

The BYU Finance Major is a highly competitive, limited-enrollment major. All admitted students enter the major in the fall semester. Applications for admission to the program are due the last business day of June and can be accessed at: <http://marriottschool.byu.edu/students/apply>. The application has four components: (1) four GPA measures (prerequisite, last 30 credit hours, BYU, and overall), (2) current resume, (3) essay, and (4) transcripts. Admissions decisions are based on these four data sources.

Applicants are first ranked based on GPA. Specifically, the program director calculates a single, weighted-average GPA using the four individual GPAs accompanying the application. More than 50% of the weight is placed on the prerequisite GPA. A significant number of students are admitted to the program largely on the basis of this weighted-average GPA. Therefore, it is imperative for students to understand that one of the most important things they can do to improve their odds of acceptance is to achieve top grades in the prerequisite courses.

It is also important for students to understand that an impressive weighted-average GPA does not ensure admission to the major. Before offering admission to any student, the program director or an admissions committee member reviews the student's essay and resume. Hence, it is important for all students to submit polished and well-crafted resumes and essays.

All applicants not accepted on the basis of weighted-average GPA are further vetted on the basis of their resumes, essays, and transcripts. The essays, resumes, and transcripts are used to manually re-rank the rest of the applicant pool in preparation for extending admissions offers. Hence, for students not admitted on the basis of weighted-average GPA as described in the preceding paragraphs, the essay, resume, and transcripts become critical.

Essays that significantly increase students' odds of acceptance share the following characteristics. First, they are parsimonious and well written. The diction, grammar, organization, and syntax are correct and create a document that is concise and easily read. The top essays also make a compelling case for why the student should be admitted to the program. Students often inquire to know what constitutes a compelling case. The possibilities on this subject are too numerous to outline exhaustively, but here are a few things that have proved compelling in the past:

- Finance-related experience at a recognizable company
- Active involvement in the Finance Society and subsidiary clubs
- Passion for the discipline as demonstrated through specific activities or experiences
- Ability to overcome unusually difficult adversity

Resumes that significantly increase students' odds of acceptance share the following characteristics. First, they are in the correct format – ordering of information, layout, font size, language, etc. The top resumes also have substance. They outline awards, achievements, and experience that portend success – both in our program and after our program.

Transcripts that significantly increase our students' odds of acceptance share the following characteristics. First, they demonstrate a students' ability to take and achieve high grades in challenging courses. The admissions committee especially favors economics, engineering, math, science, and statistics classes. For students with below average GPAs, transcripts demonstrating a clear trend of improvement and strong recent performance can be beneficial.