

Position Description

Data Architect & AI Lead



The Cooperative Bank

Our purpose

Our long-term aspirations are to develop more long-term value-based relationships with our customers, and for our people to grow and develop so that they are better off working at the Co-operative.

Our values

Our values represent who we are, how we think, and how we behave to bring these to life every day. You'll demonstrate behaviours that define our core values and support an inclusive culture with a strong teamwork spirit.



About the team

The Payments, Core and Data team plays a crucial role in driving The Co-operative Bank's strategic transformation. This team is responsible for modernising and maintaining our payments, data and core banking platforms to ensure they are secure, scalable, and aligned with our strategic aspirations. Working collaboratively with stakeholders across the organisation, the team translates business needs into innovative technology solutions that support growth, compliance, and customer value.

The team is part of The Co-operative Bank's Technology and Change team, which is responsible for delivering innovative, secure, and customer-focused technology solutions. Our team plays a crucial role in ensuring the Bank can make data-driven decisions, provide personalised customer experiences, and drive operational efficiency through the smart use of data and AI.

Purpose of this position

As the Data Architect and AI Lead, you will play a pivotal role in shaping the bank's future by developing the vision for data architecture, driving enterprise-wide adoption of AI, and working with a team of data and AI professionals. You will be responsible for advising on the execution of the data strategy, roadmap, and governance frameworks that enable the bank to make informed, data-driven decisions.

You will lead the design of the data models which Co-op uses for storing data including leading the development of strong data modelling capabilities.

This role requires a technical visionary who can contribute to the design of the data systems, ensure scalable and secure data management, and lead the integration of AI-driven solutions that enhance customer experiences and drive operational efficiencies.

As the Data Architect and AI Lead, you will lead the team of Data Engineers and Data Analytics Engineers in driving data-driven innovation that enhances customer experiences and improves operational efficiencies. You will own and execute the bank's data and AI strategy to ensure data is treated as a strategic asset, supporting better business decisions and customer outcomes, and establish policies and procedures to ensure data accuracy, consistency and security

You will oversee the development and implementation of robust data governance frameworks while embedding AI capabilities that create positive customer experiences and drive innovation. This will include ensuring data from across the business is integrated and accessible across the organisation

In this role, you will contribute to fostering a culture of collaboration and continuous learning. You will play a key role in driving the bank's transformation agenda, ensuring that data and AI capabilities align with the bank's vision of helping New Zealanders get ahead financially.

We are looking for a passionate Lead who thrives on using data to unlock value for customers and the bank. This will ensure that The Co-operative Bank continues to offer market-leading services and products that reflect our commitment to putting people first.

Position reports to: Head of Payments, Core and Data

Challenges and opportunities of this role

- Balancing the need to maintain existing data systems while driving a strategic transformation towards modern data architecture and AI adoption.
- Ensuring data from across the business is integrated and accessible across the organisation
- Ensuring data is accessible, accurate, and secure to support improved customer and business insights.
- Establishing and embedding a strong data stewardship culture across the organization to ensure data is treated as a strategic asset.
- Collaborating with cross-functional teams to integrate AI-driven solutions in ways that align with our values and customer focus.
- Embedding AI capabilities that support customer outcomes in a highly regulated environment
- Managing multiple stakeholder expectations while driving initiatives that simplify and enhance data processes across the bank.
- Building a future-ready data team capable of supporting the bank's ongoing growth and digital evolution.

How you will contribute:

What you'll do	Success will mean
Data Engineering Leadership	
<p>Provide leadership to a team of data engineers and data analytics engineers by mentoring and driving the adoption of modern engineering practices such as DevOps, CI/CD pipelines, and automated testing.</p> <p>Champion data governance, quality, and security to ensure robust and effective data solutions.</p> <p>Act as a trusted advisor, translating technical insights into strategic recommendations for senior leadership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead, mentor, and develop a team of data engineers. • Drive adoption of modern data engineering practices, including DevOps for data, CI/CD pipelines, and automated testing. • Champion data governance, data quality, and data security best practices. • Contribute to building a culture of innovation, collaboration, and continuous learning. • Help build a data-driven mindset across the organization, ensuring teams leverage data and AI to drive better customer and business outcomes. • Act as a trusted advisor to the Head of Payments, Core and Data and executive leadership team, translating complex data and AI concepts into actionable business strategies.
Data Strategy & Technical Vision	
<p>Take a lead role in developing the bank's data strategy to align with business goals, customer needs, and regulatory requirements.</p> <p>Lead the design of the data models which Co-op uses for storing data including leading the development of strong data modelling capabilities.</p> <p>Contribute to the development of modern data architecture that enables secure, scalable, and efficient data systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help define and drive the bank's data strategy and roadmap, ensuring alignment with business goals, regulatory requirements, and customer needs. • Play a lead role in the transformation towards a modern data architecture, leveraging cloud, real-time analytics, and advanced data management practices. • Advocate for and implement data democratization, ensuring data is accessible, reliable, and actionable across the organization.
AI Strategy & Adoption	
<p>Contribute to defining and implementing the AI strategy, driving responsible AI adoption to improve customer experiences and operational efficiency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Head of Payments, Core and Data to define and own the AI strategy and roadmap, driving enterprise-wide adoption of AI technologies to enhance customer experiences and business efficiency. • facilitate processes between technology, and product teams to integrate AI-driven solutions

What you'll do	Success will mean
<p>Collaborate with teams across the bank to embed AI solutions that enhance banking products and services.</p>	<p>into banking products, customer experience and operational processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In conjunction with the Head of Information security establish and govern ethical AI practices, ensuring responsible use of AI models while maintaining compliance with regulatory and security standards. • Explore and implement emerging AI capabilities, such as generative AI, automation, and predictive analytics, to drive innovation and efficiency.
Data Governance, Risk, and Compliance	
<p>Establish robust data governance practices to ensure data quality, integrity, and security.</p> <p>Promote a data stewardship culture across the bank to drive accountability and support compliance with regulatory requirements.</p> <p>Act as the business owner for the data governance framework and work collaboratively across the bank to Ensure data from across the business is integrated and accessible across the organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and oversee a robust data governance framework, ensuring data quality, integrity, security, and compliance with regulatory requirements. • Drive a data stewardship culture, ensuring that data is treated as a strategic asset across the bank. • Collaborate with risk, compliance, and legal teams to uphold data privacy, ethical AI use, and security best practices.
Healthy and safe work environments	
<p>Follow all health and safety policies, standards, emergency procedures and plans.</p> <p>Participate in health and safety activities, training and meetings as required.</p> <p>Reports hazards, near misses, injuries, incidents, and ideas for continuous improvement.</p> <p>Cease work if an unsafe situation arises and seek assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having healthy and safe ways of working. • All workers feel empowered to and aware of opportunities to participate in health and safety activities. • Our people can easily report hazards, near misses, injuries, incidents, and ideas for continuous improvement. • Workers stop work if they feel unsafe and connect with their people leader or other workers for assistance.

Decision making and responsibilities

a) Decisions and/or financial accountabilities:

- Driving operational efficiencies through data and AI innovations.

b) Actions and decisions that are recommended to a higher level of management for approval:

- Recommendations for strategic investments in data and AI capabilities.
- Significant changes to data governance frameworks or risk management approaches.
- Proposals for customer data innovations that require Board-level review.

Qualifications and experience

- Ideally tertiary qualified/working towards a tertiary qualification in information systems (or other relevant qualification).
- Role requires 5-7 years' experience in data architecture, AI, or cloud-based data platforms.
- Experience in data engineering at a senior level
- Experience in mentoring and coaching of technical teams.
- Strong understanding of banking regulations, operational processes, and industry trends.
- Ability to build strong, collaborative relationships with multiple business stakeholders.
- Proven experience leading enterprise-wide data and AI functions within financial services or a regulated industry.

Skills and attributes

Technical Skills

- Expertise in data architecture, AI, cloud-based data platforms, and machine learning.
- Strong track record in developing and executing data strategies and AI roadmaps that drive business value.
- Experience in data engineering, warehouse design and implementation, SQL relational database systems. Snowflake experience desirable.
- Experience designing and governing modern data ecosystems, ensuring security, compliance, and operational resilience.

Personality Attributes

- Ability to influence, engage, and contribute to driving change at an executive level.
- Passion for using data and AI to create meaningful customer experiences and improve financial well-being.
- Adaptable to changing needs, with a willingness to embrace new ideas and ways of working.
- Courageous and resilient in the face of challenges, with the confidence to lead change.

Leadership Skills

You will be expected to demonstrate behaviours from our Leadership skills framework through your actions, the way you work and how you work with others.