

Data Analyst

Turn a company's messy data into answers people can act on. The most reachable job in the data field.

TYPICAL PAY

\$120,230

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$67k to \$199k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Company offices, remote, hospitals, banks, government age...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
 Statistics and any programming class. Learn spreadsheets properly. Almost every analyst still lives in them.
- 2 Degree** 2 to 4 years
 Statistics, economics, mathematics, computer science, information systems or a science with heavy quantitative work. Any major works if you can show the skills.
- 3 Learn the three core tools** 6 to 18 months, overlapping school
 SQL (Structured Query Language) for pulling data, Python or R for analysis, and a dashboard tool for showing results. SQL is the one every job posting asks for.
- 4 Build a portfolio** During school
 Three or four projects on public data where you asked a real question, cleaned messy data and explained the answer. This matters more than your GPA.
- 5 First job, then specialize** Ongoing
 Start as an analyst, then choose: deeper statistics toward data science, engineering toward pipelines, or business toward strategy.

Pros and cons

- + Strong pay without a license or a long professional school
- + Remote work is common and the tools are free to learn
- + Every industry needs it, so you are not tied to one employer type
- Junior roles are crowded. A degree alone does not get interviews any more
- Most of the work is cleaning data, not the interesting modeling part
- Your work only matters if someone acts on it, and often they do not

Optional boosts

Statistics done properly. Data engineering basics. Cloud data platforms. Machine learning.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Data Scientists
 American Statistical Association
 Georgia Tech: online master's in analytics
 USAJOBS, the federal government hiring site

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/data-analyst>

Good to know

Most of the job is cleaning

Analysts routinely say the majority of their time goes on finding, fixing and reconciling data rather than analyzing it. Duplicate records, changed definitions and missing months are the daily reality.

A good analytics master's can cost under \$13,000

Georgia Tech runs its online analytics master's at \$330 a credit hour across 36 credits, about \$11,880 in total for state residents. Comparable on-campus programs elsewhere cost several times that.



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