

Positioning Maps

Chart Your Path to a Meaningful Career

Competitive positioning is how you differentiate yourself from other job candidates and create value for your employer. It's about how you carve out a niche in the marketplace. These customized guides, by position title, help you achieve this.

December 2023

Your Guide to Becoming a Data Analyst

Are you interested in becoming a Data Analyst when you graduate? You are not alone. Many graduates of TRSM are interested in this field and are currently working as a Data Analyst within different industries.

This **Positioning Map** identifies the programs you can participate in at TRSM, to help you develop a specific and relevant skill set that will make you far more competitive when applying to part-time and full-time roles.

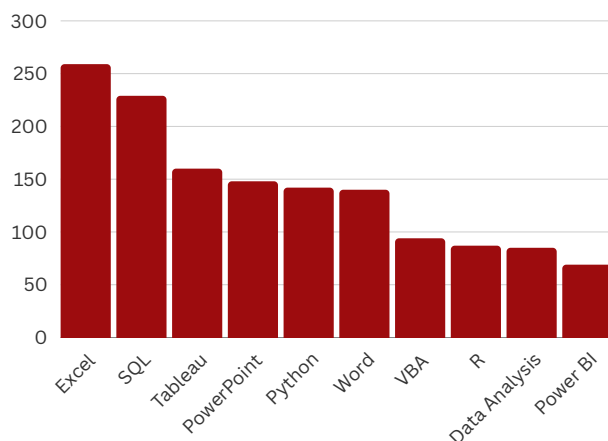
STEP 1 - Understand the Skills Expected of a Data Analyst

We analyzed 398 job postings in our job portal, for *Data Analyst* roles, for the period September 2018 to June 20 2023, and identified the top most cited technical and professional skills across these job descriptions.

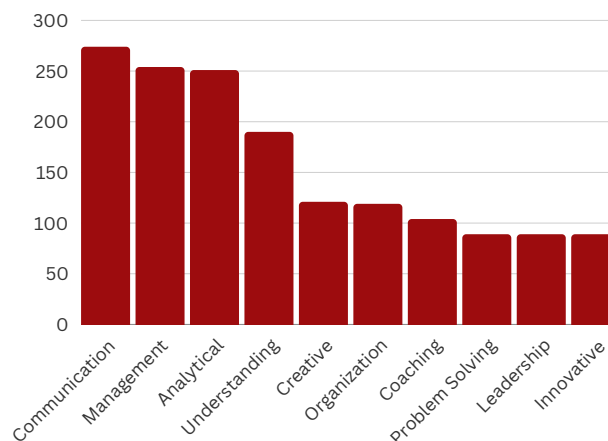
Highlighted below are the skills employers are seeking when recruiting for this role. Note the importance of Excel, SQL, Tableau, and PowerPoint, in addition to the ability to communicate effectively and analyze a problem.



Top 10 Technical Skills for Data Analyst



Top 10 Professional Skills for Data Analyst



STEP 2 - Develop a Data Analyst Skillset

Program	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Register for Bootcamps: Excel, Power BI, Tableau, SQL, Python, VBA, R, and Microsoft Certification
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Attend Prep Programs: Consulting Prep Program
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Join Student Groups: Ted Rogers Economics Society , Toronto Metropolitan Data Science Association , TMU Student Groups , TMU Toastmasters , TRSM Student Groups
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Participate in Case Competitions/Conferences: Leadership Development , TRACE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ted Rogers Co-op: BTM, ENT, HTM, RET, SAF students apply to the Co-op program at the end of 1st year, by June 1. All other Business Management majors (including EMS) apply at the end of 2nd year.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hub Insights reports: Economics and Management Science Major , Day in The Life: Data Analyst

Why Professional Skills Are Important To Employers



Communication Skills

Data Analysts have to leverage communication skills when working with stakeholders to conduct intakes and to better understand expectations to be able to present and deliver solutions. Data Analysts have to also be able to address queries, provide clarifications and seek and implement feedback.



Analytical Skills

Data Analysts leverage strong analytical skills when working with complex datasets. They examine and interpret complex data to derive valuable insights that will be useful in business decisions.

- Consider taking **ECN 620** - Applied Economic Analysis



Creativity Skills

Data Analysts are expected to bring a creative mindset to their work to implement and initiate solutions for their stakeholders. Creative thinking allows analysts to effectively communicate complex findings to present solutions and findings in a comprehensible manner.



Leadership Skills

The ability to demonstrate leadership abilities is important in the role of a Data Analyst to be able to lead projects and ensure timelines and stakeholder expectations are met.



Organizational Skills

Working with large volumes of complex data and managing multiple tasks will require organization to maintain accuracy and meet deadlines. Data Analysts are also required to be organized in presenting complex data and findings in a clear manner.



Problem Solving Skills

Effective problem-solving skills enable Data Analysts to understand stakeholder issues, break them down into manageable components, and create structured processes for investigation and solutions.

STEP 3 - Prepare for the Interview

Typical Interview Questions for a Data Analyst Role

Here are some examples of behavioural questions, paired with answers to guide you when preparing for your next interview. Keep in mind interview questions can vary depending on the industry and level of the role.



Tip #1 When answering the interview question about how you prioritize and manage multiple tasks or projects with competing deadlines, you should aim to showcase your methods to setting priorities while highlighting how you are adaptable and adjust to changing needs.

How do you prioritize and manage multiple tasks or projects with competing deadlines?

“

During my coursework, I often had assignments and exams overlapping with various deadlines. To manage this, I would break down tasks into smaller sub-tasks and allocate specific time blocks for each sub-task while using reminders to stay on track throughout the week. I also considered the urgency and scale of each task to allocate sufficient time and attention. This approach allowed me to tackle high-priority items efficiently while being mindful of upcoming deadlines.

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Tip #2 Your ability to work effectively within a team and cross-functional departments is an important aspect as a Data Analyst, and often overlooked. Use an example from your own experience to highlight how diverse skill sets and departmental knowledge were essential to achieving an objective in a particular project or task.

Describe a situation where you had to collaborate with multiple departments or with different skill sets?



During my internship as a Marketing Coordinator, I was tasked with analyzing customer data to identify trends and recommend improvements to our marketing strategy. To accomplish this, I had to collaborate with the sales and product development teams. I scheduled bi-weekly cross-functional meetings to leverage their expertise and insights. As a result, we were able to develop more data-driven marketing strategies that improved our customer satisfaction and increased sales.



Tip #3 Highlight any unique strategies you developed to assess meaningful insights from the data. Describe any creative visualization techniques or programs you used to present your insights and findings to stakeholders.

Tell me about a project where you had to use creative method to extract insights from data?



During a case competition, my team was presented with a dataset from a retail company. Our objective was to optimize inventory management and increase sales. We decided to develop a model that leveraged historical sales data, and customer demographics to forecast demand for specific products using Power BI. This approach improved the company's inventory turnover and increased overall sales revenue. As a result, our team placed 1st overall within our category.



Tip #4 Attention to detail is a vital skill as a Data Analyst working with large amounts of complex data. Start by explaining a project, task, or problem you were working on and why accuracy was important in this situation. Highlight the positive outcome of your careful attention to detail.

Can you describe a situation where you needed to pay close attention to details to solve a problem or complete a task accurately?

“

While working as a Sales Associate at H&M, I was responsible for maintaining accurate inventory levels. During a routine stock check, prior to the launch of our highly anticipated seasonal sale, I noticed that several products had been mislabeled with the wrong price. Recognizing this as a potential pricing issue, I corrected the labels and avoided a loss of revenue.

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Technical Questions

Technical aspects of the interview are often used to determine if the candidate has exposure to the programs required to succeed in the role. Commonly, the technical aspects of the interview may consist of step-by-step answers on how you would tackle a challenge or project leveraging a specific program (i.e. Excel, Python, Power BI) to see how familiar you are with the application. Alternatively, the interviewer may ask you to complete a ‘challenge’ during the interview as opposed to walking them through it verbally.

Quick Tip!

- Use the STAR method to answer behavioural questions based on your own experiences to showcase your knowledge and capabilities. Review the [Behavioural Interviews Hub Insights Report](#) to prepare.
- Remember to tailor your responses to your own experiences and the specific company you're interviewing with.

STEP 4 - Update LinkedIn and Resume - and Apply

Now that you have better positioned yourself for this role, make sure to update your LinkedIn profile, your resume and cover letter to reflect how aligned you now are with this type of role.

Check out these Hub Insights resources for best practices on doing just this!

1. [LinkedIn](#)
2. [Resumes, Cover Letters](#)
3. [Interview Tips: Behavioural Interviews, Behavioural Interviews In-depth](#)

Some of the Top Employers Hiring Data Analysts

There are hundreds of employers who hire Data Analysts every year, but based on our data in the Co-op job portal, some are:



Meet a TRSM Student



Data Analyst,
Bank of Canada

ERIC RAJARATNAM

“ Eric Rajaratnam is a 5th year EMS Co-op student on his final work term. He joined the Co-op program to explore diverse career paths. His journey started off in Finance, but after realizing he wanted to work with a wider range of technical programs, he pivoted to Data Analyst roles. Eric is currently a Data Analyst at the Bank of Canada.

A typical day involves building solutions for internal stakeholders. He meets regularly with internal departments to understand their needs and goals and from these consultations, develops a solution leveraging Power BI. Eric's week alternates between team member collaboration and independent work focused on developing creative solutions.

Eric has developed important skills in data visualization using leveraging graphs and charts in Tableau and Power BI. He further shares that basic coding knowledge is helpful in this type of role.

Other valuable skills Eric has developed is the ability to understand stakeholder needs and their pain points before developing a solution. Strong communication skills are critical to clearly express and present insights and ideas while identifying discrepancies, trends and solutions. To this end, Eric encourages students to participate in case competitions to build a critical thinking skill set.

Meet a TRSM Alumni



Data Analyst,
Celestica

LAURYN YURICH

“ Lauryn Yurich is an alumni from the EMS Co-op program. Having been in the Co-op program, Lauryn began her path towards becoming a Data Analyst when she secured a co-op position at Celestica. Due to her networking efforts and maintaining her connections at Celestica, Lauryn saw her career continue to progress at the organization, where she is currently a Supply Chain Management Data Analyst.

Lauryn's current day to day changes frequently being on an emerging team but it often requires her to develop and lead large projects by leveraging Excel. Lauryn has developed and continues to leverage skills in problem-solving, communication and delivering to a deadline.

Lauryn emphasizes that being a Data Analyst requires a certain level of intuition and curiosity-asking the right questions and being prepared to answer questions from leadership and relevant stakeholders.

Learn More for Free



Learn how to become a Data Analyst through courses offered on LinkedIn Learning. [Click here to register.](#) (Students study in Toronto can gain free access to LinkedIn Learning. [Learn more here](#))



AI is leveraged to optimize the data analysis process. Learn about Top 10 AI tools that can be leveraged to analyze data. [Read more here.](#)



Learn about growth sectors, skills employers are seeking, and how to prepare for a competitive marketplace. [Access Hub Insights reports here.](#)

Visit the Business Career Hub

Employer Events

The BCH hosts several employer events to prepare you for your professional career. Refer to your weekly BCH Careers Newsletter for a list of upcoming events.

Bootcamps/Prep Programs

Advance your technical, earn digital badges, and gain an advantage in today's workforce with Power BI, Power of Excel, Python, R, SQL, and Tableau. [Click here to register.](#)

Coaching & Mock Interview

For career coaching, interview prep and more, [schedule a 1:1 appointment](#) with a Career Consultant or a Co-op Coordinator.



[TedRogersBCH](#)



[Business Career Hub Website](#)



Career Consultant Contributor Tania Rasie

Tania is a Career Consultant and a graduate of the Ted Rogers Co-op program. She has experience in campus and early talent recruitment within the IT industry. She aims to assist students in uncovering their career passions while leveraging their unique strengths.



Student Contributors Muneera Ali

Muneera is a Business Technology Management student who worked as a Project Coordinator at the Business Career Hub in her 3rd year. She is interested in self-development, gaining meaningful experiences, and wishes to pursue a career in the ever expanding field of Information Technology.



Katie Doan

Katie, a Global Management Studies student, is completing a Co-op work term as the Project Coordinator for Hub Insights. As an active student leader, she supports several initiatives including AIESEC and Fit For Business, where she was a Mentor for 1st Year Students. Her career aspirations include Project Management, Supply Chain, and Logistics Management.