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Poor Undergrad Recruiting Got Ya Down, Consider The MSF Option

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I am often asked by readers what types of finishing degrees can help them break into banking, but don't require a bunch of work experience first (as the MBA does, or at least a [good MBA program](#) does, for example). There are a few finishing degrees as well as the ability to delay graduation as a means of providing some extra time to land the right internship or find available opportunities. Recently, I came across a site that I think would prove useful to my readers interested in learning more about some of these

options – MSFHQ.com. The site is dedicated to exploring the Master in Science of Finance ("MSF") option, which is becoming increasingly popular among college seniors and those with a year or less work experience as a way of gaining a higher understanding of finance and getting another shot at recruiting. Programs typically take a year to complete and cover the full gamut of topics to provide a well-rounded, graduate-level understanding of finance. Upon completion, graduates typically go into banking or sales & trading in an analyst level position.

A very common question asked about the MSF is its relation to the MBA. The MSF is much more quantitative than an MBA and its focus is narrower. Therefore, you see a much more focused career track whereas with an MBA you can do almost anything you want. Also, MSF programs are typically comprised of 22-24 year olds with little to no work experience which is the primary reason why they place into analyst positions instead of coming in as an associate.

The CFAs are regularly compared to an MSF and while there are elements of the CFA in most MSF programs, comparing them is a disservice on both sides. The CFA is a very well-respected designation. It also takes a long time to pass the tests and accumulate the required work experience. As mentioned earlier, the MSF takes only one year to complete. CFAs are very useful in asset management, but it does not cover many topics useful in trading or banking. The MSF tries to prepare students for a more broad range of careers. Ultimately, both are great letters to have after your name and many people choose to earn both.

Although the degree is still relatively new here in the USA (most programs have been around for 5 years or less), it is starting to catch on. Princeton & MIT both offer MSF degrees and provide the best brand recognition out of the group. A few of the other more well known schools are Vanderbilt, Villanova, Boston College, WUSTL, Florida and Claremont McKenna. More and more schools are starting to offer an MSF (Ohio State being one of the newest) and in the future you will see the degree become much more common and well known.

For more information on an MSF, check out <http://www.MSFHQ.com>. The site is run by Anthony DeAngelis, a 2010 Villanova MSF graduate.

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