capability.

It is important to determine which, if any, further study options align with future career aspirations.

For further UC study options visit:

www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/academic-study

How can I gain a sense of career direction?

Understanding yourself and others is important to gain a sense of direction. This grows with experience; therefore, trying new things and reflecting on an ongoing basis is important.

Career planning checklist

❑ Discover and reflect on:

- Your values, interests, strengths, abilities, and aspirations
- Your connection to whānau, people, and places
- Lifestyle preferences and location
- The skills you want to gain, use, or enhance

❑ Engage in a variety of experiences to learn about:

- How you want to contribute to society, the environment, and global challenges
- The tasks, responsibilities and work environments you prefer
- Your work values, priorities and interests

❑ Learn more and gather career and study information (refer to page one of this resource)

- Speak with people working in careers that interest you; check the realities of a job/career
- Gather information from various sources

❑ Identify your next steps

- Talking to a career consultant can help you to identify your next steps. Visit:
www.canterbury.ac.nz/life/jobs-and-careers



What have other students and graduates done?

Explore career stories of students' university experiences and UC alumni who make a difference globally in varied ways.

Visit: www.canterbury.ac.nz/about-uc/why-uc/our-students/student-stories



Akmal

Financial Product Analyst, Jade Software

Master of Applied Finance and Economics

Bachelor of Commerce in Economics and Finance

What motivated you to study Finance?

Finance is a field which fuels an industry that essentially oils the cogs of a nation's economy. The work that you will be exposed to here will give you opportunities to help real businesses reach their goals, encourage output and uphold the capital markets — a vital component, the backbone if I may say so — to an economy.

What did you enjoy about it?

As I started entering the more advanced topics in Finance and Economics, the level of conceptualisation and intuitiveness required to grasp the concepts being taught really kept me engaged.

We used a range of computer modelling tools as part of our learning and it was very interesting to see what you learn in theory during classes come into practical applications when building models.

Were there any highlights?

My involvement with the Economics and Finance Society of Canterbury (EFSoc). I transformed it from a small club to a thriving and respected organisation during my time as its president. A lot of the practical skills that gave me the confidence to step up and do what is needed and when it is needed came from education and exposure I gained from my courses at UC.

Now that you are working, do you have any wisdom you can share?

Time spent at university is not just about the technical skills you learn, but also about the personal skills, and connections you make during that time. It's important to not be fixated on doing one thing but to be involved in a variety of roles.

Modern day career paths are no longer limited to conventional job descriptions, and being moulded into an individual who is capable of handling change and learning to learn, is probably the most important life-skill my time at UC has given me.

What else should I know?

The value of experiences

Learn what experiences graduates attribute to helping them transition into work:

www.canterbury.ac.nz/life/jobs-and-careers/graduate-destinations

Effective job search strategies

- Speaking with employers is key to finding opportunities; not all jobs are advertised.
- Developing an online presence is useful as employers can approach you online.
- Learning about recruitment patterns and where to find opportunities is important.

Where can I seek help?

Need careers advice?

Career guidance services are available for intending and current students, and recent graduates. Contact:

Te Rōpū Rapuara | Careers

T: +64 3 369 0303

E: careers@canterbury.ac.nz

www.canterbury.ac.nz/life/jobs-and-careers

Need study advice?

Student Advisors help you with any questions you have about starting, planning and changing your studies. Visit:

www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/study-support-info/study-support

• If you are considering UC contact:

The Future Students team

T: 0800 VARSITY (0800 827 748)

E: futurestudents@canterbury.ac.nz

• If you are a current UC student contact:

Kaitoko | First Year Student Advisors

T: +64 3 369 0409

E: firstyearadvice@canterbury.ac.nz

Te Kura Umanga | UC Business School

T: +64 3 369 3888

E: studybusiness@canterbury.ac.nz

www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/academic-study/business

