

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Higher Research Degrees Advisor

Reports to:	Higher Research Degrees Manager
Division:	School of Graduate Research
Tenure:	Fixed Term
Location:	Hamilton
Date:	September 2025

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

Te Te Mata Kairangi School of Graduate Research sits under the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research. The School is responsible for the strategic leadership and provision of services and support for all postgraduate higher research degree programmes, including Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Higher Doctorates (DLit, DSc, LLD), Professional Doctorates (EdD, DMA), Master of Philosophy (MPhil), and all Scholarships, Awards and Prizes at the University of Waikato.

2. POSITION PURPOSE

The Higher Research Degrees Advisor will provide high level administrative support to current and prospective postgraduate research students, and academic staff who supervise postgraduate research. The role will have responsibility for (a) overseeing the admission, enrolment, candidature and examination of higher research degrees, (b) ensuring that regulations, guidelines and processes related to postgraduate research are followed, and (c) contributing to the implementation of strategic initiatives within the School of Graduate Research.

3. FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Internal:** Staff of Te Mata Kairangi School of Graduate Research
Staff of: Library, Centre for Tertiary Teaching and Learning, Research and Enterprise Office; International Office; Student Services; Communications; Marketing; Finance and Analytics
Associate Deans Postgraduate Research (Divisions/Faculty)
Staff of Divisions and Faculties
University service providers such as caterers or event venue staff
Enrolled Higher Research Degree students of the University of Waikato
- External:** Prospective students
External examiners

4. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Committees and Panels

- Provide support for Postgraduate Research Committee including contributions to the agenda. Act as Secretary by delegation from the Higher Research Degrees Manager.
- Collaborative support to Scholarships, as required, in providing data and materials relevant to the University of Waikato Doctoral Scholarship Suite selection panels.

School of Graduate Research

- In conjunction with the Higher Research Degrees Manager, maintain an awareness of university policies, procedures and business processes as they relate to Higher Research Degrees.
- Contribute to advancement in the strategic priorities of the University Strategy and achieving the objectives of the School of Graduate Research Plan, through supporting the implementation of strategic initiatives.
- Participate in the ongoing review and development of new and improved processes relating to higher research degrees.
- Uphold the University's commitment to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi | The Treaty of Waitangi, providing culturally-responsive support to Māori and Pacific postgraduate researchers and staff.
- Participate in the continuous improvement of good practice in meeting the needs of internal and external stakeholders.
- Proactively contribute to team meetings, operational planning and decision-making processes of the School of Graduate Research.
- Proactively support the Scholarships teams and other members of the School as required.

Operational and Administrative

- Provide a high level of administrative support to the Higher Research Degrees Manager and Dean (i.e., Chair of the Postgraduate Research Committee).
- Advise the Higher Research Degrees Manager of any issues arising and provide recommended actions as needed.
- Manage the administration of higher research degree students from application through to thesis submission, examination and completion, as required.
- Monitor the progress of higher research degree students and identify and escalate any issues or concerns responsively.
- Support Senior Higher Research Degree Advisor(s) to report on doctoral processes through providing data and information responsively.
- Be responsible for coordinating and/or delivering doctoral administrative workshops, group discussions and other events for higher research degree students and academic supervisors, in collaboration with other Higher Research Degree Advisors where appropriate.
- Be responsible for co-monitoring all email and other forms of contact for Higher Research Degrees, and the wider school.
- Ensure current and accurate documentation is maintained, and shared as appropriate, regarding all aspects of higher research degrees and for any other responsibilities within the School.
- Work with integrity and ensure confidentiality when handling personal information and enrolment details of higher research degree students.
- Be willing and able to take on team-members portfolios when they are on leave.
- Ensure all Student Management System testing, training and functionality and any other training required to undertake the role is satisfactorily completed.
- Undertake special projects as directed by the Higher Research Degrees Manager.
- Mentoring and training of new staff as required, and as appropriate to experience.
- Support Senior Higher Research Degree Advisor(s) to deliver training to new Higher Research Degree Advisors, particularly relating to their individual work portfolio.
- Any other duties as required that are consistent with the position held, other than in exceptional circumstances such as rehabilitation after injury or sickness.

Outreach and stakeholder engagement

- Maintain the external postgraduate research webpages, internal postgraduate supervision webpages, Moodle site, and contribute to social media sites supported by the University and School of Graduate Research.
- Provide informed and professional advice and information to stakeholders (e.g., current and prospective students, professional and academic staff, and the University Leadership Group).
- Oversee the design and printing for relevant collateral as requested.

Team Contribution

- Work effectively as a member of the Higher Research Degrees Team in the School of Graduate Research 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

- Actively contribute to the ongoing development and improvement of School of Graduate Research systems and processes.

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

5. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The Higher Research Degrees Advisor will be performing satisfactorily when:

- Initiative is displayed in suggesting new initiatives or processes for the School.
- Prompt and professional advice on Higher Research Degree matters is provided to internal and external stakeholders.
- The School is supporting a respectful and culturally-responsive environment for Māori and Pacific higher research degree students and academic supervisors to thrive and succeed.
- Administrative support is provided to stakeholders in an efficient, timely, transparent, professional, and well documented manner.
- Appropriate process guidelines are developed and maintained in collaboration with the Dean and Higher Research Degrees Manager, and are reviewed and revised as necessary.
- Workshops, discussion forums, and events are organised effectively and delivered professionally.
- The School's online presence is kept up-to-date and is accurate.
- Committees related to postgraduate research are supported administratively.
- Decisions by the Dean and Committees are accurately recorded.
- A current and accessible file of work-activities is developed and maintained and in accordance with the team filing protocol.
- Projects are completed in an effective and timely manner.
- Safe and healthy work practices are followed. University policies, procedures, relevant work standards and statutory obligations are complied with.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Essential

- Tertiary qualification or relevant work experience

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE and EXPERIENCE

Essential

- High-level written and interpersonal communication skills with attention to detail.
- Moderate ICT skills and experience, particularly Microsoft Office Suite (especially Excel) and working with databases.
- Ability to communicate with stakeholders in a professional and succinct manner.
- Proven planning, organisational, analytical and problem-solving skills, with ability to prioritise and meet tight deadlines.
- Proven ability to demonstrate initiative and to work both independently and as a team.
- Demonstrated ability to work in accordance with regulations and policies.
- 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.

Preferred

- Ability to kōrero in te reo Māori.
- Knowledge of the New Zealand tertiary education environment.
- Ability to use SITS/e-Vision Student Management System.
- Relevant work experience in a customer service or administrative role and with general business skills.
- Ability to deliver presentations and workshops, or a willingness to develop presentation skills
- Ability to manage projects and organise events.
- Skills in maintaining website content and social media pages.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Complete discretion and confidentiality.
- Genuine commitment to the mission, values and work of the University of Waikato.
- Ability to relate well to a wide range of people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures in a pleasant, professional, courteous and sensitive manner.
- Client-focused with a flexible and professional approach and an ability to build effective working relationships.
- Ability to prioritise and make sound judgements.
- Ability to maintain performance standards in a sometimes high-pressure environment.
- Ability to work individually and collaboratively with a flexible attitude to work tasks.
- Commitment to equal opportunity and to upholding the University's commitment to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi | The Treaty of Waitangi.
- Commitment to a culture of openness, flexibility and co-operation to achieve excellence in academic programmes, research and service.
- Commitment to ongoing professional development and building capability.