The University of Waikato
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Financial Accountant

Reports to:	Financial Controller
Division:	Corporate Services Group
Tenure:	Permanent
Location:	Hamilton Campus
Date:	September 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 purpose of the Finance team, part of the Corporate Services Group within the portfolio of the Chief Operating Officer, is to provide best-in-class financial services, reporting and analytics to the University. The team is responsible for the provision of insightful performance reporting and measurement, as well as business intelligence and analytics. The team also manages the financial systems, financial data and financial policy and procedures ensuring the integrity and accuracy of financial information to support better decision-making across the University.
The Finance team works with staff across the University to facilitate strategic thinking, formulation of credible budgets and reporting of results to internal and external stakeholders.

2. Position Purpose

To support the delivery of a comprehensive range of financial reporting, financial management, accountancy and taxation services across the University.

Responsibility for specific areas will be allocated to provide on-going financial services support as well as specific needs identified by the Financial Business Partners team.

The aim of the role is to provide high quality advice and information to the assigned areas, to aid financial process and policy compliance and strategic business decisions. To enhance and implement policies, systems and procedures which assist the assigned areas strategic and financial goals to achieve outstanding educational, research, financial and support services outcomes.

3. Accountability

The Financial Accountant is responsible to the Financial Controller.

4. Functional Relationships

Internal:
Financial Controller
Chief Financial Officer
Financial Team
Chief Operating Officer
Senior management
Pro Vice-Chancellors
Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Management of subsidiary and associate entities in the University Group
Division Directors, School Managers and Financial Administrators
Other University staff and students

External:
Audit New Zealand - External auditors
Tertiary Education Commission and other regulatory bodies
Inland Revenue
The University's bankers
The University Insurance Collective
External clients and stakeholders, including banks and lenders, and other professional advisors such as insurers, valuers, tax advisors

5. Key Responsibilities

Financial Control and Reporting

- Assist with the preparation of the University group annual financial report in accordance with New Zealand generally accepted accounting practice and in particular public benefit entity international public sector accounting standards (PBE IPSAS).
- Co-ordinate and assist with the satisfactory completion of audit and compliance processes.
- Coordinate and complete allocated elements of the monthly financial close process, ensuring timely, accurate and analytically robust financial information required by all users
- Prepare and review allocated balance-sheet reconciliations, investigate outstanding items and support the integrity of the University's financial results.
- Co-ordinate and assist with the preparation and compilation of monthly journals and accounting in the general ledger.
- Prepare analysis reports and models upon request for decision making and reporting purposes.
- Research and analyse accounting and taxation matters and prepare technically sound advice for senior team members.
- Undertake treasury activities allocated by the Financial Controller, including cashflow analysis, forecasting, banking administration and preparation of treasury information.
- Assist with insurance management functions as directed.
- Prepare and file indirect taxation returns as required. Research applicable tax law, analyse and provide appropriate advice
- Prepare and coordinate allocated statutory and regulatory financial returns, including Charities Services returns, ensuring they are accurate and completed within required timeframes.

Risk & Control

- Assist with implementing, monitoring and testing the financial controls, policies and procedures.
- Assist with the development, maintenance and implementation of financial policies, procedures and guidance.
- Monitor compliance within allocated areas and escalate significant issues.
- Perform, monitor and test allocated financial controls and recommend improvements.
- Support the maintenance of an effective University and Group financial control environment to a level expected of an organisation funded with public monies, and in accordance with Public Benefit Entity (PBE) financial reporting standards
- Oversight of financial controls within allocated subsidiaries
- Monitor relevant accounting, tax and regulatory developments, assess their potential implications and provide analysis to the Senior Financial Accountant and Financial Controller.
- Maintain the integrity of financial master data and contribute to improvements in finance system controls and data quality.

Team Contribution

- Actively participate in and contribute to the Finance team objectives and priorities to encourage transparency across activities, open sharing of knowledge, and actions to build a high performance culture.
- Manage own workload to ensure high quality and consistent delivery across the Finance and Analytics team.
- Maintain an awareness of internal and external factors that impact the organisation and individual business areas.

- Proactively build positive relationships with and work collaboratively with all members of the Finance and Analytics team to support the provision of financial services and advice to the University and wider stakeholders as required.
- Demonstrate a collaborative approach to working together with other groups in the Finance Team, other University staff and external stakeholders.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Support the interaction with internal and external auditors in completing audits.
- Liaison with University staff to advise and monitor compliance with internal control processes and tax obligations.
- Contribute to the development and delivery of training that improves process adherence, internal control awareness and financial literacy across the University.
- Provide specialist financial input to committees, working groups and projects as appropriate.

Continuous Improvement

- Support the continuous improvement of Financial Services' processes, identifying and leading improvement initiatives that minimise risk, improve information for decision making and maximise the use of technology.
- Identify and contribute to improvements in financial systems and processes, including ERP optimisation, automation and the responsible use of AI, to improve efficiency, control and insight.
- Embrace digital transformation and AI-enabled systems

Health and Safety

- 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.

Any other duties as required that are consistent with the position held, other than in exceptional circumstances such as rehabilitation after injury or sickness.

6. Performance Standards

The Financial Accountant will be performing satisfactorily when:

- The monthly close process operates efficiently and effectively and provides accurate information required by all users.
- Revenue and fixed asset accounting tasks are performed accurately, on time and communicated effectively.
- Accurate clearly presented reports are provided within agreed timeframes. Periodic performance reporting and analysis is prepared to agreed standards and within the specified timeframe.
- Interactions in the course of performing duties are conducted professionally, respectfully and collaboratively.
- There is a productive and closely aligned working relationship with the other teams in Finance and key stakeholders.

- Allocated annual financial statement sections and supporting workpapers are accurate, complete, appropriately evidenced and delivered within agreed timeframes.
- Audit queries relating to allocated areas are resolved accurately and promptly, with significant matters escalated appropriately.
- Allocated tax, treasury and insurance activities are completed accurately, within required timeframes and in accordance with relevant policies, delegated authorities and statutory obligations.
- Feedback demonstrates that the financial accounting team has a productive and effective working relationship with other teams and colleagues across the University.
- Feedback demonstrates that the Financial Accountant has built credibility and mana within the University and with key external stakeholders.
- Advice provided complies with professional standards, University policies and procedures
- Ad hoc financial queries are responded to quickly and effectively.
- Safe and healthy work practices are followed that meet University and statutory obligations.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Education Qualifications

Essential

- Relevant tertiary degree.
- Studying towards, or eligible to study towards, CAANZ CA membership or an equivalent professional accounting qualification.

Preferred

- CA qualified or close to completion.
- Relevant experience in PBE reporting, a multi-entity environment or a complex organisation.

Training, Skills and Knowledge

- Minimum 3 years financial and commercial accounting experience.
- A solid background in technical financial accounting principles and procedures.
- Sound working knowledge of relevant Financial Reporting Standards.
- Experience with Public Benefit Entity (PBE) reporting
- Experience in annual reporting and audit processes.
- Working knowledge of New Zealand's indirect tax regime.
- Experience in a multi-entity group structure
- Experience in building and maintaining effective relationships with diverse stakeholders.
- Strong analytical / problem solving skills and the ability to provide pragmatic solutions in a timely manner.
- Demonstrated ability to present complex information in a clear and accurate written and verbal format.
- Ability to prioritise and meet strict deadlines.
- Knowledge and previous experience of supporting treasury and/or insurance functions and engagement with external advisors.
- Familiarity with modern finance systems and the aptitude to apply technology to improve financial processes and outputs.
- Excellent digital Office systems capability, including Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- Demonstrated awareness of Māori and Pacific cultures

Personal Qualities

- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, including the ability to build and maintain effective relationships with diverse stakeholders at all levels.
- Collaborative team player that develops positive working relationships with colleagues and clients, ability to coach, develop and mentor staff.
- Excellent organisational and planning skills: delegating, coordinating and completing tasks efficiently.
- Shows a high level of initiative, ability to assume responsibility, flexibility and self-motivated
- Personal integrity and credibility
- Sets and maintains high standards of performance for self and others.
- Accuracy and attention to detail with a high output of work.
- Projects a professional and personable image.

- Excellent planning and time management skills with the ability to set priorities and manage complex workloads.
- Forward thinking approach and commitment to excellent customer service.
- Commitment to EEO to equal opportunity and to the University’s partnership with Māori as intended by the Treaty of Waitangi.
- Commitment to a culture of openness, flexibility and co-operation to achieve excellence in academic programmes, research and service.