# Business analyst

As a business analyst you'll work within an organisation, helping to manage, change and plan for the future in line with their goals. This could be for one specific project, or as a permanent feature of the organisation. You'll need to understand the current organisational situation, identify future needs and create solutions to help meet those needs, usually (but not always) in relation to information and software systems.

You'll need to demonstrate excellent understanding of the way the organisation works and the sector it operates in, as you'll be helping the organisation to develop its functions, services and products to meet goals with internal and external stakeholders.

You'll also play a key role in communicating between internal departments and external parties, acting as a 'translator' where necessary to convey how information technology can support the organisation's needs.

A business analyst may also be known as:

* business architect
* business systems analyst
* enterprise analyst
* management consultant
* process analyst
* product manager
* product owner
* requirements engineer
* systems analyst.

## Responsibilities

As a business analyst, you'll need to:

* communicate with internal colleagues to understand the needs of departments and the organisation as a whole
* work with external stakeholders to understand and investigate feedback into the service, function or product provided
* use data modelling practices to analyse your findings and create suggestions for strategic and operational improvements and changes
* consider opportunities and potential risks attached to suggestions you make
* identify the processes and information technology required to introduce your recommendations
* gain agreement, usually from senior management, of the best method of introducing your recommendations to the business
* communicate the benefits of your recommendations across departments and help to address any uncertainty and concern
* produce written documentation to support your work, report on your findings and to present to stakeholders when necessary
* support staff and teams in making your recommended changes, including helping to resolve any issues
* ensure plans are made and processes are created to evaluate the impact of the changes made, including taking responsibility for overseeing and reporting on this evaluation.

## Qualifications

Competition for business analyst positions is high, so having a degree is a distinct advantage. This could be in a relevant subject such as business information systems or business computing systems, but could also be from other disciplines, such as history, so long as you can demonstrate excellent analytical skills.

Relevant experience of managing projects can provide a pathway into working as a business analyst, although this is more likely for someone with a few years' industry experience, rather than someone looking to begin their career in this field.

As well as your degree, employers value experience and transferable skills, such as the ability to work in groups, analyse data, use technology and manage projects, which could be related to your studies or extra-curricular activities.

If you're a graduate from a non IT-related subject, you could take a relevant postgraduate qualification.

## Skills

You'll need:

* excellent communication skills, with the ability to talk and present to a range of audiences, sometimes acting as a translator between parties
* the ability to motivate others and lead change
* the ability to work under pressure on multiple projects within your project timeframes
* a passion for creating solutions with a positive attitude to change
* excellent analytical skills and an informed, evidence-based approach
* a strong interest in business and business development
* a good understanding of information technology.