Chief / Principal Architect

Responsible for the organisation's overall architectural direction, coherence, standards, and long-term technology evolution. Provides high-level technical leadership across domains, guides complex architectural decisions, and ensures alignment between business strategy and technical capability.

Candidates should use the **STAR method** (Situation, Task, Action, Result). This assessment is about demonstrated experience, not theoretical understanding.

A - Enterprise Strategy & Direction

00:10 *- SFIA STPL / ARCH Level 6–7*

Defining long-term enterprise architecture strategy, shaping technology roadmaps, and aligning architecture with business and commercial strategy.

What to look for:

- Defined long-term enterprise architecture strategy spanning multiple domains (cloud, data, integration, applications)
- Shaped technology roadmaps, principles, patterns, and platform evolution plans at organisational scale
- Aligned architecture with business, product, and commercial strategy through executive engagement
- Evaluated disruptive or emerging technologies and recommended adoption, experimentation, or avoidance
- Demonstrated systemic thinking across cloud, data, integration, security, and application architectures
- Influenced multi-year investment decisions through architectural insights and strategic analysis
- Articulated compelling architectural vision that inspired and mobilised diverse stakeholder groups
- Delivered measurable business value through strategic architectural decisions and direction

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B - Governance & Standards

00:15 *- SFIA GOVN / POMG / METL Level 5–7*

Establishing architecture governance, defining enterprise-wide standards, and ensuring architectural compliance and portfolio alignment.

What to look for:

- Established architecture governance frameworks (review boards, design authorities, ADR/RFC processes)
- Defined enterprise-wide patterns, reference models, templates, and architectural standards
- Ensured architectural compliance and coherence across multiple delivery groups or business units
- Identified and managed architectural risks early through structured governance and escalation
- Maintained portfolio investments aligned with long-term technical direction and architectural principles
- Governed adoption of architecture tooling, methods, and frameworks at enterprise scale
- Balanced governance rigor with organisational agility, enabling teams rather than blocking them
- Created decision-making frameworks that scale across the organisation while ensuring oversight

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C - Complex Design & Integration

00:20 *- SFIA DESN / SINT / DATM Level 5–6*

Designing complex multi-domain systems, integration architectures, and data strategies that solve enterprise-scale technical challenges.

What to look for:

- Designed systems spanning multiple platforms, teams, data domains, or cloud environments
- Demonstrated strong integration architecture capability (events, APIs, pipelines, streaming, interoperability)
- Anticipated cross-system impacts (scalability, failure modes, security, data consistency, operational complexity)
- Solved deep-rooted architectural issues (scalability bottlenecks, technical entropy, cross-domain coupling)

- Balanced design trade-offs with operational, financial, organisational, and timeline constraints
- Designed data architectures ensuring consistency, quality, lineage, and governance at enterprise scale
- Led development of organisational systems integration capabilities including automation and CI/CD
- Delivered architectural solutions that proved robust, scalable, and maintainable in production

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D - Executive Influence & Advisory

00:25 *- SFIA RLMT / CNSL Level 6*

Influencing C-suite and senior stakeholders, providing architectural consultancy, and acting as trusted advisor on strategic technical decisions.

What to look for:

- Influenced C-suite, senior product, commercial, and engineering leaders on strategic architectural decisions
- Presented architectural options with clear trade-offs, risks, costs, and business implications to executives
- Managed disagreements or competing priorities constructively, diplomatically, and with evidence-based reasoning
- Acted as trusted advisor to executives, engineering groups, and customer stakeholders on complex decisions
- Communicated complex architectural concepts in clear, structured language tailored to diverse audiences
- Established long-term strategic relationships with key stakeholders ensuring alignment and delivery
- Navigated organisational politics and competing agendas to achieve architectural outcomes
- Built credibility and authority through delivery, transparency, technical depth, and strategic insight

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E - Capability & Leadership

00:30 *- SFIA PDSV / PEMT / SCTY Level 5–6*

Building architectural capability, leading architect cohorts, embedding professional standards, and ensuring security is architectural.

What to look for:

- Mentored Solution Architects, Principal Engineers, Enterprise Architects, and Architecture Leads
- Defined architecture competency frameworks, career pathways, and professional development standards
- Established architecture communities of practice (CoPs), guilds, or centres of excellence
- Embedded secure-by-design, compliance, and risk management principles into architectural processes
- Role-modelled high professional standards, ethics, integrity, and architectural judgement
- Developed organisational capability to make sound architectural decisions autonomously
- Created learning opportunities through reviews, ADR discussions, design critiques, and knowledge sharing
- Ensured security strategy, controls, and practices are embedded at architectural design time

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Scoring Matrix

Thresholds: *20+* is a pass

Competency	1	2	3	4	5
A - Enterprise Strategy & Direction					
B - Governance & Standards					
C - Complex Design & Integration					
D - Executive Influence & Advisory					
E - Capability & Leadership					