

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Director Research & Enterprise

Reports to:	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research
Division:	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research
Tenure:	Permanent
Location:	Hamilton
Date:	August 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:

- Tūngātahi 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 Research and Enterprise office provides operational support to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, leadership in implementing the University's research strategy and leadership of the University's central research support infrastructure, including identifying research opportunities, working alongside researchers and research teams to develop mission-led impact-focused research proposals, brokering multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional research team proposals, developing appropriate proposal management and governance mechanisms, supporting

researchers in engaging with research stakeholders, managing and reporting on research contracts, and supporting wider research performance and compliance requirements.

Research Office Staff work collaboratively with Academic Divisions, Finance, Ethics, Commercial and Business Partnerships and the School of Graduate Research where appropriate to support the wider needs of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research Portfolio.

The Research and Enterprise office includes staff working in and between the Research Nodes, Regional Offices and Central Office.

2. POSITION PURPOSE

The Director – Research & Enterprise is responsible for the strategic leadership, integration, performance, and continuous development of the University's research support functions across the full research lifecycle to maximise funding, impact, and institutional reputation.

The role provides leadership from opportunity identification and shaping, through proposal development, partnership building, and funding acquisition, to effective project delivery and impact realisation. It leads five integrated functional teams and ensures a shift from a predominantly operational service model to a strategic, data-informed partner that proactively develops competitive programmes, manages funding strategically, and supports complex, multi-institutional and mission-led initiatives.

This position plays a key role in enabling the University to succeed in a rapidly evolving research funding environment, including the transition to RFNZ, with increasing emphasis on impact, commercialisation, international engagement, and robust systems to support decision-making.

3. ACCOUNTABILITY

The Director, Research & Enterprise reports to the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research. The Director, Research & Enterprise has responsibility for Team leaders.

4. FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Internal:

- Deputy Vice Chancellor Research
- Deputy Vice Chancellor Māori
- Assistant Vice Chancellor Impact
- Assistant Vice Chancellor Research Performance
- Director Commercial and Business Partnerships
- Dean School of Graduate Research
- Pro Vice-Chancellors, Deans, Associate Deans (Research)
- Directors of Research Institutes
- Research and Enterprise Team Leads and staff
- Divisional Academic and Research staff
- Deans, Associate Deans and Department Chairs
- Finance Office staff

External:

- Research Funding New Zealand (RFNZ) and other funding agencies
- Government and policy stakeholders
- Industry partners and investors

National and international research collaborators
Peer institutions and sector networks

5. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Leadership and Direction

- Provide strategic leadership for the Research & Enterprise Office, aligning activities with the University's Research Plan and national research priorities
- Lead the transition to a strategic, impact-driven operating model, moving from reactive support to proactive research opportunity development
- Shape institutional approaches to mission-led, multidisciplinary, and multi-institutional research programmes
- Advise senior leadership on research funding strategy, opportunities, and risks

Research Funding Strategy and Growth

- Lead strategies to grow external research income across national and international funding sources.
- Ensure alignment with emerging funding models (e.g. RFNZ strategic investment pillars) and government priorities.
- Support the development of large-scale, high-value research proposals and programmes
- Oversee engagement with industry, government, and international partners to enhance funding opportunities and impact.

Leadership of Research Support Functions

- Provide oversight and leadership across core functional areas, including:
 - Strategic foresight and horizon scanning
 - Pre-award proposal development
 - Post-award project management and governance
 - Internal strategic funds management
 - Contracts and research systems management
- Ensure clarity of roles, responsibilities, and performance expectations across specialised teams.
- Build a high-performance culture with strong capability, clear career pathways, and effective resource allocation.

Proposal Development and Research Enablement

- Ensure the University has strong capability to develop competitive, high-quality research proposals.
- Support the development of mission-led, impact-focused research programmes
- Enable proactive identification and development of multidisciplinary and multi-partner collaborations.
- Strengthen proposal development leadership, coordination, and quality assurance.

Systems, Data and Operational Excellence

- Lead the implementation and optimisation of a Research Management System to support the full research lifecycle.
- Ensure effective use of data and analytics to inform decision-making, monitor performance, and identify opportunities.
- Drive process improvement and efficiency, reducing administrative burden and enhancing service delivery.
- Ensure robust systems for compliance, reporting, and governance.

Stakeholder Engagement and Partnership Development

- Build and maintain strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders.
- Engage effectively with academic leadership to align support with research priorities.
- Represent the University in key national and international research forums.
- In collaboration with the Director Commercial and Business Partnerships facilitate collaboration with industry and government to support research impact.

Research Performance, Impact and Delivery

- Ensure effective monitoring of research funding performance, success rates, and impact outcomes.
- Oversee delivery performance of funded research, including project governance and reporting.
- Support the translation of research outputs into tangible impact, including economic, social, and environmental outcomes.
- Contribute to institutional performance measures and national research assessment processes.

Change Leadership and Culture

- Lead organisational change associated with the restructuring of the Research & Enterprise Office.
- Foster a proactive, strategic, and collaborative culture.
- Address capacity, workload, and role clarity challenges through effective leadership and resource management.
- Support staff development, engagement, and wellbeing.

Team Contribution

- Work collaboratively with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and senior leadership team.
- Contribute to broader University strategy and initiatives.
- Promote a culture of excellence, innovation, and continuous improvement.

Health & Safety

- Lead and 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.

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

6. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The Research Trust Management Specialist will be performing satisfactorily when:

- External research income grows in line with institutional targets
- The Research & Enterprise Office operates as a strategic, high-performing function
- Research proposals increase in scale, quality, and success rate
- Strong alignment with national funding priorities and mission-led research opportunities is evident
- Effective systems, processes, and data support decision-making and performance monitoring
- Stakeholder satisfaction and engagement are high
- Research delivery and project governance are effective and timely
- A positive, high-performing team culture is established and sustained
- Processes and systems are improved and consistently applied
- 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

- Postgraduate qualification (Master's or equivalent experience)

Desirable

- Doctoral Qualification

SKILLS

Essential

- Strategic leadership and organisational management capability
- Excellent stakeholder engagement and influencing skills
- Strong analytical and decision-making capability
- Ability to lead complex change and transformation initiatives
- Financial and resource management skills

Desirable

- Experience leading multidisciplinary teams
- Experience in large-scale programme development

KNOWLEDGE

Essential

- Deep understanding of the evolving research funding environment (national and international)
- Knowledge of research lifecycle processes and systems
- Understanding of governance, compliance, and research performance frameworks

Desirable

- Knowledge of RFNZ and evolving funding models
- Understanding of commercialisation and industry engagement

EXPERIENCE

Essential

- Senior leadership experience in research, research management, or related field
- Experience managing complex teams and organisational functions
- Experience in research funding, proposal development, or institutional strategy

Desirable

- Experience leading significant organisational change
- Experience working with government, industry, or international partners

PERSONAL QUALITIES

Personal Attributes

- Strategic and visionary leader
- Proactive, adaptable and resilient
- High attention to detail and accountability
- Highly collaborative and relationship focused
- High integrity and professionalism
- Commitment to excellence and continuous improvement

Key Competencies

- Strategic leadership
- Governance and risk management
- Stakeholder coordination
- Communication and influence

Other Requirements

- Commitment to collaboration, continuous improvement, and professional standards
- Ability to build strong working relationships across the University and externally
- Commitment to health and safety and a positive team culture
- Commitment to equal opportunity and to the University's partnership with Māori as intended by the Treaty of Waitangi

August 2026