

Personal Statement

I am a person who has always embraced new challenges in life. As a student at George Mason University, I stretched myself by pursuing a double-major in Finance and Information Systems and Operations Management. For the past five years, I have worked as a database administrator and technician, and have gained expertise in a number of technologies. Now, with substantial industry experience, I am ready to embark on a new phase of my career in Data Analytics and Intelligence Methods.

My initial career goal was to become an expert in database administration. As a result, during my undergraduate years I focused primarily on this skill set. Since graduation, I have worked as a database administrator, performing such activities as Installation, Configuration, Upgrades, Backup/Recovery, High Availability Solutions, Database Automation, Security, Performance Tuning, Data Modeling, SSIS, and SSRS. Working at two large companies in the Washington D.C. area has provided me valuable industry experience—including a first-hand understanding of data privacy, emerging cybersecurity threats, and the various ways in which data management is evolving. As a database administrator, my colleagues recognized me for my solid work ethic, technical acumen, and ability to manage multiple priorities within diverse work environments. Overall, I believe that my industry experience will be a solid asset as I begin this program.

Because I genuinely love to manage and manipulate data, I believe that Data Analytics and Intelligence Methods is an excellent choice for my major. This concentration will allow me to build on my data management foundation, while also positioning me for a range of job opportunities. As an undergraduate I did not take programming classes, something that I now realize was a big mistake. The market demand for programming knowledge is significant, and I know that developing strong programming skills is vital to my career development. Thus, I am committed to filling in those gaps as a student in the AIT program. Of course, I recognize that shifting from the School of Management to the School of Engineering may be viewed by some as a difficult leap. However, while I recognize these challenges, I am deeply committed to making the transition and to continuing my career development.

I believe that now is an ideal moment to pursue a degree in data science. With the volume of data more than doubling every two years, organizations need to be able to collect and analyze large datasets to identify and solve problems, improve business strategy, and minimize risk. Given my dual background in finance and database administration, I plan to pursue a career in business intelligence and analysis. The intersection of data science and business analysis offers tremendous opportunities for people with skill sets in both of these areas. By earning a degree in Data Analytics and Intelligence Methods, I hope to build a successful career that combines the skills of data management, data integration and analytics, machine learning, and business analysis.

The MS in Applied Information Technology at George Mason is widely recognized as one of the best graduate programs in the field, particularly in the areas of big data, data analytics, cybersecurity, and knowledge mining. As a recent graduate of GMU, I know how outstanding the faculty are in this department. Further, I have been impressed that the GMU program appears to go well beyond abstract theory and helps students to apply practical knowledge in their fields.

Finally, I would like to address one shortcoming in my resume. As an undergraduate I had a 2.8 GPA, which I recognize is lower than the required 3.0 GPA. I attribute my lower GPA to having a dual major, as well as to my busy work schedule at the time. Moving forward, I am

committed to earning all A's in my coursework. Also, I am willing to take extra courses or complete prerequisites in order to gain admission into this program. Given the opportunity, I am confident that I will excel.