

THE BOEHLY CENTER

FOR EXCELLENCE IN FINANCE

CAREERS IN FINANCE PODCAST

EPISODE 13: THE HIRING TIMELINE

Jeffrey Rich

Welcome to Careers in Finance, presented by the Boehly Center for Excellence in Finance at William & Mary's Raymond A. Mason School of Business. This podcast will explore various areas of the financial services industry, career paths in finance, and other practical insights that will help students better understand and prepare for professional success in the field of finance. Be sure to subscribe to the podcast and catch future episodes as we explore the field of finance. And now your host, Jad Howell.

Jad Howell

Welcome to today's podcast of careers in Finance through the Boehly Center. Today, we're going to focus on prepared for success, the hiring timeline. And we have with us Noha Baltagi, who works in the H.R. department with IHS Market. Noha, welcome. Why don't we begin today and have you provide our listeners with a brief career sketch and how you arrived to your current position with IHS?

Noha Baltagi

I'm grateful to be a part of this podcast. I have to say it's my first, well, it's my second podcast. It's been about eight to 10 years on Wall Street. And I'm a fully licensed stockbroker. I have a finance degree, but I graduated during the crash, so I never got to actually be a broker. Instead, I went into a career I didn't even know existed. And that's kind of where I talk to students about thinking about things you don't even know exist and using skills in a different way. So, So, yeah, graduating as a female with a finance degree during the crash, I got licensed, and there weren't a lot of opportunities, but I could talk the talk, and I had a really good skillset in finance. So I ultimately found my place within H.R. Instead of being a broker, I hired brokers and recruited brokers and ultimately managed the performance of those brokers or bankers or research analysts at institutions such as Credit Suisse. And I've worked on the trading floor at Guggenheim Securities. I went into FinTech a few years ago and worked for Ipreo, which was owned by Blackstone and Goldman Sachs, and we were acquired by IHS Market. So I'm now currently the head of all intern and graduate hiring at IHS Market, which is a very large data company, and I graduated with a finance degree. I never thought I would be in this position ten years down the road. So as you start to finalize your education and pursue internships, just know that it's okay to change course, it's okay to make risks, and it's actually encouraged to try something new. So what you think you might be doing in five years? That job may not even exist. There are a ton of new opportunities being created every day. So just keep that in mind as you go through your journey and you do due diligence on firms and positions. Personal email address is something that is professional and that you wouldn't mind sharing. And I say that for a few reasons. Some universities block incoming mail from large institutions. So if you have a dot edu email address, you may not get these notifications. If you have a personal email address, you probably will. So it's always good on your application to put two email addresses.

Also, this is an ongoing application. Maybe you're graduating in a few months. That student email address is no longer going to be active. How am I going to

Jad Howell

That's a great point?

Noha Baltagi

So think about the longevity of your application and making sure you're always going to be available. And then it's always great to put a link to your LinkedIn profile. Only do it if you have a good LinkedIn profile. So if you don't have a picture up, if it's not updated, if you haven't added skills on LinkedIn, if you haven't indicated interests in companies, then maybe don't include your LinkedIn profile. But if your LinkedIn profile is very good, there is a way to include the external hyperlink. So as a recruiter, I look at your name. What are you studying? People don't tell me when they're graduating. I love to know started college in twenty nineteen, but when are you graduating? Because that's what's impactful to me. So your name, how I can get in touch with you, what you're studying, when are you graduating? Your anticipated graduation date is missing on almost 50 percent of the resumes that I get. So I don't know. Are you good for an internship? Are you good for a full-time role? You have to help me with this commercial. So in a commercial, we're selling a product. We're telling someone why they want this product. And at the end of the commercial, they're convinced that they need the product, right?

Jad Howell

Sure.

Noha Baltagi

Your resume is your commercial. Start with introducing yourself and the product. Why do they need you? Why? Because I'm graduating. I've got this great degree and then convince them that they have to have you with the body of the resume. And the way to do that is to look at the job description. If the job description that you're applying for and always have one version of your resume as a template on your desktop, you take that resume and you make minor adjustments to it for the jobs that you apply to based on the job description. So if they're looking for X, Y, and Z skills and those aren't on your resume, and you have them, then you need to update your résumé. If they're asking you to do certain responsibilities as part of the role and you've done those things in an internship or as part of a student organization. That should be the first bullet in your work experience on your resume. So you are pulling exactly what they want and putting it on your resume in an accurate form. So that's how you really customize your resume for each role. The last thing I would say is activities and interests are more important now than ever. I don't get to greet you in a lobby. I don't get to have small talk with you around the elevator. How was your commute? Let's talk about the weather. So I'm not getting that additional color from that interaction with a human being. This is a chance for you to add some additional color on your resume. I've seen people who put hip hop dancing as their interest. And I was like, you know what?

Jad Howell

That's great.

Noha Baltagi

I just remember that I even had someone put LeCroix, like, water, like the sparkling water. Don't know why that's an interest. But you know what? I remember it.

Jad Howell

You remembered it.

Noha Baltagi

Out of the hundreds of thousands of resumes I see. I remember that. So put something in there that's special to you. And obviously, in this COVID environment, I would hope that everyone has a new hobby or interest. So there should be something for you to put on there that also gives us insight into your personality, your character traits. Maybe there's a certain department that I now think you'd be a great fit for, culturally. All of those things are really important when you think about your resume. So I would traditionally go through a workshop and have everyone create templates of their resume. My last biggest piece of advice for your resume is once you have a good basic one-page version that you're happy with, convert it to a PDF. Never, ever, ever give a word version of your resume. That's allowing someone to change the editing or formatting, or content. You're losing your intellectual property. Always make it a PDF when you're going to share it and send yourself that resume in your personal email. Why? Because if you're out meeting someone or if you're on a call or if you're at the grocery store or you're at a family event, and they meet you, and they say, hey, you know what, I think I might have an opportunity for you. Do you have a copy of your resume? Of course, you don't.

Jad Howell

It's right there.

Noha Baltagi

On the ground with a copy of their resume in their back pocket. But if it is an email that you've sent to yourself, just as a blank email, you may absolutely have a copy of my resume. What's your email address? You open your phone right then and there, and you email that person directly. You just forward them that copy of your resume. Now, not only have you made a connection with someone, you have their email address, and you've already sent them your resume. Be smart, be efficient. And it's those little tips and tricks that I think are really helpful. So

Jad Howell

Those are excellent insights. Yeah, very helpful. Thank you for sharing that.

Noha Baltagi

Of course. All right. What are some other questions we can go through?

Jad Howell

You bet. So, for example, diversity, can you tell us a little bit about how IHS Market embraces diversity, particular programs that students should be aware of, and especially today, how is that diverse employee base you know being pursued and developed?

Noha Baltagi

I'm so glad you asked that question. It's actually one of our top agenda items from our executive committee and our board. We recently hired a new chief diversity officer at the firm. I personally am ensuring that we're an equal opportunity employer in the U.S., So every position at IHS Markit requires several people to be interviewed before we make a selection. That way, we are fair and objective in our interview process. We do partner with several external organizations that are focused on diversity recruitment. But as an individual candidate, you should know we hire the best person for the job. It is very important that people know they're welcome at IHS Markit regardless of their gender, regardless of their sexual orientation, regardless of the color of their skin. IHS Markit is a very open community. We're a global information powerhouse. We have offices all over the world. There's no way that you could feel excluded because everyone is an employee at IHS Markit, and everyone gets to be themselves. Hiring women is very important to the firm because due to the nature of what we do, we are mostly a firm that's based on acquisitions. We have acquired several data firms, several finance institutions, several fintech companies. Those industries were predominantly male-oriented. So we're up against the fence in a sense that the majority of our population was males because it was a male-dominated industry. What I love to see is people like myself, a female in an executive role. I have so many other females on the executive leadership team that I've never experienced in a big bank. It's really exciting to see more women getting promoted at this firm than I've ever seen at a broker-dealer or on a trading firm. I do have an initiative to make a 50 50 hiring quota. We want half of our population to be male, half female. That's hard because it's based upon who applies. So I can tell you the current breakdown of our firm is 70 percent male, 30 percent female. But last year, we made an effort in our intern and grad hiring to really change that. So what are we to answer your second question? What are we doing? We started a few diversity outreach programs, fintech boot camps of schools, where we knew that there was underrepresented populations of students.

Jad Howell

That's a good idea.

Noha Baltagi

And we targeted more women organizations on campus, and we really did move the needle. So I believe 70 percent of our internship class were females last year, which is very, very exciting. And I have to say a big push came from India. So that's where we saw a huge change in the gender initiative, and it inspired us globally to do what they've done in India to empower women. So we have a lot of affinity networks. Engage is our black network internally. We partner with HBCUs all over the country to make sure that they know what what is data science? What does an energy analysts do? What does the global markets do? I mean, a lot of these communities have never had exposure to Wall Street. They've never had exposure to big data. So all we're doing right now is education and outreach. We want to make sure everyone knows our door is open.

Jad Howell

Wow, that's terrific. You're starting at a very early point in terms of getting them educated and ultimately successful in terms of placement.

Noha Baltagi

Exactly. And students at any level of their college education are welcome to participate in our workshops and our boot camps. We especially encourage people at the freshman and sophomore level because that's where you start to decide. Maybe I want to change my course for next year. Maybe I do want to take a class in that. And it's really important to sign up for these workshops or learn more about these companies early on and try an internship because guess what? You might hate it. You might realize, okay, this is not for me. I'm good at that, and I have another summer to try something else. But yeah, the door at IHS Markit is open to everyone.

Jad Howell

That's great. And to that point, the Mason School of Business, you may be aware, is a two-year business school. And so, in many instances, we have juniors who may be somewhat behind the eight ball, and we may have student-athletes as well that have conflicts. And for whatever reason, they are not able to well in advance of that recruiting cycle participate in position than themselves. What advice might you give to a student who may be behind somewhat that recruiting cycle to advance and catch up, if you will?

Noha Baltagi

Well, the good news is that this is a very unconventional year, so we have really shifted how we recruit at IHS Markit, and we traditionally in the past, you would see, okay, I've got to make sure I've got I apply for an internship in August. I need to be available in May. Internships are only in the summer. COVID really threw a wrench in all of that. A lot of people had full-time jobs that got eliminated. A lot of people had internships that were eliminated. A lot of people are now going back to school an additional year. To your point, a lot of athletes are being invited back for an additional year. I've had multiple cases where I work with them, and all I ask is that you're honest on your application. That's all it takes, just to be honest about your intent. And so, if you are in a unique situation like that, a cover letter is a really good idea because a cover letter is helping the recruiter understand what's going on with the timeline. And it's also helping them understand your availability, your interest, your eagerness in the role. I've shifted the recruitment timeline at IHS Markit. We hire now organically. So as soon as we find someone, we hire them because I'm conscious that although I typically wouldn't hire for my grad program until July of this year if we find someone who graduated in May of last year and just hasn't been able to find a job because of COVID, we're going to hire you right now. If you graduated in December, we're going to hire you right now. And I think that when you look at early careers programs, and you think about the requirements, zero to six months experience or you have to be a recent grad, or you should be a sophomore. Just remember, an internship is an internship. It's an opportunity for you to learn about the firm. Full-time jobs are a little different. You need to make sure that you're really interested in that full-time job, and you need to be available to work in the city in which you're applying to down the road. So right now, you're going to see a ton of jobs posted. Let's say you get to stay in school unconventionally for

another six months, and you're applying for a job in New York City, but you're going to school in Georgia. Well, that's you know, we're going to go back to work eventually. You need to be available to work in New York City, not in Georgia. So just be conscious of that also

Jad Howell

That's great feedback.

Noha Baltagi

when you're applying for jobs. We could start people virtually in another state, but when the office is open up, it is your responsibility to be available in that location. And these companies are not going to pay relocation for entry-level jobs. You applied for position in that city. It's not our responsibility to get you to that city. We'll be flexible, and you might start remotely, but you are ultimately supposed to be reporting to that office. And it's a case-by-case basis at IHS Markit. Some other firms might not be as flexible. They're probably a bit more strict, but I do whatever I can for the right student. And that includes work authorization. Right. So that's a big topic that people are asking about. And if I require sponsorship, can I apply? All I say is be honest. Just be honest on your application and tell us what the situation is so we can find the most feasible path for you. I know that some parts might work and some won't. So as long as you're honest, we're willing to work with everyone.

Jad Howell

That's terrific. Just being transparent about your current circumstances and your ultimate desires. And, you know, it's amazing how far that will take you. Well, that's very helpful. So then there are no hard and fast hiring, recruiting timelines with IHS.

Noha Baltagi

Ideally, we host a nine. So I'll tell you about our programs. So we are going to host a nine-week summer internship program, and it starts on June 1st. So it's a it's one day short of nine weeks because May thirty-first is a holiday, but it's June 1st to July 30th. It's going to be virtual. So last year, everyone kind of canceled their intern programs. Right. And then I just marketed the last minute. Gotta love my CEO. Literally, like four weeks before we were supposed to go live with the program, we canceled; he goes, you know what? We should have an internship program. I just told everyone they don't have an internship, but we pivoted. If anyone is familiar with friends and the ross and the couch. That is our code word. And I just market pivot. And we did we pivoted, and we hosted the first-ever five-week virtual internship, and we did five weeks because we weren't sure how it was going to be right, you know. How this virtual environment was going to work out. Well, turns out it was awesome and really fun and everyone really enjoyed it, and they were really sad at the end of the five weeks. So this year, despite COVID, we will have an internship program. It will be nine weeks. It will be virtual. The goal of our internship program historically has always been a pipeline. So you see it as a nine-week interview. And if you do really well, you're probably going to get a full-time offer to join us when you graduate. That doesn't mean we don't look at sophomores or freshmen. We do. So there are some internship roles where I've had interns come back year over year over year and then get an offer. I've several examples of that. So don't be discouraged if you're not going to be available immediately. I would say if you aren't going to be available, immediately put in your cover letter. Why? Like I just market. Why you want this internship? That's going to help the

company be a little bit more flexible and have an appetite to take someone on who okay, maybe they do come back summer after summer and then join us full time because you have to remember, it's a lot of time and effort for the managers to train an intern. And we don't just hire interns. You don't go get coffee. You're not doing data work. We are putting you on the desk. You're doing real work. It is a true test to see if you're going to be a fit in this team full time. That's what our internships are about. It is actually a nine-week full-time job. You are doing actual work, but you're also part of the global cohort, so you have networking opportunities, learning and development sessions, you get to hear from different business leaders. So maybe you're in the finance sector, but you're going to get to hear from the head of energy and transportation. You also have a mentor. You also have a group project with interns around the globe. And you do a presentation to our president and CEO at the end. So it's very fun. It's very engaging. And we did the best that we could virtually. That's what our summer internship looks like. So for interns, timelines pretty tight. Yeah. You need to be available during those dates, now for grads whole new ballgame. Ideally, we hire one grad cohort, and they start in July because I'm just one human being. So I start the interns in June, and they're up and running. And then our grads join us in July, and they get up and running, and then I get to say goodbye to my interns. So it's very fluid. But again, the opportunities that I just market are organic. So if you've already graduated, there are jobs on our website right now that you can go and apply to that don't necessarily have the words early careers next to them. Okay, so early careers is traditionally for someone who just graduated from school. But again, I'm opening up to people who might have graduated in the past year. But for those of you who have graduated in the past year, don't just limit yourself to early careers. Go and look at the rest of the website. There are a ton of opportunities, and you shouldn't limit yourself just because you're a recent grad to an early careers position. Make sure again that you look at the location, customize your resume based on the job description. And we're going to work very closely with William & Mary because I'm taking your hedge fund style to recruitment this year. I'm going to be filling most of these jobs myself exclusively in-house with students who indicate interest or referrals. And that's also for diversity reasons because to ensure that I can get the right people in front of the right jobs and they don't get lost among ten thousand resumes online. So I would say to students from William & Mary, if you are interested, stay close to this network. You have a campus ambassador. IHS Markit. He's going to be able to help you basically cut the line and go through the VIP door and get considered for roles. If you do reach out to your campus ambassador or to anyone else at the school, like we said, be transparent about when you're available, what you're looking for and what locations. That's going to help me figure out where I could market you to managers internally. Rules are a little different. We're very unique bird here at IHS. You can indicate interest right now. So online, there is a current indication of interest placeholder. So you can just say, hey, you know what, I think I'm interested. It takes about five minutes. It's not a full application. You're just giving me some information about yourself indicating interest online in the event that I do post jobs, which I probably will in mid-February. Like in a couple of weeks, I'll probably have several jobs online. You'll get emailed directly. You don't need to keep monitoring the website. So by indicating interest online, you actually will receive an email from me. And I'm going to say go shopping, take your time, browse, but don't purchase too many items. That's my last and final piece of advice about applying. If I see someone applied to 10 jobs, they don't know what they want.

Jad Howell
Right.

Noha Baltagi

I don't have time to figure this out for them. Be very smart and strategic with an application approach. You can apply to maybe two or three jobs, most within a firm. If you do more than that, recruiters will not take you seriously.

Jad Howell

That's great insights. What do they do after they go express an indication of interest they apply? What do you recommend they do as they wait?

Noha Baltagi

Okay, so by indicating interest, you don't have to do biometrics yet. You're just going to get notified once jobs are live. I would say if you've indicated interest, the best thing to do is go to the IHS Markit website. Watch the videos. There's also IHS Markit YouTube channel. Go watch the videos, go watch all these videos about IHS Markit, read our client testimonials, look at the new press releases, find some content on LinkedIn that gets you really excited about the firm or gives you a little bit more information. That way, when jobs do go live, you know which ones you want. That's what I would do in the meantime. And I would also polish up my LinkedIn profile. So if your LinkedIn profile isn't good, this is a really great opportunity to sit at home, take a selfie, upload a new professional photo. And guys, what's really important on LinkedIn that people don't realize there is a skills section. Like actually add your skills to the skills section on LinkedIn and maybe go and ask for a few recommendations from people that you know. Get some testimonials up there. And if you want to show what you're interested in at the bottom. It wouldn't hurt if you put that you're following IHS Markit on your LinkedIn.

Jad Howell

Absolutely.

Noha Baltagi

So that when I, as a recruiter, look at your LinkedIn, I'm like, oh, they're following IHS Markit. So

Jad Howell

Interesting, interesting.

Noha Baltagi

That's what you can do in the meantime. And then, if you do apply, what is it going to look like? It's rapid-fire, guys. So if you do apply, it's going to go really fast and really quick starting after February 16. So everyone here is invited to the IHS Markit showcase. That's on February 16th. I will make sure to give the invite to you. It's really cool and really exciting. I don't know if anyone's ever done anything like it before, but you're going to hear from the heads of the businesses, each business really quick. And it's going to be like CNBC style, like a panel.

Jad Howell

Yeah.

Noha Baltagi

You're going to hear from each business and our diversity officer. Then you're going to have eight people from the business give you advice. How to make the most of LinkedIn, mentoring, interview skills, interview tips, and you can choose which session you want to join throughout the day. So we'll share the whole agenda with you. And again, I really encourage you to attend cause it's kind of awesome. After you get career guidance from, like, all the coolest execs in my firm that agreed to do this for me. Then there's a fireside chat with recent grads. So we're going to actually have people who just recently graduated that are going to tell you about their journey. We're talking about things like adulting one o one from the dorm room to the boardroom.

Jad Howell

That's terrific.

Noha Baltagi

Setting multiple alarms.

Jad Howell

I don't think I like it.

Noha Baltagi

That's our first topic as adulting one o one. It's hosted by grads. And that's going to be a really fun fireside chat. So

Jad Howell

That's terrific.

Noha Baltagi

We just got our headcount like two weeks ago.

Jad Howell

And?

Noha Baltagi

Because of the merger with S&P. So I normally would already have my jobs filled.

Jad Howell

I see.

Noha Baltagi

I have never waited this long to recruit. So I am I think to those students who are worried. Don't. I haven't even started yet.

Jad Howell

There is still time.

Noha Baltagi

There is plenty of time just when you're ready. It's a sprint. So when you're ready, be ready.

Jad Howell

Yeah, well, that's very helpful. You know, I've just enjoyed listening to you throughout. You're so energetic and excited about all these aspects that are important to the student. And I know they're just going to digest this podcast and really appreciate your thoughts and thoughtfulness in responding to these areas. Can you maybe just to capstone this all this podcast share with us and for the student, you know, some parting thoughts and comments perhaps in a COVID still era as they're trying to navigate this unprecedented time? Any parting comments or thoughts that you think would be really helpful?

Noha Baltagi

Absolutely. This is what I tell some of my favorite candidates, some of the personal advice that I give them. Be patient. Things are not moving as quickly as they used to. So don't lose hope. Be resilient and be patient. That those are the qualities that resonate the most during COVID. Is someone's ability as a candidate to be patient with me, to be kind, and to be resilient. Okay, so maybe the first interview didn't work. Go to the next one. Go to the next one. Go to the next one. Okay, so also, we don't have a lot of human interaction. Right. And I talked about the fact that you don't get to greet someone at an elevator. So how are you really making an impact on this virtual interview? Think about that. Practice. This is going to sound crazy. I don't care. You can make fun of me. But every person I've ever told this to told me it worked – the night before your interview. I want you to sit down, sit down, or whatever you need to be in front of the mirror, and you are literally going to practice and pretend someone else is interviewing you, and you're not going to do it once. You're going to do it twice. And I don't care how ridiculous you feel doing it. Confidence is key. If you do that, you already know what you're going to say the next day on the interview. You're not nervous.

Jad Howell

Sure.

Noha Baltagi

Okay, it's going to help you with slowing down your words. Don't speak too fast on a virtual interview. And because we're not walking back and forth from the elevator, you have more time as a candidate to ask questions. There is more of a buffer zone now than ever. That's where a candidate shines or fails. Do you say, okay, thanks? I don't have any questions. This was great. Or do you make the most of those five minutes someone at the company that you got, because those would have been five minutes hanging up my coat or getting a glass of water? How are you maximizing that? So I would say be patient, practice, be curious, be resilient. And an interview is a 50/50 conversation. You should be talking half the time. They should be talking half the time. And you're interviewing them as much as they're interviewing you. Okay.

Jad Howell

Sure.

Noha Baltagi

You're a commodity, you guys. You need to be confident, believe in your resume. Believe in your thirty-second commercial and go in there thinking, you know, I'm interviewing this company like, yeah, they're interviewing me, but I'm interviewing them too. That's what's going to make you stand out.

Jad Howell

Oh, that's very helpful. Very timely. You know, it's a marathon right now, isn't it? And endurance is key. I like that. Just being diligent, persistent, and endure.

Noha Baltagi

If a position doesn't work out. You guys, it's not your fault. You have to realize companies are going through a lot right now. There's ever-evolving changes and moving parts. The markets are volatile, so don't get defeated. Just know that the right job is out there for you, and it will happen. But the more interviews that go on, the more practice that you have, you're going to be ready and perfect for that final one permanent position.

Jad Howell

Yeah. When it comes, that's terrific. Well, this has been, again, very helpful. I've learned a lot myself, and I know the students will as well when they hear this podcast. So from all of us here in the Mason School of Business and on behalf of the student body, thank you so very much for your time.

Noha Baltagi

Thank you so much for having me. This is so much fun, and I hope to see everyone applying to IHS Markit.

Jad Howell

All right. We will get the word out. We will get the word out.

Noha Baltagi

Okay.

Jad Howell

Thank you so much.

Jeffrey Rich

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