

# College Student Financial Literacy Survey

## Welcome!

Thank you for your participation in the College Student Financial Literacy Survey. If you are at least 18 years old and are an undergraduate or graduate college student, please read the information below about the study before taking the survey.

## Information and Consent Form

I invite you to participate in my thesis research about the financial literacy of college students. The purpose of this project is to measure financial literacy and factors influencing financial behavior. There are questions about financial attitudes, financial behaviors, financial knowledge, influences on financial literacy, and demographic information. Please try to answer every question. If there is a question you do not feel comfortable answering, you may skip it.

There are 42 questions in this survey as well as some demographic questions at the end. It will take you about 10-20 minutes to complete the survey. At the end of the survey you will be given the opportunity to enter a drawing for a free iPod. It is my way of thanking you for participating in the survey.

No one but me and my research committee will see answers and you will not be asked to give your name or any information that tells us who you are during the survey. This survey is anonymous for all respondents with no link between your answers and you. Your decision to participate in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You may skip questions you do not want to answer.

There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. Many of the questions involve personal opinion.

You may ask questions about this research by contacting me at [bljorge@vt.edu](mailto:bljorge@vt.edu). In addition, you may contact Dr. David Moore, Assistant Vice Provost for Research Compliance at Virginia Tech (540) 231-4991 for questions about your rights as a research participant.

By continuing with the survey and submitting it, it means you have read this form and are consenting to take the survey under the conditions described above.

## FINANCIAL ATTITUDES

### 1. How sure do you feel about your ability to manage your own finances?

- 1. Not sure at all – I wish I knew a lot more about money management
- 2. Not too sure – I wish I knew more about money management
- 3. Somewhat sure – I understand most of what I'll need to know
- 4. Very sure – I understand money management very well

### 2. How interested are you in increasing your financial knowledge? Why?

- 1. Very uninterested
- 2. Somewhat uninterested

3. Not sure  
 4. Somewhat interested  
 5. Very interested

**Why?**

**3. Would you take a personal finance course as an elective if offered?**

- yes  no

**Why or why not?**

**4. Which topics would be of interest to you? (Check all that apply)**

- Budgeting  Investing  Taxes  Credit  Wills  Life Insurance  Auto Insurance   
 Loans/debt  Credit cards  Saving  Interest rates other:

**5. Using the scale given below, please rate the importance of items to you (1. not important, 2. somewhat unimportant, 3. not sure, 4. somewhat important, 5. very important)**

**a. Maintaining adequate financial records**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**b. Spending less than your income**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**c. Maintaining adequate insurance coverage**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**d. Planning and implementing a regular savings/investment program**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**6. Rate the following items on a scale of 1-5 (1 = not at all true of me and 5 = very true of me)**

**a. I feel in control of my financial situation**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**b. I feel capable of using my future income to achieve my financial goals**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**c. My finances are a significant source of worry or "hassle" for me**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**d. I am uncertain about where my money is spent**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**e. I feel credit cards are safe and risk free**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**f. Purchasing things is very important to my happiness**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**g. I feel capable of handling my financial future (e.g. buying insurance or investments)**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**h. I am afraid of credit and credit cards**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**i. I feel the cost of using a credit card is too high**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**j. I feel putting away money each month for savings or investments is important**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**k. I feel having life insurance is an important way to protect loved ones**



- 1  2  3  4  5

**l. I feel it is important to understand apartment leases and loan agreements before I sign**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**m. I enjoy thinking about and have interest in reading about money management**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**n. I enjoy talking to my peers about money management issues (i.e. taxes, investing, credit cards)**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**o. I am comfortable with not paying my credit card bills in full each month as long as I make the minimum payment**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**p. I feel disability insurance is less important than life insurance**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**q. I feel being covered by homeowner's or renter's insurance is important**

- 1  2  3  4  5

## FINANCIAL BEHAVIORS

**7. Some people tend to be very thrifty, saving money whenever they have the chance while others are spending-oriented, buying whenever they can and even borrowing to consume more. How would you classify yourself?**

1. Very thrifty, saving money whenever I can  
 2. Somewhat thrifty, often saving money  
 3. Neither thrifty nor spending oriented  
 4. Somewhat spending-oriented, seldom saving money  
 5. Very spending-oriented, hardly ever saving money

**8. What kind of financial accounts do you have? (Check all that apply)**

- savings  checking  money market  certificate of deposit (CD)  stocks  bonds   
mutual funds  IRA other:

**9. How much do you estimate you owe on all debts including credit cards, student loans and other debts? (Do not include mortgage)**

1. \$0  2. \$1 - 4999  3. \$5000-\$9999  4. \$10,000 - \$19,999  5. \$20,000 - \$39,999   
6. \$40,000 or more  7. Don't know

**10. Respond to the following questions on credit cards: (if you have no credit cards skip to question 11)**

**a. How many credit cards do you have?**

**b. What is the combined total balance owed on your credit cards?**

1. \$0 - \$99  2. \$100 - \$499  3. \$500 - \$1999  4. \$2000 - \$4999  5. \$5000 or more  
 6. Don't know

**c. How do you usually pay your monthly credit card bills?**

1. I pay the minimum  
 2. I pay between the minimum and full amount  
 3. I pay credit bills in full  
 4. My parents pay my credit card bill

**11. In what manner do you maintain financial records?**

1. Maintain no records  
 2. Maintain minimal records  
 3. Maintain very detailed records

**12. Rate the following items on a scale of 1-5 (1 = not at all true of me and 5 = very true of me)**

**a. I budget and track spending.**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**b. I compare my receipts of purchases to my monthly statement.**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**c. I use credit cards to make purchases that I can't afford and I don't have the money in the bank to pay the bill.**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**d. I get cash advances from my credit card.**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**e. I have my parents "bail me out" of credit card debt.**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**f. I work extra hours (in excess of 20 hours a week) to meet bills and expenses.**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**g. I miss class to work extra hours to meet bills and expenses.**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**h. I contribute to a savings account regularly.**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**i. I find legal ways to lower my taxes.**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**j. I compare prices when shopping for purchases.**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**k. I have a life insurance policy.**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**l. I read to increase my financial knowledge.**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**m. I read over and understand apartment leases and loan agreements before I sign them.**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**n. I contribute to an investment account.**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**o. I have a disability insurance policy.**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**p. I am covered by a homeowner's or renter's insurance policy**

- 1  2  3  4  5

## INFLUENCES

**13. Rate the following influences on a scale of 1-5 (1 = none, 2 = not much, 3 = not applicable, 4 = some, 5 = a lot). How much did you learn about managing your money from the following:**

**Parents**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**Friends**

- 1  2  3  4  5

**School**

- 1  2  3  4  5



**Books**

1  2  3  4  5

**Media**

1  2  3  4  5

**Job**

1  2  3  4  5

**Life experiences**

1  2  3  4  5

**Internet**

1  2  3  4  5

**Informal public seminar or class**

1  2  3  4  5

**Financial planner or counselor (professional)**

1  2  3  4  5

**14. Rate the following on a scale of 1-5 (1 = never, 2 = once per year, 3 = every few months, 4 = twice per month, 5 = weekly). How often were you influenced by or did you discuss finances with the following:**

**Parents**

1  2  3  4  5

**Friends**

1  2  3  4  5

**School**

1  2  3  4  5

**Books**

1  2  3  4  5

**Media**

1  2  3  4  5

**Job**

1  2  3  4  5

**Life experiences**

1  2  3  4  5

**Internet**

1  2  3  4  5

**Informal public seminar or class**

1  2  3  4  5

**Financial planner or counselor (professional)**

1  2  3  4  5

**15. Which of the following items did you learn about in your home while growing up? (Check all that apply)**

Budgeting    Investing    Taxes    Credit    Wills    Life Insurance    Disability Insurance  
 Auto Insurance    Renter's/Homeowner's Insurance    Loans/debt    Credit cards    Saving     
 Giving to charities    Interest rates    Keeping records    Being honest in all dealings    Work for  
 what you receive   other:

**16. Which of the following classes have you had? (check all that apply)**

1. An entire course in money management or personal finance  
 2. A portion of a course where at least a week was focused on money management or personal finance  
 3. An entire course in economics

4. A portion of a course where at least a week was focused on economics

other:

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**17. Where do you expect to learn/increase your financial knowledge? (check all that apply)**

Parents  Friends  School  Books  Media  Job  Life experience  Financial

planner or counselor (professional) other:

**Explain.**

**18. How would you describe how finances were handled in your family? (check all that apply)**

1. My parents usually argued about the finances  
 2. Within the family we openly discussed our finances  
 3. My parents explicitly taught me about finances (e.g., credit cards, debt, budgeting, savings)  
 4. We didn't talk much about finances but I learned from their examples  
 5. My parents included me in various financial decisions

other:

**19. Comparing yourself to your parents, would you say that you are:**

1. Much more likely to save  
 2. Somewhat more likely to save  
 3. About as likely to save/spend  
 4. Somewhat more likely to spend  
 5. Much more likely to spend

## FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE

**20. Net worth is:**

1. The difference between expenditures and income  
 2. The difference between liabilities and assets  
 3. The difference between cash inflow and outflow  
 4. The difference between borrowings and savings  
 5. None of the above

**21. In which year after a car is bought does it lose its value the fastest?**

1. First Year  
 2. Second year  
 3. Fourth year  
 4. Seventh year

**22. Which account usually pays the MOST interest?**

1. Certificate of deposit (CD)  
 2. Savings account  
 3. Checking account  
 4. Money Market account

**23. When a check bounces, who, if anyone, is usually charged a fee?**

1. The check writer only



- 2. The person to whom the check is written only
- 3. Neither the check writer nor the person to whom the check is written
- 4. Both the check writer and the person to whom the check is written

**24. Rob and Molly are the same age. At age 25 Rob began saving \$2,000 a year for 10 years and then stopped at age 35. At age 35, Molly realized that she needed money for retirement and started saving \$2,000 per year for 30 years and then stopped at age 65. Now they are both 65 years old. Who has the most money in his or her retirement account (assume both investments had the same interest rate)?**

- 1. Molly, because she saved more money overall
- 2. Rob, because his money has grown for longer period of time
- 3. They would each have about the same amount
- 4. Unable to determine with information provided

**25. If you signed a 12-month lease for \$300 /month but never occupied the apartment, you legally owe the landlord**

- 1. Your security deposit
- 2. Your first month's rent of \$300
- 3. Your twelve month's rent of \$3600
- 4. Nothing
- 5. Whatever the landlord wants

**26. The MOST important factors that lender use when deciding whether to approve a loan are**

- 1. Marital status and number of children
- 2. Education and occupation
- 3. Age and gender
- 4. Bill-paying record and income

**27. If you co-sign a loan for a friend, then you**

- 1. Become eligible to receive part of the loan principal
- 2. Vouch for the friend's reliability but have no legal obligation for the loan
- 3. Are responsible for repaying the loan if the friend defaults
- 4. Are in a better position to get a personal loan

**28. If a consumer fails to pay personal debts, a creditor is allowed to do all of the following EXCEPT**

- 1. Discuss the consumer's debts with his or her employer
- 2. Bring suit against the consumer
- 3. Tell a credit bureau that the account is delinquent
- 4. Turn the account over to a professional debt collector

**29. All of the following are TRUE of bankruptcies except:**

- 1. It is more difficult to get a low interest rate loan
- 2. It will stay on your credit for ten years
- 3. Any loan you receive will have a higher interest rate due to the bankruptcy
- 4. For all types of bankruptcies you are released from all your debt

**30. What does a credit bureau do?**

- 1. Approves applications for credit
- 2. Informs applicants of the reasons for denial of credit
- 3. Extends credit to qualified applicants

4. Provides creditors with reports of consumers' bill-paying records

**31. The owner of a credit card that is lost or stolen is legally responsible for**

1. Any unauthorized charges  
 2. Any unauthorized charges until the loss or theft is reported  
 3. Only the first \$50 of any unauthorized charges  
 4. Only the first \$500 of any unauthorized charges  
 5. No unauthorized charges

**32. If a credit card account has a balance carried over from the previous month, when will interest charges usually begin on a new credit purchase?**

1. On the day of the purchase  
 2. One month after the date of the purchase  
 3. After a 2-week grace period  
 4. After a 2-month grace period

**33. Your take home pay for your job is less than the total amount you earn. Which of the following best describes what is taken out of your total pay?**

1. Federal income tax, property tax, and Medicare and social security contributions  
 2. Social security and Medicare contributions  
 3. Federal income tax, social security and Medicare contributions  
 4. Federal income tax, sales tax, and social security contribution  
 5. Federal income tax, social security, Medicare contributions, state and local taxes

**34. Is a \$500 tax credit or a \$500 tax deduction more valuable to you?**

1. A \$500 tax credit  
 2. A \$500 tax deduction  
 3. They are the same  
 4. Depends on your tax bracket

**35. Assume you are in your early twenties and you would like to build up your nest egg for a secure retirement in 30 years. Which of the following approaches would best meet your needs?**

1. Start to build up your savings account gradually in an insured bank  
 2. Save money in certificate of deposit accounts  
 3. Put monthly savings in a diversified growth mutual fund  
 4. Invest in long-term Treasury bonds  
 5. Accumulate money in a safe-box rented from a local bank

**36. Which of the following combination of investments is most risky?**

1. A mutual fund containing 80% stocks and 20% bonds  
 2. A mutual fund containing 80% bonds and 20% stocks  
 3. An index fund (like the S&P 500)  
 4. Stock in a single company

**37. Hector and Maria just had a baby. They received money as baby gifts and want to put it away for the baby's education. Which of the following tends to have the highest growth over periods of time as long as 18 years?**

1. A U.S. Government savings bond  
 2. Stocks and mutual funds  
 3. A savings account  
 4. A money market account



**38. Many people put aside money to take care of unexpected expenses. If Susan and Joe have money put aside for emergencies, in which of the following forms would it be of LEAST benefit to them if they needed it right away?**

- 1. Savings account
- 2. A house
- 3. Stocks
- 4. Checking account

**39. If an auto insurance policy has bodily injury limits of \$100,000/\$300,000, the insured person is covered for**

- 1. Up to \$100,000 for each accident but no more than \$300,000 for the life of the policy
- 2. Up to \$100,000 for medical bills but no more than \$300,000 for hospital costs
- 3. Up to \$100,000 for each person injured but no more than \$300,000 for each accident
- 4. Up to \$100,000 for people in the insured auto but no more than \$300,000 for people outside the insured auto

**40. Choose the type of insurance coverage (1. liability, 2. comprehensive, 3. collision, 4. uninsured motorist) that pays for the following:**

**a. The replacement of a stolen car**

- 1. liability
- 2. comprehensive
- 3. collision
- 4. uninsured motorist

**b. A loss resulting from a lawsuit**

- 1. liability
- 2. comprehensive
- 3. collision
- 4. uninsured motorist

**c. Damage to your own car from an accident caused by you**

- 1. liability
- 2. comprehensive
- 3. collision
- 4. uninsured motorist

**41. The main reason to purchase insurance is to**

- 1. Protect you from a loss recently incurred
- 2. Provide you with excellent investment returns
- 3. Protect you from sustaining a catastrophic loss
- 4. Protect your from small incidental losses
- 5. Improve your standard of living by filing fraudulent claims

**42. Assume you are in your twenties, don't have a lot of money, are married and have one child. Assuming you already have disability insurance through your employment, which of the following would you do regarding your life insurance?**

- 1. You would buy a term insurance policy
- 2. You probably do not need to buy any life insurance policy
- 3. You would buy flight insurance each time you travel by air
- 4. You would buy a cash value insurance policy

**43. The owner of a bank debit card that is lost or stolen is legally responsible for**

- 1. Any unauthorized charges
- 2. Any unauthorized charges until the loss or theft is reported
- 3. Only the first \$50 of any unauthorized charges
- 4. Only the first \$500 of any unauthorized charges
- 5. No unauthorized charges

**44. Which of the following can not legally access your credit report?**

- 1. Creditors
- 2. Employers
- 3. Apartment rental agencies

- 4. Insurance companies
- 5. All of the above can access your credit report

**Thank you for answering the financial questions. Please answer the final general questions below.**

**a. What is your gender?**

- Male
- Female

**b. What is your age?**

- 18-22
- 23-29
- 30-39
- 40-59
- 60 or older

**c. What is your academic standing?**

- First-year (Freshman)
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Masters student
- Doctoral student

**d. What is your race/ethnicity?**

- African American
- Asian
- Caucasian-not Hispanic
- Hispanic
- Multiracial
- Native American/Pacific Islander
- other:

**e. What is your marital status?**

- Never been married
- Married
- Divorced
- other:

**f. What is your major field of study?**

- Business
- Agriculture and Life Sciences
- Education
- Liberal Arts
- Human Sciences
- Science
- Engineering



Medicine

Law

other:

**g. Which best describes your parents income last year?**

0-\$34,999

\$35,000-\$49,999

\$50,000-\$79,999

\$80,000 or more

Don't Know

**h. How many years of working experience do you have? (Include full or part-time experience, internships, co-ops, summer jobs, etc.)**

None

Less than 2 years

Two to less than 4 years

Four to less than 6 years

Six years or more

**i. My father's primary occupation is**

**My mother's primary occupation is**

**j. What is the highest level of schooling your father has completed?**

Less than high school

High school or equivalent

Associates/community college degree

Bachelor's degree

Masters, doctorate, or professional degree like medical doctor, veterinarian, or lawyer

other:

**k. What is the highest level of schooling your mother has completed?**

Less than high school

High school or equivalent

Associates/community college degree

Bachelor's degree

Masters, doctorate, or professional degree like medical doctor, veterinarian, or lawyer

other:

**l. My college education is paid by (including who will pay off student loans if applicable)**

Self (100%)

Parents (100%)

Mostly self (more than 50%)

Mostly parents (more than 50%)

50% self, 50% parents

other:

**m. What is your birth order?**

- First Born  
 Only child  
 Youngest child  
 other:

**n. Are you an international student?**

- No  
 Yes, less than 2 years in the US  
 Yes, 2 to 4 years in the US  
 Yes, 4 to 6 years in the US  
 Yes, 6 years or more in the US

**o. What is your housing arrangement?**

- On-campus  
 Off-campus rent  
 Off-campus own  
 Live with parents/relatives  
 other:

**p. Which best describes your income last year (not including student loans)?**

- 0-\$9,999  
 \$10,000-\$19,999  
 \$20,000-\$29,999  
 \$30,000-\$39,999  
 \$40,000 or more

**q. What is your overall grade point average (GPA)?**

**r. Where do you attend school?**