

EDUCATION

PURSuing A DEGREE IN BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

TASFAH LIAKAT

At present, artificial intelligence (AI), big data, and digital transformation are reshaping industries. As a result, the demand for professionals who can speak both the language of business and technology has grown bigger than ever. The business and technology management (BTM) degree came into existence in order to tackle this growing demand and bridge the gap between business and technology education.

Fatima Meher, a junior lecturer in the Department of Business and Technology Management at Islamic University of Technology (IUT), explains that the programme is designed to combine both business and technology in response to modern industry demands.

"In today's corporate world, no business can function without technology, so the programme aims to combine both. Our students are required to take basic courses from the engineering programmes, with a particular emphasis on computer science and engineering (CSE)-related courses," she says.

Naznin Akther, an assistant professor at the same department, notes that this interdisciplinary structure sets the BTM degree apart. She explains that while a traditional Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) graduate may not know how to incorporate technology into business applications, BTM takes a different approach.

"Topics typically covered in CSE, such as AI, machine learning, and database management, are also taught in BTM in an integrated way with business, taking it to a different level," she states.

Akther adds: "We focus on areas like sensitive data analysis and predictive modelling. While CSE students have programming knowledge, there is often a gap in applying that knowledge within the business sector. BTM aims to bridge this gap, making graduates more competitive in the job market."

According to Akther, the programme is designed to bridge an existing gap in the workforce—technically skilled graduates who struggle with business application and business graduates who lack technological fluency.

WHAT THE CURRICULUM LOOKS LIKE

The Department of Business and Technology Management at IUT, established in 2017, is the only university department in Bangladesh offering a BTM degree. Examining IUT's BTM curriculum,

therefore, provides the best insight into what a BTM programme entails.

The programme consists of 155.25 credits in total, which includes 21 business core courses, five business core lab courses, and three business elective courses. Technical proficiency is developed through nine technology courses and 10 technology lab courses.

The BTM curriculum is supported by six allied courses in economics and mathematics and five general education courses, along with their respective lab components. It also includes a mandatory 12-week internship where students apply their learning in real-world settings.

Within this broad curriculum, specific courses best reflect the essence of BTM. "Database management, business systems analysis and design, business data analysis and machine learning, and AI in

competitions, while others collaborate with engineering students in areas like blockchain or robotics."

CAREER PROSPECTS

BTM graduates can work across a wide range of roles in different industries, including government and non-government sectors. "Our graduates can work as business executives, business analysts, or in general management roles similar to traditional BBA graduates," Meher notes. "They can also pursue careers in technical roles like data analysts, security analysts, data scientists, product designers, and programmers."

This is well reflected in alumni experiences. Abrar Zahin Bin Saif, a senior associate at Airtel Marketing, says,



"Graduates thrive in roles such as product management, business development, business analytics, and sales analytics, while also excelling as management trainee officers (MTOs), sales managers, and human resource business partners (HRBPs). Our alumni are currently working in leading organisations, including Robi Axiata PLC, Unilever Bangladesh Limited, British American Tobacco Bangladesh (BATB), bKash Limited, City Bank PLC, Singer Bangladesh Limited, and so on."

Fariha Tasneem, an information analyst at ACI PLC, explains that this success comes from understanding both business and technology: "We often hear the saying, 'A jack of all trades is a master of none; but oftentimes better than a master of one.' I

believe BTM stands for that—you are not a master of one thing, but you know a lot of things and use that to your advantage."

"My current role shows what BTM is meant to do—a bridge that translates business requirements into something developers can build and explains technical outcomes in a way business teams can understand," Tasneem adds.

The ability to translate between business and technology has also increased market demand for BTM graduates. Mashkhawath Abedin Mahi, a business analyst at iFarmer, highlights their strong employability. "Most BTM graduates secure a job before completing their degree because of the market-ready curriculum and the mandatory three-month internship."

For those who do not secure positions before graduating, employment opportunities follow shortly after. Meher shares, "Around 96 percent of our graduates find employment within three months of graduation."

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES AND SCOPES ABROAD

A BTM programme also provides a strong foundation for students who want to pursue research or higher studies. Current research areas include data science and artificial intelligence, big data analysis, machine learning in finance, cloud computing, fintech, management information systems, blockchain, logistics and supply chain management, technology adoption, credit risk modelling, consumer behaviour, marketing, and so on.

"Graduates typically pursue an MSc abroad rather than an MBA if they plan to continue to a PhD," says Meher. "Business analytics is among the most popular choices."

A BTM degree also opens up opportunities beyond Bangladesh. "Our graduates have gone on to work at companies such as Snap Inc. and KPMG," Mahi shares.

"Many IUT BTM alumni are pursuing MSc degrees in business or data analytics in countries like Australia and the USA, which highlights the programme's strong global relevance," adds Saif.

As industries continue to evolve at the intersection of business and technology, the value of a BTM education becomes increasingly clear. For students weighing their academic options, BTM offers a distinctive path: one that doesn't require choosing between technical expertise and business acumen, but instead cultivates both.