The Change in Core Business Finance Course Offerings

Q: What is happening?


Q: What is the reasoning behind the change?

A: BUAD 215x was for non-Marshall majors, while BUAD 306 was for Marshall majors. Whether or not a student is a Marshall major is not the best indicator of a student’s interest, enthusiasm and aptitude for finance. The new course structure, comprising BUAD 306 and BUAD 308, allows Marshall majors and non-majors to self-select into course options based on their own preferences and objectives.

Comparing BUAD 306 and BUAD 308

Q: In what ways are BUAD 306 Business Finance and BUAD 308 Advanced Business Finance similar?

A: BUAD 306 and BUAD 308 are more similar than different. Both courses fulfill the same degree requirements for majors and minors. Both courses have no formal prerequisites. Both courses have the same recommended preparation: economics, (business) statistics, and (financial) accounting. Both courses satisfy the same prerequisite requirements for FBE upper division electives. Both courses cover (roughly) the same set of foundational finance topics.

Q: In what ways are BUAD 306 Business Finance and BUAD 308 Advanced Business Finance different?

A: While BUAD 306 and BUAD 308 both cover the foundations of business finance, BUAD 306 is a more streamlined approach, focusing on the mechanics and application of business finance. BUAD 306 is designed to work as a standalone course (i.e., the only finance course that a student takes), or as a platform for further study in finance. BUAD 308 is designed as a “first” course in finance. BUAD 308 enhances the coverage of core topics with more discussion of underlying economic theory, more coverage of special cases, and reference to extensions and further areas of study (i.e., linkages to FBE elective courses). This extra coverage is accommodated in two ways: (1) less time is spent on algebraic mechanics and solution techniques, and (2) the overall pace of the course is accelerated. As such, students who enroll in BUAD 308 are expected to have sound quantitative skills and are expected to put more time into the course (relative to what would be required if the same student enrolled in BUAD 306).
Q: **Will BUAD 306 and 308 be taught in the same format?**

A: Both courses will be offered in multiple formats. Some sections will meet in-person two times per week (aka the *traditional* format). Other sections will meet in-person once per week and have asynchronous learning modules in lieu of the second in-person meeting (aka the *flipped* format). Both formats have benefits and we know (from survey data) that both formats are preferred by some students. Over time, we will seek to provide a mix of formats that aligns with student preferences. Of course, student preferences for a certain format will have to be weighed against other preferences, like day of week and time of day.

Q: **Will there be any difference in grades between BUAD 306 and BUAD 308?**

A: As with all USC Marshall classes, grades are assigned based on the instructor’s evaluation of the performance of each individual student and in consideration of Marshall’s grading guidelines. If there is a significant difference in the academic performance of students enrolled in BUAD 306 versus BUAD 308, the grading guidelines allow sufficient flexibility to assign grades that reflect the difference in academic performance.

**Recommended Preparation for BUAD 306 and BUAD 308**

Q: **How necessary is the recommended preparation for BUAD 306 and 308?**

A: While there are no formal prerequisites for either BUAD 306 or 308, students will be better prepared for either course if they have previously taken, or are taking concurrently, courses in microeconomics, macroeconomics, financial accounting, and statistics. AP courses in high school are sufficient, or any college level courses in these areas. If you have no prior exposure to these areas of study, and are not in a hurry to take BUAD 306/308, it makes sense to take the following courses (required for Marshall majors) prior to, or concurrently with, BUAD 306/308:

- ECON 351x Microeconomics for Business
- ECON 352x Macroeconomics for Business
- BUAD 280 Introduction to Financial Accounting
- BUAD 310g (or 312g) Applied Business Statistics

If you are in a hurry to take BUAD 306/308 and have not completed the recommended prep, you should expect that some portions of the course will require more effort on your part and/or be more challenging to master.
Considerations in Choosing Which Class to Take

**Q:** Who should take BUAD 306 Business Finance?

**A:** If finance is not an academic or professional priority for you, BUAD 306 is a better course to take. If you do not plan to take upper division electives in FBE, BUAD 306 *may* be the better course to take. If you anticipate that using algebra and statistics to perform financial analysis will be a challenge for you, BUAD 306 is the better course to take. If you do not have any prior courses in economics, statistics or accounting, and are not willing to fill in your knowledge gaps as needed for finance, BUAD 306 is the better course for you.

**Q:** Who should take BUAD 308 Advanced Business Finance?

**A:** If finance is an academic and professional priority for you, BUAD 308 *may* be the better course to take. If you plan to take upper division electives in FBE, BUAD 308 *may* be the better course to take. If you have strong quantitative skills, you *may* prefer to take BUAD 308. If you have successfully completed courses in microeconomics, statistics and financial accounting, BUAD 308 *may* be the better course for you. If you plan to prioritize BUAD 306/308 among your other commitments, you *may* prefer BUAD 308.

**Q:** Will there be any changes to BUAD 306?

**A:** Yes. BUAD 306 will continue to cover core business finance topics, but BUAD 306 will adjust to accommodate the removal of prerequisites. BUAD 306 will continue to serve equally well as a stand-alone course (i.e., the only finance course that a student takes), or as a platform for further study in finance.

Some Details on the Fall 2022 Course Offerings

**Q:** Will BUAD 215x still be taught?

**A:** There will be sections of BUAD 215x on the schedule of classes, but these sections will be combined (i.e., taught in the same room at the same time) with sections of BUAD 306. We are listing sections of BUAD 215x in the schedule of classes because some students will have BUAD 215x listed in their course plans and will be looking to register in BUAD 215x. Listing sections of BUAD 215x is done as a convenience for these students.

**Q:** How many sections of BUAD 308 will be offered?

**A:** In fall 2022 we will offer three sections of BUAD 308. In spring 2023 we anticipate offering five sections of BUAD 308. Thereafter, we will strive to balance supply with demand for both BUAD 306 and BUAD 308.
Q: What if I register for BUAD 306, but then want to change to BUAD 308, or vice versa?

A: Both courses will remain in open enrollment through the end of week three. Students can switch to any section with open seats during this time. We have made an effort to schedule some sections of BUAD 306 and 308 in complementary time slots that should make it easier for students to switch sections without disrupting a student’s entire class schedule.