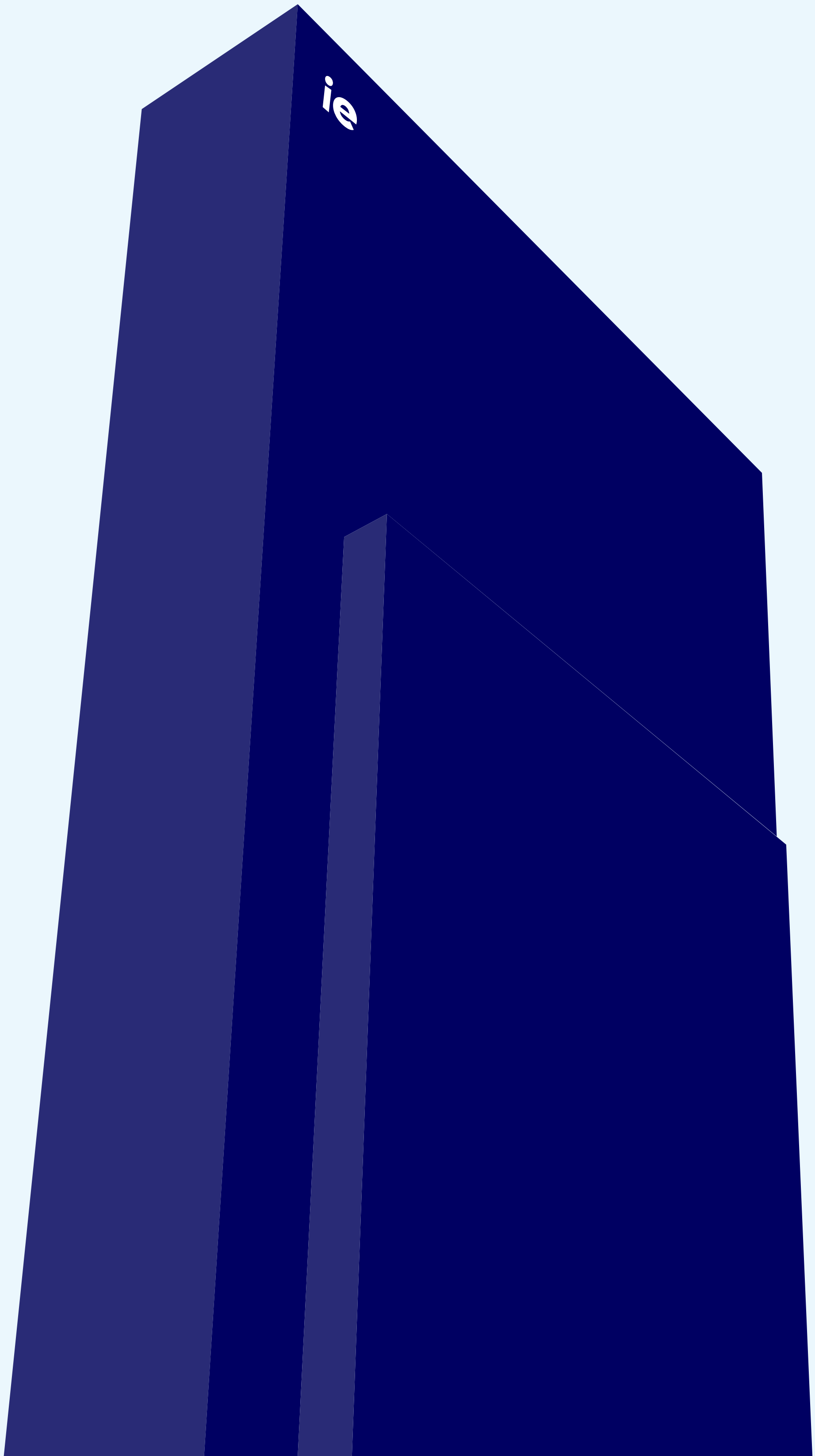
BREAKING INTO FINANCE

A Practical Guide to Careers & Recruitment

By Talent & Careers



ie UNIVERSITY
BUSINESS SCHOOL

01 FINANCE INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

Front Office Divisions (Revenue-Generating & Client-Facing)

Investment Banking & Corporate Finance

- Capital Markets & Primaries
- Underwriting
- Advisory, IPOs, M&A
- Equity Capital Markets (ECM)
- Debt Capital Markets (DCM)
- Financial Planning & Analysis (FP&A)
- Project Finance
- Leveraged Finance
- Corporate Finance & Banking

Typical Job Titles
- Investment Banking Analyst
- M&A Analyst
- ECM Analyst
- DCM Analyst

Typical Employers
- Goldman Sachs
- J.P. Morgan
- Lazard
- Rothschild
- Alantra
- Bank of America
- Evercore
- UBS

Global Markets, Sales, Trading & Research

- Fixed Income, Currency & Commodities (FICC)
- Equity
- Derivatives & Structured Products
- Quants, Algorithmic Trading & HFT
- Digital Assets
- Prime Brokerage Services
- Trading, Clearing, Settlement Platforms
- Securitization, Securities & Cash Lending, Collateral Management
- Exchanges, Clearing Houses & Market Data

Typical Job Titles
- Sales Analyst
- Trader
- Structurer
- Research Analyst

Typical Employers
- Morgan Stanley
- Citi
- Barclays
- BNP Paribas

Asset Management & Alternative Investments

- Asset/Investment Management (Pension, Macro, Value Funds & Traditional Portfolio Management)
- Wealth Management (Private Banking, HNW, UHNW)
- Hedge Funds (Directional, Macro, Equity, Derivatives, Commodities, FX & Crypto)
- Alternatives (Private Equity, Private Credit, Debt, Real Estate, Infrastructure, Renewables, Venture Capital)

Typical Job Titles
- Investment Analyst
- Portfolio Analyst
- Research Analyst

Typical Employers
- BlackRock
- Vanguard
- Fidelity
- Amundi

Trends Shaping the Future of Finance

Fintech & Digital Finance
- **Generative AI** → Assisting research, coding, document review and productivity
- **Robotic Process Automation (RPA)** → Automating repetitive operational tasks
- **Big Data** → Enabling data-driven decision-making
- **Cloud Computing** → Faster and scalable financial infrastructure
- **Machine Learning (ML)** → Improving predictions from financial data
- **Cryptocurrency** → Enabling digital payments and asset transfers
- **Blockchain** → Digital assets and settlement technologies

Sustainability & Impact
- **ESG** → Embedding sustainability into investment and corporate decisions
- **Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI)** → Encouraging responsible investment practices

- **UN Global Compact** → Driving ethical and sustainable business commitments
- **Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs)** → Guiding long-term sustainable development goals
- **IIF Task Force** → Strengthening sustainable finance and climate risk frameworks

Support Functions

Middle Office
- Risk Management
- Compliance
- KYC/AML
- Treasury
- Legal

Back Office
- Operations
- Technology
- Cybersecurity
- Finance
- Administration

02 UNDERSTANDING INVESTMENT BANKING

Explanation

Investment Banks = Advisors + Capital Providers
Investment banks help companies and governments:

- **Raise money** → through stocks (Equity) and bonds (Debt)
- **Grow or restructure** → through Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A)
- **Manage financial risk** → FX, interest rates, derivatives
- **Access investors and markets**

Area

- M&A
- ECM (Equity Capital Markets)
- DCM (Debt Capital Markets)
- Sales & Trading

What They Do?

- Buy, sell, merge companies
- Raise money through equity
- Raise money through debt
- Trade securities and make markets

Who Are the Clients?

- Corporations
- Governments
- Financial Sponsors (Private Equity)
- Institutional Investors

Example

- Microsoft acquires a startup
- IPO on a stock exchange
- Corporate bond issuance
- Bond & Equity Trading

Deal Process

A company wants to acquire another company

Investment Bank advises

Valuation

Negotiation

Financing

Deal Completion

Career Progression

Analyst

Associate

Vice President

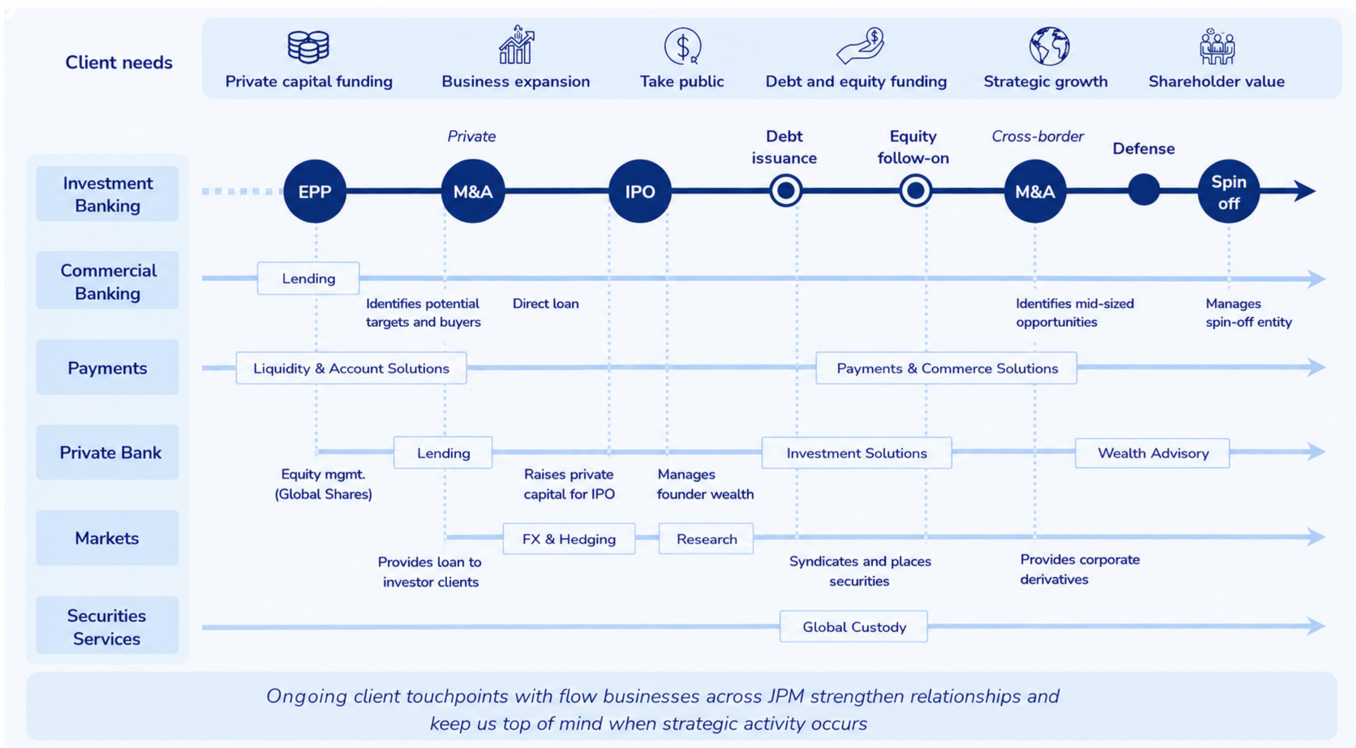
Director

Managing Director

The Role of an Investment Bank

Connect companies, investors and markets → provide expert advice, raise capital and deliver solutions that drive growth and create long-term value

Connection to the Financial Ecosystem



03 ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS INTO INVESTMENT BANKING

Corporate Development / Corporate M&A

- In-house M&A and strategy teams within large companies
- Exposure to acquisitions, divestitures, financial analysis and deal execution from the client's perspective
- A common route into Investment Banking, especially at Associate level

Valuation & Financial Advisory

- Specialist valuation teams in advisory firms
- Develop strong financial modelling and company valuation skills
- Excellent preparation for Investment Banking interviews

Leveraged Finance / Debt Advisory

- Exposure to acquisition financing, leveraged loans and debt markets
- Often works closely with M&A teams and Private Equity sponsors
- A highly transferable skill set for Investment Banking

Big Four Deal Advisory / Strategy & Transactions

- Teams such as EY-Parthenon, Deloitte Financial Advisory, KPMG Deal Advisory and PwC Deals
- Experience in due diligence, valuation, M&A advisory, restructuring and transaction services
- Many professionals later transition into Investment Banking, Private Equity or Corporate Development

Corporate Banking

- Lending, relationship management and structured finance roles
- Develop expertise in Corporate Finance and capital structures
- Common transition into IB or Leveraged Finance

Boutique Investment Banks

- Smaller advisory firms often provide earlier client exposure and greater responsibility
- Excellent platform for moving into larger Investment Banks after gaining deal experience

M&A Consulting / Strategy Consulting

- Firms such as Oliver Wyman, Strategy&, Kearney, L.E.K., Roland Berger or the strategy teams within the MBB firms
- Strong exposure to commercial due diligence, market analysis and strategic projects
- Particularly relevant for candidates interested in M&A advisory or Private Equity

Search Funds / Private Equity Internships

- Hands-on experience analysing businesses, building financial models and evaluating investment opportunities
- Particularly valuable for students interested in M&A, Private Equity or Entrepreneurship through Acquisition (ETA)

04 BECOMING A COMPETITIVE FINANCE CANDIDATE

Market Awareness

Market awareness means understanding financial markets and the wider economy and being able to explain why current events matter.

Recruiters want candidates who regularly follow financial news and can discuss how topics such as interest rates, inflation, M&A, IPOs and geopolitical events affect companies, industries and investors.

How to Build It?

- Read the Financial Times, Bloomberg or Reuters for 10–15 minutes each day
- Follow one major transaction (e.g. an acquisition or IPO) each week and understand why it happened
- Be able to explain one current market trend and its impact on businesses
- Develop your own opinion rather than simply summarising the news

Where Should I Search?

- LinkedIn Jobs
- eFinancialCareers
- Company Career Pages
- IE Career Portal
- Alumni Network

What Recruiters Look For?

- Motivation
- Technical Skills
- Market (Commercial) Awareness
- Leadership

A Competitive Candidate

- Strong academics
- Relevant experience
- Leadership
- Networking
- Commercial Awareness
- Technical Preparation

Build Your Finance Profile

Technical

- Excel
- Accounting Fundamentals
- Financial Statements
- Corporate Finance
- Financial Modelling
- Company Valuation
- Markets Knowledge
- LBO & M&A Modelling
- Bloomberg / Reuters

Finance candidates are increasingly expected to demonstrate AI literacy and digital fluency alongside traditional finance knowledge!

Professional

- Clear Communication
- Teamwork
- Commercial Awareness
- Networking
- Time Management
- Stress Management

Analytical

- Problem Solving
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Attention to Detail
- Risk–Reward Thinking

Evidence of Excellence

Recruiters typically want to see:

- Strong Academics
- Leadership
- Work Experience
- Extracurricular Activities
- Genuine Interest in Finance

Financial Skills Framework

Foundation
AI Literacy & Digital Fluency

Required for 100% of finance workforce

Core
Financial Fundamentals

(Accounting, Valuation, Risk) Required for all specialist roles

Differentiator
Judgement, Critical Thinking, Business Partnering

Separates analysts from advisors

05 FINANCE RECRUITMENT ROADMAP

When to Start?

Recruitment Route	Application Timing	Start Date
Spring Week / Insight Programmes	Aug–Oct (1st year)	Following Spring
Summer Internships	Jul–Nov (1 year before)	Following Summer
Off-Cycle Internships	Rolling Throughout the Year	Various / Throughout the Year
Graduate Programmes	Aug–Dec (final year)	After Graduation

Timeline Before the Applications Window Opens

12 Months Before
- Learn finance fundamentals
- Build CV
- Start networking

6 Months Before
- Practise technicals
- Prepare HireVue answers
- Follow markets daily

3 Months Before
- Mock interviews
- Refine CV
- Build target company list

Once Applications Open
- Apply within the first week
- Continue networking
- Prepare for tests immediately

Key Rule

Finance recruits extremely early!

Many Investment Banks open applications in July/August for positions starting the following year.

Waiting until the spring semester is often too late!

Many finance firms recruit on a rolling basis. Applying early can significantly increase your chances of progressing through the recruitment process!

How Finance Recruitment Works

Application

Online Tests

HireVue / Video Interview

First Round Interview

Assessment Centre / Superday

Offer

Success Formula

Strong CV

Early Applications

Technical Preparation

Networking

Commercial Awareness

Interview Practice

06 RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Stage	What To Expect	What To Do	Common Mistakes
Application	Submit CV and application questions	Tailor your CV, apply early, research the firm and proofread everything	Applying late, generic CV, inconsistent format, spelling mistakes
Online Assessments	Numerical, logical and situational judgement tests	Practise beforehand (SHL, JobTestPrep), complete tests promptly and in a quiet environment	Not practising, leaving tests until the last day
HireVue / Video Interview	Motivation, behavioural and market awareness questions	Prepare "Why Finance?", "Why this firm?", use the STAR method and test your setup	Reading from notes, memorised answers, generic responses
Technical & Behavioural Interviews	Technical finance questions and competency interviews	Review accounting, valuation and markets, prepare STAR stories and recent market discussions	Weak technical understanding, poor commercial awareness
Assessment Centre / Superday	Group exercises, interviews, case studies and presentations	Collaborate, contribute without dominating, stay engaged throughout the day	Staying silent, dominating discussions, focusing only on technicals
Offer	Final decision and contract	Respond professionally, thank your interviewers and continue networking	Delaying your response or assuming preparation is over

Resources

Applications
IE Career Portal & VMock

Online Tests
JobTestPrep & SHL

Technical Interviews
BIWS, Mergers & Inquisitions

Market Awareness
Financial Times, Bloomberg & Reuters

How Recruiters Evaluate Candidates

- **Applications** → Motivation and relevant experience
- **Online Tests** → Numerical ability and logical reasoning
- **HireVue** → Communication and motivation
- **Interview** → Technical knowledge and commercial awareness
- **Assessment Centre** → Teamwork, leadership and problem-solving

07 CV & COVER LETTER

CV

Keep it:
- One page
- Results-oriented
- Quantified

Instead of:
Assisted with financial analysis

Write:
Analysed financial data for 20+ clients, identifying cost reduction opportunities of 15%

Application Checklist

Before You Submit
- CV is one page
- Every bullet shows impact
- Application is tailored to the firm
- Cover letter tells a story
- Motivation is genuine
- Have someone review it

What Recruiters Want to See

Academic Excellence

Include:
- GPA
- Scholarships
- Relevant coursework

Leadership

Examples:
- Club leadership
- Team management
- Volunteer initiatives
- Entrepreneurship

Professional Experience
(Makes you a stronger candidate)

Examples:
- Previous internships
- Corporate experience
- Consulting projects
- Startups
- Family business involvement

Cover Letter

Why Finance? → Your Skills → Evidence from Your Experience → Why This Bank? → Strong Cover Letter

Start with "Why?"
Before writing your application, ask yourself:

What skills do I want to develop?
- Making decisions under pressure
- Solving complex problems
- Working with brilliant people
- Developing an international mindset
- Learning to communicate ideas clearly

Why are those skills important to me?
Build a personal story. Explain why these skills are important based on your experiences and goals.

What have I already done to develop them?
Show evidence through:
- Student societies
- Sports or competitions
- Work experience
- Projects
- Leadership roles

Why is this bank the right place to continue that journey?
Research the bank and connect its culture, people and opportunities to the skills you want to develop.

Principles
- Tell a story rather than repeating your CV
- Explain why this firm fits your long-term goals
- Show genuine motivation for the role and division
- Use specific examples to make your application personal
- Seek feedback and revise multiple times before submitting

Show Genuine Motivation
Recruiters are not only looking for the highest GPA or the most finance experience.

They want candidates who:
- Know why they want to work in finance
- Have already taken steps towards that goal
- Can clearly explain why they chose that bank

08 NETWORKING STRATEGY

Why?

Finance is competitive!

Networking helps you:
- Learn about roles
- Understand firm culture
- Gain interview insights
- Build relationships

Who to Network With

Alumni (Start here)

They often:
- Understand your background
- Are more likely to respond
- Share practical recruitment advice
- May refer candidates internally

Current Analysts & Associates

- Learn about the role
- Understand the interview process
- Gain insights into team culture

Recruiters

- Learn about recruitment timelines
- Attend employer events
- Stay informed about opportunities

Ask Better Questions

Use networking conversations to understand:
- Why did you choose this bank?
- What makes your team unique?
- What advice would you give someone applying?

How?

LinkedIn Message Structure
- Introduction
- Common connection (school, country, programme)
- Short reason for reaching out
- Specific request

LinkedIn Message Example

Hi Sarah,

I'm a finance student at IE interested in Investment Banking.
I noticed you're also an IE graduate working at Goldman Sachs.
I'd love to learn more about your experience if you have 15 minutes for a quick chat.

IE Advantage

- **Strong Alumni Network**
  The IE Alumni Network is one of the strongest assets available. Use it extensively!
- **Frequent employer events**

Employer Events

Attend events whenever possible!

Many students attend events.
Only a few students follow up!

The follow up often creates the opportunity.

A short thank-you message can be the start of a long-term professional relationship.

Leverage Your Strengths

- Relevant academic specialisation
- Relevant professional experience
- Better communication skills
- International experience
- Clearer career goals

Goal

What Should You Aim For?

- 2–3 conversations per week
- 20–30 meaningful connections before recruiting season

Golden Rules

- Be genuine, not transactional
- Ask for advice, not a job
- Keep messages concise (10–15 lines)
- Always follow-up and say thank you
- Stay in touch, even after recruiting

09 ONLINE TESTS & VIDEO INTERVIEWS

Online Tests

Numerical Reasoning

- Percentages
- Ratios
- Growth rates
- Graph interpretation

To test quantitative accuracy and data interpretation

Logical Reasoning

- Patterns
- Sequences
- Critical thinking

To test pattern recognition and analytical thinking

Situational Judgement

- Teamwork
- Integrity
- Decision-making

To test decision-making, teamwork and professional judgement

How to Prepare?

Practise before applications open!

- Start practising before applications open
- Complete full timed practice tests
- Review mistakes after every attempt
- Build speed as well as accuracy

Example Practice Platform:
- JobTestPrep

Test Strategy

- Read the instructions carefully
- Manage your time
- Don't get stuck on one question
- Stay calm under pressure
- Check answers if time remains

Know Before You Start

- Online tests are often eliminatory
- Passing the tests is required to reach interviews
- Many firms use similar question formats
- Early practice gives a major advantage

Video Interviews

Common Questions:

About Motivation
- Why finance?
- Why our firm?
- Why this division?

Competency
- Tell me about a time you led a team
- Describe a challenge you overcame
- Tell me about a conflict

Market Questions
- What's happening in the markets?
- Discuss a recent deal

Don't improvise these answers
- Prepare them
- Practise them

Importance of Structure

Something as simple as, "There are two reasons why I'm interested in this bank..." or "I'm going to answer this question in three parts..." makes it much easier to follow your response.

Many people have good ideas. The challenge lies in communicating them clearly and concisely.

Use the STAR Method
- Situation
- Task
- Action
- Result

Interview Tips

- Look at the camera, not the screen
- Pause before answering
- Structure your response first
- Speak clearly and naturally
- Finish with a concise conclusion

Common Mistakes

- Reading from notes
- Memorised answers
- Speaking too quickly
- Ignoring the question
- No commercial awareness
- Poor eye contact
- Weak internet or audio setup

Remember

Recruiters are assessing how you communicate, not just what you say!

10 TECHNICAL INTERVIEWS

Investment Banking

Accounting
- Income Statement
- Balance Sheet
- Cash Flow Statement

Valuation
- Comparable Companies (Trading Comps)
- Precedent Transactions
- Discounted Cash Flow (DCF)

Corporate Finance
- Enterprise Value vs Equity Value
- M&A Fundamentals
- Accretion / Dilution

Asset Management

Markets & Economy
- Macroeconomics
- Interest Rates
- Inflation
- Market Trends

Investing
- Stock Pitch
- Portfolio Construction
- Investment Thesis

Sales & Trading

Markets
- Asset Classes
- Market Drivers
- Current Events

Trading Concepts
- Risk vs Return
- Market View
- Trade Ideas

Daily Habits

Read & follow trusted financial news:
- Financial Times
- Bloomberg
- Wall Street Journal
- Reuters
- Mergermarket → particularly useful for IB/M&A

15–20 minutes per day is enough!

Weekly Habits

Analyse:
- One major deal
- One macro trend
- One company

Demonstrating Knowledge

Recruiters expect you to:
- Explain concepts clearly
- Apply them to real examples
- Discuss current market events
- Go beyond memorising textbook definitions

Possible Questions

Investment Banking
- Walk me through a DCF
- How do the three financial statements connect?
- What is Enterprise Value?

Asset Management
- Pitch me a stock
- How has inflation affected markets?
- What would you invest in today?

Sales & Trading
- Why did markets move yesterday?
- How do interest rates affect bonds?
- Which asset class interests you most?

Commercial Awareness

Understanding how current events, markets and business decisions affect companies, industries and financial firms.

Recruiters assess whether you can connect financial news to real business outcomes.

They expect opinions!

Instead of saying: "Interest rates increased."

Explain: "Higher rates increase borrowing costs, which may reduce M&A activity while improving margins for certain financial institutions."

Topics to Understand

Market
- Interest rates
- Inflation
- Central banks

Major Deals
- M&A transactions
- IPOs
- Fundraising rounds

Geopolitics
- Elections
- Trade policy
- Regulatory changes

11 ASSESSMENT CENTRE

Assessment Centre

Assessment centres simulate real workplace situations to evaluate how you think, communicate and collaborate.
Recruiters assess your technical ability, communication, teamwork and problem-solving skills.

Typical Exercises

- Group exercises
- Case study
- Presentation
- Technical interview
- Behavioural interview
- Networking session

What is Evaluated?

Technical Ability

- Can you solve finance problems?
- Do you understand the concepts?
- Can you apply them to real situations?
- Can you explain your reasoning?

Communication

- Can you explain clearly?
- Are your ideas structured?
- Can you communicate concisely?
- Can others easily follow your thinking?

Teamwork

- Can you collaborate effectively?
- Do you listen to others?
- Do you contribute without dominating?
- Can you help the team reach a decision?

Professionalism

- Would clients trust you?
- Do you stay calm under pressure?
- Are you respectful and professional?
- Would people enjoy working with you?

Tips for Group Exercises

- Listen before speaking
- Build on others' ideas
- Encourage quieter teammates
- Keep discussion moving
- Focus on solving the problem

Tips for Presentations

- Structure your answer
- Support ideas with evidence
- Be concise
- Speak confidently
- Finish with a recommendation

Common Mistakes

- Dominating discussion
- Staying silent
- Interrupting others
- Ignoring time
- Defending poor ideas

Success Formula

Listen → Communicate → Collaborate → Think Logically → Stay Professional → Assessment Centre Success

12 COMMON MISTAKES STUDENTS MAKE

Why This Matters

Finance recruitment is highly competitive, and even small mistakes can affect your chances.

The good news is that most are entirely avoidable. By recognising them early and making small adjustments, you can strengthen every stage of your application.

Applications

- Applying too late
- Using a generic CV or cover letter
- Not tailoring applications to the role
- Ignoring spelling and formatting errors
- Applying without researching the firm

Takeaway:
Every application should be tailored and submitted early

Interviews & Online Assessments

- Memorising answers instead of understanding them
- Neglecting technical preparation
- Underestimating online tests
- Weak commercial awareness
- Not practising aloud

Takeaway:
Preparation builds confidence

Networking

- Only reaching out when asking for a job
- Sending generic LinkedIn messages
- Failing to follow-up after conversations
- Asking questions that could be researched beforehand
- Giving up after one unanswered message

Takeaway:
Build relationships, not transactions

Industry Knowledge

- Not understanding the role you're applying for
- Weak commercial awareness
- Not following financial markets
- Confusing different areas of finance
- Unable to explain "Why this division?"

Takeaway:
Know the industry before applying to it

Organisation & Timing

- Waiting for the "perfect time" to apply
- Missing application deadlines
- Starting preparation too late
- Leaving online tests until the last minute
- Forgetting networking follow-ups
  Poor organisation throughout
- recruitment

Takeaway:
Successful candidates plan ahead

Recruitment Success Checklist

Tailor Every Application

Prepare Consistently

Build Relationships

Know the Industry

Stay Organised

Stay Persistent

Mindset & Professionalism

- Giving up after one rejection
- Comparing yourself to others
- Not asking for feedback
- Expecting one application to be enough

Instead:
- Learn from every rejection
- Focus on steady improvement
- Celebrate small wins

Takeaway:
Consistency beats perfection

13 USING AI EFFECTIVELY

Use AI to Your Advantage

Behavioural Interviews

- Practise competency questions
- Improve STAR structure
- Receive feedback on clarity and impact
- Generate follow-up interview questions

Example prompt:
"Act as an Investment Banking interviewer and critique my STAR answer"

Learn Technical Concepts

- Accounting
- Valuation
- Financial modelling
- Markets
- Investment Banking terminology

Example prompt:
"Explain enterprise value vs equity value with an example"

Improve Applications

- Refine CV bullet points
- Improve networking messages
- Check grammar and tone
- Generate ideas, then personalise them

Commercial Awareness

- Summarise major transactions
- Explain market events
- Compare companies
- Clarify unfamiliar terminology

Example prompt:
"Explain why this acquisition matters to the industry"

Mock Interviews

- Simulate interviews
- Ask technical questions
- Test commercial awareness
- Identify weak answers

Avoid These Mistakes

Never:

- Copy cover letters
- Fabricate experience
- Use AI during online assessments unless explicitly permitted
- Memorise AI-generated interview answers
- Share confidential information from internships
- Accept AI responses without checking them

Write Better Prompts

Students often get poor results because they ask poor questions.

Better Prompts → Better Answers

Bad Prompt:
"Explain DCF"

Good Prompt:
"Explain DCF valuation as if I were preparing for a first-round investment banking interview, including a simple example"

Best Practice

- Be Specific
- Think Critically
- Protect Privacy
- Use AI as a Coach
- Be Ethical
- Always Personalise the Output

Remember

AI can help you work more efficiently, but it cannot replace curiosity, integrity, preparation or professional judgement!

14 GLOBAL FINANCE RECRUITMENT CALENDAR

Region	Networking	Applications	Interviews	Internships
US	6–12 months ahead	Aug–Dec	Dec–Mar (Rolling)	Jun–Aug (Summer Analyst)
UK	Jul–Sep	Aug–Nov	Sep–Jan	Jan–Aug (Summer Intern)
Spain	Continuous	Sep–Mar (Varies)	Throughout the year	Off-Cycle & Summer (Varies)
Germany	Continuous	Year-round (Rolling)	3–6 months ahead	Off-Cycle (3–6 months) & Summer
Middle East	Continuous	Sep–Jan (Grad roles)	Rolling	Off-Cycle & Summer (Varies)

Key Differences

US → Earliest Recruitment Timeline
- Networking is critical
- Referrals are valuable
- Highly structured process

UK → Spring Weeks Matter
- Heavy use of online tests
- Internships feed graduate roles
- Commercial awareness matters

Spain → Flexible & Relationship-Driven
- Less standardised process
- Alumni networks are valuable
- Opportunities arise year-round

Germany → Off-Cycle Focus
- Multiple internships are typical
- Experience is highly valued
- Language needs vary

Middle East → Networking Opens Doors
- Recruitment is less predictable
- Regional knowledge helps
- Strong international competition

Action Points

- **Start earlier than you think** → especially for US and UK roles
- **Research your target market** → don't use one strategy everywhere
- **Check individual firms** → timelines vary by employer
- **Network locally** → recruiting culture differs by region
- **Stay flexible** → off-cycle and rolling roles can appear throughout the year

Disclaimer

Timelines are indicative and vary by firm and programme.

Always check individual employer deadlines!

15 FINANCE RESOURCES TOOLKIT

Build Your Foundation

Books	Best For
Investment Banking	Valuation, M&A, technical interviews
Expectations Investing	Equity valuation and market expectations
The Intelligent Investor	Value investing fundamentals
The Most Important Thing	Investment thinking and risk
King of Capital	Understanding Private Equity
Barbarians at the Gate	Classic LBO case study
Security Analysis (selected chapters)	Advanced valuation

Weekly Learning Routine

Frequency	Activity
Daily	FT, Bloomberg or Reuters
3x per week	Financial modelling practice
Weekly	Read one investment memo or M&A deal
Weekly	Listen to one finance podcast
Bi-weekly	Coffee chat / networking conversation
Monthly	Complete one mock interview

Make the Most of These Resources

- **Read actively** → Take notes instead of just reading
- **Apply what you learn** → Relate concepts to real companies or deals
- **Be consistent** → 20–30 minutes daily beats occasional long sessions
- **Review regularly** → Revisit key concepts before interviews

Daily News

Essential Reading
- Financial Times
- Bloomberg
- Reuters

Recommended
- Wall Street Journal
- Mergermarket (particularly useful for M&A professionals)
- PitchBook News (PE & VC)
- Private Equity News
- Sifted (European startups)
- TechCrunch (VC & Technology)

Podcasts

Investment Banking & Markets
- Goldman Sachs Exchanges
- JPM Market Insights
- Odd Lots (Bloomberg)
- Thoughts on the Market (Morgan Stanley)

Private Equity & Investing
- Invest Like the Best
- Capital Allocators
- Acquired
- 20VC (Harry Stebbings)

Check Your Progress

Ask Yourself:
- Can you explain a recent M&A deal?
- Could you teach EV vs. Equity Value to a friend?
- Can you connect a recent news story to its impact on a company or industry?
- Can you explain a DCF?

16 FINANCE RECRUITMENT PREPARATION

Technical Preparation

Investment Banking

- Wall Street Prep
- Breaking Into Wall Street (BIWS)
- Financial Edge
- Mergers & Inquisitions

Private Equity

- Wall Street Prep PE
- Private Equity Interview Guide
- Wall Street Oasis

Venture Capital

- OpenVC
- NFX
- Andreessen Horowitz (a16z)
- First Round Review
- Sequoia Articles

Recruitment Trackers

The Trackr
- Track internship and graduate opportunities
- Filter by region and role
- Monitor application deadlines

Prepzfy Jobs
- Finance job board
- Internship and graduate vacancies
- Recruitment updates

Interview Preparation

Behavioural
- Financial Edge Interview Guide
- STAR Method
- PREP Framework

Technical
- BIWS 400 Investment Banking Questions
- Financial Edge Interview Guide

Financial Modelling

Where to Learn
- Wall Street Prep
- BIWS
- Financial Edge
- Corporate Finance Institute (CFI)

What to Practise
- 3-Statement Model
- DCF
- Trading Comparables
- Transaction Comparables
- LBO Model
- Merger Model

Market Data & Research

Markets & Companies
- Bloomberg Terminal
- FactSet
- Capital IQ

Deals & Private Markets
- PitchBook
- Crunchbase
- CB Insights

Networking

LinkedIn + Alumni Network + Company Events + Coffee Chats + Industry Conferences

Important Reminder

- You don't need to use every resource
- Choose tools relevant to your target role
- Focus on consistent practice
- Start preparing before applications open

Where to Start

- Pick your target area: IB, PE, or VC
- Choose 1–2 core technical resources
- Practise the relevant modelling skills
- Build commercial awareness through research
- Prepare for interviews alongside applications