

POSITION DESCRIPTION

DATA AND INSIGHTS ADVISOR

Reports to:	Director, Planning Performance and Analytics
Division:	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic
Tenure:	Full-time, Permanent
Location:	Hamilton
Date:	March 2026

Vision

Ko te tangata

A research-intensive university providing a globally connected, innovative and inclusive studenty 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 Office of the Vice-Chancellor is the University's central executive and administrative hub, providing leadership, coordination, and oversight of strategic, governance, and institutional priorities. Within this context, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic portfolio is responsible for the stewardship of the University's academic mission, encompassing teaching and learning, academic quality and assurance, student experience, and the provision of academic and student-focused services. The portfolio plays a central role in supporting student success, maintaining academic standards, and enabling evidence-informed decision-making across the institution.

The Planning, Performance and Analytics (PPA) team provides an enterprise-wide capability for operational and strategic reporting, drawing primarily on centrally managed data held within the University's data warehouse and supported by Information Technology Services (ITS). In addition, the team designs and delivers targeted data-collection and evaluation activities to address specific institutional information needs.

PPA transforms data into high-quality, reliable, and actionable insights that support planning, performance monitoring, statutory reporting, and continuous improvement across the University. The team works closely with stakeholders to ensure shared understanding of data and its implications and enables evidence-based decision-making through clear reporting, data visualisation, and narrative analysis. In parallel, PPA supports organisational capability-building by providing self-service reporting tools and training staff in their effective and appropriate use.

2. POSITION PURPOSE

The Data and Insights Advisor plays a central role in delivering high-quality data, insights, and evaluation outputs that inform strategic and operational decision-making across the University. The position contributes to the annual programme of surveys and evaluation activities, ensuring that data is collected through appropriate mechanisms, accurately captured, integrated into organisational systems, and communicated effectively to staff and students.

The role applies robust analytical methods to identify trends, patterns, and insights, producing clear, accurate data visualisations and reports that translate complex information into accessible formats to support planning, performance monitoring, and continuous improvement. Working collaboratively across the Planning Performance and Analytics Team, ITS, academic units, and professional services, the Advisor supports a shared understanding of data, strong stakeholder engagement, and the alignment of insights with organisational priorities.

The position maintains high standards of data integrity through sound data-management practices, comprehensive documentation, and proactive identification and mitigation of risks associated with reporting and evaluation activities. A key component of the role is contributing to statutory and institutional reporting requirements—such as the Single Data Return—by supporting the creation, testing, validation, and timely submission of accurate outputs.

By fostering transparent practices, supporting knowledge-sharing within the team, and contributing to a positive, high-performance culture, the Data and Insights Advisor strengthens the University's capacity to leverage data for decision-making, enhances evaluation and reporting processes, and promotes continuous organisational improvement.

3. FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Internal:

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic
- Members of University Committees
- Other members of the PPA Team
- Academic teaching staff
- Professional services staff
- ITS staff

4. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Data and Information Collection

- Support execution of surveys through appropriate mechanisms, including Blue, ensuring that results are captured and integrated into appropriate organisational databases.
- Support execution of the schedule of evaluation activities in line with University Policy and best practice.
- Liaise with staff across the university to facilitate projects and initiatives related to surveys.
- Contribute to communication with staff and students related to survey and data collection process, including the development of student facing materials and the feedback loop to students on impact of their evaluations.
- Maintain operational knowledge on the use of Blue. In doing so, raise any issues or opportunities so that they can be discussed promptly with ITS and the external software vendor.
- Contribute to the review of survey methodologies and provide recommendations on development of best practice to capture effective student voice.

Data Analysis

- Analyze data to identify trends, patterns, and anomalies, applying statistical and analytical techniques to generate actionable insights that inform decision-making.
- Create clear, accurate data visualisations and reports that translate complex information into accessible formats to support effective decision-making across the University.
- Work collaboratively across the PPA team and with stakeholders to interpret data, ensure shared understanding, and deliver outputs that align with organisational priorities.
- Ensure the accuracy and integrity of datasets and reporting outputs by applying sound data-management practices, validating information, and maintaining high standards of documentation and quality control.
- Liaise with appropriate ITS staff in the use of the operational data store and data warehouse.
- Ensure adequate documentation is completed. Creation of technical designs and specifications where appropriate as part of report development.
- Identify risks and mitigate those risks where possible. Report on risks and their mitigation to line manager and escalate risks where appropriate.

Insights and Reporting

- Support the creation, testing, validation, review and submission of the Single Data Return (SDR).
- Translate data findings into meaningful narratives and recommendations, presenting insights in a way that supports strategic and operational goals across the organization.
- Build and maintain business relationships to understand reporting requirements, inform prioritisation of information needs, and deliver timely, accurate insights aligned with business objectives.
- Write clear, concise, and well-structured reports that summarize key findings, highlight implications, and provide actionable recommendations for stakeholders.
- Maintain knowledge of reporting processes and tools, staying current with best practices and emerging technologies to enhance efficiency and data-driven decision-making.

Team Contribution

- Work effectively as a member of the Planning Performance and Analytics Team to support other team members and provide support and/or coverage of functions.

- Work collaboratively to encourage transparency across activities, open sharing of knowledge, and the building of positive relationships to support a high-performance culture.
- Support a positive culture and morale.
- Comply with and undertake responsibilities set out in the University's Health and Safety Policy.

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

5. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The Data and Insights Advisor will be performing satisfactorily when:

- Surveys and evaluation activities are delivered on time, with results accurately captured and integrated into organisational databases.
- Communication with staff and students about surveys and feedback loops is timely, clear, and ensures strong engagement with evaluation processes.
- Data analyses are completed accurately and on time, applying appropriate analytical methods to identify trends, patterns, anomalies, and actionable insights that support decision-making.
- Risks are identified and mitigated. Issues which can't be resolved are escalated appropriately.
- Clear, accurate, and accessible data visualisations and reports are produced that translate complex information into meaningful insights for stakeholders.
- Tasks and milestones are completed to a high standard and within planned timeframes.
- Collaboration with colleagues ensures a shared understanding of insights, effective interpretation of results, and alignment of outputs with organisational priorities.
- High levels of data integrity are maintained through robust validation, quality control, sound data-management practices, and comprehensive documentation.
- Insights, reports, and SDR contributions are delivered on time, are accurate, and provide clear, actionable recommendations aligned with strategic and operational goals.
- Positive working relationships are built and maintained, with constructive contributions made to projects, meetings, and team activities that foster a transparent, collaborative, and high-performance culture.
- 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 completed tertiary qualification in a relevant area.

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE and EXPERIENCE

Essential

- Intermediate to advanced Microsoft Office Excel skills.
- Proven organisational and planning skills.
- High standards of work quality and output, the ability to work to deadlines and maintain performance under pressure.
- Hands-on expertise with methods such as data models, using use cases and user experience design.
- Ability to gather requirements from diverse stakeholders and provide advice to meet business needs.
- Ability to design innovative solutions that meet user requirements or solve business problems, while still adhering to agreed design standards and approach.
- Experience working with a wide range of data in order to predict and deliver business outcomes by applying appropriate data analytics techniques.
- High level of competence in the analysis and design of reports and knowledge of data visualisation techniques and principles.
- Demonstrated ability to investigate, analyse, summarise and make recommendations or decisions on a variety of issues.
- Excellent written and interpersonal communication skills together with the ability to build and maintain constructive and collegial relationships internally and externally.
- Ability to present and translate technical issues to non-technical audiences.
- Ability to maintain consistently high levels of accuracy and attention to detail.

Preferred

- Sound statistical knowledge and research methodology expertise for data collection, processing, interpretation, and qualitative analysis.
- Experience with best-practice methodologies and standards for business analysis.
- Experience with Tertiary Education Commission reporting methodologies.
- Experience in scripting (e.g., SQL/Python/R) and experience working with databases and building data-collection instruments.
- Working knowledge of privacy obligations and ethical handling of evaluation data, including NZ Privacy Act 2020 and institutional privacy practices.
- Understanding of Aotearoa New Zealand tertiary policy settings and institutional data/assurance practices.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

Strategic Thinking - Able to see the broader institutional context and align academic development activities with long-term goals and priorities.

Detail-Oriented - Applies precision and thoroughness when reviewing proposals, preparing documentation, and interpreting regulations.

Initiative and Accountability - Takes ownership of responsibilities, proactively identifies issues, and follows through on actions without requiring close supervision.

Adaptability and Openness to Change - Responds constructively to feedback, evolving priorities, and changes in policy or practice, contributing to continuous improvement.

Collaborative Spirit - Works effectively with colleagues across the University, contributing positively to team dynamics and shared goals.

Commitment to Quality and Improvement - Demonstrates a continuous improvement mindset, seeking ways to enhance academic processes and contribute to institutional excellence.

March 2026