**Professional Program in Finance (PPF)**

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

*Updated August 2020*

**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 industry. Students who are accepted are held to a higher standard and expected to work harder than just satisfying the traditional academic requirements.

**What are the application requirements?**
You can apply here: [https://jindal.utdallas.edu/som/application/ppf-application/](https://jindal.utdallas.edu/som/application/ppf-application/). **Online applications are due by Friday, September 7th, 2020.**

- At least a Finance major (double majors, minors in anything else are fine)
- 3.5 cumulative GPA to apply
- Minimum of 6 graded hours at UTD or another 4 year college. Transfer students from community colleges will need to have at least one semester at UTD before applying.
- Sophomore or Junior level standing – defined as having at least 3 semesters before graduation and not your first two semesters of college
- 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 Excel and financial modeling training, including producing a working 3-statement model on a public company
- A completed internship every calendar year (in fall, spring or summer)
- Participation in at least one competition before graduation – ideally multiple. Securities Analysis Competition (SAC) and Case Competition put on by the Financial Leadership Association (FLA) are two good ones
- 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 17\textsuperscript{th} and be due online by Sunday, September 6\textsuperscript{th}, 2020
- Candidates for first round interviews will be selected within 1-2 weeks of the application deadline
- In 2020, due to COVID-19, we will be conducting video interviews in place of the usual in-person interviews. Those will be scheduled 2-3 weeks after the application deadline
- After interviews, final acceptance will be determined within 1-2 weeks (Mid-to-late September)

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 at least 3 semesters away from graduation, and not a freshman, to join the PPF
  - If you are a high performing senior (3.5+ GPA, relevant internship experience) interested in one of our target industries, please reach out
- If you are not eligible right away I highly recommend that you join the Financial Leadership Association (FLA). The FLA is a student run organization that 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 won’t work.

**Does getting into the PPF guarantee a job / internship for me?**

In short, no.

The PPF will give you tools, skills and resources to pursue top careers in finance, but given the competitive nature of many of these jobs, students will have to compete and win to get the best roles. There will be PPF exclusive opportunities (i.e. internships, jobs) for students in the program, which gives you a leg up.

**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/](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](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFO8dAv-cLg)
- **McKinsey:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2C5a2L5NHl0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2C5a2L5NHl0)
- **Boston Consulting Group:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBYH2bzFRvY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBYH2bzFRvY)
- **Victor Cheng (on case interviews):** [https://www.youtube.com/user/caseinterview/videos](https://www.youtube.com/user/caseinterview/videos)
- **Case Interview Website:** [http://www.caseinterview.com/](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.

For more info on how to network and where to start, read this: [https://medium.com/@alextreece/how-to-get-a-job-out-of-college-1c70a9d78c28](https://medium.com/@alextreece/how-to-get-a-job-out-of-college-1c70a9d78c28)