

Data Scientist

Turn messy company data into numbers a boss can act on, using code and statistics.

TYPICAL PAY

\$120,230

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$67k to \$199k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 6 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Tech companies, banks, hospitals, retailers, government agencies, of...

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
 Take every math class on offer and start writing code. Python is free and runs on any laptop.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
 Data science, statistics, computer science, math, economics or a science with heavy quantitative work.
- 3 Internship and projects** During college
 A summer internship plus three or four finished projects on a public code profile. This is what gets you interviews.
- 4 First job with data** 1 to 3 years
 Data analyst, business analyst or research assistant. You learn the messy real-world part here.
- 5 Data scientist title** 1 to 2 more years
 Some people move up internally, some take a master's degree to make the jump faster.

Pros and cons

- + High pay without medical school or law school
- + Remote and hybrid jobs are genuinely common
- + Every industry needs it, so you are not stuck in one sector
- Perhaps 70 percent of the work is cleaning data, not building models
- The job title is crowded with graduates and career changers
- Tools change every couple of years and you have to keep up on your own time

Optional boosts

Machine learning engineering. Experimentation. Natural language work. Health and biostatistics.

Good to know

The job title is younger than you are

The phrase data scientist was only coined around 2008, by people building analytics teams at LinkedIn and Facebook. The federal government did not give it its own occupation code until 2018.

Cleaning data eats the day

Survey after survey of working data scientists puts the share of time spent finding, cleaning and reshaping data somewhere around two thirds to three quarters. The modeling everyone signs up for is the s...

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Data Scientists (15-2051.00)

American Statistical Association

University of California, Berkeley: College of Computing, Data Science, and Society

USAJOBS: the federal government's official 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-scientist>



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