

The MBA in Financial Planning

The MBA-Financial Planning degree program helps finance-related professionals keep pace with growing market demand and stay ahead in an increasingly complex career field. In addition, this unique program, designed for mid-level professionals, allows students to meet the education requirements to sit for the prestigious CFP® Certification Exam.

A rigorous, MBA in Financial Planning curriculum is registered and recognized by the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, Inc. (CFP® Board) in Washington, D.C. Candidates who wish to sit for the CFP® Certification Examination must successfully complete a CFP® Board-Registered program.

The online MBA in Financial Planning courses are offered year round in five 8-week terms.

Nationwide, more than 300,000 professionals serve as financial planners and personal financial advisors. As of August 2018, only 75,000 have passed the rigorous examination that allows them to be called “certified financial Planners” or CFPs. Many of the planners work in finance and insurance industries, including securities and commodity brokers, banks, insurance carriers, and financial investment firms. However, about 30 percent of personal financial advisors are self-employed, operating small investment advisory firms, usually in urban areas.

Jobs in the financial planning profession are projected to grow in the next decade by more than 15 percent, a rate that is considerably greater than all other occupations. As the population ages and life expectancies rise, demand for financial planning services should increase. This is the expected driver for the robust growth of the industry.

Median annual earnings of wage and salary for personal financial advisors were \$88,890 in May 2018. These statistics are sourced from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey program.

Cal Lutheran’s MBA in Financial Planning program is considered to be one of the leading graduate programs in the country. The key benefit of Cal Lutheran’s program is that our students receive a level of education that is generally not available elsewhere. Most programs in the country are either credentialing or undergraduate programs that fulfill only the most basic education required for a planner, and planners with graduate degrees are a rarity in the profession. Graduate students are better prepared to serve clients through higher levels of competency (possessing greater field-specific knowledge and the ability to apply advanced planning techniques) and ethical standards. These two most desired attributes of professional financial planners are also the hallmarks of the students and alumni of Cal Lutheran’s program.

The CFP® Board is a nonprofit professional regulatory organization that requires education, ethics requirements, examination and experience for Certified Financial Planner™ licensees. Along with completing the financial planning course work and passing the certification examination, the CFP® Board also requires successful CFP® licensees to have financial planning-related work experience and adhere to their Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility. With CFP® certification now available in 26 countries, it is the most widely recognized and respected financial planning credential.

Admission Requirements

Admission decisions for regular graduate standing are based on a review of the following materials in the candidate’s file:

1. A completed online application and non-refundable application fee
2. Interview with an admission counselor
3. Official transcripts showing a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited U.S. institution or equivalent international course work
4. Two letters of professional recommendation
5. Personal Statement
6. Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) scores may be waived for candidates who present an official transcript of previous college work from a regionally accredited college or university reflecting any one of the following criteria:
 - a. an undergraduate, upper division grade point average of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale; or
 - b. a combined grade point average of 3.0 or higher for the most recent 60 credits of study consisting of any of the following: graduate course work, upper division post baccalaureate course work (exclusive of extension or continuing education work), and upper division undergraduate course work; or
 - c. a minimum of nine credits of graduate course work completed and a 3.50 grade point average; or
 - d. a previously earned master’s degree

Foundation courses may be needed for those who do not meet prerequisite requirements into the program. Such foundation courses do not count towards the degree.

Admission Counseling

Interested individuals should make an appointment for an interview with the Graduate Admission Counselor. This exploratory meeting will clarify individual program requirements and give prospective students an opportunity to ask questions. For application materials or an interview appointment, call toll free (805) 493-3325.

Provisional Admission

Under some conditions, after meeting with an admission counselor, a student may register for classes before completing the entire admission process. However, the Application for Admission, application fee, and a copy of a transcript showing a bachelor's degree with an acceptable GPA and/or acceptable standardized test score must be on file in the Graduate and Adult Programs Office before the class registration can be accepted. Students are expected to complete all admission requirements in the first term of their program or they will not be permitted to enroll in subsequent terms. Provisionally admitted students are not eligible for financial aid.

Requirements for the MBA – Financial Planning

(45 Credits)

The MBA in Financial Planning requires 45 semester credits of course work, which must be completed within a seven-year period. The program is comprised of 15 courses: eight general MBA courses, three courses specific to the financial-planning program and five courses specific to either of two elective tracks (Track 1 or Track 2). Completion of the general and financial planning core courses and Track 1 courses lead to an MBA and eligibility to sit for the CFP® Examination. Completion of the general requirements, core financial planning courses and Track 2 leads to an MBA in Financial Planning. Additional coursework may be required for individuals whose academic records reflect the need for preparation in the areas of accounting, economics, finance and/or statistics. The requirement for this preparation is determined during the admissions process. Basic knowledge of word processing and spreadsheet applications is expected.

MBA General Requirements

(24 credits)

Required Regardless of Track

MFP 505	Enterprise Mgt, Org & Strategy (Required for Either Track)	3
MFP 506	Information Technology Management	3
MFP 508	Business Ethics and Law	3
MFP 509	Marketing Management	3
MFP 510	Strategic Decision Making	3
MFP 511A	Macroeconomics for Investment	3
MFP 513	Financial Principles and Policies	3
MFP 545	Behavioral Finance	3

MBA – Financial Planning Requirements

(21 units)

Track 1:

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 598	Capstone Course in Financial Planning	3

Track 2

MFP 530	Advanced Estate Planning	3
MFP 534	Financial Planning Small/Family Business	3
MFP 535	Psychology and Cultural Dynamics	3
MFP 536	Social Psychology of Client Leadership	3
MFP 537	Retirement Income Planning	3
MFP 542	Investment and Portfolio Management	3
MFP 597	Applied Research in Financial Planning	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 538. Financial Counseling. (3).

Financial Counseling represents a market opportunity for a knowledgeable financial planner. In this course, you will be introduced to the attributes of the financial counseling in four major areas: 1) competencies in the practice of financial counseling and framework; 2) financial counseling soft skills in understanding financial decisions, client's psychology, financial behaviors, and addictions; 3) debt management in debtor rights; litigation; credit, and foreclosures; 4) consumer population of the poor in financial mentality. This course qualifies for one of the education requirements for the Accredited Financial Counselor® certificate examination.

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 in answering financial planning practitioners' need, which positions you as a content expert. Applied research methodology to be explored outline of the research process in data collection, summary, analysis, and interpretation as well as limitations and implication for financial planning practitioners. Target journal publications are Journal of Financial Planning, Journal of Personal Finance, Financial Service Review, Journal of Financial Services, Journal of Financial Counseling and Planning as well as CFP Board's Financial Planning Review.

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.