



**ASM- Executive and Professional Education Center (EPEC) – Greene Consulting
Hybrid Format of the CFP® Certification Professional Education**

Course 7: Developing the Financial Plan – Course Syllabus

Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the content found within the Financial Planning curriculum and effectively apply and integrate this information in the formulation of a financial plan.
2. Effectively communicate the financial plan, both orally and in writing, including information based on research, peer, colleague or simulated client interaction and/or results emanating from synthesis of material.
3. Collect all necessary and relevant qualitative and quantitative information required to develop a financial plan.
4. Analyze personal financial situations, evaluating clients' objectives, needs, and values to develop an appropriate strategy within the financial plan.
5. Demonstrate logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches to a specific problem.
6. Evaluate the impact of economic, political, and regulatory issues with regard to the financial plan.
7. Apply the CFP Board Financial Planning Practice Standards to the financial planning process.

Course Layout:

The course material involves ten steps in the actual development of the Case Study that the student will use to present a plan to us. Those steps, delivered through 13 lessons, are listed below.

- 1. Understanding the Client and Gathering Data**
- 2. Financial Analysis – A Disciplined Process (Personal Financial Statement & Cash Flow Projections)**
- 3. Income Tax Evaluation and Recommendations**
- 4. Risk Management Evaluation and Recommendations**
- 5. Education Funding Evaluation and Recommendations**
- 6. Retirement Planning Evaluation and Recommendations**
- 7. Estate Planning Evaluation and Recommendations**
- 8. The Process of Balancing Comprehensive Recommendations**
- 9. Developing the Plan Presentation**
- 10. Plan Implementation & Monitoring**



Based on the premise that developing a financial plan must be a systematized process that the planner must adhere to in order to maximize efficiency in a very complex endeavor, the coursework is imbedded with a case study that illustrates in great detail the systematic approach that is to be utilized. Upon completion of their study of the coursework, students are then given their own case study from which they are to develop and present a financial plan.

Students will be instructed to utilize the coursework and its imbedded case study as a roadmap for the development of their own plan, going back through and carefully reviewing each step as they prepare their financial plan. Since early errors can compound the possibility of making incorrect assumptions as they proceed through the interwoven analyses and recommendations of the comprehensive plan, checkpoints (e.g., in-process submission of drafts of cash flow statements, statement of assets, calculation of education needs, etc.) will be utilized to assure that students are not getting "off track" and affording us the opportunity of coaching and redirecting their efforts.

Therefore, this course will be delivered through the following 13 lessons.

Lesson 1: Introduction

Lesson 1 will outline the purpose of the course, and its structure. We will provide the student with a procedural system to develop a comprehensive financial plan. Financial planning concepts and development will be described as we proceed through development of a comprehensive financial plan for a sample case.

The procedure of developing the plan will be "manual." That is the student will use formats in EXCEL, forms, prescribed formats, and a financial calculator to develop and present the plan. The use of Naviplan Select 2 software will be offered as an informational alternative for the student to investigate if they wish to do so.

Lesson 2: Understanding the Client and Gathering Data

Lesson 2 will focus on how to properly gather data from the client, and how to begin evaluating and analyzing that data. This will include a discussion of soft data versus hard data, and how to collect each. The student will then learn how to validate data received from different sources, such as comparing a tax return to the questionnaire filled out by the client to ensure accuracy. Finally we will discuss how to properly determine, prioritize, and quantify objectives.

Lesson 3: The Cashman's - A Case Study

Lesson 3 will introduce the case study we will use throughout the remainder of the course. The purpose of the case study is to lead by example. Students will learn the process of putting together a financial plan by seeing how we address the Cashman's financial picture.

Students will be provided a completed interview, documents, and a questionnaire with the Cashman's information, and will be asked to determine what information may be missing



and get that information from their advisor. This is to prepare them for doing the same in their own case at the end of the course. Students will be taught how to organize that data effectively and how it is to be used in the analysis process.

Lesson 4: Financial Analysis – A Disciplined Process

Lesson 4 will introduce and discuss the various statements that should be collected from clients, and those that should be created for them. Chief among them are the Personal Financial Statement and Cash Flow Projections. These are core tools that provide a comprehensive overview of the client's current financial position. These statements will also be supplemented by additional statements that reflect recommendations that are developed by further analysis of Income Tax, Risk Management, Education, Retirement and Estate Planning issues.

Lesson 5: Income Tax Evaluation and Recommendations

Income taxes are affected by many other planning decisions. No financial decisions should be made without consideration of how an implemented strategy of any kind may impact other aspects of a comprehensive plan. Therefore, this lesson will focus on the key topics from income tax planning, how they impact the client, and how to address them. We will also discuss how to use the income tax return to gain valuable insight and to understand the client.

Lesson 6: Risk Management Evaluation and Recommendations

Lesson 6 will focus on taking appropriate stock of the clients' current insurance in place, identifying lacking coverage, and how to address that needed coverage. We will teach students how to identify significant risks for each client's particular situation using a checklist. Key risks to identify and provide solutions for are property and liability, health, and death.

Lesson 7: Investment Allocation Strategies

This lesson will discuss appropriate investment allocations and recommendations based on the client's risk level, goals, needs, and investable income. It will include a general discussion of the benefits of asset allocation and the strategies that we will use in this case study.

Lesson 8: Education Funding Evaluation and Recommendations

Lesson 8 will focus solely on the need for educational funding, including how to determine need, how to address the need, and balancing it against other objectives. Students will learn how to:

- Identify quantified objectives,
- Identify resources and/or future savings requirements to attain goal.



- Optimize vehicle/strategy, asset selection, income tax planning, and asset allocation of existing resources and future savings to meet goal in accordance with other objectives and risk tolerance.

Lesson 9: Retirement Planning Evaluation and Recommendations

This lesson will discuss the client's plan for retirement. It will provide a background of the life cycle, how retirement can be planned for, how to transition into retirement, and what the planner should do as their client nears retirement. Students will be taught the three stages or phases of clients in Retirement Planning, which are the accumulation phase, the transition phase, and the post-retirement phase. Students will learn to quantify the retirement objectives and identify current resources available to fund objectives.

Lesson 10: Estate Planning Evaluation and Recommendations

Lesson 10 will focus on estate planning needs. Perhaps the most overlooked component of financial planning, we will focus most on how to properly transition assets, and how to prepare for unexpected death or illness. Managing the Estate Tax is also discussed. We will address estate planning issues that maximize efficient transfer of assets in the event of an unexpected death(s) or long-term illness in accordance with the clients' objectives and circumstances.

Lesson 11: The Process of Balancing Comprehensive Recommendations

Lesson 11 will teach students how to take all of the individual facets of their client's financial picture, analyze each individually, and then balance them all against each other to develop the plan. This includes instruction on how analyze the overlap and contradictions of various recommendations. If discretionary cash flow is insufficient to meet recommendations, the planner must make adjustments. The case study may indicate some shortage of Discretionary Cash Flow to fully fund all objectives, leading students to struggle with alternative strategies, such as cheaper school, retire later, part-time work in retirement, reallocate assets, retitle assets, reduce objectives, more aggressive asset allocation, etc.

Lesson 12: Developing the Plan Presentation

Lesson 12 will lead students through a discussion of how to develop the actual plan presentation to their client. Students in this lesson will use a watch and repeat type of learning where they will see video of our presentation of the case study we have used throughout the course. They will then make any personal adjustments they see fit, and present their plan for grading after having submitted the written plan. The grading rubric will give students a guideline for what we will be looking for in the presentation.



Lesson 13: Plan Implementation & Monitoring

The student will develop a specific, scheduled, and prioritized plan of implementation for recommendations proposed to the client.

Final Evaluation - Student Plan and Presentation

Student will be provided information for the test case in the same manner that we provided in the sample case study. The test case will be similar to the sample case developed in the course. Students will analyze case in same manner and order as the sample case.

Short tests will be given incrementally to the student as they proceed in developing the case to make sure they are on track.

Students will provide a written plan. If the plan contains substantive errors, the student will be notified to correct the errors. When the written plan is acceptable, the student will be notified to schedule an oral presentation and question and answer session with their advisor. The oral presentation and question/answer session will be done via synchronous online interaction with the instructor(s) using Adobe Connect, giving students the opportunity to present the plan "face-to-face" over the Internet to their instructor, and also allow the instructor to ask questions a normal client would be expected to ask as well as general instructor questions.