

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Associate Director, Quality Assurance

Reports to:	Director of Academic Services
Division:	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic
Tenure:	Continuing
Location:	Hamilton
Date:	3 August 2026

Vision

Ko te tangata

A research-intensive university providing a globally connected, innovative and inclusive student experience in an environment characterised by a commitment to diversity, respect for Indigenous knowledge, and high levels of community engagement.

Values

Ko te mana o Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato ka herea ki tō tātou:

- Tū ngātahi me te Māori
- Mahi pono
- Whakanui i ngā huarahi hou
- Whakarewa i te hiringa i te mahara

The University of Waikato places a high value on:

- Partnership with Māori
- Acting with integrity
- Celebrating diversity
- Promoting creativity

1. GENERAL

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (DVCA) is responsible for teaching and learning, curriculum oversight, academic governance and quality assurance, student administration and enrolment, and the pastoral care and support of students. The DVCA portfolio integrates academic leadership and professional services to ensure a coherent, high-quality and student-centred academic experience, from admission through to progression, completion and graduation.

Situated within the DVCA Portfolio, Quality Assurance provides advice and operational coordination for the development, review, and enhancement of the University's academic

offerings. It provides expertise in work-integrated learning, qualification and programme development and approval, and academic reviews and reporting. In doing so, it maintains the University's academic quality framework and leads audit activity as well as regular KPI reporting. The team develops and maintains the University's academic regulations and policies, and information publication ensuring a clear 'source of truth' through relevant systems.

The Office works in partnership with academic units and professional services to ensure that the University's academic quality systems are coherent, effective and continuously improved to ultimately enhance student learning experiences and outcomes.

2. POSITION PURPOSE

The Associate Director, Quality Assurance provides strategic and operational leadership to the teams that deliver the University's academic governance and quality assurance services. They oversee and provide advice on the systems and services that enable clear, coherent and effective decision making. They ensure the University's academic information, regulations, and policies are accessible and informative for staff and students.

The role provides direction across quality assurance activities including work-integrated learning, curriculum and programme development, academic reviews, and audit activity, including stewardship of relevant systems. Working in partnership with academic units and professional services, the Associate Director ensures academic quality processes are continuously improved to enhance student learning experiences and outcomes.

3. FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Internal:	Associate Directors and Managers across the DVCA portfolio Associate Deans Academic Chairpersons and Committee members Heads of School Academic staff University academic committees and their secretariats Planning, Performance and Analytics Marketing and Communications Future Students Team International Office
External:	External quality assurance and accreditation bodies Peer universities and sector networks related to academic quality and programme design WSU staff and representatives Universities New Zealand

4. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership

- Provide strategic and operational leadership for academic governance and quality assurance activity, ensuring efficient and effective services support the delivery of high-quality academic programmes.
- Lead planning and decision-making that aligns academic governance and quality assurance with University strategy, values, and partnership with Māori under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Academic Governance

- Lead the development, review, and publication of the University's academic regulations, policies, and information ensuring they remain current, clear, and accessible as a trusted 'source of truth' for students and staff.

- Oversee the systems and tools that support curriculum development and approval, ensuring fit-for-purpose workflows, clear data ownership, and reliable information for decision-making and reporting.
- Lead academic committee services, including planning and scheduling, secretariat support, student representation, and clear decision-making pathways.
- Oversee the development and maintenance of academic agreements with domestic providers.

Quality Assurance

- Lead the redevelopment and continuous improvement of the University's academic quality framework including programme development, monitoring, review, and reporting.
- Ensure the systems and processes that support work-integrated learning operations deliver safe, relevant, and enriching student experiences.
- Ensure quality assurance processes are proportionate, consistent, aligned with external requirements, and clearly understood by academic divisions and faculties.
- Lead audit activity, including external Universities New Zealand audits, and internal self-accreditation reviews, monitoring, and reporting in a way that supports meaningful reflection, improvement, and innovation.
- Enable the effective use of data and evidence to strengthen curriculum coherence, work-integrated learning experiences, and graduate outcomes.
- Provide expert advice and guidance to academic units, drawing on sector benchmarks, student feedback, and performance data.

Collaboration

- Build strong, collaborative relationships with academic leaders and professional colleagues across divisions and business units.
- Facilitate cross-University networks that bring together academic, teaching development, and professional expertise to support high-quality, student-focused outcomes.
- Lead workshops, guidance, and professional learning activities that strengthen shared understanding of academic quality processes, and evidence-informed improvement.

People and Culture

- Lead, support, and develop managers and professional staff to deliver high performing services.
- Foster a culture of collaboration, accountability, and continuous improvement across all areas of academic administration.
- Champion inclusive practices and a positive workplace culture that reflects the University's values and commitment to partnership with Māori .
- Comply with and undertake responsibilities set out in relevant University policies and procedures, including the Health and Safety Policy and statutory obligations.

NOTE: Staff have an annual Objectives, Development and Reflection (ODR) meeting with their manager.

5. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The Associate Director, Quality Assurance will be performing satisfactorily when:

- Academic governance and quality assurance services are strategically led and operationally managed to deliver efficient, effective support for high-quality academic programmes and student outcomes.
- The University's academic regulations, policies, and supporting information are current, clear, accessible, and maintained as a trusted source of truth for students, staff, academic committees, and decision-makers.
- Academic committee servicing is well planned and delivered to a high standard.

- Academic quality assurance and audit activity is delivered in ways that support meaningful reflection, evidence-informed improvement, innovation, and accountable follow-through.
- Data, evidence, sector benchmarks, student feedback, and performance information are used effectively to strengthen curriculum coherence, work-integrated learning experiences, graduate outcomes, and academic decision-making.
- Systems, tools, and processes supporting curriculum and programme development and approval, academic agreements, and work-integrated learning operations are fit for purpose, well governed, clearly documented, and provide reliable information for decision-making and reporting.
- Effective relationships and cross-University networks are maintained with academic leaders, professional services, teaching development colleagues, students, and external sector partners, supporting shared understanding, timely advice, and high-quality student-focused outcomes.
- Managers and professional staff are well led, supported, and developed, with clear priorities, managed workloads, inclusive practices, accountability for delivery, continuous improvement, and safe and healthy work practices embedded across the team.
- Leadership and conduct demonstrate integrity, respect, and alignment with the University's values and partnership with Māori.
- Advice provided complies with professional standards, University policies and procedures and supports the University's strategic objectives.
- Safe and healthy work practices are followed that comply with University policies and procedures, relevant work standards and statutory obligations.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Essential

- A relevant tertiary qualification and substantial experience in academic quality assurance, academic governance, or a closely related area within a tertiary education environment, or an equivalent combination of qualifications and experience.

Desirable

- A postgraduate qualification in education, leadership, management, quality assurance, or a related field.

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE and EXPERIENCE

Essential

- Demonstrated expertise in academic quality assurance and enhancement within a tertiary education context, including academic governance support, qualification and programme development and approval, review and monitoring.
- Experience with the development and interpretation of regulations and policies.
- Demonstrated leadership experience in a complex organisation, including leading professional teams, coordinating work across multiple stakeholders and workstreams, and influencing senior leaders through clear, well-evidenced advice, briefings and reports for governance committees.
- Demonstrated capability in people leadership and management, including developing team capability through coaching and feedback, setting clear expectations, supporting performance and wellbeing, and creating a positive, inclusive team culture.
- Strong functional knowledge of external quality assurance and accreditation requirements relevant to the New Zealand university sector (including CUAP, NZQA, and Universities New Zealand), and the ability to apply these in ways that support quality enhancement and compliance.
- Demonstrated experience leading evaluation and audit activity relevant to an academic environment, using qualitative and quantitative evidence to identify risk, inform decision-making, and drive improvement.
- Demonstrated ability to lead through change, foster a collaborative and improvement-focused culture, and manage multiple workstreams, prioritising effectively to deliver high-quality outputs to agreed timelines.
- Demonstrated understanding of and commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and mātauranga Māori, and the ability to apply this in leadership, decision-making, and service delivery in ways that support meaningful partnership with Māori, advance equitable outcomes, and reflect the University's founding relationships and strategic obligations.

Desirable

- Experience leading or contributing to the design or implementation of an institutional academic quality framework or major quality system change.
- Experience representing an institution in sector networks, working groups, or external engagement related to academic quality, programme approval, review/audit, or quality reporting.
- Project management experience, including scoping and planning, managing dependencies and risks, engaging stakeholders, and delivering improvements or change initiatives to agreed timelines.
- Experience with business process ownership and/or system stewardship in a tertiary environment (e.g., curriculum management, programme approval workflow tools, quality reporting systems).

- Experience designing and delivering workshops, guidance materials, or professional learning activities related to academic quality, academic governance, curriculum design, or evidence-informed improvement.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Consultative, inclusive, and collegial in approach, with the ability to engage constructively with a wide range of academic and professional stakeholders across the University.
- Credible, calm, and confident when discussing matters of academic quality, with the judgement to balance institutional requirements, academic autonomy, and practical realities.
- Improvement-focused and reflective, with a genuine commitment to continuous enhancement of programmes, processes, and student learning experiences.
- Able to navigate complexity and ambiguity, maintaining perspective while working across multiple priorities and competing demands.
- Pragmatic and solutions-oriented, with the ability to translate quality frameworks and requirements into clear, workable practices for academic units.
- Resilient and adaptable, responding positively to change and supporting others through periods of transition or system change.
- Collaborative team leader who values shared ownership, supports capability development, and fosters a respectful, inclusive, and high-trust working environment.
- Organised, dependable, and detail-conscious, with a strong sense of accountability for delivering high-quality work to agreed timelines.
- Demonstrated commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, including respect for the University's partnership with Māori under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and an openness to diverse perspectives and ways of working.
- Acts with integrity and professionalism at all times, modelling the University's values in interactions, decision-making, and leadership practice.