Sydney University Data Society

FIRST YEAR GUIDE

2026

Welcome to the 2026 SUDATA First year Guide

Acknowledgement of Country

We'd like to begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and study, the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation. We would also like to pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Disclaimer

This guide is a student-made overview for 2026 and is intended as a supplementary resource only. Whilst great care has been taken in preparing it to give you advice, keep in mind that unit information, majors, and degree structures can change over time. Please conduct further research and use the University's official resources before you make any decisions relating to your enrolment.

Stay connected

@usyd.sudata

@Sydney University Data Society

@www.

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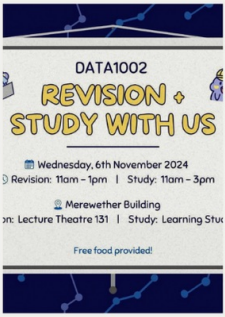

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1. O-Week!

Activities! (Check Instagram for exact details)

Come to **SUDATA Speed Friending!** A great way to meet lifelong uni friends!
📅 19th Feb
📍 Carslaw seminar room 356
⏰ 2pm-4pm

SUDATA x SUBAA Welcome Drinks! A great way to meet execs, enjoy a free drink and yummy food!
📅 26th Feb
📍 Courtyard Bar and Cafe
⏰ 5pm-7pm

Sign up for our first year camp, in collaboration with SUMS, BioSoc & BISA!

First-Year Camp is always an unforgettable way to meet new friends for life, and to get away for a weekend of fun!

2. About Us

Hi! We're SUDATA (Sydney University Data Society). SUDATA is dedicated to providing students with valuable opportunities to enrich their academic, social and professional skills. Since our establishment in 2019, we've quickly grown and become one of the largest societies at USYD. If you're interested in joining our community, whether that is as a member or subcommittee, there are plenty of options available - which we'll cover later in this guide!

2000+ Active Members

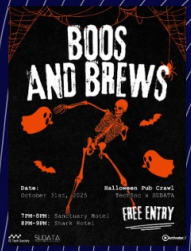
40+ Events in 2025

4000+ Followers

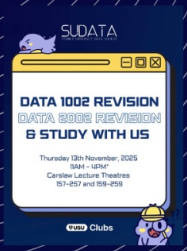
More SUDATA Events of 2025

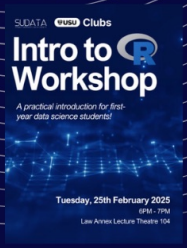
2025 Inter-Society Collab Events
Sem 1

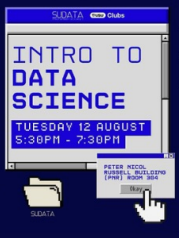
2025 Society Collab Events
Sem 2



Learn from Us Events







Joining the Internal Team

Subcommittee

What is a subcommittee?

A subcommittee is a small group of members under a portfolio and led by a SUDATA director, who work together as a team to plan, organise, and deliver initiatives.

Portfolios you can join:

🗓️ Academic Events — Organise insightful workshops and talks

🤝 Sponsorships — Communicate with partners and secure resources

📢 Marketing + Design — Grow society presence through engaging content and designing content

🌐 Social Events — Organise fun and engaging society experiences

💻 Technology — Manage the club's webpage and platforms and support event setups

Why join?

It's a great way to meet new people, have fun, and develop new skills, and attend in great internal bonding events with a fun, tight knit executive team!

Applications

Keep posted on our Instagram (@usyd.sudata) to see details on when subcommittiee applications open!

6. What is Data Science?

Data Science At USYD

Data Science is a popular and highly applicable major to a variety of courses. In this guide we will be discussing what it's like to study Data Science during your first year at USYD, including classes and opinions and advice from current students.

For more information please refer to the handbook:
https://www.sydney.edu.au/courses/subject-areas/major/data-science0.html

Please consult your faculty handbook for the most accurate and up-to-date information regarding your university degree.

Career Pathways in Data Science

Studying data science helps students develop strong foundations in statistical thinking, logical analysis, and coding logic, which underpin many career pathways in data-driven fields. These core skills prepare students to solve real-world problems and reason with data. Data science is also highly complementary to a wide range of disciplines, from the obvious—computer science, mathematics, engineering—to more diverse fields—health sciences, business, and law, making it an ideal pairing with students' existing interests.

Graduates grow into roles spanning analytics, data science and engineering, AI and machine learning, and related computational and technical positions across industries including technology, finance, health, government, and research. The broad skill set developed through data science, which combines statistics and computer science, allows graduates to adapt to new and emerging roles as data science continues to evolve.

Olivia Peng (Technology Director), Bharat Sharma and Shreejit Murthy (Technology Subcommittee)

9. Unit Overviews

In this section, we'll dive into first-year Data Science-related subjects and how fellow students felt about them. Hopefully this will give you insight into what to expect and know how best to prepare.

DATA1X01 - Foundations of Data Science

Students' Subject enjoyment rating: 9.5/10

Students' Subject difficulty rating: 6/10

Overview:
The DATA1X01 unit is a core first year unit for data science majors and can be taken in either Semester 1 or Semester 2. It uses the software RStudio and programming language R to explore how code can be used to analyse real-world datasets. It combines a mix of foundational statistics and data analysis skills (hypothesis testing, etc), and teaches how to apply them in research contexts.

Students' Perspective:
DATA1X01 is generally a well structured unit, with a clear Canvas page and well-paced assessments throughout the semester. The teaching staff are friendly and supportive, and there are weekly drop-in sessions if you want any extra guidance or feedback.

Students' Tips:
One of the keys to doing well in DATA1X01 is staying consistent. Having strong foundations early on, will help a lot in later coding projects. Also try to stay on top of the weekly quizzes. They are only worth a small weighting of your final grade, but they are a great way to revise for your final exam.

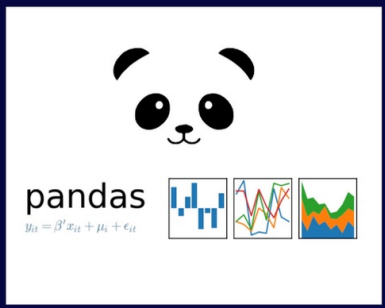
DATA1X02 - Informatics: Data and Computation

Students' Subject enjoyment rating: 7/10

Students' Subject difficulty rating: 7.5/10

Overview

The DATA1X02 unit is a core first-year unit for BSc students majoring in Data Science. It introduces programming using Python. Throughout the course you will learn how to use key libraries such as *pandas* to clean and explore datasets, and *matplotlib* to create visualisations like charts and maps. This unit also covers data science ethics and data policies, which are highly relevant to real-world issues.



Student's opinion

The content in DATA1X02 is really interesting, and it's suitable for those who are beginners to coding. In some areas of the course, you may need to do some self-study to fully understand and grasp the key ideas. A bit of preparation in advance, even just spending a bit of time learning basic Python before the course starts, can be really useful to not feel out of place when harder concepts arise.

INFO1X10 - Introduction to Programming

Students' Subject enjoyment rating: 7.5/10

Students' Subject difficulty rating: 7.5/10

Overview
INFO1X10 is a first year core unit for students majoring in Computer Science and Software Development, and selective unit for those majoring in Discrete Mathematics and Algorithms. It teaches Python from a Computer Science perspective focusing on problem solving, debugging, and testing.

Student's Perspectives:
INFO1X10 is a very self-driven unit. A lot of the content, assignments and tests rely on having strong foundational programming skills. However the unit is doable and many see great results if they put in consistent effort throughout the semester.

Student's Tips:

- Don't fall behind on lectures.

With the way that the main assignments are released it's really important that you stay as up to date as possible.

- Prepare for the final exam strategically.

Usually questions in the final exam will be similar to questions in class with a couple of key changes. So knowing what "type" of question it is will give you a head start in coming up with a solution.

- Do as much of the extension assignment as you can.

It's worth 20% of your grade and its a lot easier than the exam is.

MATH1X62 - Mathematics 1B

Overview

Math1X62 is a first-year maths unit. It is not required for the Data Science major, but is required for students majoring in mathematics, statistics or financial mathematics and statistics. This unit focuses on mathematical modelling and provides students with practical skills, while teaching you how numbers tell a story. It also involves learning how to use R for statistical analysis.

Students' Subject enjoyment rating: 8.5/10

Students' Subject difficulty rating: 7.5/10

Student's Opinions:

The calculus component of the course is very engaging. You get to learn really interesting concepts about multivariable calculus and differential equations. The weekly tutorial questions plus weekly exercises provide you with a lot of material to use throughout the semester. The first few weeks may seem quite straightforward, but it quickly gets a bit more difficult.

The key to doing well in the statistics section of MATH1062 is to stay up to date with course content. Since it can get repetitive with lots of overlapping concepts and similar ideas, it is very easy to get overwhelmed by all the formulas and ideas.

Student's Tips:

- Working hard from the start helps you set the foundation to build upon for the rest of the semester, setting you up for success later on.
- Show up to your tutorials. They count for 2% and are a great way to check what you understand and what you need to work on.
- If you don't understand something visit the Maths Drop-in Hub to access help and support from tutors.

10. Execs' Testimonies:

James Dwyer, SUDATA President (2023-2024)

What made you join SUDATA?
I initially joined SUDATA on a friend's recommendation! He told me about the great people on the exec team and the fun catchups and events they held! When I ended up going to the AGM I found a group of super chill and welcoming people! It was such a fun vibe, I stuck around for nearly 4 years!

How did your uni experience change after getting involved with SUDATA?
SUDATA was no doubt the defining aspect of my uni experience! I met so many of my friends (still to this day) from SUDATA and every week of uni was filled with a cool event or new adventure! I went from being someone who was shy at the start of uni to having an amazing time throughout my degree!

What's one piece of advice you'd give to a first-year thinking about joining?
DO IT! No seriously, university is only fun if you put your hand out, strike up a convo with that person in your class and say YES to going to that cool event (even if you don't know anyone). SUDATA is an amazing place to do all that, with friendly execs and a great atmosphere. Joining SUDATA is a no-brainer! AND IT'S FREE, AND THERE ARE COOL EVENTS!

Why should someone join SUDATA, even if they're not sure data science is for them?
I was president of SUDATA and I didn't do Data Science! I was just interested in the ideas and wanted to make friends with other people. SUDATA is a social and professional experience open to literally anyone across the university, in terms of degrees, SUDATA is one of the most diverse communities on campus. For the social aspect, people love meeting people outside their degrees so all are welcome. And data is involved in literally every domain these days, so the professional events are guaranteed to still be a cool opportunity to meet potential employers. Come join!

Bachelor of Advanced Computing and Commerce
(Computational Data Science + Finance)

Jade Lee, SUDATA Secretary (2023-2024)

Tips for new students:
For students new to the uni, I highly encourage you to make an effort to meet new people! Coming from a smaller high school, university was a big and scary place and joining a society like SUDATA was the most worthwhile thing that changed my uni life. I met new friends to attend tutorials with, spent late nights on assignments, and developed into friendships outside of uni. Taking part in society events like first year camp is a great way to meet people organically, and joining the subcommittee is a good way to develop soft skills and a useful line to add to your resume.

Why did you pick a Data Science major?
A data science major is very interdisciplinary; you develop a skillset in statistics, coding and analytics which can be useful in many industries. As you progress in your degree, you can choose to pursue the more mathematical, statistical or software and data management aspects of the major. It's key to match your skills with your own interests, and apply your degree to a career in a field you'll enjoy. For myself, I plan to use my data science major to pursue a job in financial markets - I find that it's an opportunity to work in a fast-paced, quantitative environment, which rewards an analytical skillset.

Bachelor of Science and Advanced Studies
(Data Science + Financial Mathematics & Statistics with Honours in Data Science)

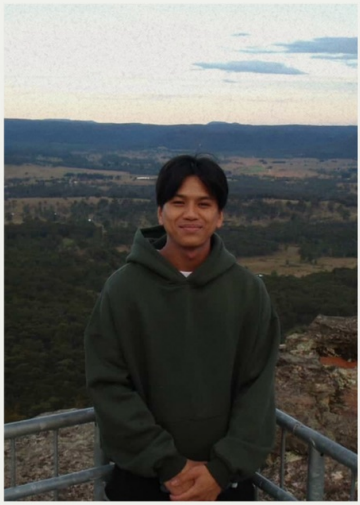
Christine Ting, SUDATA Treasurer (2024-2025)

Tips for Data Science Students:
DS involves a lot of group work, so being proactive and organised is important. The field changes quickly, so keeping up through news and podcasts really helps. Joining a society also helped me build connections with friends and made group projects feel a lot more meaningful.

Favourite subjects:
My favourites were the third-year machine learning units, which focus more on applying complex statistical theory rather than just memorising code.

Career pathways:
DS offers pathways into banking, fintech, government, health, and more. Recruiters look beyond grades and often assess teamwork and problem-solving through case studies, so both technical understanding and collaboration are crucial.

Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Science
(Economics + Data Science)



Tom Nyguen, SUDATA Outreach VP (2024-2025)

What advice do you have for 1st-year Data Science/ STEM students?

My general advice to any incoming first-year DS students would be to keep an open-minded approach to everything, whether it be uni-related or not. Say yes to as many opportunities as possible and don't be afraid to take risks, whether it's participating in a hackathon, taking a difficult unit, or joining a new society. After four years of uni, I've also realised that whilst academics are important, it's just as important to invest time and effort into building your social and professional network, because the relationships you form are probably more valuable than the degree itself.

What do you plan on doing after university?

After I graduate, I'm planning on working straight away in a Data Science graduate program (or related technical field), to gain some industry experience and get a feel of the 9-5 life.

Bachelor of Advanced Computing and Bachelor of Science (Computational Data Science + Financail Mathematics and Statistics)

11. First Year Tips

1 Explore the Campus!

Check where your classes are held before they begin. USYD is a big campus, don't be afraid to explore between classes - you might just find a new study or coffee spot.

2 Don't be afraid to ask questions!

Ask questions at O-Week, during events, or in your classes - it'll save you trouble later.

3 Plan Your timetable!

Try to select class times that suit you. If you are not a morning person, choose later tutorials where possible, and consider leaving a free day in your timetable if you want to take a break from university.

4 Join societies!

Societies are an amazing way to connect with people who have similar interests to you and make friends.

5 Follow SUDATA!

And lastly, make sure to follow SUDATA on all platforms to keep updated on the latest society news and events!

12. Final Words

Starting university can be overwhelming for a lot of people. Take it one step at a time, and don't feel pressured to have everything figured out straight away. We hope this guide has helped you learn a bit more about studying data science at USYD and what SUDATA has to offer. We'd love to see you at one of our events soon!

In the meantime, if you have any questions, feel free to reach out at: sydney.uni.data.society@gmail.com or shoot us a dm @usyd.sudata

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