

# KENNESAW GRADS GARNER SUCCESS WITH SAS® SKILLS

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## Business Issue

In order to be successful and competitive in the data-driven business world, students need the ability to translate data into meaningful information in order to support decision making.

## Solution

Kennesaw State University uses SAS in a series of five comprehensive analytics courses that culminates in students receiving a SAS Certificate that proclaims their aptitude.

## Benefits

With SAS, students gain the competitive edge in the post-graduation job market by cultivating the sought-after problem solving, analytic and critical-thinking skills needed in the business world today.

In an ever-competitive job market, today's college graduates need credible skills to obtain positions with the most sought-after employers. With SAS to supplement courses in data analytics and the SAS Certificate program, Kennesaw State University makes sure students and future graduates have the competitive edge they will need to succeed.

### The challenge

Kennesaw State University offers studies in more than 60 disciplines that will open new paths for students. What differentiates this Georgia institution from other universities is that it is determined to find ways to boost its students' chances at success and to teach them the skills they need in the most efficient way possible. That's why Kennesaw State turned to SAS.

Every university wants to prepare undergraduates for the job market. Historically, professors attained that end by teaching students the skills needed to succeed in a certain field. But sometimes basic skills are not enough to beat the competition. So at Kennesaw State, the mathematics department decided to improve on its traditional method by adding SAS to the mix.

"The demand for the SAS Certificate has exceeded our expectations," says Dr. Jennifer Priestley, Professor of Applied Statistics. "We see students from all different parts of campus – biology, political science, psychology and nursing. There's a wide diversity of majors because what the courses teach is useful in so many fields."

### Growing need for data analysts

The university's 20,000 students have always studied various vocations, but as the economy started to change in the early 2000s, professors noted a growing need for data analysts in every industry.

They saw that having analytical skills would give their students a competitive edge, no matter where they chose to work. The problem? Students needed to demonstrate their skills in a language that every employer understands. To fill that need, the professors initiated the SAS Certificate program.

"SAS is an incredible tool of discovery in the classroom," Priestley says. "SAS gives students the power to see data relationships that they never could have anticipated in advance. And when a student can go through the code himself and look at what the program is doing for him, his comfort level with the software increases just as he deepens his mathematical understanding. I could almost make the argument that you can't teach statistics without SAS."

### Employers impressed

The SAS Certificate doesn't stop at teaching students to use the software: The program equips grads with a full knowledge of statistics. Moreover, the certificate signifying completion of the series gives students tangible and credible evidence of their competency with SAS.

"That's evidence that they can then take into a job interview and present

“We have found, time after time, that once our students develop SAS skills, they can get a job almost exclusively based upon their ability to execute SAS.”

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to a potential employer,” Priestley explains. “Employers understand the value of having a SAS Certificate.”

### **Immediate credibility**

SAS’ reputation is partly responsible for Kennesaw State’s decision to use it. An employee’s familiarity with SAS indicates that he can digest and glean meaning from data and then translate analytical answers into information using graphics, tables and English. Because such analytical capabilities are in high demand across all industries, graduates find it helpful to understand SAS – even if they pursue a career that wouldn’t otherwise require math.

“I had a student who had strong math skills but who also had a solid background in SAS,” Priestley says. “He received a job offer from one of Atlanta’s most prominent hospitals, which incidentally was moving its records from an old platform onto a SAS one. He was able to get that job because of his experiences with SAS.”

Priestley applauds SAS’ capacity to improve students’ credentials: “The beauty of the SAS Certificate is that it provides our students with an immediate point of credibility.”



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