

POSITION DESCRIPTION



Principal Data Scientist

POSITION DETAILS

Position Title	Principal Data Scientist
Classification	HEW 9
Position Number	7010365
School/Office	Data Office
Division	Division of Operations

POSITION PURPOSE

The Principal Data Scientist leads the University's student load forecasting capability, providing reliable analysis and specialist advice to inform enrolment, financial and strategic planning. Working under broad direction from the Director, the position is accountable for the design, delivery and quality assurance of institutional forecasting models and scenarios. It exercises independent professional judgement in resolving complex analytical issues, establishing forecasting standards and advising senior leaders on uncertainty and the implications of alternative planning decisions. The position provides specialist leadership across organisational boundaries, coordinating stakeholder contributions and directing technical work to support a consistent institutional approach to forecasting.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Lead the University's student load forecasting program, delivering timely projections and scenario analysis to support institutional planning and decision-making.
- Determine and develop forecasting methodologies that integrate student demand, progression and institutional planning assumptions.
- Establish and maintain standards for forecasting quality, validation and governance, ensuring outputs are transparent, defensible and fit for purpose.
- Lead engagement across academic and professional portfolios to evaluate and reconcile planning assumptions, resolve complex issues and advise on material differences.
- Provide authoritative specialist advice to senior leaders and governance committees on forecast outcomes, uncertainty and implications for enrolment, funding and financial planning.
- Provide validated forecasting analysis and assumptions to support regulatory and funding reporting.
- Lead continuous improvement of the forecasting capability, directing technical contributions from analysts and specialist suppliers and strengthening its use across the University.

QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS

Essential

- Relevant postgraduate qualification with extensive experience, or an equivalent combination of qualifications and advanced professional expertise.
- Extensive experience leading complex forecasting or analytical modelling in a large organisation and applying the results to strategic and operational decisions.
- Advanced expertise in statistical modelling, scenario analysis and evaluating and communicating uncertainty.
- Demonstrated ability to exercise independent judgement and resolve complex problems where evidence is incomplete and decisions have significant organisational consequences.
- Demonstrated ability to establish analytical standards, lead specialist work and deliver improvements across organisational boundaries.
- Strong stakeholder engagement and communication skills, including the ability to influence senior stakeholders and translate complex analysis into clear advice.
- Advanced programming and data management skills relevant to enterprise forecasting and analytical systems.

Desirable

- Experience in higher education student load planning, funding arrangements or institutional research.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

This position reports to: Director, Data Insights, Analysis and Reporting

Key internal relationships:

- Data and Business Intelligence leadership
- Chief Data Officer and Operations leadership
- Finance, Strategy and Planning and executive governance committees
- Faculties, Schools, Offices and Divisions
- Admissions, Marketing, International and Student Administration
- The College, Digital Services and enterprise data teams

Key external relationships:

- Higher education regulators and government agencies, where authorised
- Analytics, technology and consulting vendors
- Sector planning, institutional research and forecasting networks

CHALLENGES

- Delivering timely and defensible forecasts in an environment of complex data, changing policy and uncertain student demand.
- Reconciling competing stakeholder assumptions and priorities to establish a consistent institutional planning outlook.
- Balancing analytical rigour, transparency and practical usefulness where forecast outcomes have significant financial and operational implications.

UNIVERSITY EXPECTATIONS

The University expects that all employees are aware of, and comply with legislation and Western's

policies and procedures relevant to the position, including but not limited to:

- Code of Conduct
- Work Health and Safety and Wellbeing Management System
- Enterprise Agreement or Award
- Anti-discrimination principles, Equal Employment Opportunity and staff and student equity.

Approved by:

Date: