

## 3 Questions with David Gorbach, Senior Director, Financial Planning & Analysis, PMI Mortgage Insurance Co.

Financial Planning and Analysis (FP&A) is one of the most desirable roles in corporate finance today. However, despite its popularity and growing importance within the corporate finance landscape, this complex profession lacks a universal set of principles and standards of practice. To overcome this, the Association for Finance Professionals (AFP) began the process of developing a certification for Financial Planning and Analysis (FP&A) professionals in early 2012. David Gorbach, senior director, FP&A for [PMI Mortgage Insurance Co.](#) shares why this certification is necessary and how it will benefit both FP&A professionals and employers.

### 1. What is the current state of hiring for FP&A positions?

FP&A is often a very high-profile endeavor and plays a very critically important role in many organizations. It sits at the intersection of numerous varied functions within the company and often serves as a strong partner to senior managers as a decision support tool. Historically, however, there have not been clear definitions of the FP&A functions nor of the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to successfully carry out those functions. Further complicating hiring for FP&A are the many different roles that FP&A professionals typically provide and the many different types of structures in a company. This makes it challenging for employers to know what they are getting from prospective FP&A employees. It also makes it difficult for prospective employees to know what kind of path they need to follow to become an FP&A professional, and what they can do to advance their career in FP&A and develop their FP&A capabilities.

### 2. What are the desired outcomes of a certification for FP&A professionals?

I would say that one of the main outcomes is to advance the field of FP&A in general, since it is such a diverse yet highly critical and important role within the organization. This will be extremely helpful to build its credibility and importance and its ability for the role to add value to the companies. It would also help define the FP&A role and function, which would be valuable to professionals in terms of being recognized for their understanding of the various complex processes, tools and best practices that are involved in FP&A and driving the strategic business value of the company. Further, certification will help develop and implement a universal set of principles and standards of practice, as well as codes of professional conduct which will help advance the field itself. Finally, it will help create and develop currently dispersed or non-existent professional development resources, which could be very beneficial to both the professionals and the employers.

### 3. How will certification benefit both FP&A professionals and employers?

Professionals will know what's expected of them and that will enable them to pursue particular fields of study that will both help them get into the field of FP&A and advance their careers. They'll understand how to use analysis and projections in the role of FP&A, how to work as a team with financial analysts, how to gather information and understand various financial concepts, how to communicate with others and employ standardized technical terms and financial concepts. They would also have a much clearer path to follow with defined continuing education requirements, which would be extremely helpful to

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FP&A professionals and their employers. Currently there are no continuing education (CE) requirements for financial analysts and we are not really seeing that too much when I talk to other people at other organizations. I have found that FP&A professionals tend to work really hard to do whatever needs to be done for their various constituencies, but they never really get the chance to improve their own professional development, and doing so would help both them and their organizations. Finally, certification will help FP&A professionals build their understanding of decision support processes so they can contribute to various analyses and products, make better decisions and perform these functions more accurately and efficiently.

For employers, certification will help define and develop the competencies of their employees. The employers will know that prospective and existing FP&A professionals have successfully completed a rigorous examination process and will have at least a minimum knowledge and competency related to FP&A skills and capabilities. Certification will also make professional development resources available to employers, which will be helpful as they are interested in making sure that their employees are current on all of the latest information and have the most up-to-date technical knowledge and skills available. Finally, certification would provide employers with a defined set of FP&A skills and best practices, as well as a professional code of conduct, so they will know what to expect of employees and employees know what to expect in the position.