

E-COURSE REVIEWS

Most of these courses introduce basic financial concepts, but none adequately addresses the basics of accounting.

Highly Recommended

★★★★ *Introduction to Financial Accounting*: 2 to 4 hours, US\$50 for 7 course log-ins. Publisher: Learning Insights

This course uses a case study to present a series of practical accounting problems. Users are asked to make financial decisions and accounting entries over the course of one imaginary year. The explanations of concepts such as initial capitalization and depreciation are clear and direct. When all transactions are complete, the course overviews the financial trends predicted in the financial statements. That effectively illustrates how and why accountants track profitability and liquidity over time.

Recommended

★★★1/2 *Financial Competence*: 6 to 8 hours, US\$89.95 for unlimited access for 1 user. Publisher: Competence Software

Financial Competence is the most interactive of the courses reviewed. You create financial reports using your own data. You can even use the actual figures from your company's annual report. The course skips over a few general financial topics, but going through the steps of creating a report is an excellent way to understand financial statements and cash flow. The explanations are thorough and clear.

Not Recommended

★★1/2 *Foundations in Finance*: 2 to 3 hours, US\$50 for 7 course log-ins. Publisher: Learning Insights

Foundations in Finance is centered around a case study in which you analyze a company's financial situation and advise the company on a large capital improvement project. This course provides in-depth explanations on concepts such as cash flow and valuation. However, it isn't suitable as an introductory finance course. Many beginners will have trouble with the advanced material. The course's poor organization doesn't help.

★1/2 *Finance Essentials*: 1 to 2 hours, US\$99 for 1 year of access to ManageMentor curriculum. Publisher: Harvard Business School Publishing

This is a good example of what can go wrong when a course tries to do too much. This course is designed to give managers access to just-in-time information, but instead of being an engaging treatment of financial statements and concepts, it's a thin outline of nearly every financial subject imaginable. The presentation of material

is an afterthought, and there isn't enough context or explanations and examples—even for just-in-time training.

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Adequate

★★★ *Financial Basics for Non-Financial Managers*: 1 to 2 hours, US\$7.95 for 1 month of course access. Publisher: QuicKnowledge.com

Based on a case study of QuicSport, a fictitious sports company, this course presents financial concepts in a realistic scenario. But the information can be too dense for financial beginners, and the quizzes test short-term memory rather than real understanding.

★★★ *Introduction to Finance*: 2 to 3 hours, US\$99.95 for 1 year of course access. Publisher: SkillSoft

Designed for nonfinancial managers, this course introduces concepts such as capital expenditures, depreciation, return-on-investment, and the future-value formula. The course focuses on terminology and skips over the numerical aspect of financing.

★★★ *Understanding Balance Sheets*: 1 to 2 hours, US\$95 for 1 year of course access. Publisher: KnowledgePool

This course's narrow focus makes it the best of the balance-sheet-related courses reviewed. Engaging questions, effective examples, and thorough explanations solidify the importance and uses for balance sheets. The drawback is the cost; other courses cover this topic and more for a similar price.

★★★ *Reading and Analyzing Financial Statements*: 12 to 15 hours, corporate pricing is available. Publisher: SkillSoft

Reading and Analyzing Financial Statements is a five-part series. The first three are introductory, and the final two are more advanced. The series does a satisfactory job of covering important financial statements and offering advice on how to analyze financial statements.