



Is a Master's in Business Analytics Worth It?

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You've likely seen the headlines touting the [ongoing need for data professionals](#) or the growing demand that [businesses become more data-driven](#). Yet, even with [excellent job prospects](#) and potential for career advancement, going back to school is still a major investment, both in terms of your time and your money. So, is a [master's in business analytics](#) worth it?



We get it. We're data-driven ourselves. We wish we could offer an algorithm that analyzes your goals and produces a statistically backed answer as to whether you should go back to school. The thing is, we're not quite there (yet).

There are definitely [career benefits to earning a master's in business analytics](#), but we'll be entirely honest: it's not for everyone. First, you'll need to think about what you really want to do with the degree: Do you want to move up in your organization? Switch careers? Gain more visibility and influence in your job? This is an intensive degree, which means setting some driving goals for earning an MSBA will help you get the most out of your experience.

Second, you absolutely must be fascinated by data. Succeeding in a rigorous MSBA program like ours requires a relentless inquisitiveness and a passion for wielding data in a way that makes your organization more competitive.

Who Needs to Earn an MSBA Anyway?

A master's in business analytics is worth the investment if you want to learn how to use and interpret data to solve complex business problems, you want to increase your decision-making power at your organization, and you choose the right program—one that provides you with the ability to not only do the technical analysis but also teaches you how to actually apply it in a business context.

The fact that you're taking an analytical approach to this decision is a good sign this may be the right path for you. But there's more to it than that. Let's dig in.

What to Expect from a Master's in Business Analytics Program

First, it's important to understand what you'll be getting from an MSBA program.

"Fundamentally, master's in business analytics students transition from being analysts who work for decision-makers into decision-makers who can understand the analysis"

—David Leland Lamont, Associate Teaching Professor at the Tepper School of Business

In general, [business analytics master's curricula](#) focus on the use of advanced quantitative and analytical tools to make strategic business decisions. Students learn how to manipulate large datasets and how to apply that information to make data-backed judgements. Coursework incorporates machine learning, algorithms, probability and more.

Because business analysts must be able to translate their insights to their team or to managers, our MSBA program also covers leadership, corporate communication and data visualization to help our students hone both their analytical and persuasive skills. The best programs teach you how to turn raw data into strategy-leading stories.

"I learned how to accurately present my data and draw my manager's attention to a certain takeaway," said Andrew Kwiatkowski, a current student in Tepper's online MSBA program and senior business specialist at EQT. "Knowing how to help deliver a message has been immensely helpful and I always get compliments on the visualizations or the graphics I create now."

Eight Reasons to Go After a Graduate Business Analytics Degree

There are short-term benefits to investing in a business analytics master's degree. You can apply the techniques you learn in class to your workplace, sometimes as soon as the next day. You [gain](#)

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access to experts who work in your industry or in the industry you want to move into. And you're adding an [in-demand credential](#) to your resume.

But the best way to approach an advanced degree is to think about it as a long-term investment. The time and energy you put in now can pay off exponentially in the future. Here are eight ways a master's in business analytics benefits your career.

1. Increases your earning potential

The most literal return on your investment in a [master's in business analytics is increased salary potential](#). A general business analyst makes a median salary of around \$81,000, according to the labor database [Burning Glass](#). But for those who use their graduate degree to move into senior or manager roles, the median salary jumps to more than \$95,000.

2. Opens up your career options

The mix of technical skills and business acumen inherent in an MSBA makes it an attractive degree to employers in a wide range of fields. [Finance](#), [health care](#), [retail](#) and [manufacturing](#) are just some of the industries turning to analytics to drive their decisions.

Top industries for business analytics professionals	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Professional, scientific and technical services2. Finance and insurance3. Public administration4. Manufacturing5. Health care and social assistance
Top employers hiring business analysts	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Anthem Blue Cross2. ACCA3. Wells Fargo4. IBM5. Deloitte
Common job titles	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Business analyst2. Senior business analyst3. Program analyst4. Consultant5. Management analyst

Source: [Burning Glass Technologies](#). [burning-glass.com](#). *Labor Insight™* 2021.

3. Positions you for promotions and increased influence in your organization

If you are already working as a business analytics professional, an MSBA makes a compelling case to an employer about your abilities and your worth to the organization.

"It's not just the increased technical skills that helped me get a promotion, it was my increased communication skills," explained Kwiatkowski, who credited earning his MSBA through Tepper as contributing to his promotion at EQT. "I was able to effectively communicate why I should be able to receive a promotion based on the value I brought to the company."

4. Installs you in a lifelong professional network

Our MSBA program [follows a cohort model](#) that allows you to work alongside the same group of professionals for the entirety of the degree. Through projects that mirror real-world work environments, you can foster meaningful connections with your teammates that pay off.

"You really get to know everybody, their personalities as well as their work ethics, and you get to really make some good friends," said Kwiatkowski. "We're all here with similar interests, so it's no surprise that we all get along pretty easily."

You're also plugging into a huge network of alumni. Most schools boast [tens of thousands of alumni](#) around the globe.

"As our alumni progress in their careers, they often have influence on where their companies recruit," said Stephen M. Rakas, executive director of the Masters Career Center at the Tepper School of Business.

You can see a sample of who embarks on an MSBA by [viewing the class profile data](#) for Tepper's part-time program.

5. Gives you access to career support, even after you graduate

A graduate program supported by a robust career services office goes far beyond resume checks and interview prep. Their career coaches will spend time strategizing with you about what you want out of your career and how you can maximize the impact of the skills you're learning. They also have access to expansive job networks and, thanks to an increase in virtual recruiting, can connect you with employers in your preferred geographic location.

If your [MSBA is through a business school](#) like Tepper, you'll have access to career services [specifically designed for business-focused students](#). The counselors are industry specialists who have deep experience in the fields they advise on. They constantly monitor changes in the market or needs of employers and pass that intel on to you, saving you time and effort.

If your MSBA is through a school with smaller class sizes, you'll have access to more bespoke services. The counselors can get you where you want to be—not where 300 people need to be.

"We're here to be a coach and an accountability partner, to help you refine a set of skills you're going to use to manage your career for decades"

-Stephen M. Rakas, Executive Director of the Masters Career Center at the Tepper School of Business

6. Keeps you up to date

In an industry that's inescapably tied to technology and always on the lookout for the next innovation, most analytics professionals will need upskilling at multiple points in their career. Even beyond the technical realm, the need for upskilling is a defining feature of the decade: [The World Economic Forum](#) estimates that 42% of the core skills needed to perform a job are going to change by 2022.

MSBA programs are a good fit for both professionals who want to upgrade their skills or career changers that want to move into a field that's expected to see a [faster-than-average growth](#) in the next 10 years.

"Our MSBA program has been designed to appeal to a broad range of students with technical or STEM backgrounds, including engineering, economics or mathematics," said Willem-Jan van Hoeve, senior associate dean of education at Pepper, [in a recent interview](#).

7. Keeps you competitive

The number of master's degree holders is increasing every year. The [National Center for Education Statistics](#) tracked a 10-year period ending in 2017 and found that the number of master's degrees conferred rose by 32%. The greatest number of advanced degrees came in the field of business. This means it's probable your coworkers are going to have a graduate degree and that the people you're competing against for the next job opening or promotion are going to have an advanced degree.

This holds true even in tight job markets: A [2020 survey](#) from the Strada Center for Education Consumer Insights found that graduate or professional degree holders are 20% more likely to find and start a new job than those with a bachelor's degree.

8. Instills you with confidence and competence

Uncertainty is part and parcel of the business world. Data isn't always pretty and business problems may not have clear-cut solutions. That's why you must go beyond just knowing tools and develop sophisticated problem-solving abilities. You must be able to step up at your organization and say, "I can do this."

"The ability to attack and solve unstructured problems is a key skill that someone in an MSBA program should walk away with," said Lamont. "When you are confronted with some sort of problem in your organization, it won't phase you. You'll just attack the problem."

"Whatever is coming at you, you can deal with it. It's a powerful combo of confidence and competence."

Choose a Program That Gives You the Best Return On Your Investment

If you are going to invest in a graduate program in analytics, you're going to want one that is worth your time and money. The master's in business analytics programs that give you the greatest return are going to be rigorous and will challenge you to perform at your very best.

"You're making an investment in dollars but the investment in time and energy is much larger," explained Lamont. "So, you can choose a program that is going to give you skills, network and reputation, or one that doesn't—you still have spent the same amount of time."

A World-Class Reputation

The [online Master of Science in Business Analytics](#) at Carnegie Mellon University brings together the business expertise of the world-renowned Tepper School of Business and the leading-edge research of the #1-ranked School of Computer Science. Employers know that Tepper graduates are exceptionally prepared and highly driven.

Flexibility for Professionals

While the program is rigorous, its part-time, fully online format makes it possible for students to stay in their jobs and eliminates the need to uproot their lives or spend money and time on a commute.

One-on-One Career Support

A degree from CMU makes a significant statement on a resume, but the career-boosting benefits don't stop there. Tepper offers personalized career management through their award-winning [Masters Career Center](#).

"What really differentiates our program is our philosophy and size. Instead of a program with 500 students and maybe one career coach, we can offer customized services," said Rakas. "We're really working closely with the students to help them present themselves in a way that showcases their full potential."

"This program is 100% worth it. I cannot rave about it enough."—Andrew Kwiatkowski, online MSBA student

Request Information

To learn more about the Tepper School's [online Master of Science in Business Analytics](#), fill out the fields below to [download a free brochure](#). If you have additional questions, please call [888-876-8959](#) or [412-238-1101](#) to speak with an admissions counselor.

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