



Data Analytics FAQs

1. What is Data Analytics?

Data Analytics is the practice of using data to drive strategy and decision-making. Data analysts use cutting-edge statistical and technological tools to discover trends and predict outcomes in nearly every sphere of contemporary life. The interdisciplinary Data Analytics major program draws upon core courses in computer science, statistics, mathematics, communication, and writing; in addition, every Data Analytics student selects a “domain” of study, which serves both as an area of application for data analysis and as a framework that informs the data modeling process. The defining characteristic of the Data Analytics major is the explicit emphasis that statistical, computational, and domain-specific knowledge jointly contribute to effective data analysis. Hence, the purpose of the Data Analytics major is three-fold: (a) to equip students with the statistical and computational tools to conduct meaningful data analyses; (b) to provide students with the disciplinary-specific context to articulate and comprehend the meaningful data analytic questions within a domain; and (c) to encourage students to develop their skills to effectively communicate data-driven insights.

2. Can you tell me more about “domains”? What domains does the Data Analytics major offer?

A domain is a context for data analysis. A domain serves as an area of application for computational and statistical analysis; however, a domain also provides an analytical framework that informs and influences the data modeling process. Thus, a domain provides a lens for data analysis, enabling students to articulate and understand meaningful and substantive questions that can be addressed using statistical and computational methods. The list of domains offered by the Data Analytics major program is large and growing. (Ask the Director if you are interested in a domain that is not currently listed—it may be in the works!) Currently, there are 13 possible domains in the Data Analytics program: Actuarial Science, American Politics, Biology, Chemistry, Criminal Justice, Economics, Environmental Science, Geographic Information Systems, Geology, Information Systems, Physics, Public Health, and Sociology, and Strategic Communication.

3. As a Data Analytics major, can I double-major or minor in other fields of study?

Definitely! The Data Analytics major is an interdisciplinary program that draws upon several fields of study. Thus, many different majors/minors will complement the Data Analytics major, allowing students to explore an aspect of Data Analytics in greater depth. The most common double-majors among Data Analytics students are Economics, Computer Science, and Actuarial Science, but students also double-major in Biology, Chemistry, Neuroscience, and Spanish. The most common minors among Data Analytics students are Computer Science, Economics, and Statistics, along with Actuarial Science, Catholic Studies, Mathematics, and Political Science.

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