

Business Analyst vs Data Analyst

techfitflow.com | Role comparison, SQL ladder, RACI, metric template, 90-day skill-gap plan

1. Role comparison

Dimension	Business analyst	Data analyst
Core question	What should we build or change, and why?	What happened, why, what next?
Main outputs	Requirements, stories, process maps	Queries, analyses, dashboards
Core skills	Elicitation, modeling, traceability	SQL, statistics, visualization
Common tools	Jira, Confluence, Visio, Excel	SQL, Excel, Python/R, Power BI, Tableau
SQL depth	Read, profile, verify	Write, tune, maintain
Reference	IIBA BABOK Guide v3	Team data governance rules
Success measure	Solution meets the stated need	Decision makers act on trusted findings

2. SQL ladder

Level	Skills	BA	DA
1	SELECT, WHERE, JOIN, ORDER BY	Minimum	Entry
2	GROUP BY, CASE, CTEs, date filters	Working	Daily
3	Window functions, reconciliations	Helpful	Expected mid-level
4	Tuning, modeling, stored logic	Rare	Senior

3. Which path fits?

- [] Energized by clarifying needs, process, change: business analyst. Add SQL basics.
- [] Energized by patterns in data: data analyst. Add stakeholder and presenting skills.
- [] Not yet comfortable with facilitation: practice workshops; consider systems analyst.
- [] Not yet comfortable with SQL and statistics: build both; consider BI analyst.

4. RACI for a reporting project (R, A, C, I)

Activity	BA	DA	QA	Owner
Elicit question and decision	R	C	I	A
Write metric definition	R	C	C	A
Identify sources and grain	C	R	C	I
Write and tune query	I	R	C	I
Reconcile to source	C	R	A	I
Write test cases	R	C	A	I
Approve definition change	R	C	C	A

5. Metric definition template (sign before building)

Field	Your entry
Metric name	
Decision it supports	
Numerator (exact events)	
Denominator (exact population)	
Exclusions and who owns the list	
Grain and period	
Source tables and fields	
Refresh and cutoff	
Owner, version, effective date	
Reconciles to	

6. Starter SQL

```
-- BA: is the field populated, and what values exist?
SELECT d.NAME AS disposition, COUNT(*) AS discharges
FROM PAT_ENC_HSP h LEFT JOIN ZC_DISCH_DISP d ON d.DISCH_DISP_C = h.DISCH_DISP_C
WHERE h.HOSP_DISCH_TIME >= '2026-09-01' AND h.HOSP_DISCH_TIME < '2026-10-01'
GROUP BY d.NAME ORDER BY discharges DESC;
```

```
-- DA: monthly volume and change
LAG(discharges) OVER (ORDER BY month_start) -- aggregate by month first
```

7. 90-day skill-gap plan

Month	BA moving toward data	DA moving toward business analysis
1	Profile every requirement with a query	Write 3 user stories with acceptance criteria
2	Learn aggregation, CTEs, window functions	Facilitate one workshop; produce a process map
3	Build one dashboard end to end and present	Build a traceability matrix for one release
Evidence	3 queries, 1 presentation	3 stories, 1 map, 1 matrix

Skill-gap worksheet: rate each skill 1-4 now and for your target: SQL ____ Requirements ____ Visualization ____ Facilitation ____
Statistics ____ Domain ____

Sources: IIBA BABOK Guide v3; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook. Apply minimum necessary to any patient data.