Professional Program in Finance (PPF)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Updated August 2017

What is the point of the PPF?
The Professional Program in Finance (PPF) is a 2-3 year undergraduate program designed to create better outcomes for top students pursuing top finance/business careers.

Who is the ideal candidate?
The PPF is ideal for undergraduate Finance majors who are interested in aggressively pursuing the top, most competitive careers in the industry. Students who are accepted will be held to a high standard and be required to spend additional time and resources above the traditional academic requirements to be successful. For example, all PPF students will be required to complete an intensive, self-paced, Excel / financial modeling course called Breaking Into Wall Street (BIWS).

What are the application requirements?
You can apply here: https://jindal.utdallas.edu/som/application/ppf-application/. Online applications are due by Friday, September 1st, 2017.
- At least a Finance major (double majors, minors in anything else are fine)
- 3.5 cumulative GPA to apply (the higher the better)
- Minimum of 6 graded hours at UTD or another 4 year college
- Sophomore or Junior level standing.
  - As of Fall 2017, if you are scheduled to graduate from Fall 2018 to Spring 2020, you are eligible
- Admission is competitive and we have limited spots. Select applications will be chosen to move forward for in person interviews, which will determine final acceptance
- Admission is based on BOTH quantitative (GPA, experience, etc.) and qualitative factors (communication skills, attitude, drive, etc.)

What are the on-going requirements to stay in and graduate with the designation?
- Completion of Breaking Into Wall Street, a self-paced, Excel / financial modeling course
- A summer internship for every available summer. At least 2 completed internships before graduation. Exceptions made for study abroad and other valid reasons.
- Participation in the Financial Leadership Association’s (FLA)Securities Analysis competition (SAC) before graduation
- Maintain a 3.5 cumulative GPA.
What type of jobs are you targeting?
Investment Banking, Investment Management / Hedge Funds, Private Equity, Corporate Finance / Development / Strategy, and Management Consulting are some of the targets. However, there are plenty of other great options out in the market (Equity research, sales & trading, valuation, etc.). Ultimately the student will determine what career path suits them best.

What’s the overall timeline of the process?
- Applications will open on Monday, August 21st and be due online by Friday, September 1st, 2017
- In person interviews will take place during the week of September 4th at the Career Management Center within the JSOM. These will be formal interviews, similar to a regular job interview. Business dress is required
- After interviews, final acceptance will be determined in the following week
- Accepted PPF students will be added into Breaking Into Wall Street for Spring 2018
- Spring semester 2018 and beyond:
  - Completion of Breaking Into Wall Street
  - 1-on-1 meetings with every PPF student and the Director to formulate a personalized, concrete career strategy
  - PPF Events, Speakers and competitions during the school term
  - Extensive preparation in anticipation for summer/fall recruitment cycle

I’m a freshman, or a senior, can I apply?
- Given the timing of the program and the length of time required to complete it, you need to be graduating between Fall 2018 to Spring 2020 to be eligible
  - If you are a freshman interested in the PPF please reach out to me so I can get to know you and learn about your interests
  - If you are a high performing senior (3.5+ GPA, relevant internship experience) interested in one of our target industries, please reach out as well
- If you fall into one of these categories it is highly recommended that you join the Financial Leadership Association (FLA), which is a student run organization advised by Alex Treece (The PPF Director). The FLA will provide access to similar types of professional and learning opportunities

I’m a graduate student, can I apply?
The PPF is for undergraduates only. Graduate students interested in getting similar professional and learning opportunities should get involved with the FLA.
I’m an Economics, Accounting, or [Insert non-Finance Major here] major, can I apply?
The PPF is for finance students only. Extra majors and minors are perfectly acceptable, as long as you have a finance major as well.

Does this program conflict at all with the Davidson Management Honors Program (DMHP) or the Professional Program in Accounting (PPA)?
The PPF does not conflict with the DMHP.

The PPF does not technically conflict with the PPA, but I highly recommend not trying to mix the two. Pursuing a top career in finance is very demanding. Pursuing a top career in accounting is also very demanding. Trying to commit to both simultaneously is likely to produce results below expectations.

Does getting into the PPF guarantee a job / internship for me?
In short, no.

The PPF will give you all the tools, skills and resources to pursue top careers in finance, but given the competitive nature of many of these jobs, students will have to outshine their competition to ensure placement. There will be many PPF exclusive opportunities (i.e. internships, jobs) for students in the program.

Our first class (2016) had 100% placement for internships. Many of those students received full-time offers for after graduation.

How can I prepare for PPF interviews and top-careers generally?
For investment banking, private equity, hedge funds, corporate finance and top finance roles generally, I recommend spending a lot of time reviewing Mergers & Inquisitions’ articles: https://www.mergersandinquisitions.com/articles/

For consulting, I recommend checking out content from top firms and Victor Cheng:
Bain: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFO8dAv-cLg
McKinsey: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2C5a2L5NHi0
Boston Consulting Group: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBYH2bzFRvY
Victor Cheng (on case interviews): https://www.youtube.com/user/caseinterview/videos
Case Interview Website: http://www.caseinterview.com/

And don’t forget the most important way: Networking. Real networking = reaching out and developing relationships with professionals directly, not attending events in big rooms with lots of people.