

Sprouts Project Examples: Finance

1. Equity Research Report: Investment Recommendation

Introduction:

Students will conduct financial analysis on a publicly listed company and develop an equity research report recommending whether investors should buy, hold, or sell the stock.

Field of Finance:

Equity Research / Investment Analysis / Valuation

Required Level of Knowledge:

Basic understanding of company financials (revenue, profit, balance sheet), market trends, and valuation concepts. Key financial analysis frameworks will be introduced during the project.

Real-World Example:

Equity research teams at firms like Goldman Sachs or JP Morgan regularly issue buy/sell recommendations that influence investor sentiment — for example, Amazon's stock ratings have often shifted following earnings reports or strategic shifts. What factors should drive a buy or sell recommendation?

What You Would Be Doing:

In this project, you'll act as an equity research analyst and select a publicly listed company from a provided list, review financial statements, revenue growth, profitability, and debt structure, conduct competitor and industry analysis, build a simple valuation model (P/E ratio, DCF concepts introduced), and draft an equity research report summarising your analysis and investment recommendation. This project develops your understanding of financial analysis, valuation, and real-world investment decisions.

2. Corporate Finance Case Study: M&A Transaction Analysis

Introduction:

Students will analyse a proposed merger or acquisition between two companies, evaluating the deal's financial logic, risks, and strategic fit.

Field of Finance:

Corporate Finance / Mergers & Acquisitions

Required Level of Knowledge:

Basic financial metrics, valuation multiples, and strategic reasoning. M&A frameworks will be introduced during the project.

Real-World Example:

In 2019, LVMH's \$16 billion acquisition of Tiffany & Co. illustrated how luxury conglomerates expand through strategic acquisitions, brand consolidation, and global expansion. Why did LVMH pursue this deal — and was it worth it? Source: <https://www.lvmh.com/en/publications/lvmh-reaches-agreement-with-tiffany-co-release>

What You Would Be Doing:

As an M&A analyst, you will review the financials of both companies involved, research the strategic rationale behind the deal, conduct synergy and valuation calculations, identify integration risks and competitive implications, and prepare an M&A transaction report outlining whether the deal should proceed. This project builds your analytical, strategic, and valuation thinking — key areas for finance careers.

3. Financial Risk Assessment: Corporate Credit Analysis

Introduction:

Students will assess a company's financial risk profile, focusing on creditworthiness and the likelihood of loan repayment or default.

Field of Finance:

Credit Risk / Financial Risk Management

Required Level of Knowledge:

Basic financial ratios (debt/equity, interest coverage), balance sheet analysis, and risk assessment. Credit rating frameworks will be introduced.

Real-World Example:

During the 2020 COVID pandemic, credit rating agencies (e.g. Moody's, S&P) downgraded numerous airlines due to weakened balance sheets and future earnings uncertainty — including Lufthansa and American Airlines. How do you evaluate when a company becomes too risky?

What You Would Be Doing:

As a credit analyst, you will review company financials and debt obligations, calculate credit risk ratios, analyse cash flow stability and external risk factors, apply credit rating agency methodologies, and produce a credit risk assessment report with a final creditworthiness evaluation. This project trains you to assess financial stability, lending risks, and corporate solvency.

4. Financial Markets Case Study: Central Bank Policy & Market Impact

Introduction:

Students will study how central bank policies (interest rates, quantitative easing, etc.) influence financial markets, corporate valuations, and investor behaviour.

Field of Finance:

Macroeconomics / Monetary Policy / Financial Markets

Required Level of Knowledge:

Basic understanding of interest rates, inflation, stock and bond markets. Monetary policy tools will be explained during the project.

Real-World Example:

The Bank of England's interest rate hikes from late 2021 onwards were designed to combat inflation, but also triggered sharp moves in UK bond markets (gilt yields) and mortgage rates. How do monetary policy shifts ripple through financial markets? Source: <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy>

What You Would Be Doing:

In this project, you will study recent central bank policy actions, track market reactions across equities, bonds, and currencies, analyse how rate changes affect borrowing, corporate profits, and consumer behaviour, and write a policy impact report explaining how financial markets respond to monetary policy changes. This project deepens your understanding of real-world market dynamics and macro-financial linkages.