

Research Director, Data Science and Automation

Shape the Future of Educational Innovation

Are you ready to lead transformative change in education through cutting-edge data science and automation? Join the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) as our Research Director, Data Science and Automation, and play a pivotal role in shaping the future of assessment and learning.

About ACER

ACER is a globally respected, independent, not-for-profit research organisation committed to improving learning across the lifespan. Since 1930, we've grown into one of the world's leading educational research bodies, with over 450 staff across Australia, Dubai, Kuala Lumpur, London, and New Delhi.

At the heart of our innovation is the Measurement, Analytics and Technologies (MAT) Division, where we harness the power of data science to drive excellence in educational assessment and research.

The Opportunity

This newly created senior leadership role offers a rare opportunity to lead the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Natural Language Processing (NLP), and advanced data science into ACER's world-leading assessment design, analysis, and reporting products and services.

Reporting to the Head of Division, you'll provide strategic direction for applied research and development, driving innovation and efficiency across ACER's products and services. As a key member of our senior leadership team, you'll collaborate across disciplines to deliver impactful, future-focused solutions.

You'll also work closely with the Research Director, Methodology and Measurement, fostering collaboration across complementary areas of expertise.

Key Responsibilities

- Lead the design and delivery of automated data processing, analysis, and reporting tools using modern, interoperable architectures.
- Integrate real-time analytics and visualisation into assessment workflows to enhance adaptivity, monitoring, quality assurance, and reporting.
- Evaluate and apply emerging data science methods to automate assessment feedback, item generation, scoring, standard setting and test assembly.
- Modernise proprietary modelling and analysis software to improve user experience, scalability and performance.
- Drive business development and external engagement for statistical and algorithmic software solutions.

About You

You are a visionary leader with deep technical expertise and a passion for innovation. You bring:

- Internationally recognised expertise in a relevant discipline and a strong record of professional achievement.

- Proven success in applying AI, NLP, and data science to deliver business value.
- Proficiency in machine learning workflows and algorithms (e.g. cross-validation; linear and non-linear models) and programming languages (e.g. R, Python).
- Experience with scalable data systems and distributed computing technologies.
- A track record of leading high-performing technical teams and multidisciplinary projects.
- Strong strategic, organisational, and problem-solving skills.
- Exceptional stakeholder engagement, negotiation, and communication abilities.
- Financial acumen in managing budgets and proposals.
- A commitment to continuous improvement and professional development.

Why Join ACER?

This full-time, 3 year fixed-term senior management position can be based at any of ACER's offices in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide, or Perth. We offer:

- A chance to join a global network of experts driving meaningful change
- A competitive salary plus 17% superannuation
- Access to salary packaging options
- Generous leave entitlements, including 3 additional paid days over Christmas
- Flexible, hybrid work arrangements and the option to purchase additional leave
- Ongoing professional development opportunities
- Access to wellbeing initiatives including flu vaccinations, Headspace for Work, and confidential counselling services

Please visit our career site to learn more about our benefits.

Apply Now

For a full copy of the position description or to apply, click on 'Apply' or visit our career site <https://www.acer.org/au/about-us/careers>.

Applications will close at midnight (AEST) on Wednesday 12 November 2025.

ACER is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to actively fostering a diverse and inclusive work environment. We are dedicated to attracting, retaining and developing our people regardless of gender identity, cultural and faith background, sexual orientation, disability and/or age. ACER welcomes applications from all sectors of the community.

ACER encourages applications from the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community.

ACER is committed to supporting candidates with disability through provision of adjustments during the recruitment and selection process and throughout employment. To request or discuss adjustment requirements, please contact: p&c@acer.org