

The University of Waikato
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Financial Controller

Reports to:	Chief Financial Officer
Division:	Corporate Services Group
Tenure:	Permanent
Location:	Hamilton Campus
Date:	March 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

Lead and oversee financial control across the University and its entities, with accountability for financial accounting policy, statutory reporting, tax, treasury, insurance and financial compliance.

Act as principal guardian of the University's financial integrity and control environment, ensuring robust governance, transparency and long-term financial sustainability in the stewardship of public funds.

Provide authoritative technical advice and high-quality financial information to support sound decision-making, policy compliance and the achievement of the University's strategic objectives.

3. FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Internal:	Chief Operating Officer Chief Financial Officer Financial Team 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

4. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Financial Control and Reporting

- Ensure accurate and timely completion of the University and Group annual financial reports in accordance with statutory Financial Reporting Standards and the requirements of the University's auditors.
- Manage external audit processes and resolve issues promptly
- Provide technical advice on accounting and taxation issues across the University
- Oversee and continuously improve the monthly financial close process, ensuring timely, accurate and analytically robust reporting
- Ensure balance sheet integrity through disciplined reconciliation, review and control processes, to maintain accurate financial results
- Maintain the integrity of the fixed asset register, ensuring accurate capitalisation, depreciation, impairment assessment and asset accounting in accordance with PBE standards.
- Ensure tax reporting and compliance is completed in a timely manner.
- Management of treasury operations including cashflow forecasting and liquidity management
- Management of insurance functions, including membership of the Universities' insurance Collective.
- Accountable for the integrity of other financial regulatory reporting, i.e. Charities Commission returns are completed in a timely manner.

Risk & Control

- Maintain robust financial policies and enable compliance
- Maintain the University internal control environment to a level expected of an organisation funded with public monies, and in accordance with Public Benefit Entity (PBE) financial reporting standards
- Maintain robust controls over capital expenditure, asset recognition and valuation processes to mitigate financial and audit risk
- Oversight of financial controls within subsidiaries
- Monitor internal and external developments that may impact financial reporting and control

Team Leadership

- Provide team leadership, encouraging transparency across activities, open sharing of knowledge and an innovative high-performance culture operating within University values.
- Manage the workload of the team, ensuring high quality and consistent delivery across the breadth of responsibilities.
- Proactively contribute to the planning and decision-making process of the Finance team.
- Instil a culture of innovation within the team to support the University in achieving its strategic objectives.
- Provide guidance and support through professional goal setting, effective coaching, mentoring and training and recognition of achievements.
- Encourage a collaborative approach to working together with other groups in the Finance Team, other University staff and external stakeholders.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Liaison with group entities to advise and monitor compliance with internal control processes and tax obligations.
- Along with the Financial Business Partners, Financial Operations and Corporate Systems teams, develop and manage the delivery of training plans to improve process adherence and financial literacy throughout the University.
- Provide specialist financial input to committees, working groups and projects as appropriate.

Team Contribution

- Work effectively as a member of the <insert relevant team, department or division name> 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.
- Work with other team members on projects.
- Support a positive culture and morale.
- Comply with and undertake responsibilities set out in the University's Health and Safety Policy

Continuous Improvement

- Lead continuous improvement activities for internal and external reporting cycles and financial operations processes in association with other managers in the Finance team.
- Identify and contribute to transformation initiatives including ERP optimisation, automation and responsible use of AI to improve efficiency, control and insight.
- Encouraging teams to embrace digital transformation and AI-enabled systems
- Manage the financial controlling services in accordance with annually agreed objectives and key performance indicators.
- Ensure that the University maintains and improves its financial processes and systems, to mitigate risks, improve the information available for decision making, and to maximise the use of technology.
- Identify opportunities to continually improve the effectiveness and efficiency of University financial systems and processes, both within the Financial Team and across the wider University.

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.
- Undertake line manager health and safety responsibilities as 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 Financial Controller will be performing satisfactorily when:

- Interactions while 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.
- The monthly close process operates efficiently and effectively and provides accurate information required by all users.
- The Annual Accounts preparation process operates as intended with positive feedback from the external auditors, Health, Safety, Audit & Risk Committee and Capital & Finance Committee
- Annual financial statements delivered within statutory deadlines with an unmodified audit opinion
- The Financial Accounting team has clear objectives and performance standards, regular appraisals and appropriate professional development.
- 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 Controller has built credibility and mana within the University and with key external stakeholders.
- Advice provided complies with professional standards, University policies and procedures
- The treasury and insurance functions and relationships meet objectives.
- Ad hoc financial queries are responded to quickly and effectively.
- Valuable contribution and participation in relevant meetings and/or projects is provided.
- 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

- Bachelor's degree in a relevant field.
- Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (CAANZ) CA status (or equivalent).

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE and EXPERIENCE

Essential

- Prior experience in a similar Financial Controller / Finance Manager role.
- Extensive post-qualification experience in financial accounting and control roles within complex organisations
- Experience in a multi-entity group structure
- A solid background in technical financial accounting principles and procedures.
- Experience managing and leading a high performing team.
- Excellent knowledge of relevant Financial Reporting Standards.
- Experience with Public Benefit Entity (PBE) reporting
- Demonstrated experience managing, monitoring and improving the internal control function.
- Experience managing audit and annual reporting processes.
- Knowledge and previous experience of managing treasury and insurance functions and engagement with external advisors.
- Familiarity with modern finance systems and the aptitude to apply technology to improve financial processes and outputs.
- 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.
- Excellent digital Office systems capability, including Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- Demonstrated awareness of Māori and Pacific cultures
- Basic understanding in Te Reo Māori or one or more Pacific languages
- Commitment to equal opportunity and to the University's partnership with Māori as intended by the Treaty of Waitangi. Demonstrated awareness of Māori and Pacific cultures.
- Current full driver's license.

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 with the ability to assume responsibility.

- Personal integrity and credibility
- Sets and maintains high standards of performance for self and others.
- Ability to demonstrate professionalism.
- 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.