

Finance Department / B.S. in Financial Management **Frequently Asked Questions for Academic Advising**

I. Academic Advising Overview

- **How is undergraduate advising handled in the Finance Department?**

Every Financial Management student has been assigned a faculty member as an academic advisor. If you do not know who your advisor is, you can ask to see the advising list in the Finance Department office in 314 Sistine Hall. Your advisor is available to answer questions and to help you as you plan your class selections each semester.

It is important to remember that the purpose of advising is only to help you understand curriculum requirements and options. *Ultimately, the responsibility for selecting courses, checking prerequisites, and verifying graduation requirements remains with you.* Your degree program's curriculum for the appropriate year is the official contract between you and Clemson University, and it is your responsibility to schedule courses accordingly.

Each semester, before you register for classes, you will need to obtain your advising number. Your advisor will provide your number during an advising session which will be held prior to the start of registration.

- **How do I sign up for an advising appointment?**

During the Advising period prior to Registration each term, you can use the electronic scheduling system (http://workgroups.clemson.edu/DCIT2803_ADVISING/). At other times, you should email or telephone your advisor to schedule an appointment at a mutually convenient time.

- **What should I bring to my advising appointment?**

First of all, you should know what you want to discuss with your advisor. You should have reviewed your degree progress report and should be familiar with the requirements of the curriculum. If it is a pre-registration advising appointment, you should bring a tentative schedule of the courses that you think would be suitable. It is NOT appropriate for you to show up for an advising appointment with the expectation that your advisor will tell you what you need to take.

II. Advising Tools and Resources

A. Degree Progress Reports

- **Where do I find a list of my curriculum requirements?**

Your curriculum requirements are listed in the appropriate section of the *Undergraduate Announcements*. Go to www.registrar.clemson.edu/html/catalog.htm and select the appropriate year for your curriculum. Worksheets are also available on the department's website.

- **How do I check the curriculum year for which I am registered?**

Your curriculum year is shown at the top of your Degree Progress Report (DPR).

- **How do I access my Degree Progress Report?**

The degree progress report is a menu item on the SIS system (sisweb.clemson.edu).

- **Can I change my curriculum year?**

Students have the option of changing to a curriculum year later than the one originally assigned during enrollment. For example, a student in the 2004-05 curriculum in 2007 may change to the 2005-06 curriculum or the 2006-07 curriculum. You can use a "what if" DPR to see how the change would affect you. Be careful when making a change of curriculum to consider all changes that may affect you since you will not be able to change back. *Change of Curriculum* forms are available at Enrolled Student Services (104 Sikes), and must be signed by your advisor.

- **Why does the DPR say my electives (or any other category) are "NOT COMPLETED" even though I've completed some of the coursework?**

The DPR will list a requirement as NOT COMPLETED until you have completed all the requirements. For example, if your curriculum has a 6 hour International Studies Requirement, it will be listed as NOT COMPLETED even if you have taken one course that meets this requirement (i.e., if you have only 3 of the 6 hours completed, the International Studies Requirement will be listed as Incomplete since you still have to take another 3 credit hours to meet this requirement).

B. Transfer Courses and Substitutions

- **I just transferred from another major. Can I substitute courses which I have already taken for courses in my Management or Industrial Management curriculum?**

Substitutions may be possible. You should see the department chair or undergraduate coordinator about this when you bring the Change of Major form to be signed
- **Can I take courses at other academic institutions and have them transferred to Clemson?**

You will need to fill out a Permission to Take Coursework Elsewhere form and have the classes approved prior to taking the classes. For each class that you will take, you will need to determine which Clemson class is equivalent. Many classes at other universities have already been approved. These are listed on the Transfer Credit Equivalency List (<http://virtual.clemson.edu/groups/tcel/>). If, however, a class is not listed, you can still get it approved by obtaining a copy of the syllabus and taking that to the department in which the Clemson equivalent is offered and asking for it to be reviewed by the department chair. (Typically, you will have to leave it and come back later to pick the form back up). You will need your advisor's signature once all the approvals are met before you take the form to Sikes Hall. You will receive a copy and you should put it away in a safe place just in case. After you have completed your classes, you should arrange to have a transcript sent to the Registrar's Office. Be aware of Clemson's residency rule, which requires that 37 of your last 43 credit hours be taken in residence at Clemson. You must complete a "Permission to Take Coursework Elsewhere Form" prior to taking a course at another institution.
- **If I have a course transferred from another academic institution, will the grade be transferred and count toward my overall GPR?**

You only receive credit for the course, and you must receive at least a "C" for the course to transfer. The grade itself is not transferred or counted into your overall Clemson GPR.
- **Can I take courses at colleges overseas and receive credit toward my curriculum requirements?**

Evaluation of courses taken abroad works very similarly to evaluation of courses taken at other U.S. universities. You should work with the Clemson University Study Abroad Office (656-6468) to ensure you will receive credit at Clemson University for the courses.
- **Can I receive course credit for internships?**

The Finance Department does offer an internship course, FIN 399, in the summer. All internships must be approved by the course coordinator prior to enrolling in the course. Contact the Finance Department to find out who the coordinator is for this summer.
- **As a Financial Management major, what are my options to satisfy the "Business International Requirement" (6-credit hours)?**

A list of approved courses is available on the department's website. Be sure to read the footnotes in this document. Please note that this requirement may be called the "International Studies Requirement" in your DPR.

III. General Education Requirements

- **What courses can be used to satisfy the General Education requirements listed in the first section of my Degree Progress Report?**

All of the courses that can be used to satisfy one of the General Education requirements (such as Literature, Cross Cultural Awareness or Science and Technology in Society) are listed in the Undergraduate Announcements. If you no longer have your copy, you may view the catalog online at <http://www.registrar.clemson.edu/html/catalog.htm>.
- **What courses can be used to satisfy the Business International requirement?**

A list of the approved courses is available on the department's website. However, the list of courses approved for this requirement does change occasionally. The Academic Advising Center should have the most up-to-date list.
- **Can I take a course that satisfies more than one requirement?**

The short answer is 'Sometimes.' Some courses may be used to satisfy two requirements such as both a Natural Science and the STS requirement or a Non-Literature Humanities and a Cross Cultural Awareness. However, "double-dipping" does not reduce the total number of credit hours required in the curriculum and a student may have to take more elective hours to reach the total. Additionally, the Business International requirement may only be "double-dipped" with STS or Cross Cultural Awareness – you may not count a course for both Business International and Non-Literature Humanities.

IV. Financial Management requirements

A. Overview, Prerequisites and Scheduling

- **What are the major requirements?**

All Financial Management students must complete certain 300-level FIN courses (including FIN 311, 312, 305, 307 and 308), an emphasis area consisting of five additional courses, and certain related courses including Intermediate Accounting and Business Strategy. All of these requirements will be listed on your degree progress report.

- **What are the prerequisites for Finance courses and why do I have to take them?**

Prerequisites are not chosen at random but are carefully selected to ensure that students have the tools they need to succeed. The very first Finance course taken by Financial Management students is FIN 311. Since the course involves a lot of work with financial statements, we require that the student receive at least a 'C' in both ACCT 201 and ACCT 204. Additionally, we use a number of statistical measures in our coverage of risk so students must have passed a statistics course such as MTHSC 309 or EXST 301. Because the essential time value of money concepts are developed in FIN 311, the other 300-level FIN courses all require FIN 311 as a prerequisite and typically with at least a 'C'. The 400-level FIN classes all require one or more of these other 300-level classes as a prerequisite except FIN 409, which also requires some ACCT courses as prerequisites. More information can be found in the Undergraduate Announcements.

- **I got a 'D' in my FIN course this semester. Can I continue the sequence while I retake this class?**

Probably not. The prerequisites for the next course was chosen to ensure that you have the foundation you need to do well in that course. If you have not developed an understanding of the material that you would need to build upon, allowing you to continue would be tantamount to setting you up to fail. We feel it is much more appropriate for you to retake the class, learn the material you need to know well and then move on with a much higher chance for success. While there are some rare exceptions, every instance must be approved by the department chair and requires a strong case in favor of allowing the exception.

- **I don't like my Accounting course. Do I really have to take all the ACCT courses that are required?**

Yes! It is impossible to function well in any of the areas of Finance without an understanding of financial statements. Whether you are evaluating stocks to decide whether to include them in your investment portfolio, determining how much financing your company needs, or examining a proposed real estate development to decide whether to invest, you cannot consistently make good decisions without understanding where the data comes from. Clemson does require more ACCT courses in its curriculum than many other schools but the corporate recruiters know this and can at least partially explain why students earning BS degrees in Financial Management are sought after.

- **I have heard that to graduate, I have to have at least a 2.0 GPR in my FIN courses. How is that calculated?**

Unlike your overall GPR, which is based upon every class you take at Clemson, including ones you repeat, the FIN GPR is only based upon the last grade you get in each FIN class you take at Clemson. There is a FIN GPR displayed on your degree progress report and as long as you have not repeated any FIN courses, it should be accurate. However, it may not be if you have repeated any FIN classes. For the graduation requirement, every candidate's FIN GPR is calculated manually (i.e., someone actually looks at your last grades in each FIN course and ensures that you have received enough grade points to result in an average of at least 2.0.)

- **A course that I need is not being offered this semester – why not or when will it be offered?**

Most 300-level FIN courses (304 and 399 are exceptions) are offered every term including at least one summer session. FIN 304, which is only required of Financial Planning students but which may be taken as an option by Corporate Finance students, is typically offered each Fall semester. The internship course, FIN 399, is only offered in the summer. Most 400-level courses, which are typically required only of students in one or two of the emphasis areas, are offered at least one term each academic year. FIN 402 and 417 are offered each Fall while FIN 404, 406, 408, 415 and 416 are taught each Spring. FIN 405 and FIN 411 are normally offered both Fall and Spring. Occasionally, some 400-level classes are offered during the summer but only when there is sufficient student demand to warrant the class.

If you are supposed to graduate this semester and a FIN course you need is not being offered, you should speak with your advisor. With the consent of the department chair or undergraduate coordinator, you may be permitted to substitute another FIN class in its place. However, if you are missing the class due to a lack of planning (i.e., you could have taken the course the previous semester and chose not to), such a substitution may not be approved.

- **Can an advisor increase my limit so I can take more classes?**

In most cases the limit is set by the registrar up until just a few days before the semester begins to allow everyone to have a chance to get a full load of classes before allowing students to take an overload of classes.

- **Can an advisor tell me if I will graduate “on time”?**

You (the student) are the best person to address this question as many personal factors are involved. Use your DPR and curriculum sequence to determine how many classes you have remaining to take. Then you will need to consider variables such as the amount of time available to devote to your studies (e.g., will you be working during the semester?) as well as your comfort level with the courses to decide how many courses you want to take in a given semester.

Advisors can help students understand the curriculum requirements and the suggested sequence of course selection as indicated in the Undergraduate Announcements. However, it is YOUR responsibility to schedule course loads (based on your personal goals and situations) and to regularly compare your plans with the curriculum requirements listed in your DPR.

Note: In addition to making sure that all the “slots” in your DPR are filled, you MUST also keep track of the total credit hours needed for your curriculum.

- **How important is getting an internship?**

We consider internships to be very important for several reasons. First, the internship will give you valuable experience that will allow you to decide whether that particular type of position is of interest to you. It will also give you a much better perspective for the topics you will be exposed to during your senior level courses since you will have a better understanding of why these concepts are important and how the tools are used in a business environment. Secondly, an internship sends a much stronger signal to prospective employers that you understand what will be expected of you once you start your employment and that you are somewhat familiar with the business world.

B. Emphasis Areas

- **What are the different emphasis areas that I can choose from?**

There are four emphasis areas within the Financial Management program: Corporate Finance, Financial Services, Financial Planning and Real Estate.

Corporate Finance concentrates on management of non-financial (i.e. manufacturing or service) companies. Students learn concepts related to resource allocation (such as capital budgeting) and obtaining funding (such as capital structure and short-term financing). This area also explores the principal-agent relation, including corporate governance, and emphasizes analytical skills, such as modeling, and an understanding of accounting statements.

Financial Services is more closely related to investments. Students receive greater exposure to security analysis (common stock, bonds, options, warrants) and also learn about resource allocation but more in the context of management of a portfolio of diverse assets. Students are also exposed to banking practices and credit instruments. During this curriculum, the Student Managed Investment Fund invests real money in securities selected by students based on screens developed in their coursework.

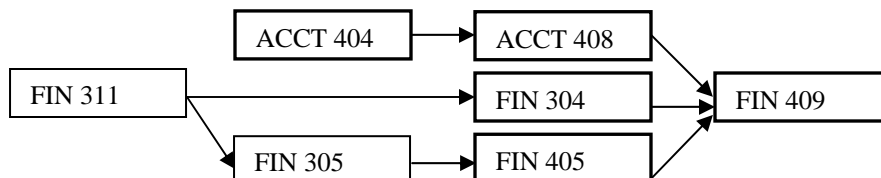
Financial Planning is also related to investments but from more of an individual perspective. Rather than becoming a fund manager, students that complete this track are prepared to become financial advisors to individual clients. Coursework includes both finance, such as Portfolio Management and Risk and Insurance, and accounting classes, such as Individual Taxation and Estate Planning. Upon completion of this track, students are eligible to take the Certified Financial Planner exam and earn the CFP designation. If you are interested in Financial Planning, you should discuss this with your advisor as soon as possible because this area represents a lock-step sequence with each course fulfilling the prerequisites for the next course in the sequence.

The Real Estate concentration trains students to become involved in any of a number of areas within real estate. Coursework includes Construction Law, Real Estate Valuation (i.e., appraisal), Real Estate Investment (i.e., development) and Real Estate Financing.

All Financial Management students are required to take at least one course from each of these areas as part of the common core of the degree program. This should give students the opportunity to consider in which area their interests may lie.

- **I have heard that taking all of the classes in the Financial Planning emphasis area requires specific timing due to some courses only being offered one semester each year. Can you elaborate?**

The financial planning emphasis area has a capstone course (FIN 409) that is only offered each Spring and that requires several prerequisites. FIN 304 and ACCT 408 are only offered each Fall. Since ACCT 404 is a prerequisite for ACCT 408, it needs to be completed even earlier.



V. Minor requirements

- **As a Financial Management major, how do I declare a minor?**

Your emphasis area actually uses the space that the computer system would normally use to record a minor. Thus, you will not formally declare your minor until you are ready to graduate. There is a space on the graduation application where you can specify a minor and your transcript will correctly show your minor after graduation.

- **I understand that many companies want finance students that understand accounting. What do I have to do to get an Accounting minor?**

It depends on your emphasis area. As of 2007-2008, the Accounting minor requires students to complete ACCT 201, 204, 311, 312 and nine additional hours at the 300- or 400-level. The Financial Management curriculum already requires ACCT 201, 204, 303, 311, 312 and 313 so every Financial Management student would already have six of the additional nine hours. If you choose Financial Planning as your emphasis area, you will take two additional ACCT courses (404 and 408) so that will complete the minor. Corporate Finance gives students some options for the last of the emphasis area and includes the option to take one more ACCT course which will allow completion of the minor. If you choose Financial Services or Real Estate, you can still complete the minor by taking one additional ACCT course but it will have to come from elective hours rather than part of the Financial Management curriculum.