

**2015
AWARD
WINNER**

EXCELLENCE IN ACTION

**Business Administration
& Management**

CAREER CLUSTER



BACKGROUND

The **Bergen County Technical Schools – Bergen County Academies’ (BCA) Academy for Business and Finance (ABF)** in Hackensack, New Jersey was one of the first Career Academies established in the state. Since its inception in 1992, BCA have provided challenging and innovative secondary CTE programs and programs of study for Bergen County residents that benefit from well-established relationships with college partners – including the Academy for Business and Finance.

A cornerstone of the success of ABF and Bergen County’s other academies has been the ongoing effort by administration and faculty to create and maintain learning communities that emphasize curricular innovation, advancement and articulation. The curricula focus on rigorous academic requirements alongside critical analysis in problem-posing, problem-solving and employability skills. In 2001, ABF began the process of earning accreditation from the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO).

About Bergen County Academy for Business and Finance Students

Number of students	147
Male: Female ratio	44% : 56%
Minority students	57%
Low-income students	2%

“Although our curriculum varies from course to course, we have a central focus on research, analysis, collaboration, and decision-making. This central focus allows our students to build these critical skills over their four years with us.”

**Michelle Pinke, CTE Lead Teacher,
Bergen County Technical Schools**



DUAL ENROLLMENT AND CERTIFICATION

ABF has a variety of ways to prepare students for continuing education through IB assessments, Advanced Placement (AP) exams, certifications and dual enrollment. All students in the program take a series of IB assessments graded according to rigorous International Baccalaureate standards. In 2014, ABF students’ scores exceeded international averages in ten courses. The core requirements of the IB Diploma Program are accepted by many schools, which will grant students between 24-30 credits in advanced standing.

In addition to their core IB courses, many students also earn college credit by taking dual enrollment courses such as the Introduction to Organizational Management at the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT). Students admitted to the Academy are guaranteed admission into a parallel Bachelor of Science program at NJIT if they complete the program’s articulated curriculum and meet the criteria for admission. This agreement makes it seamless for students to move from secondary to postsecondary education.

Additionally, ABF students at all grade levels regularly engage in independent research using the Bloomberg terminal, a professional research tool, and other industry-based resources and collaborations. Students are encouraged to culminate their research with a series of on-line exams

that lead to official certification by Bloomberg, a recognition that is generally reserved for professional financial executives.

PARTNERSHIPS KEY TO WORK-BASED LEARNING

Along with high-quality academics, ABF provides work-based learning through internships and mentorship with partners, including Merrill Lynch, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Ernst & Young LLP, Wrightson ICAP, Bloomberg, Deutsche Bank, Sony and Eisai Pharmaceuticals. All seniors participate in an internship experience on a worksite every Wednesday at one of these organizations. This *Senior Experience* internship is an interactive learning partnership that familiarizes students with all aspects of the industry and with the workplace culture.

"Students are given the opportunity to effectively see and do our jobs. In our profession, it's not all about the numbers and financial modeling. They learn the art and science of interaction with others in the workplace, attend meetings with advisors and see how we deal with personal emotions, decision-making, procrastination and numerous other interpersonal skills necessary for success in our business."

William G. Bulick, Vice President, Sales Manager, Merrill Lynch

GLOBAL COMPETENCIES IN BUSINESS & FINANCE

One unique opportunity presented through ABF's international focus is that all students have the chance to participate in trip to London, which is planned around four themes: corporate visits; global education; creativity, action and service opportunities; and cultural experiences. During this study tour, students learn first-hand about critical business issues at global and London-based organizations, tour renowned institutions of higher education, including the London School of Economics and Oxford University, and visit IB schools in London to meet their international peers.

STUDENT SUCCESS BY THE NUMBERS

So what does this all mean? Through dedication to providing students with a high-quality curriculum and partnerships with some of the best financial institutions in the country, ABF students' indicators for success are off the charts.

