

Investment banker

Help companies raise money, buy other companies or sell themselves, for very high pay and very long weeks.

TYPICAL PAY

\$400,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$165k to \$1.0M

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 5 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Investment banks, boutique advisory firms, offices in New York and other big cities

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 9 to 12
Strong grades, the hardest math you can manage, and a school where you can get into a business, economics or finance program.
- 2 University, first two years** Years 1 and 2
Join the finance club, learn accounting and spreadsheet modeling, and start networking with alumni at banks.
- 3 Recruit for the junior summer internship** Year 2
Applications open about 1.5 to 2 years before the internship starts, often in your second year.
- 4 Summer internship** Summer before your last year
About 10 weeks in a bank's office. Most full-time analyst offers come from this summer.
- 5 Analyst, then associate** 2 to 3 years
Two to three years as an analyst. Many then leave. Those who stay are promoted to associate.

Pros and cons

- + Some of the highest starting pay of any job out of university
- + You learn how companies are valued and sold very fast
- + Opens doors to private equity and hedge funds
- 70 to 100 hour weeks are common for analysts
- Hiring favors a short list of schools
- Recruiting starts 1.5 to 2 years before you would start

Good to know

98 hours a week

In 2021, 13 first-year analysts at Goldman Sachs surveyed themselves and reported working an average of 98 hours a week and sleeping about 5 hours a night. Their slides went viral on Instagram.

A cap after a death

In May 2024, a 35-year-old Bank of America associate died after weeks of very long hours. That September, JPMorgan Chase (the largest US bank) said it would cap junior bankers at 80 hours a week i...

Optional boosts

Spreadsheet modeling. A finance club or investment club. Earlier internships. Alumni networking.

Where these numbers come from

Bureau of Labor Statistics: Securities, commodities and financial services sales agents (includes investment bankers)

My Next Move: Securities, Commodities and Financial Services Sales Agents (41-3031.00)

Mergers and Inquisitions: investment banking salary and bonus by level, 2026

Financial Industry Regulatory Authority: Series 79 exam

Numbers checked October 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise.

Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/investment-banker>



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