6 Master of Business Analytics & AI Careers

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Between now and 2033, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) expects employment of every profession to increase by an average of 4 percent. However, in the same time frame, the BLS projects employment of management analysts, including business and data analysts, will increase by 11 percent, close to triple the average.

In general, data analysts are professionals who collect, manage, and draw insights from vast amounts of information. However, while these professionals often work in research-focused sectors, such as the pharmaceutical and technology industries, their talents are becoming increasingly valuable in a much broader and wider-reaching sector: business administration.

Today, organizations in every industry rely on administrators with business data analysis skills to understand their consumer bases, streamline internal processes, and make important decisions about their long-term strategies. For students who are interested in business analytics careers, here are a few unique roles to investigate and how Tulane University's Master of Business Analytics & AI program can help them prepare.

What Is a Master's in Business Analytics & AI?

A master's degree in business analytics is a graduate-level degree for future or current business administrators who want to take on roles that require data science skills. At Tulane, the Master of Business Analytics & AI curriculum includes a mix of classes on organizational leadership, programming, and data analysis.
The classes that students in the program take include the following:

- SQL Database Fundamentals and Business Intelligence
- Modeling and Analytics
- Business Statistics and Modeling with R
- Web Analytics

In addition to classroom learning, students work on semester-long projects sponsored by faculty and Tulane's industry partners. These hands-on learning opportunities give students the chance to solve real-world business data issues and develop skills that companies value.

Degree Specialization Options

To prepare students for business analytics careers in specific industries and specialties, Tulane offers three degree specialization options. Students who choose specializations take more highly focused classes in addition to the core curriculum.

Tulane's Master of Business Analytics & AI offers three specializations:

- **Accounting and Finance**: In this track, students take classes on risk analysis, econometrics and forecasting, accounting information systems, and other topics that prepare them for careers in the financial sector or the accounting departments of organizations in any industry.

- **Marketing and Management:** In this track, encompassing classes on technology innovation management, social media marketing analysis, and strategic decision-making, students learn how to lead organizations through the unique challenges of engaging consumers in today's economy.
- **Energy:** In this track, a unique, industry-specific degree track, students learn to make informed financial and business decisions at energy companies, energy consulting firms, and firms that trade or invest in the energy market.

Each track comes with experiential learning opportunities as well. For example, students in the Marketing and Management specialization learn how to gain consumer insights from large unstructured data sources, such as social media platforms. Students in the Energy track can use the William M. Templeton Trading Center floor to learn how energy investors analyze the market and make decisions.

Master of Business Analytics & AI Requirements

As a graduate-level program, admissions requirements for the Master of Business Analytics & AI program at Tulane are more rigorous than the requirements for a bachelor's program. However, because the program is designed for students from different academic and professional backgrounds, administrators try to balance rigor with accessibility.

To enroll in Tulane's Master of Business Analytics & AI program, students must have or submit:

- **Bachelor's Degree:** Students do not necessarily need a bachelor's degree in business, statistics, or data science, but some familiarity with one or more of those subjects can help.
- **GMAT or GRE Scores:** The GRE is a standardized entrance exam for graduate schools of all kinds, while the GMAT is an entrance exam specifically for business schools. Business analytics programs often accept either. Qualifying students can apply without either in many cases.
- **Resume:** Business analytics program administrators usually like to know about applicants' professional experience. Paid work, internships, and related school-based projects can typically be included.
- **Application Essay:** Each program has its own essay prompts, but students must usually outline their professional and academic goals, so admissions staff can determine whether they are a good fit for the program.

- **One Letter of Recommendation:** Letters of recommendation can come from professors, work supervisors, or others who can attest to a student's work ethic and academic abilities. However, it is important to check with the admissions staff about specific guidelines.

International students may have some additional requirements. They must typically include scores from the TOEFL or similar exams, an affidavit of support, and a GPA equivalency evaluation.

What Can You Do With a Master's in Business Analytics & AI? 6 Business Analytics Career Opportunities

Master of Business Analytics & AI programs prepare students for administrative careers that require critical thinking, data analysis, and organizational leadership skills. Graduates can find such careers in just about any industry, including finance, retail, energy, and health care. While this can be helpful for students with little to no professional experience, working students often enroll in business analytics programs to prepare for promotions and high-level positions in their industries.

Because business analytics careers require advanced technical and industry-specific knowledge, experienced analysis professionals can pivot into C-suite and executive roles later in their careers. For students who are interested in that career trajectory, here are a few roles that professionals with a master's degree in business analytics can pursue.

1. Business Analyst

Also known as business intelligence analysts, business analysts identify and find ways to overcome organizational challenges at both a macro level, such as operational inefficiencies, and a micro level, such as process improvement. While they can work directly for the organizations they serve, they often work for consulting firms that serve multiple businesses at once.

Typical duties for a business analyst include the following:

- Generating reports on financial and operational performance as well as general market conditions
- Using statistical models and historical data to make predictions about future challenges and conditions
- Implementing and maintaining data analysis systems and training other employees to use them
- Recommending solutions to current and potential issues
- Monitoring the progress of solutions and making changes as needed
- Communicating insights to more senior analysts, executives, and departmental managers

Business analysts often specialize in specific areas, such as accounting or supply chain logistics. Those who work for consulting firms may focus on specific industries, such as retail or manufacturing. These professionals mostly work in the private sector, but government agencies often employ them to reduce costs and increase efficiency.

Business Analyst Salary

According to the BLS, management analysts, including business analysts, earned a median annual salary of $99,410 as of May 2023.

2. Senior Business Analyst

Senior business analysts share many of the same goals and duties as their early-career colleagues. However, often it is up to senior analysts to meet with executives, lead teams of less-experienced analysts, make decisions about new initiatives, and combine multiple strategies into a single cohesive plan.

For example, a senior analyst working for a consulting firm might discuss challenges and goals with a client, then their entry-level analyst teammates would gather data about different aspects of their client’s organization. Once areas of improvement have been identified, the senior analyst would then make recommendations based on this research and help the client implement them.

Senior Business Analyst Salary

As of May 2023, the BLS reports that the top-earning management and business analysts make between approximately $130,800 and $172,280 or more.

3. Market Research Analyst

Market research analysts help their organizations understand their customers and the state of the market in their industries. With the rise of social media marketing, businesses have more consumer data than ever to organize and interpret, making the role of a marketing research analyst an in-demand business analytics career.

While their exact duties may vary between industries, market analysts typically include the following:

- Gather customer data from polls, questionnaires, and social media interactions.
- Make forecasts about consumer behavior based on historical trends, economic conditions, and various other factors.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of current marketing campaigns.
- Assess competitors and their place in the market.
- Help colleagues make decisions about pricing, production quotas, and advertising placement.

In addition to monitoring a company’s existing customer base, market research analysts gather insights about new demographics and markets that their organizations are trying to reach. This makes them vital to organizational development in today’s global, e-commerce-driven market.

Market Research Analyst Salary

The median annual salary for market research analysts was $74,680 as of May 2023, according to the BLS. The highest-earning market research analysts made over $137,040.

4. Business Development Manager

While business analysts are in charge of helping organizations overcome issues, business development managers focus on achieving long-term goals and finding opportunities for organizational growth. In most cases, this includes seeking out new partners and clients and maintaining those relationships.

However, as important as interpersonal skills are to being a business development manager, these professionals must have strong analytical skills to:

- Analyze and negotiate contracts
- Find new markets and potential leads
- Track clients' needs using advanced customer relationship management software
- Keep track of market trends
- Track the financial impact of new strategies and partnerships
- Determine how many new clients their organization can take on

While some development managers work for organizations that serve individuals, they most often work for business-to-business organizations. These are organizations that provide products and services to other organizations, including technology companies, wholesale suppliers, financial institutions, third-party logistics companies, and similar enterprises. To find new clients, business development managers often attend trade shows and conferences.

Business Development Manager Salary

The median annual salary for business development managers was around $82,200 as of November 2024, according to the compensation website Payscale.

5. Chief Data Officer

A chief data officer is an executive who guides an organization's data policies and strategies. As a C-suite position, this is a business analytics career for professionals with years of experience in other data-focused administrative roles. Earning a Master of Business Analytics & AI can be a stepping stone for mid-career professionals who want to become chief data officers.

Chief data officers have slightly different responsibilities depending on what kind of organization they work for, but they generally:

- Create data storage, access, and security protocols
- Help other executives integrate data into their decision-making processes
- Determine what kind of data their organizations should use
- Ensure that other data analysis professionals are using meaningful, high-quality data

- Foster strategic partnerships with contractors and other organizations
- Research new technologies and techniques for their organizations to use
- Create budgets, inform hiring campaigns, and perform similar administrative duties

In some industries, chief data officers are also responsible for ensuring that their organizations stay compliant with all data usage regulations. This is an especially important duty for those working in health care, finance, and other sectors that use sensitive information.

Chief Data Officer Salary

Chief data officers earned a median annual salary of around $174,600 as of September 2024, according to Payscale.

6. Chief Intelligence Officer

Chief intelligence officers direct their organizations' technology strategies. While this may sound similar to the role of a chief data officer, chief intelligence officers focus more on the implementation of software and hardware instead of data usage. To perform this duty, they must have a strong understanding of how their organizations use data, meaning that it can be a great mid-to-late-career position for experienced business analysts.

Common responsibilities of a chief intelligence officer include the following:

- Overseeing the implementation of new technologies, such as cloud servers
- Advising other executives about budgeting for new hardware and software
- Negotiating with vendors when third-party IT services are required
- Finding solutions to organization-wide IT issues that affect daily operations or revenue
- Researching new business technology trends

In a way, they bridge the gap between their organizations' IT departments and the departments that rely on IT solutions. For example, if the finance department is having trouble with outdated or otherwise inefficient software, they would investigate the issue, help the IT department develop a solution, and help the finance team implement the fix.

Chief Intelligence Officer Salary

Chief intelligence officers earned a median annual salary of around $108,700 as of January 2024, according to Payscale.

Why Choose Tulane's A. B. Freeman School of Business for Your Master of Business Analytics?

No matter what your business analytics career goals are or what position you want to take on, you will need to be able to both extract valuable insights from diverse data sources and turn those insights into actionable strategies. The Master of Business Analytics & AI program at the A. B. Freeman School of Business at Tulane University is designed with this hands-on, solution-oriented approach in mind.

Through classes focused on business statistics, data modeling, and business intelligence techniques, students learn how to collect, organize, and draw meaning from many types of data. Also, with three degree specializations to choose from — Accounting and Finance, Marketing and Management, and the industry-specific Energy degree track — students build on that foundation through numerous advanced and highly-specialized classes.

However, in-class learning is only part of the process. Students also get the opportunity to work with industry partners of Tulane's business school on real-world data management issues and learn about the tools and techniques today's businesses rely on.

Find out more about the curriculum, admissions requirements, and how Tulane's Career Management Center can help you prepare for your next career move.

- **Sources**:
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