

New Academic Program: BS in Data Science (OSU Corvallis)

Program Proposed Start Date

Winter 2026

Program Description

The Bachelor of Science degree in Data Science offered by the Department of Statistics and Data Science will be housed in the College of Science. The program will be offered in person on the Oregon State University campus in Corvallis. The new undergraduate degree in Data Science will prepare students with the skills and competencies needed to thrive in a technological and data-driven workforce. By integrating technical expertise with real-world applications, the program ensures graduates are well-prepared with both theoretical knowledge and practical experience in data science so that they may make a meaningful impact in their careers in the expanding data science field. Graduates will be prepared for professional roles in data analytics and data science.

The BS in Data Science prepares students with essential skills across four key areas: mathematics, statistics, computing, and soft skills. The soft skills include topics such as data ethics, leadership and communication. To enhance students' degrees, they may select from distinct options, including "Advanced Data Science," "Life Sciences," "Economics" and "Environmental Economics and Policy." Students in the BS in Data Science program will delve into the intricacies of data analysis, machine learning, and statistical modeling, while examining the ethical implications of data use and the transformative power of data-driven decision-making in various industries.

Program Context

While the Department of Statistics and Data Science offers programming at the master's level (in Statistics and in Data Analytics) and the PhD level (in Statistics), it has never offered a full undergraduate degree. This program will create a new opportunity for undergraduate students to pursue a broadly applicable data science degree.

Program Purpose/Relationship to University Mission/Strategic Plan

The BS in Data Science is designed by faculty to equip graduates with the skills and knowledge needed to support critical sectors in Oregon, such as sustainable agriculture, renewable energy and cultural preservation. Data science can help these industries thrive while preserving the state's unique heritage. By addressing these areas, the program aims to prepare graduates to become active citizens who contribute to the state's civic, cultural and economic vitality.

Need for the Program

Within the state of Oregon three institutions offer undergraduate majors related to data science. The University of Oregon, Portland State University and the Oregon Institute of Technology each offer a major in data science. Our proposed program is not designed to duplicate these existing offerings, rather to address the rapidly increasing demand for data scientists and analysts in Oregon. As industries across all sectors—ranging from healthcare and technology to agriculture and finance—continue to rely on data-driven decision-making, the need for

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professionals skilled in data science is expected to grow significantly. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects substantial job growth in data-related fields in the coming years, making it crucial for higher education institutions to prepare a larger and more diverse workforce for this work. As the largest university in the state of Oregon, Oregon State University must provide our students with the opportunity to major in this field and contribute to the state needs and job growth.

By leveraging Oregon State University's strengths in science, engineering and agricultural sciences, our program can integrate interdisciplinary approaches that enhance the learning experience. Collaborating with these established programs allows us to enrich our curriculum with practical applications and critical thinking skills.

Program Financials

The Department of Statistics and Data Science projects that enrollment should reach 200 students by its fifth year.

RECOMMENDATION

All appropriate university committees and the OSU Faculty Senate have reviewed and supported the proposal. The provost recommends that the Academic Strategies Committee approve the approval of the BS in Data Science for winter 2026, pending the approval of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission.