

# Betting Big on Data Science

Data scientists are an increasingly hot commodity across industries. The UTA College of Science is rising to meet the moment.

**A**s the need for data scientists has grown rapidly in seemingly every field over the past decade, so too has the need for comprehensive degree programs to train students for data science jobs. The UTA College of Science has answered the call with spectacular results.

The college began offering undergraduate data science courses in fall 2018. A bachelor's degree program was launched in 2021 with 19 students. In fall 2025, the program enrolled 199 majors and 51 minors.

In fall 2023, the college launched an MS degree in applied statistics and data science (MS-ASDS). The first cohort included 66 students, the largest first-year enrollment for any new master's program at UTA. In fall 2025, the program enrolled 121 students.

In spring 2024 the college launched the Division of Data Science (DDS) to organize, provide infrastructure support, and facilitate growth in instructional and research programs involving data science. DDS serves as a catalyst to foster interdisciplinary learning and research.

"The story of the college's data science program is one of rapid and necessary institutional expansion," says Sherry Wang, Jenkins-Garrett Professor of Statistics and Data Science and DDS director for research. "The growth from the first courses in 2018 to a full academic pipeline demonstrates remarkable momentum."

To further strengthen its academic profile, DDS is developing a PhD program. It was unanimously approved by the UTA Graduate Assembly in October 2024 and received formal approval from the UT System Board of Regents in August 2025. Final approval could come within the next year.

At the undergraduate level, the college's program is unique, as it pairs a bachelor's degree in data science

(BSDS) with a concentration in a student's chosen science discipline. It also includes two semesters of capstone research. Designed as an interdisciplinary program with eight concentrations across the college, it has become one of UTA's fastest growing programs.

"Today, the program offers over 12 specialized core and elective courses in data science and statistics each semester, allowing students to plan flexible schedules and graduate on time," says Shan Sun-Mitchell, professor of mathematics and DDS director of academic programs.

The MS-ASDS is an 18-month program that includes a capstone research project in which students apply data science to real-world problems. They get a solid foundation in applied statistics through the program, which sets it apart from most other data science master's programs, and they get the chance to collaborate with numerous industry partners from around Dallas-Fort Worth.

In 2024, the BSDS program added a fast-track pathway to the MS-ASDS, allowing top undergraduates to begin graduate coursework early.

The master's program is expanding to include seven concentrations within the college and a geographic information system (GIS) concentration under the College of Architecture, Planning, and Public Affairs. These new tracks will allow students to specialize in various science disciplines while integrating advanced GIS and spatial analytics training. Overall, the program's expansion will strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration and broaden career opportunities for students across scientific fields.

With in-demand degree programs and the addition of more soon, the College of Science is leading the way in providing the comprehensive training students need for jobs in the ever-expanding field of data science.