

RE: Pre-Skills Finance Course from Harvard Business School Publishing

Dear Incoming Student:

BUSI 640 is an introductory course in financial management. The course outlines the financial concepts and techniques used to evaluate corporate decisions. The topics include the time value of money, estimating opportunity costs of capital, valuation of common securities, discounted cash flow, and capital structure. The objectives are to introduce the language and structure of finance and develop the ability to analyze financial decisions.

In my experience, finance is a topic that most people master through repetition. We have a limited amount of time together during the semester, and the course covers a significant amount of material. While we do not expect you to have previously taken a finance course, the more that you have been exposed to finance prior to the course, the more you will get out of it. To better facilitate a basic awareness of finance before the course begins, I am asking you to complete the online pre-skills course from Harvard Business School Publishing entitled "Finance Online Course: Introductory Section." It is product number 6000-HTM-ENG (There is a second course available that has greater coverage, but I am only asking you to complete the Introductory Section).

To encourage you to complete the course, **10% of your grade in BUSI 640 will come from whether or not you have obtained a score of at least 65% on Final Exam 1 by the first class meeting.** Note that while the website considers 75% to be passing, I am only looking for a score of 65%. Do NOT take Post-Test 2 unless I have specifically asked you to do so. Please submit a copy of your certificate through Canvas before the first day of the class.

This online course introduces you to some material that we will cover in BUSI 640 (Time value of money, financial ratios, and financial forecasting). I am not looking for you to have mastered these concepts before entering the course (which is why a 65% score is sufficient). Instead, I am looking for you to be familiar with them so that we can use our time together to push you closer towards mastery of the material.

The online course is **estimated to take from 8 to 10 hours** depending upon your experience with the material. If you have never been exposed to finance before, the course could take as long as 20 to 30 hours. You are urged to register for all of your online courses *as soon as possible*. Past experience indicates that many students significantly underestimate the time and effort needed to complete the courses. The more time you have given yourself to start learning some of the fundamental concepts of financial analysis, the less overwhelmed you will feel when the first semester is underway.

If you have significant experience with the course material, you may be able to successfully take the Final Exam without going through the various lessons in detail. Since you have only one chance to take the Final Exam, you should test your mastery by first taking the pre-test. Take the pre-test *only* if you have significant prior experience with the course material. If you score 75% or more on the Pre-test, you can consider taking the Final Exam without going through the various lessons in detail.

As a reminder, you will be taking the online course under the University of Maryland's *Code of Academic Integrity* ([link](#)). Any violation of this code, such as receiving help from another individual in taking a test, will result in an automatic "XF" on your transcript with the notation "failure due to academic dishonesty."

If you have any other questions about the class, please feel free to contact me via email at lyang1@umd.edu.

I look forward to working with you this spring!

Sincerely,

Dr. Liu Yang
Associate Professor of Finance
R. H. Smith School of Business
University of Maryland

Instructions for Purchasing Harvard Business School Publishing's Finance Online Course: Introductory Section

Login Information:

- Turn off all pop-up blockers
- Click on the **appropriate link on Networth** for your cohort's course section
- Click on "Register Now" if applicable, or "Login Now" with your existing account
- Under Coursepack View, click on "Purchase Coursepack."
- You will be prompted for payment information and click "Next."

Payment: Individually by the student directly to HBSP. You will receive the Smith discounted price of **\$35.00** for this course.

Students can confirm technical requirements for the Finance Online course at <http://forio.com/hbp-support/#check/courses/foc>

If you experience technical difficulty, please contact the Harvard Business School Publishing Technical Support Group: 1-800-810-8858 (outside the U.S. and Canada, 1-617- 783-7700) -or email to - techhelp@hbsp.harvard.edu. HBSP tech support business hours are: Monday - Friday, 8am - 6pm ET.