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MARKET INTELLIGENCE • 2026

Data & AI Salary Guide 2026

What should you pay data and AI professionals in 2026 — and what will it take to hire and keep them? Permanent salary benchmarks and contractor day rates for employers across data engineering, data science, machine learning and the fast-growing generative-AI layer, drawn from market data spanning 385,000+ data and AI professionals.

385k+

DATA & AI PROFESSIONALS IN MARKET DATA

11 markets

NORTH AMERICA, UK, EUROPE, APAC BENCHMARKS

64%

INTEND TO UPSKILL IN AI THIS YEAR

Pearson Carter — employer salary benchmarks & contractor day rates. Figures show Lower, Medium and Upper ranges; monthly markets are labelled. © Pearson Carter 2026.

Salary benchmarks & contractor rates by region

United States

Permanent salaries — United States

Role	Lower	Medium	Upper	Contractor rate (day)
Chief Data Officer	\$253,000	\$297,000	\$457,000	\$2,025 – \$3,115
Chief AI Officer	\$248,000	\$303,000	\$396,000	\$2,065 – \$2,700
Head of Data	\$198,000	\$231,000	\$330,000	\$1,575 – \$2,250
Head of AI	\$209,000	\$259,000	\$314,000	\$1,765 – \$2,140
AI Architect	\$162,000	\$200,000	\$242,000	\$1,450 – \$1,585
ML Architect	\$162,000	\$195,000	\$237,000	\$1,450 – \$1,585
Data Architect	\$165,000	\$194,000	\$229,000	\$1,275 – \$1,410
Machine Learning Engineer	\$140,000	\$174,000	\$209,000	\$1,275 – \$1,410
MLOps Engineer	\$135,000	\$171,000	\$204,000	\$1,190 – \$1,320
Data Engineer	\$143,000	\$167,000	\$201,000	\$1,100 – \$1,230
Data Scientist	\$130,000	\$165,000	\$207,000	\$1,055 – \$1,145
AI Engineer	\$138,000	\$165,000	\$204,000	\$1,275 – \$1,410
Prompt Engineer	\$132,000	\$162,000	\$195,000	\$1,275 – \$1,410
Data Security	\$127,000	\$157,000	\$187,000	\$1,190 – \$1,320
AI Governance & Ethics Specialist	\$113,000	\$143,000	\$176,000	\$1,055 – \$1,145
D&A / AI Translator	\$116,000	\$143,000	\$171,000	\$1,055 – \$1,145
Data Governance	\$110,000	\$140,000	\$171,000	\$1,055 – \$1,145
Data Analyst	\$109,000	\$133,000	\$163,000	\$705 – \$790
Business Intelligence	\$102,000	\$124,000	\$146,000	\$835 – \$970

United Kingdom

Permanent salaries — United Kingdom

Role	Lower	Medium	Upper	Contractor rate (day)
Chief AI Officer	£160,000	£204,000	£259,000	£1,540 – £1,760

Role	Lower	Medium	Upper	Contractor rate (day)
Chief Data Officer	£154,000	£176,000	£220,000	£1,320 – £1,540
Head of AI	£127,000	£160,000	£198,000	£1,320 – £1,540
Head of Data	£121,000	£138,000	£154,000	£1,100 – £1,320
AI Architect	£107,000	£138,000	£171,000	£1,075 – £1,265
ML Architect	£102,000	£127,000	£157,000	£980 – £1,135
AI Engineer	£83,000	£105,000	£132,000	£815 – £970
Machine Learning Engineer	£77,000	£99,000	£127,000	£760 – £915
MLOps Engineer	£77,000	£99,000	£121,000	£730 – £880
Prompt Engineer	£80,000	£99,000	£127,000	£760 – £915
Data Security	£72,000	£91,000	£116,000	£675 – £825
Data Governance	£66,000	£85,000	£107,000	£610 – £750
Data Scientist	£66,000	£83,000	£93,000	£665 – £805
D&A / AI Translator	£63,000	£83,000	£105,000	£610 – £750
Data Engineer	£64,000	£78,000	£96,000	£705 – £860
Data Architect	£80,000	£100,000	£113,000	£870 – £1,025
AI Ethicist	£74,000	£94,000	£118,000	£705 – £860
Business Intelligence	£51,000	£66,000	£83,000	£540 – £660
Data Analyst	£47,000	£61,000	£79,000	£475 – £585

Europe

Germany (€) — permanent salaries, annual

Role	Lower	Medium	Upper	Contractor rate (day)
Chief AI Officer	€132,000	€176,000	€220,000	€1,200 – €1,500
Head of AI	€116,000	€149,000	€187,000	€1,015 – €1,275
AI Architect	€99,000	€121,000	€143,000	€1,450 – €1,585
ML Architect	€94,000	€110,000	€132,000	€1,320 – €1,410
Head of Data	€88,000	€99,000	€116,000	€675 – €790
AI Ethicist / Governance Specialist	€77,000	€96,000	€121,000	€1,055 – €1,145
MLOps Engineer	€77,000	€98,000	€124,000	€1,165 – €1,230

Role	Lower	Medium	Upper	Contractor rate (day)
Data Architect	€77,000	€94,000	€110,000	€1,100 – €1,320
D&A / AI Translator	€74,000	€94,000	€116,000	€1,055 – €1,145
Prompt Engineer	€74,000	€94,000	€118,000	€1,080 – €1,145
Data Scientist	€66,000	€88,000	€99,000	€990 – €1,145
Data Security	€66,000	€88,000	€110,000	€1,055 – €1,145
AI Engineer	€66,000	€83,000	€99,000	€1,035 – €1,230
Machine Learning Engineer	€66,000	€83,000	€99,000	€1,055 – €1,145
Business Intelligence	€66,000	€83,000	€99,000	€970 – €1,055
Data Governance	€66,000	€83,000	€99,000	€1,230 – €1,320
Data Engineer	€61,000	€83,000	€94,000	€1,035 – €1,230
Data Analyst	€61,000	€77,000	€94,000	€525 – €640

France (€) — permanent salaries, annual

Role	Lower	Medium	Upper	Contractor rate (day)
Chief AI Officer	€121,000	€154,000	€198,000	€1,050 – €1,350
Chief Data Officer	€99,000	€121,000	€138,000	€825 – €940
Head of AI	€94,000	€116,000	€149,000	€790 – €1,015
AI Architect	€74,000	€96,000	€127,000	€1,090 – €1,175
ML Architect	€72,000	€91,000	€116,000	€1,005 – €1,090
Data Scientist	€72,000	€81,000	€89,000	€830 – €1,000
Data Architect	€66,000	€88,000	€110,000	€910 – €1,045
MLOps Engineer	€63,000	€80,000	€102,000	€885 – €1,000
Data Security	€66,000	€83,000	€99,000	€840 – €990
AI Engineer	€61,000	€81,000	€103,000	€885 – €1,000
D&A / AI Translator	€61,000	€81,000	€103,000	€720 – €825
AI Ethicist	€61,000	€81,000	€103,000	€705 – €825
Machine Learning Engineer	€61,000	€77,000	€99,000	€870 – €1,000
Data Governance	€55,000	€77,000	€99,000	€775 – €935
Data Engineer	€59,000	€72,000	€85,000	€750 – €880
Prompt Engineer	€50,000	€72,000	€88,000	€680 – €825

Role	Lower	Medium	Upper	Contractor rate (day)
Data Analyst	€53,000	€66,000	€81,000	€615 – €770
Business Intelligence	€47,000	€61,000	€77,000	€655 – €770

Spain (€) — permanent salaries, annual

Role	Lower	Medium	Upper	Contractor rate (day)
Chief AI Officer	€110,000	€154,000	€220,000	€1,050 – €1,500
Head of AI	€88,000	€138,000	€165,000	€940 – €1,125
Chief Data Officer	€99,000	€127,000	€154,000	€865 – €1,050
AI Architect	€72,000	€99,000	€121,000	€675 – €825
ML Architect	€66,000	€94,000	€110,000	€640 – €750
Head of Data	€72,000	€88,000	€105,000	€600 – €715
AI Engineer	€55,000	€83,000	€105,000	€565 – €715
Machine Learning Engineer	€53,000	€77,000	€99,000	€525 – €675
MLOps Engineer	€55,000	€77,000	€99,000	€525 – €675
AI Ethicist	€50,000	€66,000	€88,000	€450 – €600
Data Security	€44,000	€61,000	€83,000	€415 – €565
Prompt Engineer	€44,000	€61,000	€83,000	€415 – €565
Data Architect	€64,000	€77,000	€80,000	€525 – €550
Data Engineer	€52,000	€58,000	€64,000	€400 – €435
Data Scientist	€45,000	€57,000	€63,000	€390 – €430
Data Analyst	€36,000	€57,000	€66,000	€390 – €450
Data Governance	€42,000	€55,000	€77,000	€375 – €525
D&A / AI Translator	€39,000	€53,000	€72,000	€360 – €490
Business Intelligence	€36,000	€49,000	€84,000	€330 – €575

Poland (zł) — permanent salaries, monthly

Role	Lower	Medium	Upper	Contractor rate (day)
Chief AI Officer	zł39,000	zł58,000	zł83,000	zł4,725 – zł6,750
Chief Data Officer	zł39,000	zł58,000	zł83,000	zł4,725 – zł6,750
Head of AI	zł30,000	zł41,000	zł58,000	zł3,375 – zł4,725
Head of Data	zł30,000	zł41,000	zł58,000	zł3,375 – zł4,725

Role	Lower	Medium	Upper	Contractor rate (day)
AI Architect	zł29,000	zł33,000	zł42,000	zł2,700 – zł3,420
ML Architect	zł26,000	zł32,000	zł40,000	zł2,655 – zł3,285
Data Architect	zł26,000	zł31,000	zł40,000	zł2,520 – zł3,240
Data Engineer	zł22,000	zł26,000	zł33,000	zł2,160 – zł2,700
AI Engineer	zł22,000	zł26,000	zł33,000	zł2,160 – zł2,700
MLOps Engineer	zł20,000	zł25,000	zł30,000	zł2,070 – zł2,475
Machine Learning Engineer	zł17,000	zł25,000	zł30,000	zł2,070 – zł2,455
Data Scientist	zł18,000	zł24,000	zł30,000	zł1,980 – zł2,430
Prompt Engineer	zł17,000	zł19,000	zł26,000	zł1,530 – zł2,160
Data Security	zł13,000	zł19,000	zł28,000	zł1,530 – zł2,295
Data Governance	zł13,000	zł18,000	zł25,000	zł1,440 – zł2,025
AI Ethicist	zł13,000	zł17,000	zł25,000	zł1,350 – zł2,070
Business Intelligence	zł11,000	zł15,000	zł21,000	zł1,260 – zł1,755
D&A / AI Translator	zł11,000	zł15,000	zł22,000	zł1,260 – zł1,800
Data Analyst	zł10,000	zł14,000	zł22,000	zł1,150 – zł1,800

Australia

Permanent salaries — Australia

Role	Lower	Medium	Upper	Contractor rate (day)
Chief AI Officer	A\$264,000	A\$330,000	A\$396,000	A\$1,650 – A\$1,815
Chief Data Officer	A\$264,000	A\$325,000	A\$385,000	A\$1,760 – A\$1,980
Head of AI	A\$209,000	A\$253,000	A\$303,000	A\$1,515 – A\$1,650
Head of Data	A\$198,000	A\$242,000	A\$275,000	A\$1,650 – A\$1,815
AI Architect	A\$198,000	A\$220,000	A\$253,000	A\$1,375 – A\$1,540
ML Architect	A\$176,000	A\$209,000	A\$242,000	A\$1,265 – A\$1,430
Data Architect	A\$187,000	A\$209,000	A\$242,000	A\$1,130 – A\$1,320
Machine Learning Engineer	A\$143,000	A\$171,000	A\$198,000	A\$1,185 – A\$1,375
MLOps Engineer	A\$143,000	A\$171,000	A\$198,000	A\$1,210 – A\$1,430
AI Engineer	A\$143,000	A\$165,000	A\$220,000	A\$1,210 – A\$1,375

Role	Lower	Medium	Upper	Contractor rate (day)
Data Security	A\$143,000	A\$165,000	A\$187,000	A\$1,075 – A\$1,320
Data Engineer	A\$121,000	A\$154,000	A\$198,000	A\$1,130 – A\$1,320
Data Scientist	A\$99,000	A\$154,000	A\$198,000	A\$1,050 – A\$1,350
Data Governance	A\$127,000	A\$154,000	A\$198,000	A\$1,130 – A\$1,320
Business Intelligence	A\$99,000	A\$132,000	A\$154,000	A\$935 – A\$1,100
AI Ethicist	A\$110,000	A\$132,000	A\$154,000	A\$965 – A\$1,100
Data Analyst	A\$107,000	A\$129,000	A\$151,000	A\$880 – A\$1,030
Prompt Engineer	A\$77,000	A\$99,000	A\$121,000	A\$825 – A\$880
D&A / AI Translator	A\$66,000	A\$77,000	A\$88,000	A\$770 – A\$825

New Zealand

Permanent salaries — New Zealand

Role	Lower	Medium	Upper	Contractor rate (day)
Chief AI Officer	NZ\$259,000	NZ\$308,000	NZ\$363,000	NZ\$2,100 – NZ\$2,475
Chief Data Officer	NZ\$253,000	NZ\$303,000	NZ\$363,000	NZ\$2,065 – NZ\$2,475
Head of AI	NZ\$198,000	NZ\$237,000	NZ\$286,000	NZ\$1,615 – NZ\$1,950
Head of Data	NZ\$187,000	NZ\$226,000	NZ\$259,000	NZ\$1,540 – NZ\$1,765
AI Architect	NZ\$187,000	NZ\$209,000	NZ\$242,000	NZ\$1,425 – NZ\$1,650
ML Architect	NZ\$165,000	NZ\$198,000	NZ\$231,000	NZ\$1,350 – NZ\$1,575
Data Architect	NZ\$176,000	NZ\$198,000	NZ\$231,000	NZ\$1,350 – NZ\$1,575
Machine Learning Engineer	NZ\$143,000	NZ\$171,000	NZ\$198,000	NZ\$1,165 – NZ\$1,350
MLOps Engineer	NZ\$143,000	NZ\$171,000	NZ\$198,000	NZ\$1,165 – NZ\$1,350
AI Engineer	NZ\$143,000	NZ\$165,000	NZ\$209,000	NZ\$1,125 – NZ\$1,425
Data Security	NZ\$138,000	NZ\$160,000	NZ\$187,000	NZ\$1,090 – NZ\$1,275
Data Engineer	NZ\$121,000	NZ\$154,000	NZ\$193,000	NZ\$1,050 – NZ\$1,315
Data Scientist	NZ\$99,000	NZ\$154,000	NZ\$193,000	NZ\$1,050 – NZ\$1,315
Data Governance	NZ\$127,000	NZ\$154,000	NZ\$187,000	NZ\$1,050 – NZ\$1,275
Business Intelligence	NZ\$99,000	NZ\$132,000	NZ\$154,000	NZ\$900 – NZ\$1,050
AI Ethicist	NZ\$110,000	NZ\$132,000	NZ\$154,000	NZ\$900 – NZ\$1,050

Role	Lower	Medium	Upper	Contractor rate (day)
Data Analyst	NZ\$105,000	NZ\$127,000	NZ\$149,000	NZ\$865 – NZ\$1,015
Prompt Engineer	NZ\$77,000	NZ\$99,000	NZ\$121,000	NZ\$675 – NZ\$825
D&A / AI Translator	NZ\$66,000	NZ\$77,000	NZ\$88,000	NZ\$525 – NZ\$600

Canada

Permanent salaries — Canada

Role	Lower	Medium	Upper	Contractor rate (day)
Chief Data Officer	C\$215,000	C\$252,000	C\$388,000	C\$1,720 – C\$2,645
Chief AI Officer	C\$211,000	C\$258,000	C\$337,000	C\$1,760 – C\$2,300
Head of Data	C\$168,000	C\$196,000	C\$281,000	C\$1,335 – C\$1,915
Head of AI	C\$178,000	C\$220,000	C\$267,000	C\$1,500 – C\$1,820
AI Architect	C\$138,000	C\$170,000	C\$206,000	C\$1,160 – C\$1,405
ML Architect	C\$138,000	C\$166,000	C\$201,000	C\$1,130 – C\$1,370
Data Architect	C\$140,000	C\$165,000	C\$195,000	C\$1,125 – C\$1,330
Machine Learning Engineer	C\$119,000	C\$148,000	C\$178,000	C\$1,010 – C\$1,215
MLOps Engineer	C\$115,000	C\$145,000	C\$173,000	C\$990 – C\$1,180
Data Engineer	C\$122,000	C\$142,000	C\$171,000	C\$970 – C\$1,165
Data Scientist	C\$111,000	C\$140,000	C\$176,000	C\$955 – C\$1,200
AI Engineer	C\$117,000	C\$140,000	C\$173,000	C\$955 – C\$1,180
Prompt Engineer	C\$112,000	C\$138,000	C\$166,000	C\$940 – C\$1,130
Data Security	C\$108,000	C\$133,000	C\$159,000	C\$905 – C\$1,085
AI Governance & Ethics Specialist	C\$96,000	C\$122,000	C\$150,000	C\$830 – C\$1,025
D&A / AI Translator	C\$99,000	C\$122,000	C\$145,000	C\$830 – C\$990
Data Governance	C\$94,000	C\$119,000	C\$145,000	C\$810 – C\$990
Data Analyst	C\$93,000	C\$113,000	C\$139,000	C\$770 – C\$950
Business Intelligence	C\$87,000	C\$105,000	C\$124,000	C\$715 – C\$845

Singapore

Permanent salaries — Singapore (monthly)

Role	Lower	Medium	Upper	Contractor rate (day)
Chief AI Officer	S\$19,000	S\$25,000	S\$32,000	S\$2,050 – S\$2,655
Chief Data Officer	S\$19,000	S\$24,000	S\$30,000	S\$2,005 – S\$2,475
Head of Data	S\$17,000	S\$22,000	S\$32,000	S\$1,800 – S\$2,590
Head of AI	S\$14,000	S\$20,000	S\$27,000	S\$1,645 – S\$2,205
AI Architect	S\$11,000	S\$14,000	S\$17,000	S\$1,150 – S\$1,420
Data Scientist	S\$10,000	S\$14,000	S\$17,000	S\$1,125 – S\$1,350
ML Architect	S\$10,000	S\$13,000	S\$16,000	S\$1,080 – S\$1,330
Data Architect	S\$10,000	S\$12,000	S\$15,000	S\$990 – S\$1,215
AI Engineer	S\$9,000	S\$12,000	S\$15,000	S\$970 – S\$1,215
Machine Learning Engineer	S\$9,000	S\$12,000	S\$15,000	S\$945 – S\$1,195
MLOps Engineer	S\$9,000	S\$11,000	S\$14,000	S\$925 – S\$1,150
Data Engineer	S\$8,000	S\$11,000	S\$13,000	S\$880 – S\$1,080
Data Analyst	S\$7,000	S\$10,000	S\$13,000	S\$855 – S\$1,105
Data Security	S\$8,000	S\$10,000	S\$14,000	S\$855 – S\$1,170
Data Governance	S\$8,000	S\$10,000	S\$13,000	S\$810 – S\$1,080
D&A / AI Translator	S\$7,000	S\$10,000	S\$13,000	S\$810 – S\$1,035
Prompt Engineer	S\$7,000	S\$10,000	S\$12,000	S\$790 – S\$1,015
AI Ethicist	S\$7,000	S\$10,000	S\$12,000	S\$790 – S\$1,015
Business Intelligence	S\$7,000	S\$9,000	S\$12,000	S\$720 – S\$970

Japan

Permanent salaries — Japan (annual)

Role	Lower	Medium	Upper	Contractor rate (day)
Chief AI Officer	¥19,800,000	¥28,960,000	¥39,240,000	¥197,000 – ¥268,000
Head of AI	¥14,660,000	¥24,940,000	¥28,600,000	¥170,000 – ¥195,000
Chief Data Officer	¥18,340,000	¥24,560,000	¥38,500,000	¥167,000 – ¥263,000

Role	Lower	Medium	Upper	Contractor rate (day)
Head of Data	¥13,560,000	¥18,340,000	¥28,240,000	¥125,000 – ¥193,000
AI Engineer	¥8,910,000	¥16,500,000	¥19,060,000	¥113,000 – ¥130,000
ML Architect	¥8,610,000	¥16,310,000	¥17,790,000	¥111,000 – ¥121,000
Data Architect	¥8,990,000	¥15,590,000	¥20,710,000	¥106,000 – ¥141,000
Data Scientist	¥7,890,000	¥15,590,000	¥20,900,000	¥106,000 – ¥143,000
Data Governance	¥8,910,000	¥15,590,000	¥20,160,000	¥106,000 – ¥137,000
Business Intelligence	¥6,600,000	¥14,850,000	¥18,150,000	¥101,000 – ¥124,000
AI Architect	¥8,610,000	¥14,490,000	¥18,510,000	¥99,000 – ¥126,000
MLOps Engineer	¥8,140,000	¥13,780,000	¥18,700,000	¥94,000 – ¥128,000
Data Security	¥9,540,000	¥13,390,000	¥19,800,000	¥91,000 – ¥135,000
Data Engineer	¥6,410,000	¥13,280,000	¥19,800,000	¥91,000 – ¥135,000
Prompt Engineer	¥8,060,000	¥13,200,000	¥15,950,000	¥90,000 – ¥109,000
Machine Learning Engineer	¥7,340,000	¥11,740,000	¥20,350,000	¥80,000 – ¥139,000
Data Analyst	¥4,950,000	¥10,200,000	¥16,500,000	¥70,000 – ¥113,000
AI Ethicist	¥6,790,000	¥9,050,000	¥11,470,000	¥62,000 – ¥78,000
D&A / AI Translator (AI Evangelist)	¥6,680,000	¥9,100,000	¥12,290,000	¥62,000 – ¥84,000

Benchmarking your 2026 offers? These figures show Lower, Medium and Upper ranges with indicative contractor day rates. To secure scarce talent we typically advise offering 10–15% above the medium. Need a bespoke benchmark for a role or region not shown? Contact Pearson Carter — it's free.