

‘Few decisions affect the future as much as going to study at a university or college...’

UCAS is the UK's centralised higher education admissions service. We track choices and decisions across millions of applications for higher education – half of all young people pass through our systems. This generates big, deep, and rich operational data. Buried in this data are the key insights and understanding about going to university. UCAS is committed to finding these insights to deliver our mission of connecting people to higher education.

It can be hard for graduates to learn the full set of skills needed to be a leading data scientist, so for the last three years UCAS has been running a paid Data Scientist Graduate programme to fast-track graduates into this profession. Graduates from previous cohorts have gone on to become permanent members of staff and many are now leading areas of work with line management responsibility for up to two data scientists. The programme is based in the UCAS Analysis and Insights business unit, which leads in the application of data science techniques to one of the richest decision data sets in the world.

The Analysis and Insights team primarily uses the powerful, industry standard SAS software system, combined with contemporary data science tools. It specialises in the core skills of analytical programming, which are needed by the best data scientists to give them the highest capability to create data structures and analysis.

If you are successful in your application, you will receive:

- full training by experts in analytical programming
- exposure to a variety of roles across the Analysis and Insights team, where you will be involved in solving real problems from day one and will gain the full range of skills to progress your career
- the support of being paired with one of our experienced data scientists, and regular meetings with the Director of Analysis and Insights and other senior members of the team
- the opportunity to present your best work to UCAS' Executive team, and receive support and advice on the next step in your data science career
- a competitive salary to reward your growing skills and contribution to our work

To be considered, you should be able to show that you have:

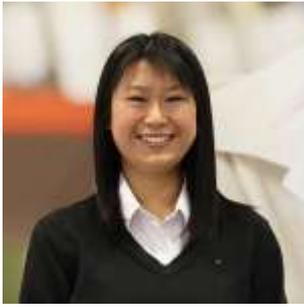
- exceptional levels of numerate, analytical and logical thinking
- drive to find things out that really matter from data
- potential to learn and apply analytical programming at the highest level
- personal values and attributes for being a leading data scientist

Data scientists come from a variety of backgrounds, but you are most likely to have very strong quantitative skills, reflected in high grades in mathematics or a physical science at A level (or equivalent). You might also have some computer programming experience. Being able to pair your ideas with the ability to create results through structured code is key to these roles.

If you think you have the potential and commitment to succeed on one of our Data Scientist Graduate programmes, then let us know by emailing careers@ucas.ac.uk with:

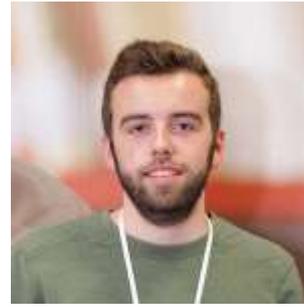
- a brief CV of your academic and other achievements
- a note (300-600 words) telling us about something you have done which shows your potential to become a data scientist, and why you want to work with us and our data

Applications for the 2018 Data Scientist Graduate programme should be with us by 17:00 on 12 March 2018.



**Sher Tang, BSc Discrete Mathematics,
Lead Data Scientist (completed programme in 2015)**

‘Since starting at UCAS, I have had research I’d done presented to stakeholders, and produced countless new operational reports for providers but my highlight has been creating new tools for the internal business to keep an eye on what’s happening in the application cycle. Now, I lead a team, helping customers to deliver targeted marketing to learners. I have always been under the leadership of experienced analysts but also allowed the freedom to work independently on new projects. The managers have also supported me wonderfully in developing my professional skills. UCAS is a lovely place to work. The office is open, friendly and bright. We have staff events and great communication between different teams and departments. Cheltenham is a stunning town and I was happy to move here.’



**Dan Brookes, MEng Engineering,
Lead Data Scientist (completed programme in 2016)**

‘Since joining UCAS, I’ve worked on a variety of projects such as the End of Cycle report, interactive data visualisation, and the Digital ID service. I’ve been given opportunities to develop both my technical and managerial skills, with a series of training programmes to support my progression. UCAS is a fantastic employer with a very fun and friendly staff culture, with recent self-organised events such as the walking football tournament and UCAS sports day great examples of this. I would recommend the graduate programme to anyone with a mathematical background and an interest in data, as it is a great way to learn on the job and progress your early career, with exposure to senior staff and the opportunity to learn first-hand from previous graduates.’



**Tom Hawker, Master of Earth Sciences,
Lead Data Scientist, (completed programme in 2015)**

“I started the graduate scheme with no coding experience at all and in less than 3 years, I progressed into a Certified Advanced SAS user. During that time, I have been involved in the development/re-development of important and innovative services such as the Direct Contact Service and the Tracking Data Service, STROBE. A big advantage (for me) about working for UCAS, is it a well-known and respected brand but the organisation is not so huge that you will be lost in the shuffle.”



**Heather McNeill, BA Natural Sciences,
Data Scientist, (completed programme in 2017)**

“During my time at UCAS, I have contributed to multiple projects developing new ways of offering insights from data both to inform the business, and to provide these insights in an understandable but powerful way to customers such as Higher Education Providers. The atmosphere throughout the business is incredibly friendly and supportive and this, along with the more specific training and support with learning new programming skills, has helped me to have a positive impact on the team’s work from day one.”



**Amy Denby, BSc Conservation Biology and Ecology,
Lead Data Scientist (completed programme in 2016)**

“During the two and a half years I’ve spent at UCAS so far, I progressed quickly from a graduate, fresh out of university with very little coding experience, to becoming a SAS-certified data scientist, and then on to becoming a line manager. I have gained experience in many areas, from creating new products, to analysing data collected from surveys, to publishing my first report – my biggest achievement to date! UCAS are dedicated in aiding both personal and professional development, while also encouraging volunteer days, sports competitions, and general fitness and wellbeing. These factors, combined with the approachable staff, and friendly atmosphere of the office, are why I would recommend UCAS to anyone looking to begin a career in data science.”



**Luke Perrott, MChem Chemistry
Data Scientist Graduate, 2017-2018**

“I joined UCAS with no programming experience whatsoever, but this didn’t matter as the initial training provided really brought me up to speed and very soon I was contributing to exciting new projects taking place within the Data Integrity team. UCAS greatly values its employees and offers a wide range of personal development opportunities tailored to your needs. The graduate program feels like a perfect transition from university to the world of work and starting like-minded graduates made the transition even easier. I would definitely recommend the graduate program to anyone considering a career in data science.”



**Emily Bennett, Masters in Theoretical Physics,
Data Scientist Graduate, 2017-2018**

“This graduate scheme is such a good way to enter the world of data science without having a very statistical or coding-heavy background. It’s great working with previous graduates and seeing how far they progress in a few short years. UCAS is also dedicated to getting the best out of everyone and there are lots of opportunities to develop professional skills. Everyone is very friendly and welcoming, Analysis and Insights is a brilliant place to work, learn and develop your skills while working for a company that does great things for people all over the country!”



**Jess Wadey, MSci Mathematics and Physics
Data Scientist Graduate, 2017-2018**

“This graduate scheme at UCAS was the perfect stepping stone on my way into a data science career. I finished university with very little programming experience and felt that UCAS supported me in every way possible to build my analytical skills, providing excellent training and a very friendly working environment. One of the best things about the programme is that there’s a graduate cohort, so you’re not alone in starting a new job and there are other graduates experiencing the same process as you. It’s not your typical graduate scheme, you have immediate input into ideas and ongoing projects from the offset and everyone is eager to learn from each other.”