Actuarial Science, B.S.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- be able to bring to bear actuarial, financial, mathematical, and statistical techniques to model and analyze risks, particularly in the context of insurance and pension;
- have the knowledge and analytical ability to pass the initial professional actuarial examinations given by the Society of Actuaries and Casualty Actuarial Society, and develop the skills needed for successful self-study of the advanced professional examinations;
- be skillful in using and developing computer software to solve actuarial problems;
- be able to clearly communicate results from an actuarial analysis to all stakeholders, and write effective reports that describe the analysis and summarize important findings; and
- possess a basic understanding of insurance and business operations.

Overview

Due to the demanding nature of the actuarial science major and the difficulty of the professional examinations, the department maintains a selective admission program for actuarial science. Students must apply and be admitted to the major.

Students interested in becoming actuaries should declare an interest in actuarial science as their major when they enter the University of Iowa. Ordinarily, students apply for admission to the actuarial science major in the fall semester of their sophomore year, after they have taken MATH:2700 Fundamentals of Spaces and Functions I or MATH:2850 Calculus III, and STAT:3100 Introduction to Mathematical Statistics I. Students should apply no later than the end of the spring semester of their junior year.

Students admitted to the actuarial science major usually have completed at least 40 s.h. at the University or at another postsecondary institution, including a three- or four-course calculus sequence, a course in linear algebra, and a calculus-based course in probability and statistics. The admission decision is based on a student's performance in these courses and other courses relevant to success in the major. ACT or SAT scores are considered in evaluating transfer students. Factors such as work ethic, enthusiasm, and commitment also may be considered. Students who do well in the prerequisite math courses tend to be the most successful in actuarial science.

For application forms and more information about selective admission, contact the Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science.

Requirements

The Bachelor of Science with a major in actuarial science requires a minimum of 120 s.h., including 51 s.h. of work for the major. Students must maintain a g.p.a. of at least 2.00 in all courses for the major and in all UI courses for the major. They also must complete the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences GE CLAS Core.

The program prepares students for careers as actuaries. It also helps them learn material that is included in professional examinations administered by professional organizations such as the Society of Actuaries and the Casualty Actuarial Society.

Students take a variety of actuarial science courses. They prepare for business aspects of the actuarial profession by studying accounting, law, finance, insurance, and economics. They also complete courses that enhance important communication skills, such as writing and speaking, as part of their GE CLAS Core requirements.

Courses Required for the Major

The B.S. with a major in actuarial science requires the following course work. Permission to substitute course work taken at another institution for required courses at the University of Iowa is decided case by case; students should contact the department.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACTS:4280</td>
<td>Mathematics of Finance II</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACTS:4180</td>
<td>Life Contingencies I</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACTS:4280</td>
<td>Life Contingencies II</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACTS:4380</td>
<td>Mathematics of Finance II</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>STAT:3100/IGPI:3100</td>
<td>Introduction to Mathematical Statistics I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAT:3101/IGPI:3101</td>
<td>Introduction to Mathematical Statistics II</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAT:4100/IGPI:4100</td>
<td>Mathematical Statistics I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAT:4101/IGPI:4101</td>
<td>Mathematical Statistics II</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In exceptional cases, the advisor may grant permission to waive STAT:3100/IGPI:3100 Introduction to Mathematical Statistics I and/or STAT:3101/IGPI:3101 Introduction to Mathematical Statistics II.

Students may choose to complete ACTS:6480 Loss Distributions and ACTS:6580 Credibility and Survival Analysis (both courses) instead of ACTS:4280 Life Contingencies II, except honors students, who must complete all three courses.
Combined Programs

B.S./M.S. in Business Analytics (Career Subprogram)

Students majoring in actuarial science who are interested in earning a master’s degree in business analytics with a career subprogram may apply to the combined B.S./M.S. program offered by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Tippie College of Business. The program enables students to begin the study of business analytics before they complete their bachelor’s degree. Students are able to complete both degrees in five years rather than six.

Separate application to each degree program is required. Applicants must be admitted to both programs before they may be admitted to the combined degree program. For information about the business analytics program, see the M.S. in business analytics (career) in the Tippie College of Business section of the Catalog.

B.S./M.S. in Finance

Students majoring in actuarial science who are interested in earning a master’s degree in finance may apply to the combined B.S./M.S. program offered by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Tippie College of Business. The program enables students to begin the study of finance before they complete their bachelor’s degree. Students are able to complete both degrees in five years rather than six.

Separate application to each degree program is required. Applicants must be admitted to both programs before they may be admitted to the combined degree program. For information about the finance program, see the M.S. in finance in the Tippie College of Business section of the Catalog.

Honors

Honors in the Major

Students majoring in actuarial science have the opportunity to graduate with honors in the major. They must maintain a UI cumulative g.p.a. of at least 3.33, a g.p.a. of at least 3.40 in all departmental courses, and complete the following five courses in addition to all courses required for the major.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACTS:6480</td>
<td>Loss Distributions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTS:6580</td>
<td>Credibility and Survival Analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAT:4560</td>
<td>Statistics for Risk Modeling</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIN:3300</td>
<td>Corporate Finance</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH:3600</td>
<td>Introduction to Ordinary Differential Equations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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University of Iowa Honors Program

In addition to honors in the major, students have opportunities for honors study and activities through membership in the University of Iowa Honors Program. Visit Honors at Iowa to learn about the University’s honors program.

Membership in the UI Honors Program is not required to earn honors in the actuarial science major.

Academic Plans

Four-Year Graduation Plan

The following checkpoints list the minimum requirements students must complete by certain semesters in order to stay on the University’s Four-Year Graduation Plan. Courses in the major are those required to complete the major; they may be offered by departments other than the major department.

Much of the course work is sequential, so students must begin requirements for the major as soon as possible. Individual study plans must be made carefully. Students who first enroll for a spring semester must consult their advisor to confirm a four-year plan.

Before the third semester begins: MATH:1860 Calculus II and MATH:2700 Introduction to Linear Algebra


Before the seventh semester begins: STAT:4101/IGPI:4101 Mathematical Statistics II, ACTS:4130 Quantitative Methods for Actuaries, ACTS:4180 Life Contingencies I, ACTS:4380 Mathematics of Finance II, and at least 90 s.h. earned toward the degree

Before the eighth semester begins: ACTS:4280 Life Contingencies II

During the eighth semester: enrollment in all remaining course work in the major, all remaining GE CLAS Core courses, and a sufficient number of semester hours to graduate

Sample Plan of Study

Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, see MyUI.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Career</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any Semester</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students apply to the Actuarial Science BS program through a selective process. Acceptance is not guaranteed. a</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>First Year</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MATH:1850</td>
<td>Calculus I b, c</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL:1200</td>
<td>The Interpretation of Literature or Rhetoric c</td>
<td>3 - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS:1210</td>
<td>Computer Science I: Fundamentals</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE CLAS Core: World Languages First Level Proficiency or elective course g</td>
<td>4 - 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSI:1600</td>
<td>Success at Iowa</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTS:1001</td>
<td>Introductory Seminar on Actuarial Science</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Attend the Actuarial Science, Risk Management and Analytics Fair during the fall semester to apply for summer internships.

**Spring**
- MATH:1860 Calculus II  
- MATH:2700 Introduction to Linear Algebra  
- GE CLAS Core: Natural Sciences with Lab  
- GE CLAS Core: World Languages Second Level Proficiency or elective course  

**Second Year**
- Fall
  - MATH:2850 Calculus III  
  - STAT:3100 Introduction to Mathematical Statistics I  
  - GE CLAS Core: Social Sciences  
  - RHET:1030 or ENGL:1200 Rhetoric or The Interpretation of Literature  
  - GE CLAS Core: World Languages Second Level Proficiency or elective course  

**Third Year**
- Any Semester
  - The curriculum shown in the third and fourth years on this plan begins upon acceptance into the Actuarial Science BS program.

**Fall**
- ACTS:4280 Life Contingencies I  
- STAT:4560 Statistics for Risk Modeling  
- STAT:4540 Statistical Learning  
- GE CLAS Core: International and Global Issues  
- Elective course

**Fourth Year**
- Fall
  - ACTS:6480 Loss Distributions  
  - ACTS:6580 Credibility and Survival Analysis  
  - GE CLAS Core: Values and Culture  
  - Elective course  
  - Elective course

Degree Application: apply on MyUI before deadline (typically in February for spring, September for fall)

**Spring**
- ACTS:6480 Life Contingencies I  
- ACTS:4540 Statistical Learning  
- GE CLAS Core: Historical Perspectives  

a The Academic Advising Center advises Actuarial Science Interest students on prerequisite course planning. Students are advised for success, based on academic strength, not necessarily for a four year plan. Prerequisites may take more than one and a half years to complete.

b Enrollment in math courses requires completion of a placement exam.

c Fulfills a major requirement and may fulfill a GE requirement.

d Students who have completed four years of a single language in high school have satisfied the GE CLAS Core World Languages requirement. Enrollment in world languages courses requires a placement exam, unless enrolling in a first-semester-level course.

e GE CLAS Core courses may be completed in any order unless used as a prerequisite for another course. Students should consult with an advisor about the best sequencing of courses.

f Typically this course is offered in fall semesters only. Check MyUI for course availability since offerings are subject to change.

g Ordinarily, students apply for admission to the actuarial science major in the fall semester of their sophomore year, after they have taken MATH:3770 or MATH:2850, and STAT:3100. Students should apply no later than the end of the spring semester of their junior year. For further details and application instructions, see your advisor and the Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science website.

h Typically this course is offered in spring semesters only. Check MyUI for course availability since offerings are subject to change.

i Restricted to Actuarial Science Majors. For further details and application instructions, see your advisor and the Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science website.

j This course is a recommended elective, not a requirement.

k This course may count for VEE credit.

l Students may use elective courses to earn credit towards the total s.h. required for graduation or to complete a double major, minors, or certificates.

m Students may choose to complete ACTS:6480 and ACTS:6580 (both courses) instead of ACTS:4280, except honors students, who must complete all three courses.
Please see Academic Calendar, Office of the Registrar website for current degree application deadlines. Students should apply for a degree for the session in which all requirements will be met. For any questions on appropriate timing, contact your academic advisor. For more information visit http://commencement.uiowa.edu/. If applicable search for "Early and Late Participation" to find this page (e.g. walk in graduation ceremony in May, degree conferral in August).

**Career Advancement**

Most actuaries are employed by insurance companies or employee benefits consulting firms. They have responsibilities related to all phases of product development and maintenance for their companies. Individual employers who need guidance in establishing employee insurance and retirement programs also hire actuarial science graduates. A growing number of actuaries work in asset/liability management, some in investment firms, and others in insurance companies.

Actuaries have always been in high demand and earn good salaries. Most Iowa graduates find work as actuaries, but some become financial managers and teachers. They take positions in locations all across the country, often in large metropolitan areas.

The Pomerantz Career Center offers multiple resources to help students find internships and jobs.