

Syllabus

PLATO Course Introduction to Finance

Course Overview

This one-semester course is intended to help you familiarize yourself with the basic and essential concepts of finance. This course has twenty-one lessons organized into five units. Each unit has a Unit Activity, and each lesson contains one or more Lesson Activities.

This course will cover the fundamental concepts of finance, including the importance of finances and financial planning in personal life and business, ways to manage finances, different investment strategies, and various career options available in the field of finance.

You will submit the Unit Activity documents to your teacher, and you will grade your work on the Lesson Activities by comparing them with the given sample responses. The Unit Activities (submitted to the teacher) and the Lesson Activities (self-checked) are the major components of this course. There are other assessment components, namely the mastery test questions that feature along with the lesson; the pre- and post-test questions that come at the beginning and end of the unit, respectively; and an end-of-semester test. All of these tests are a combination of simple multiple-choice questions and technology enhanced (TE) questions.

Course Goals

This course will help you meet the following goals:

- Learn about key economic concepts such as scarcity, supply, demand, opportunity costs, unemployment, and inflation, and their various roles in the world of finance.
- Understand different types of economic systems and market structures.
- Learn about global trade and how it influences economies.
- Understand investment strategies, budgeting and loan creation, and business insurance.
- Interpret financial statements and financial ratios to evaluate an enterprise's financial position.
- Learn the basics of personal financial planning.
- Understand various social and psychological factors that affect financial decisions.
- Understand why soft skills are important in the world of finance.
- Learn about career options in the world of finance.

Prerequisite Skills

Introduction to Finance has the following prerequisites:

- basic computer skills
- ability to visualize and apply creativity and innovation
- familiarity with the writing process and following guidelines
- ability to structure and process information

General Skills

To participate in this course, you should be able to do the following:

- Perform basic operations on a computer.
- Perform online research using various search engines and library databases.
- Communicate through email and participate in discussion boards.

For a complete list of general skills that are required for participation in online courses, refer to the Prerequisites section of the Plato Student Orientation document, found at the beginning of this course.

Credit Value

Introduction to Finance is a 0.5-credit course.

Course Materials

- notebook
- computer with an internet connection and speakers or headphones
- Microsoft Word or equivalent
- Microsoft Excel or equivalent
- Microsoft PowerPoint or equivalent

Course Pacing Guide

This course description and pacing guide is intended to help you stay on schedule with your work. Note that your course instructor may modify the schedule to meet the specific needs of your class.

Unit 1: Fundamental Principles of Money and Economic Systems

Summary

In this unit, you will learn about money as the medium of exchange across the world and its contribution to different economies. You will familiarize yourself with the fundamentals of macro- and microeconomics and the application of these concepts in the world of finance. You will also learn about the concept of global trade; its scope, drivers, and constraints; and its effects on the national economy.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
1 day: 1	Syllabus and Plato Student Orientation <i>Review the Plato Student Orientation and Course Syllabus at the beginning of this course.</i>	Course Orientation
2 days: 2–3	Defining Money <i>Discuss how money and its various forms work and contribute to the economy.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 4–6	Fundamental Economics <i>Explain the role of fundamental economic concepts in the world of finance.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 7–9	Economic Systems <i>Discuss how enterprises operate within various market structures.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 10–12	Economic Indicators <i>Discuss how key economic indicators, such as interest rates, unemployment, inflation, and cyclicity, have a bearing on economic activity.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 13–15	Government Policy <i>Explain how government actions affect enterprises, especially in decisions on fiscal and monetary policy.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 16–18	Global Trade <i>Describe the workings of and influencing factors within global trade.</i>	Lesson

Day	Activity/ <i>Objective</i>	Type
1 day: 19	Space Jumble	Game
3 days: 20–22	Unit Activity/Threaded Discussion—Unit 1	Activity
1 day: 23	Post-test—Unit 1	Assessment

Unit 2: Personal Finance and Human Behavior in Finance

Summary

In this unit, you will learn about various methods to manage personal finances. These include creating budgets based on realistic financial goals and interpreting different financial statements. You will further analyze the sociological and psychological factors that influence decisions in finance.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
3 days: 24–26	Setting Goals in Personal Finance <i>Discuss how to create realistic financial budgets and goals.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 27–29	Personal Finance Statements <i>Discuss how to apply processes, forms, and financial entities to track one’s personal financial history.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 30–32	Sociological Factors in Finance <i>Discuss sociological factors that are likely to influence decisions in finance.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 33–35	Psychology for Finance <i>Discuss psychological factors that are likely to influence decisions in finance.</i>	Lesson
1 day: 36	Thwack-A-Mole	Game
3 days: 37–39	Unit Activity/Threaded Discussion—Unit 2	Activity
1 day: 40	Post-test—Unit 2	Assessment

Unit 3: Financial Market and Resources

Summary

In this unit, you will learn about the importance and basic operations of the various types of financial markets and financial institutions. You will understand the different ways to manage personal and business capital using various forecasting and budgeting techniques. You will also learn to interpret financial statements to evaluate an enterprise's position and prospects. Finally, you will learn about the various investment strategies that help an enterprise meet its business objectives.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
3 days: 41–43	Assets and Securities <i>Discuss how assets and securities operate within financial markets.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 44–46	Managing Money <i>Use sales forecasting and budgeting techniques to project revenues and profit.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 47–49	Interpreting Financial Statements <i>Apply ratio analysis and trend analysis techniques to evaluate an enterprise's position and prospects.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 50–52	Investment Strategies <i>Describe how informed and responsible investment helps an enterprise meet its objectives.</i>	Lesson
1 day: 53	Para Jumble	Game
3 days: 54–56	Unit Activity/Threaded Discussion—Unit 3	Activity
1 day: 57	Post-test—Unit 3	Assessment

Unit 4: Credit Management and Risk Management

Summary

In this unit, you will learn about different options available to finance a company and the processes, benefits, and risks associated with each option. You will also learn about the importance of insuring a business and the processes involved in buying and claiming insurance.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
3 days: 58–60	Capital Structures <i>Explain how debt and equity capital play a role in financing a company's operations, and the benefits and risks of each.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 61–63	Obtaining Credit <i>Discuss the importance of credit and the risks, methods, and processes associated with credit.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 64–66	Insurance for Business <i>Describe the process and importance of insuring a business.</i>	Lesson
1 day: 67	Space Jumble	Game
3 days: 68–70	Unit Activity/Threaded Discussion—Unit 4	Activity
1 day: 71	Post-test—Unit 4	Assessment

Unit 5: Careers in Finance and Financial Planning

Summary

In this unit, you will learn about the various career options available in personal and corporate finance as well as the various licensing and certification programs required for these careers. You will examine the personal traits and interpersonal skills required to be successful in a workplace. You will also learn about the computer and information technology related skills required for a successful career in this field.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
2 days: 72–73	Careers in Finance <i>Discuss career paths in personal and corporate finance</i>	Lesson
3 days: 74–76	Personal Qualities and Interpersonal Skills <i>Describe the personal traits and interpersonal skills expected in the workplace.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 77–79	Computer Skills <i>Describe computer skills that are essential in the workplace.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 80–82	Information Technology Skills <i>Describe information technology skills that are essential in the workplace.</i>	Lesson
1 day: 83	Para Jumble	Game
4 days: 84–87	Unit Activity/Threaded Discussion—Unit 5	Activity
1 day: 88	Post-test—Unit 5	Assessment
1 day: 89	Semester Review	
1 day: 90	End-of-Semester Test	Assessment