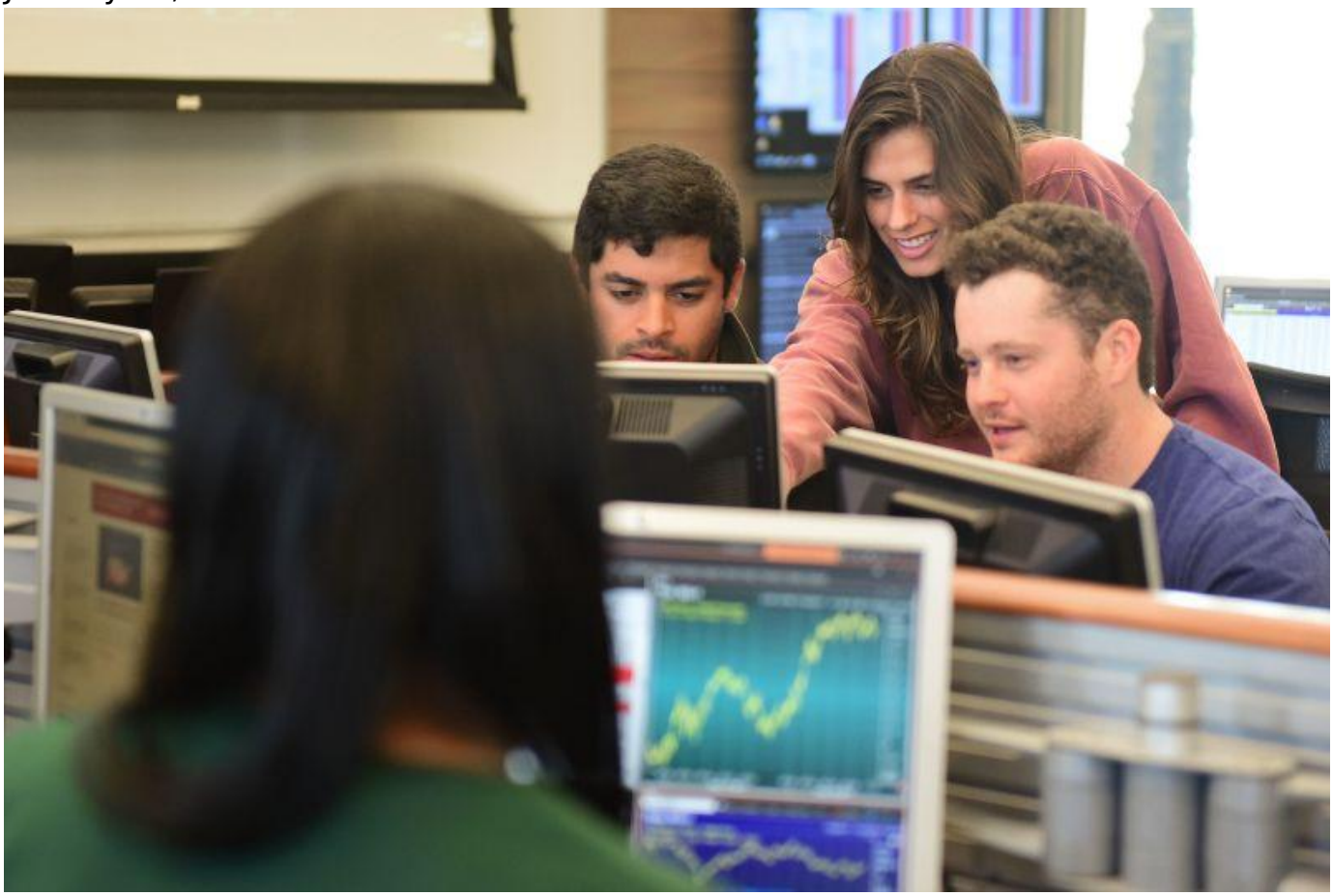
What Can You Do With a Business Analytics Degree?

January 30, 2025



Big data, a term referring to large data sets that aren’t easily managed or analyzed, has completely changed the way businesses operate. Cloud storage solutions allow organizations to store vast amounts of data on everything from historical sales data to social media metrics. And with advanced AI-driven and algorithmic software, professionals can extract meaning from those datasets much faster and more accurately than ever before.

However, many executives feel more than a little lost in the data-driven landscape.

According to a 2023 survey of almost 10,000 business leaders conducted by Salesforce, about 80 percent of executives agree that data and analysis are

essential to their decision-making processes. Despite that, about a third say they're not knowledgeable enough in data analysis to truly take advantage of it. A similar number say they are overwhelmed by the sheer volume of available data.

For that reason, experienced and early-career professionals alike are earning Master of Business Analytics and AI degrees so they can fill the data skills gap. But many would-be analytics professionals wonder what can you do with a business analytics degree and what skills do analytics programs teach?

What Will You Learn in a Business Analytics Degree Program?

At the master's level, business analytics degree programs are often multidisciplinary, involving classes on data science, finance, organizational behavior, and leadership. In addition to classroom learning, some programs pair students with industry partners so they can apply their new skills to real-world analytics tasks. This allows them to become experts in drawing informed conclusions, while providing meaningful insights to their colleagues.

Some of the more technical data analysis skills students learn include:

- Database design
- Structured Query Language (SQL), Visual Basic for Applications (VBA), R, Python, and other programming languages used to manage and navigate large data sets
- Spreadsheet management
- The ability to make projections and forecasts based on historical data and statistical models
- The use of data visualization software to communicate insights

While these topics often form the core of a business analytics program's curriculum, many programs also allow students to specialize in accounting, marketing, and other verticals by taking additional classes. For example, an accounting analysis student might take classes on financial risk management, while a marketing analysis student might learn how to extract insights from social media and other unstructured data sources.

What Can You Do With a Business Analytics Degree? Careers and Responsibilities

With a degree in business analytics, professionals can take on any number of department-specific data analyst positions. Generally speaking, early-career analysts are often responsible for collecting data and generating reports. As they gain more experience, analysts can take on leadership positions and use their expertise to guide organizational policy as managers, directors, C-suite executives, and more.

While the field is constantly expanding, here are a few versatile career opportunities for professionals with degrees in business analysis.

Marketing Analyst

Marketing analysts help their organizations craft effective marketing campaigns using hard data about their current and future customers. In today's global, e-commerce-driven market, that task is perhaps more complex than ever.

Common duties for a marketing analyst include:

- Identifying new customer segments and trends in consumer behavior
- Learning about their organization's existing customer base by monitoring reviews
- Conducting research on competitors
- Helping their colleagues decide what types of ads (social media posts, television ads, etc.) are most effective with specific consumer segments
- Evaluating current campaigns
- Making projections about new and future campaigns
- Presenting their insights in the form of graphs and presentations

To carry out these duties, marketing analysts extract meaning from multiple sources. For example, while government-reported income data can help analysts understand spending habits, social media can show consumer interests. Because social media insights can be hidden within vast amounts of unstructured data, analysts must often employ sophisticated management tools to comb through it.

Financial Analyst

In the corporate world, financial analysts can carry out an impressive range of duties. Some focus primarily on accounting, while others might conduct risk assessment, forecasting, or general financial management. No matter what their focus is, financial analysts are vital to organizational decision-making.

Duties can vary between industries, but financial analysts are often responsible for:

- Assessing financial records and keeping an eye out for mistakes, fraud, and compliance issues
- Analyzing historical financial and economic data
- Using historical data to make projections about future conditions
- Calculating taxes and other expected expenditures
- Helping executives allocate budgets
- Finding ways to cut unnecessary expenditures and improve profits
- Assessing investments, acquisitions, and other ventures
- Creating reports for executives, investors, and other stakeholders

However, while working in corporate finance is what students may want to do with a business analyst degree, it’s not the only option. They can also work for banks, asset management firms, and other financial institutions. In this sector, analysts can use their skills to help clients make informed decisions about investments and help their organizations devise lending agreements.

Supply Chain Analyst

From sourcing production components to shipping products to consumers, supply chain analysts ensure the right materials get to the right place at the right time. Some focus on a specific part of the supply chain, while others streamline the distribution process as a whole.

In general, supply chain analysts ensure that all distribution channels are as cost- and time-efficient as possible. Their duties include:

- Planning shipping routes combining air, ground, and sea routes when needed
- Negotiating and forming partnerships with third-party distributors
- Monitoring the market for potential issues such as severe weather and product shortages
- Sourcing raw materials
- Making contingency plans for unexpected supply chain issues

- Analyzing current supply chain methods and looking for opportunities for improvement
- Collecting data about fuel costs, taxes, tariffs, and other expenditures
- Ensuring all shipping safety laws are being observed, especially in industries that handle hazardous materials
- Working with production managers to create inventory guidelines and shipping schedules

While many companies have their own supply chain analysts, they may also hire third-party logistics (3PL) firms. 3PL firms can handle any logistics issues on behalf of their clients.

They can also help companies with their own supply chain operations solve recurring issues and handle high-volume periods.

Management Analyst

Management analysts help businesses streamline operations and increase profits. Some specialize in specific aspects of a business such as finance or human resources, while others specialize in helping organizations in specific sectors such as government, health care, manufacturing, or energy.

Management analysts may work directly for organizations as a standard employee, or they may work for management consulting firms that serve multiple businesses. In either case, their responsibilities typically include:

- Analyzing different data types to identify problem areas
- Coming up with solutions and presenting them to stakeholders
- Helping department managers implement changes
- Monitoring the effectiveness of new initiatives
- Renegotiating contracts with vendors, suppliers, and other partners
- Seeking employee input and feedback through interviews and questionnaires

In addition to holding a degree in business analytics, management analysts must often have some experience in their industry. This is because they must be able to provide solutions to complex issues, enact widespread changes, and communicate clearly with executives.

Learn How to Turn Insights Into Action

To use data effectively, business analysts need more than technical skills. They need to be able to collaborate effectively and solve problems creatively. The Master of Business Analytics and AI program at Tulane University's Freeman School of Business helps students learn those soft and hard skills.

In the classroom, students learn the mathematics, programming, and statistical skills needed to organize and extract meaning from diverse sources of data. Through semester-long projects with the Freeman School's industry partners, students apply those skills to real-world business issues while practicing how to translate insights into action. Students can tailor their education to meet their long-term career goals by choosing one of three degree specialties: Accounting and Finance, Marketing and Management, and Energy.

To learn more about the curriculum, the application process, and what else you can do with a degree in business analytics, contact the Freeman School admissions team today.

Sources:

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