

Finance Lab of Centre for Applied Finance

Goal: To enable hands on training along with classroom teaching into the student learning process wherein faculty can bring real world experiences into classrooms and simulate scenarios experienced by finance professional working across leading banks, financial institutions, corporations and government agencies to improve their understanding of the finance domain.

Methodology Used: Faculty use the lab to create scenarios that match a real-world situations at a financial institution. The sessions require students to access to a variety of financial data and tools using licensed sources like Capitaline or free sources like google finance or stock exchange websites. Students then analyse these data on MS Excel, Matlab or open source software like R to draw up meaningful conclusions and recommendations.

Students are also encouraged to monitor and analyze real-time and historical financial market data and take up certifications like NISM for which knowledge support is provided through the centre.

Several courses use the lab regularly, including courses in Financial Management, Financial Markets and Instruments, Security Analysis and Portfolio Management, etc. Students independently use the lab on their own during open lab hours for the subject projects and final projects.

Outcome: Students develop their skills in financial data analytics and view the market through the eyes of a finance professional such as portfolio managers, investment analysts and traders. Faculty and students use the data retrieved and perform analysis which can then be used for research publications and projects

Significance of Results: The adoption of the Finance Lab has improved the teaching learning process, especially for the finance stream.

1. Saintgits was able to place our students with leading multinational companies, in line with achieving our vision statement, by placing one student with Bank of New York Mellon (BoNY Mellon) and two students with Standards and Poors (S&P)
2. Saintgits students were recruited in large numbers by AMC's and Capital Market Intermediaries like ICICI Securities and HDFC AMC's in addition to banking firms as recruiters appreciated our students better understanding of the concepts which enabled them to perform better in interviews
3. Saintgits was able to closely engage with Marque institutions like NISM, with whom we have signed an MoU to offer Capital Markets Training Programme

4. Saintgits was able to improve the quality of the student projects, where the students were able to get data from licensed and authentic sources rather than common websites where data authenticity is a suspect.

Improvements Needed: The Finance Lab will require infrastructure additions including an interactive display, an interactive lecture podium, smart televisions and a ticker. This is required to enhance the teaching learning process, support video conferencing for interaction with experts in distant locations, collaboration, virtual learning, communicating performance etc.

Steps Forward: Some of the planned initiatives from the Bloomberg Finance Lab include

1. Launching a **Student Managed Investment Fund (SMIF)** where students will manage an investment fund, in line with any mutual fund company with a sponsor (Management), trustees (Faculty), Asset Manager (Second Year Students) and Analysts (first and second years). The fund will be managed based on defined objectives, constraints, asset mix and portfolio management strategies wherein their performance can be benchmarked with identified Benchmark indices and presentation made on performance at a AGM.
2. Introduce a **Student Portfolio Analysis (SPAN)** Event annually where the second year's will play a portfolio management game where-in the Bloomberg Terminals virtual investment platform will be leveraged to conduct the event which will span over one semester and which will then be evaluated by industry representatives to select the best team

Conclusion: The Finance Lab has helped us bring significant improvement in the teaching learning process among the students and faculty. With the realizing of planned improvements in infrastructure and the initiatives, we believe this facility can become a strong USP and will make Saintgits one of the sought-after destinations for management education in the country