

Master of Science in Financial Planning

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Focused on the 'art and science' of financial planning, this program allows you to customize your courses and earn an accredited degree that positions you for success in your chosen career path. Our M.S. in Financial Planning degree requires students to successfully complete a program comprised of 12, three-credit hour courses (totaling 36 credits).

Track 1: M.S. + Eligibility for the CFP® Exam

Consists of 10 core courses and two electives. Our courses are registered by the Certified Financial Planner (CFP®) Board of Standards. Upon completion of the program, you will earn an M.S. in Financial Planning and gain eligibility to sit for the prestigious CFP® Certification Exam.

Required Courses

MFP 513	Financial Principles and Policies	3
MFP 521	Introduction to Financial Planning	3
MFP 522	Tax Management and Strategy	3
MFP 525	Employee Benefits/Retirement Planning	3
MFP 526	Risk Management and Insurance	3
MFP 527	Principles of Estate Planning	3
MFP 542	Investment and Portfolio Management	3
MFP 545	Behavioral Finance	3
MFP 598	Capstone Course in Financial Planning	3
MFP 597	Applied Research in Financial Planning	3

Electives

Select 2 courses from the following:

MFP 511A	Macroeconomics for Investment	3
MFP 530	Advanced Estate Planning	3
MFP 531	Sales Management	3
MFP 534	Financial Planning Small/Family Business	3
MFP 535	Psychology and Cultural Dynamics	3
MFP 536	Social Psychology of Client Leadership	3

Track 2 M.S. only; for those with CFP® certification

Identical to the first track except for the fact that five of the introductory-level financial planning courses are replaced with advanced financial planning courses and interdisciplinary-study courses. Upon completion of the program, you will earn an M.S. in Financial Planning.

Required Courses

MFP 513	Financial Principles and Policies	3
MFP 530	Advanced Estate Planning	3
MFP 534	Financial Planning Small/Family Business	3
MFP 536	Social Psychology of Client Leadership	3
MFP 542	Investment and Portfolio Management	3
MFP 545	Behavioral Finance	3

Electives

Select 4 courses from the following

MFP 510	Strategic Decision Making	3
MFP 511A	Macroeconomics for Investment	3
MFP 531	Sales Management	3
MFP 535	Psychology and Cultural Dynamics	3
MFP 541	Strategic Financial Analysis	3

Courses

MFP 505. Enterprise Mgt, Org & Strategy. (3).

Managers are called upon to make important choices that require a well-informed understanding of how organizations are designed and operate. Toward that end, they must be knowledgeable of all of an organization's functions (including accounting, finance, human resources, marketing, operations, etc.) and how these activities must be coordinated. Further, to achieve firm goals, managers are required to have a profound understanding of the industry and professional environment. This course introduces the functional areas of an organization, seeks to develop external environment analytical skills, and proposes theoretical and practical paradigms to effectively manage in an increasingly competitive global environment. Cross-listed with MBA 505.

MFP 506. Information Technology Management. (3).

In today's dynamic and competitive economy, the ability of an organization to effectively leverage their existing and emerging information technologies is a critical success factor in gaining and sustaining a strategic advantage. This course introduces students to important concepts and techniques needed to understand and leverage information technology within an organizational context. Students will learn the fundamentals of design and implementation of information systems in the modern organization, business process improvement through the use of information technology, organizational data modeling, project management concepts, data governance mechanisms, technology-enabled change management among other. Cross listed with MBA 506.

MFP 508. Business Ethics and Law. (3).

Law provides a set of rules for behavior in society. Ethics presents a menu of options for social actors. Law concerns what we are obligated to do; ethics concerns what we should do. This course presents the disciplines of law and ethics as complementary strategic tools to guide business leaders in making sound decisions as well as exercising moral judgment. Cross-listed with MBA-508.

MFP 509. Marketing Management. (3).

With more and more products and services chasing fewer dollars, marketing strategy and plan execution is more important than ever. The goal of marketing is to plan, build, manage and grow ethical and profitable customer relationships over time. Marketing Management introduces students to the great variety of functions that must be managed in a marketing organization. Activities and issues addressed include product marketing and management, customer satisfaction, pricing, product launches, digital marketing, marketing information systems, channel management, marketing administration, industry marketing, marketing communications, lead management, event marketing and marketing campaign strategy. Cross-listed with MBA 509.

MFP 510. Strategic Decision Making. (3).

The main focus of this course is on the decision-making process and the role of management science in that process. Students need to demonstrate knowledge of the practical basis of the course by mastering and correctly applying the methods for making these decisions, comparisons, and inferences in business settings. The purpose of this course is to provide students with a sound conceptual understanding of the role management science plays in the decision-making process. The course is concerned with the wide variety of quantitative techniques currently being used in the field of operations research. Students must apply the management science model to generate solutions and recommendations for management. Cross listed with MBA 510.

MFP 511A. Macroeconomics for Investment. (3).

This course illustrates how contemporary macroeconomics theories and practice explain the current state of affairs in creating better opportunities for many people and business entities in the global economy. This course also explains and argues about the emergence of the crises that have shaken the economic foundations of many economies and regions in the world. The course brings attention to major current problems in the world such as Global Financial Crisis and its outcome in the form of increase in unemployment, high public debt, and growing poverty and income gap within a country and among the nations. The class provides ample opportunities for debating the contemporary and prevailing policy initiatives with respect to issues such as inflation, exchange rates regimes, fiscal rules and regulations. Students will have the opportunity to develop an international macroeconomic perspective. They are encouraged and assisted to use critical and deductive reasoning, adaptive thinking, ethical judgment in reaching the possible conclusions. This class will embark on helping the students to enhance their capacity to synthesize competing points of view and effective communication. Cross-listed with MBA 511.

MFP 513. Financial Principles and Policies. (3).

Finance and financial institutions as they relate to the firm and the flow of funds are studied. Emphasis is on the supply and demand of capital, principles and tools of business finance, money, and capital markets. Topics include: time value of money, valuation of securities, capital budgeting, Capital Asset Pricing Model (CAPM), market efficiency, risk and return analysis, working capital management, budgeting and planning, costs of capital, and financial ratio analysis. Cross listed with MBA 513.

MFP 521. Introduction to Financial Planning. (3).

This is the introductory course in the Financial Planning (FP) program. As the name suggests, this course will introduce students to the general principles of Financial Planning. The course will begin by describing the FP process including the collection of data, financial statements and the budgeting process and the requirements of both the planner and of the profession (ethics, competencies, standards, regulations, etc.). The course will then establish the different areas of FP (law, taxes, insurance, investments, estate planning, etc.). The course will provide the appropriate foundation for the rest of the FP courses.

MFP 522. Tax Management and Strategy. (3).

This course will primarily cover the following three areas: tax planning considerations, tax computations and tax planning strategies. The main focus will be on personal tax management and strategies.

MFP 525. Employee Benefits/Retirement Planning. (3).

This course will cover the requisite material for the field of financial planning. Students will begin by being versed in different benefits plans including disability and cafeteria plans as well as business applications of the above. The course will then cover retirement planning issues including Government Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid plans. Students will be exposed to needs analysis, different types and characteristics of retirement plans, distribution options, ethical considerations, etc. At the end of this segment, students should be able to recommend suitable retirement and portfolio plans. Prerequisites: MFP 521 and MFP 513.

MFP 526. Risk Management and Insurance. (3).

Insurance is an important aspect of a financial plan. In order to acquire and develop the requisite skills, students will be provided with a knowledge base in the evolving area of risk management. This course in Risk Management and Insurance will provide students with an understanding of the modern methods of appraising risk and the different tools and techniques used to manage it. The course will provide an in-depth introduction to insurance as the traditional tool of risk management. Life, health, property and casualty, liability and other forms of insurance will be examined in detail in this course. At the end of this course, students should be able to assess the risk exposure and tolerance of clients and the different ways in which different types of insurance can be used to manage risk. Prerequisites: MFP 521 AND MFP 513.

MFP 527. Principles of Estate Planning. (3).

A significant task of a financial planner is to address the estate planning needs of clients. This complex legal area explores issues in transfer of property, wills, trust, gifts, etc. Related issues in valuation, taxes, documentation, etc., are also examined. This course will also delve into issues of probate, freezes, marital deductions, charitable contributions, charitable trusts and planning for incapacity. Special attention will be given to trusts, the use of insurance in estate planning, taxation issues in estate planning, etc. The course should provide students with the knowledge necessary to advise clients in estate planning matters as well as to recommend different plans and strategies. Prerequisites: BUS 521 and BUS 513.

MFP 530. Advanced Estate Planning. (3).

A significant task of a financial planner is to address the estate planning needs of clients. This course covers the more complex areas of trust and tax law not normally included in a financial planning program. The material covered is structured for those who tailor and administer financial and estate plans covering the most important planning concepts and examines the most important techniques used to set and meet the financial goals of the client and their families. The course should provide students with the knowledge necessary to advise clients in estate planning matters as well as to recommend different plans and strategies.

MFP 531. Sales Management. (3).

This course discusses sales problems and how to put in place sales management processes designed to solve these problems. The purposes and reasoning behind the material are emphasized and sales management principles are reinforced with actual examples. An effort is made to relate to the situations and realities students experience in the work place. Some topics covered include sales cycles, installing a sales process, strategic selling, selling to distributors, OEMs and VARs, telesales, telemarketing and direct marketing, sales planning, budgeting and reporting, sales compensation plans, sales forecasting, account and territory management, conducting sales effectiveness audits; sales automation and sales organization. Students are introduced to several structured approaches for defining and addressing selling problems and opportunities. Cross-listed with MBA 531.

MFP 534. Financial Planning Small/Family Business. (3).

Small to medium-sized businesses and professional practices are a primary market for the experienced financial planner. It is pivotal for the planner to: understand and anticipate the client's risks and concerns, provide the client with workable and practical solutions to mitigate risks, and provide the client with viable incentive and reward packages to attract and retain highly skilled and valued employees. This course uses a theory- practice approach of readings, class discussion, discussion boards, assessment tools, and case studies to provide students with an in-depth analysis of these problems and their solutions.

MFP 535. Psychology and Cultural Dynamics. (3).

This course is part of a series of courses designed to prepare students to provide services customary of business professionals. Ultimately, the goal of the class is for students to enhance their potential to succeed in the business world by augmenting their skills and abilities to communicate and persuade effectively given cultural parameters. The present course will focus on the development of communication skills based on best practices, cultural realities, and methods from several fields central and peripheral to business and management. For example, students will formulate an individual orientation to communication based on theoretical leanings, empirical evidence, and personal preferences. Additionally, students will learn strategies to ascertain what clients attempt to communicate, and strategies to arrive at workable solutions to typical business communication challenges.

MFP 536. Social Psychology of Client Leadership. (3).

Influencing financial planning clients is a leadership event. Understanding the influential tactics that clients respond to is one of the key success skills that financial planners must master. Understanding the values that their clients have, identifying those values, understanding the goals of the clients, and succeeding in getting clients to change their spending, saving and earning strategies to achieve those goals is crucial to helping both the planner and client succeed. This course will focus on the social psychology of leading and influencing clients through behaviors that the planner displays, developing skills in evaluating client values, and preparing a plan for further development of their leadership skills. The course will stress theoretical approaches and models as well as practical application relevant for financial planners.

MFP 537. Retirement Income Planning. (3).

This course is intended to explore how financial planning practitioners bridge the gap between client's wealth and their cash flow needs during retirement. To do this we will explore the implications of longevity, inflation and return volatility on client funding needs. Students will create a pro-forma retirement budget in order to define both base and discretionary spending levels. Students will then use both Probability-based and Safety-first methods to determine appropriate asset allocations based on client risk tolerance and capacity. Comparisons will be made between Annuitized products (including Social Security) and capital assets to better understand the risks of both. Students will also explore alternative retirement products such as LT Care Insurance, Longevity Insurance, and Reverse Mortgages as ways to hedge against running out of assets during retirement.

MFP 541. Strategic Financial Analysis. (3).

The course is designed to provide students with the skills necessary to exploit the richness of information available from financial statements. Upon completion of the course, students will have an appreciation for the usefulness and limitations of financial statements in asset valuation and credit analysis, and should be aware of much of the research that exists concerning the role of financial information in capital markets. Cross-listed with MBA 541.

MFP 542. Investment and Portfolio Management. (3).

This course is a study of the various type of available investments and the functions of financial intermediaries in money and capital markets. Study will also be given to the problems encountered in the management of a portfolio of investments. Cross-listed with MBA 542.

MFP 543. Real Estate Investments. (3).

This course provides students with an introduction of the application of financial principles to the discipline of real estate. Students should leave this course with an understanding of: investment property analysis and evaluation, commercial real estate and single-family housing loan underwriting, real property valuation, the real estate capital markets, real estate ownership structures and taxation. Cross listed with MBA 543.

MFP 545. Behavioral Finance. (3).

This seminar course is intended to explore the field of behavior and to promote an appreciation for the importance of human behavior in the spectrums of households, institutions and society. Behavioral science is an interdisciplinary body of knowledge with strong ties to the social sciences-psychology, sociology and anthropology, as well as to allied social sciences-such as economics and political science. Behavioral studies uses scientific methods to develop and empirically test theories about human behavior across all spectrums, therefore, the role of the scientific method in understanding and application of knowledge regarding topic areas is quintessential. This course is devoted to understanding the nature and role of reason, emotions and behavior in financial decision making under uncertainty. The three areas of decision-making behavior that will be thoroughly explored will be in the fields of investment, retirement savings and financial and mental health. Cross-listed with MBA 545.

MFP 597. Applied Research in Financial Planning. (3).

The purpose of the applied research course is to advance your expertise within a particular planning niche. Students will integrate material learned in prior financial planning courses with current research for the intended purpose of creating a book, which positions you as a content expert. Applied research methodology to be explored includes: project design, exploratory research, analysis and presentation. A second benefit of the course is that you will learn how to self-publish within Amazon's CreateSpace.

MFP 598. Capstone Course in Financial Planning. (3).

This is the capstone course in Financial Planning and it will attempt to integrate the material in all other dedicated FP classes. Students will take this course only when they have finished all other courses successfully. This course will be structured as a casework course and the cases used will closely reflect the types of cases they may encounter both as financial planners and as part of their CFPTM Exams or Certification. Hence, each case will have components of all other FP courses and will integrate such material to reflect the complexities of real life clients. The course ends with an exam styled after the CFP Certification Exam. Successful students will not only be proficient in basic and advanced financial planning skills and competencies but also will most likely be successful in attaining their CFP certification. Prerequisites: MFP 521, MFP 525, MFP 526, MFP 527 AND MFP 513.