

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Palu Navigator (Early Engagement, Recruitment and Transition)

Reports to:	Dau ni Talitali Pacific Engagement Manager
Division:	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Portfolio, Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Tenure:	Continuing, 1.0 FTE
Location:	Hamilton Campus
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 administrative headquarters and the chief executive office of the University. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic's (DVCA) portfolio provides comprehensive academic and student services to the University and our students. The Assistant Vice-Chancellor Pacific (AVC Pacific) portfolio provides strategic leadership for the university's

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efforts to deliver better outcomes through tertiary education for Pacific learners, staff, families, and communities.

The University of Waikato is committed to building and enhancing the Pacific dimensions of our institution, and to realising the educational aspirations and success of Pacific people. The AVC Pacific team (also known as Pacific at Waikato) plays a pivotal role at the University of Waikato in advancing the success and wellbeing of Pacific learners, staff, families, and communities as it coordinates activities necessary to deliver the objectives of the Pacific Plan, including:

- Objective 1: Demonstrate and grow leadership on Pacific success.
- Objective 2: Illuminate, clear and open Pacific learner success pathways.
- Objective 3: Deliver substantive outcomes for Pacific learners.
- Objective 4: Promote and deliver high-quality teaching and learning support.
- Objective 5: Foster and support lifelong success.
- Objective 6: Value, grow and attract Pacific staff.
- Objective 7: Grow Pacific researchers and research excellence.

The AVC Pacific portfolio, also known as Pacific at Waikato (PaW), currently delivers eight programmes ranging from high school and transition into study to higher degrees, research and professional development which are designed to smooth and create pathways through cultural legacies of learning and leadership.

2. POSITION PURPOSE

Palu are master traditional wayfinders from Micronesia who navigate open-ocean voyages without instruments. They utilize expert knowledge of astronomy, weather systems, animal behaviour, and other environmental cues to navigate the biggest ocean in the world, Moananuiākea (the ocean of the great and vast expanse, Hawai'i). Palu treasure and protect virtual libraries of Pacific know-how to help their communities to find success. They also pass their wayfinding knowledge down to others.

The Palu Navigator (Engagement, Recruitment and Transition) role is inspired by these master Pacific wayfinders. The role works closely with the Dau ni Talitali Pacific Engagement Manager to promote, deliver and develop programmes designed to enhance Pacific learner success, from early engagement in high school and into university study. The role works one to one with students, helping them individually to better navigate educational success, as well as families, schools, communities and other key stakeholders in Pacific learner success.

Purposes of the role include:

- To provide excellent support for Pacific learners as they navigate learner success pathways from high school through the first year of study at the University of Waikato.
- To engage with, empower and build meaningful relationships with Pacific learners, their families, schools, and communities to enhance their knowledge of educational options and resources.
- To improve outcomes for Pacific learners, families and communities through tertiary

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education, including in areas of STEM study and careers where Pacific people are underrepresented.

Key responsibilities include:

- Student advising, support coordination and proactive triaging to services.
- Increasing Pacific learner participation in PaW initiatives.
- Promotion, preparation and delivery of PaW initiatives, including workshops, seminars and other events and activities.
- Enhancing engagement with learners, families, schools, community organisations, and other key stakeholders.
- Proactive monitoring of student cohorts and data capture to improve timely intervention.

3. FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Internal: Dau ni Talitali Pacific Engagement Manager
Assistant Vice-Chancellor Pacific
Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic (DVCA)
Pacific at Waikato team
DVCA portfolio
Pacific staff and students
Student Services
Future Students
Te Puna Ako Centre for Tertiary Teaching and Learning
Scholarships team

External: Families,
Educators
Schools
Community organisations
Other key stakeholders

4. KEY TASKS

Study Advising and Support Coordination

- Provide study advice and coordinate support for Pacific new to study, re-entry and other students to connect them with the right people, services and networks to address concerns and improve outcomes.
- Proactively monitor student cohorts and capture data to improve timely intervention.
- Proactively and culturally responsively triage to support services.

- Become knowledgeable and stay up-to-date with University teams, services and opportunities.
- Connect with, grow meaningful relationships with and contribute to a wider family-like network of support for Pacific learners and other students at the University of Waikato.

Pacific at Waikato Initiatives

- Increase participation of Pacific learners, staff, families and communities in PaW initiatives through relationships, proactive recruitment and innovative approaches.
- Work with the Dau ni Talitali Pacific Engagement Manager and other members of the PaW team to promote, prepare and deliver PaW initiatives, including workshops, seminars and other events and activities.
- Enhance engagement with schools, community organisations and other Pacific stakeholders by building and nurturing relationships with schools, educators, families, and students.
- Travel and work after normal business hours and on the weekend, as and when required, to better engage with learners, staff, families, communities, and other key stakeholders.
- Capture and utilize data ethically and respectfully to improve learner outcomes and continuously improve initiatives.

General Administrative Tasks

- Process purchasing, invoicing, and payments promptly and consistently with University policies.
- Use University finance, human resources, and administrative systems confidently.
- Ensure that spending is consistent with University policies and within approved budget.
- Maintain accurate records and documentation related to role, including using systems to record attendance and other data at events and activities.
- Stay up-to-date with systems and processes training, regularly upskilling.

Collaboration, Compliance and Quality

- Work collaboratively with other teams, faculties, divisions, and services.
- Comply with University policies and procedures.
- Actively uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi and equity commitments.
- Support health, safety, and wellbeing practices.
- Participate in and contribute to continuous improvement initiatives.

Team Contribution

- Work effectively as a member of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor Pacific team to support other team members and provide logistical assistance 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 strategic projects.

- Support a positive culture and morale which embodies Pacific values of alofa/ofa/aloha (being present/love), manaakitanga (care), tautua (service-based leadership), kuleana (responsibility), fakatokilalo (humility), and sautu (communal wellbeing).
- Comply with and undertake responsibilities set out in the University's Health and Safety Policy and other relevant University policies and procedures.

Continuous Improvement

- Actively contribute to the ongoing development and improvement of Pacific at Waikato systems and processes.
- Participate in leadership and professional development opportunities individually and with the PaW team.

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

4. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The Palu Navigator (Engagement, Recruitment and Transition) will be performing satisfactorily when:

- The role is considered a trusted professional partner.
- High-quality support is provided to the Dau ni Talitali Pacific Engagement Manager.
- Relevant programmes run smoothly.
- Key events and communications are well supported.
- The role contributes to a culturally grounded, inclusive, and collaborative working environment.
- Interactions while performing duties are conducted professionally, respectfully and collaboratively.
- Valuable contribution and participation in relevant meetings and/or projects is provided.
- Work and actions comply with professional standards, University policies and procedures and supports the University's strategic objectives.
- Safe and healthy work practices are followed and comply with University policies and procedures, relevant work standards and statutory obligations.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Essential

- A tertiary qualification in a relevant field or demonstrable experience.

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE and EXPERIENCE

Essential

- Demonstrated cultural competence and experience working in partnership with Pacific people and communities.
- Strong organisational skills with the ability to manage competing priorities and be well prepared.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Excellent interpersonal skills.
- Microsoft Office skills, including Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- 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

- Fluency in a Pacific language and familiarity with one or more Pacific cultures.
- Demonstrable experience working with Pacific learners, staff, families, and/or communities.
- Experience working in a tertiary education environment, especially in supporting students.
- Knowledge of the university, divisional and faculty/school services available to students.
- Experience using university systems used by students, eg learning platforms such as Moodle.
- Experience using university systems used by staff to support students, eg customer relationship management software and student information technology.
- Experience producing social media for professional communication.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

Essential

- Commitment to improving outcomes for learners.
- Professional, personable, calm, and proactive.
- Culturally responsive and respectful.
- Attention to detail and commitment to quality work.

- Collaborative and service-oriented.
- Agile, adaptable and growth-minded.
- Consultative, inclusive and able to successfully engage with a diverse range of stakeholders
- A demonstrated commitment to challenge the status-quo and support continuous improvements.
- Collaborative team player that develops positive and productive working relationships with colleagues and stakeholders/users.
- Ability to prioritise, monitor and complete multiple tasks, prioritise and maintain progress.
- Commitment to principles of equity and diversity and the University's partnership with Māori as intended by the Treaty of Waitangi.