

The University of Waikato
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Associate Director, Student Transitions

Reports to:	Director of Student Services
Division:	Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic (DVCA)
Tenure:	Continuing
Location:	Hamilton
Date:	May 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 Student Services portfolio, Student Transitions plays a critical role in supporting students to choose well, transition successfully, persist in study, navigate concerns fairly, and achieve positive outcomes across the learner journey. It provides integrated, high quality services and coordinated interventions focused on conversion, retention, programme advice, complaints and appeals, and student discipline and academic integrity processes to strengthen learner success, progression, and institutional confidence in student resolution processes.

The portfolio includes:

- Conversion and Transition Support: Oversees activity that supports prospective and newly admitted students to convert to enrolment and begin their studies well, ensuring timely communication, targeted outreach, and effective transition support.
- Retention and Support Coordination: Oversees strategies, services, and interventions that promote persistence, progression, and completion, with a focus on identifying barriers early and coordinating responses that improve learner success.
- Programme Advice: Oversees programme advice and the coordination of support across academic and professional services, ensuring students receive timely, accurate, and connected guidance that helps them navigate decisions and access the assistance they need.
- Complaints, Appeals, and Student Discipline: Oversees student complaints and appeals processes, and student discipline and academic integrity committee work, ensuring fair, timely, transparent and well-coordinated resolution, sound procedural guidance, effective risk management, and alignment with University policy and principles of natural justice.

2. POSITION PURPOSE

The Associate Director, Student Transitions provides strategic leadership, operational oversight, and continuous improvement of the University's student success and student resolution functions across key stages of the student lifecycle.

The role is responsible for ensuring the delivery of high quality, student-centred services, interventions, and coordinated support that strengthen conversion, retention, informed programme choice, academic progression, successful completion, and the fair and timely resolution of complaints, appeals, student discipline and academic integrity matters.

The position leads a team of managers and professional staff to deliver integrated services encompassing conversion activity, retention initiatives, programme advice, coordinated support responses, complaints and appeals, and student discipline and academic integrity processes across academic and professional service environments.

The Associate Director plays a key role in aligning student success and student resolution systems, services, data, and practices with institutional goals, and in fostering a culture of collaboration, accountability, fairness, and continuous improvement across all areas of the portfolio.

3. FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Internal:

- Associate Directors and Managers across the DVCA portfolio
- PVCs and Division Directors
- Future Students
- Communications, Recruitment and Marketing teams
- Information Technology Services (ITS)
- School of Graduate Research
- Waikato Students Union
- Office of the PVC Māori and Māori student support services
- Pacific student support services and equity teams

- Legal Services, Student Operations, and academic and professional staff involved in student support and decision-making

External:

- Secondary schools, kura, and pathway partners
- Community organisations and learner support agencies
- Peers at other New Zealand universities and sector networks
- Prospective students and whānau
- Current students and Waikato Students' Union representatives
- External service providers and programme partners
- Members of the public

4. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership

- Provide leadership and direction for student success, programme advice, complaints and appeals, and student discipline and academic integrity functions, ensuring services and interventions are coordinated, evidence informed, fair, and student-centred to support engagement, persistence, resolution, and achievement.
- Lead planning and decision-making that align student success, programme advice, complaints and appeals, and student discipline and academic integrity activities with University strategy, values, and partnership with Māori under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Service Delivery

- Oversee the delivery of integrated services including conversion initiatives, retention activity, programme advice, coordinated support, complaints and appeals, and student discipline and academic integrity processes across the student lifecycle, ensuring these matters are managed fairly, transparently, and in accordance with University policy, relevant regulations, and principles of natural justice.
- Drive continuous improvement and innovation to enhance student transition, persistence, progression, successful completion, and the quality and consistency of complaints, appeals, student discipline and academic integrity handling.
- Use data, insight, and feedback to monitor performance, identify priority cohorts and risks, inform planning, and target interventions that improve student outcomes and strengthen confidence in resolution processes.
- Manage budgets, resources, and operational plans to ensure sustainability, effectiveness, and alignment with institutional priorities.

Collaboration

- Build and maintain strong partnerships with academic and professional staff to ensure programme advice, support coordination, complaints and appeals, and student discipline and academic integrity processes are integrated, timely, and responsive to student needs.
- Provide expert advice and information that supports institutional strategy, student success planning, student resolution processes, risk management, and continuous improvement.
- Represent areas of responsibility in University committees, working groups, and sector networks to promote best practice, shared learning, and coordinated approaches to student success and student resolution.

People and Culture

- Lead, support, and develop managers and professional staff to deliver high performing, student-centred services.
- Foster a culture of collaboration, accountability, care, fairness, and continuous improvement across all areas of the portfolio.
- Champion inclusive practices and a positive workplace culture that reflects the University's values and commitment to partnership with Māori.

Compliance

- Ensure compliance with University policies, relevant regulations, privacy requirements, principles of natural justice, and sound governance and quality assurance practices.
- Participate in the maintenance of a safe and healthy work environment for self and others including students. Comply with and undertake responsibilities set out in the University's Health and Safety Policy.

5. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The Associate Director, Student Transitions will be performing satisfactorily when:

- Functional areas of responsibility — including conversion, retention, programme advice, complaints and appeals, student discipline and academic integrity, and support coordination — are delivered effectively, responsively, and in accordance with University expectations and service standards.
- Student-centred services and interventions are continuously improved, resulting in stronger engagement, progression, retention, student satisfaction, and confidence in student resolution processes.
- Collaboration with academic and professional staff supports coordinated, timely, and effective responses to student need across the lifecycle, including complaints, appeals, and student discipline and academic integrity matters where appropriate.
- Managers and staff are well led, supported, and developed, contributing to a cohesive, high performing, and service focused culture.
- Governance, compliance, privacy, and reporting obligations are met to a high standard, with clear documentation and effective oversight of student success and student resolution activity.
- Financial, human, and technological resources are managed responsibly and effectively to achieve strategic and operational goals.
- Data, feedback, and learner insight are used to evaluate performance, inform decision-making, and drive innovation and improvement across student success and student resolution functions.
- 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 postgraduate qualification and relevant experience OR a relevant bachelor's degree and extensive experience.

Desirable

- A relevant postgraduate qualification (e.g. education, leadership, management, or public administration).

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE and EXPERIENCE

Essential

- Demonstrated experience in learner success, student support, student services, student resolution, or a comparable complex service environment.
- Proven ability to provide strategic leadership and manage people, teams, and service operations effectively.
- Demonstrated success in leading service improvement, change, or innovation that improves learner engagement, retention, progression, or the quality and consistency of complaints, appeals, student discipline and academic integrity processes.
- Strong understanding of the factors that influence student transition, belonging, persistence, success, completion, and the fair resolution of student matters in tertiary education.
- Capability in managing budgets, resources, performance outcomes, and cross-functional initiatives in complex environments.
- Proven ability to design and implement coordinated, data-informed, and technology enabled services, interventions, or case management processes.
- Excellent communication and relationship building skills, with the ability to engage constructively across diverse stakeholders including students and whānau, to guide sensitive matters with sound judgement and procedural fairness, and to manage or oversee complex complaints, appeals, student discipline, academic integrity processes, or comparable resolution functions.
- Strong analytical, written and presentation skills.
- 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.

Preferred

- Experience working with student management systems, CRM platforms, case management tools, or institutional reporting tools.
- Understanding of the New Zealand tertiary education environment, the factors that shape learner success and progression, and the application of natural justice in student-facing processes.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Inclusive, visible, and collaborative leadership style that values diversity of thought and experience.
- Strategic and solutions focused thinker who translates vision into effective action and high quality service delivery.
- Adaptable, resilient, and motivated to foster continuous improvement, partnership, learner success, and fair resolution of student matters.
- Demonstrated integrity, professionalism, and sound judgement in decision-making.
- Committed to upholding the University's values and fostering a positive, respectful, and student-centred culture.
- Commitment to diversity principles and the University's partnership with Māori as intended by the Treaty of Waitangi.

17 June 2026