Nurture Knowledge – Cultivate Talent – Create Expertise
Switzerland is one of the world’s leading financial centers. In a world marked by political uncertainty and structural upheavals, Switzerland stands for a variety of characteristics that are sought after and appreciated, such as the ability to see change as an opportunity and to realign oneself to that change. The business models of the players in the Swiss financial center have undergone fundamental changes in recent years. Key to guaranteeing success is a solid foundation and the support of over 130’000 employees all with excellent training. This high standard of education and training also enables the Swiss financial industry to compete successfully on a global level. The Swiss Finance Institute (SFI) makes an important contribution in this context, through its close integration of research and practice, its up-to-date continuing education courses for finance professionals, and the access it provides to a unique pool of outstanding Swiss-based academics. This unique combination is based on a systematic exchange of knowledge, nurtured by the research conducted at SFI’s partner universities—research that is supported by SFI and thus ultimately by the Swiss financial industry. The knowledge gained by the academic world flows into practice-oriented activities at SFI, into the institute’s publications and public events, and thus into the thinking of top staff in the financial sector. SFI’s added value for the Swiss financial center cannot be overestimated.

Research and development leads to new technologies and innovations, and in turn promotes competitiveness, prosperity, and employment. Against this background, SFI sees itself as playing an important bridging role for the Swiss financial industry. Our aim is to link fundamental research with practice-oriented continuing education, and to nurture a dialogue between academics and practitioners in the interests of a competitive and efficient financial sector. For this purpose, we work closely with seven Swiss partner universities. SFI’s faculty currently comprises more than 50 professors spread across three language regions in Switzerland, and the institute regularly ranks among the ten best finance research centers worldwide. Fundamental research is not carried out for its own sake or from some academic ivory tower. On the contrary, the dialogue and exchange between researchers and practitioners flows in both directions. As a result, participants of SFI courses benefit from a superior continuing education offering that is probably unique in its kind thanks to its close links between research and practice. In turn, targeted research activities give the Swiss financial sector as a whole an important advantage over competing locations, and help it to position itself as a leading competence center in the global financial industry.

Foreword by the Board

Dr. Romeo Cerutti
Chairman of the SFI Foundation Board and General Counsel of Credit Suisse Group AG

Prof. François Degeorge
Managing Director and Senior Chair
Growing Knowledge Capital for the Swiss Financial Marketplace

Never before has the financial industry undergone such rapid and fundamental change. Digital disruption and abrupt changes in regulation are challenging established business models. In order to remain competitive, the Swiss banking and finance industry must nurture innovation and expertise.

With support from its founders—the Swiss banking industry, the Swiss Confederation, and leading Swiss universities—the Swiss Finance Institute (SFI) competitively promotes world-class research and teaching in banking and finance in Switzerland. By combining academic excellence with practical experience SFI contributes to the strengthening of the Swiss financial center.

"SFI has achieved international recognition as the Swiss center of excellence for research, continuing education, and knowledge exchange in the domain of banking and finance."

Dr. Mauro Dell’Ambrogio
Former State Secretary for Education, Research and Innovation SERI

"SFI—a successful partnership of professors and practitioners to drive the future of the Swiss financial center."

Prof. Axel P. Lehmann
Former SFI Foundation Board Vice-Chairman and Chairman of the Board of Directors, Credit Suisse Group

We are the only national center uniting under one roof, world-class researchers in seven partner universities from across Switzerland:

• the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne;
• the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich;
• the Università della Svizzera Italiana;
• the University of Geneva;
• the University of Lausanne;
• the University of St. Gallen;
• and the University of Zurich.

Our purpose: growing knowledge capital to guarantee the long-term prosperity of Switzerland’s financial marketplace.
Nurturing Innovation and Expertise

Growing Knowledge Capital  The most valuable asset of any industry is the expertise of its labor force—its knowledge capital. For Switzerland to maintain its position as a leading financial center, such capital must continue to grow throughout the financial marketplace. SFI contributes by providing forward-thinking ideas and by connecting key players.

Nurture Knowledge  Fundamental research by SFI professors plants the seeds for new financial ideas and provides fertile ground for innovation. Since 2006, SFI professors have published more than 100 articles on banking and finance in top-level academic journals. And they have shared their results with all sectors of the finance industry, through university classes, public workshops, and continuing education courses.

Cultivate Talent  Talent alone is not sufficient—it must be cultivated. By disseminating knowledge, SFI reveals the value of fundamental research and allows financial talent to grow. Our events, workshops, publications, and continuing education courses boost the competency of all members of the financial marketplace. SFI professors expose bachelor’s, master’s, and PhD students at SFI partner universities to the latest thinking in banking and finance. We foster knowledge exchange between practitioners and academics, enabling researchers to get early feedback on their projects, and practitioners to have timely access to the expertise of the SFI faculty. Along the way, SFI helps educate the Swiss public on the workings of the financial sector.

Create Expertise  The Swiss banking and finance industry profits from the expertise created by SFI, embodied by the thousands of graduates from our continuing education activities and the Finance programs of our partner universities, as well as the thousands of readers of our publications and participants at our events and workshops.

"I believe that we are privileged in Switzerland to have a competence center with such a history and such support from both the banking industry and faculty. This should remain a priority for both parties, and I trust that this will be the case."  
Patrick Odier  
Senior Managing Partner of the Lombard Odier Group

"Swiss universities, particularly the Finance groups, did not have the critical mass to start a world-class PhD program themselves. SFI enabled Switzerland to attain that critical mass and to create a world-class PhD program of its own."

Prof. Jean-Charles Rochet  
SFI Head of Research and SFI Professor of Banking at the University of Geneva

"SFI conducts cutting-edge research and enables its application—all for the benefit of the Swiss financial center."

Lukas Gähwiler  
Former SFI Foundation Board Vice-Chairman and Chairman UBS Switzerland
SFI at a Glance

Knowledge plus Talent Equals Expertise

Nurturing Knowledge
• SFI retains more than 50 top professors across our seven partner universities situated throughout Switzerland;
• SFI professors have, since 2006, published more than 100 articles on banking and finance in the highest-rated journals;
• SFI is regularly ranked among the top 10 finance institutions worldwide and in the top three in Europe, according to the ranking by the W. P. Carey School of Business.

Cultivating Talent
• SFI conducts more than thirty Master Classes—short, intensive learning units—for experienced specialists and managers from the financial industry each year;
• SFI organizes two flagship conferences and many other events and workshops, and issues a number of publications each year;
• SFI professors teach hundreds of bachelor’s and master’s students each year at our seven partner universities;
• SFI runs one of the largest PhD programs in finance, with about 100 students enrolled from all over the world.

Creating Expertise
• Thousands of participants have benefited from SFI continuing education offerings since 2006;
• More than 100 PhDs have graduated from the SFI PhD program since 2006, some becoming professors at top universities such as Columbia, HEC Paris, the London School of Economics, and UCLA, and more than half currently working in the financial sector;
• We reach more than 2,000 event participants and more than a million readers with our publications each year;
• Thousands of undergraduate and master’s students have been taught by SFI finance professors in our partner universities since 2006.

"SFI is well known and has a great reputation. It is internationally renowned, and its professors have a great network that they are willing to make available to SFI PhD students."

Prof. Paola Pederzoli
SFI PhD graduate and Assistant Professor of Finance, University of Houston, Bauer College of Business

"The Swiss financial center will only maintain its leading role if new insights from fundamental finance research are systematically incorporated into practice."

Dr. Stephanino Isele
SFI Foundation Board Member and Member of the Executive Board and Head Institutions & Multinationals, Zürcher Kantonalbank

>50 top professors across our six partner universities

Thousands of continuing education participants since 2006

>100 SFI PhD program graduates since 2006

>1 million readers of our publications each year

One of the largest PhD programs in finance

Ten of a top finance institute worldwide

>100 published articles
SFI brings together the finest minds in academia and the Swiss financial community.

SFI offers something that cannot be found elsewhere: an opportunity for academics and practitioners to move beyond current practice, exchanging the knowledge and expertise that will keep Switzerland at the top of banking and finance.

As a trusted, long-term, public–private partnership between academia and the Swiss banking and finance community, SFI fosters the expertise that guarantees that Switzerland’s financial center will continue to thrive.

"One of the biggest strengths of SFI is certainly that there is a good balance between its academic, university elements and its practice-oriented continuing education. This ensures that value-oriented exchange takes place in both directions."

Dr. Romeo Lacher
SFI Foundation Board Vice-Chairman and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Julius Baer Group Ltd., Bank Julius Baer & Co. Ltd., and SIX Group AG

"SFI provides a unique educational setting for doctoral students. Not only do PhD students learn from professors in their local university, they can access faculty from across Switzerland. They can therefore leverage the expertise of a large faculty and enjoy exposure to multiple fields of research and different cultural environments."

Prof. Francesco Franzoni
SFI Professor of Finance at the Università della Svizzera italiana

SFI acts as a magnet for talent, attracting top finance students and professors to Switzerland.

SFI fosters collaboration between top researchers.

SFI faculty teach bachelor’s, master’s, and PhD programs at SFI’s seven partner universities.

SFI places PhD graduates in the financial sector and in top universities around the world.

SFI educates senior finance professionals in Switzerland.

"I think the biggest strength so far has been the ability to attract and retain top talent—world-class professors in Finance and related disciplines but also PhD students. Without SFI, Swiss universities would not have the same talent pool."

Renaud De Planta
Former SFI Foundation Board Member, Senior Partner of Pictet & Cie Group SCA, and Chairman of Pictet Asset Management
We are committed to growing knowledge capital to guarantee the long-term prosperity of Switzerland’s financial marketplace.

Contact us to foster your financial competence, access financial expertise, or stay up to date with the latest finance know-how.