

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Architecture Practice Lead

Reporting to: Deputy CIO

Division: Information Technology Services

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:

- 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

GENERAL

Our University's digital vision is "Digital connects us and moves us forward."

Information Technology Services (ITS) leads digital direction, manages and protects the digital ecosystem, supports digital initiatives and delivers digital services that ensure the University can teach, research and operate successfully in a secure, resilient, connected, sustainable and future-ready digital environment.

ITS is part of the Corporate Services Group within the portfolio of the Chief Operating Officer.

POSITION PURPOSE

The Architecture Practice Lead provides people leadership to the University's technology architecture team of four, three Solution Architects and one Infrastructure Architect, and is responsible for architecture design standards, patterns and governance frameworks that guide how technology is designed, built, and assured across the institution.

The role builds, guides, and matures the architecture practice, translating University and Digital strategy into coherent architecture direction so the team's collective output is consistent, well-governed, and aligned to the Universities Digital Plan. The Architecture Practice Lead manages architectural governance, setting the standards against which solutions are assessed and ensuring designs are assured before they proceed to delivery.

The Architecture Practice Lead is also a hands-on practitioner, personally undertaking Senior Solution Architect work on selected complex or strategically significant projects. Leading the team while remaining close to live architecture problems keeps the practice's standards grounded in real delivery experience and gives the Architecture Lead the currency and credibility to guide and develop the wider team.

The role assists in aligning IT strategy with the University's long-term business goals, providing architecture input to ITS leadership and University governance forums. Through close collaboration with Project Delivery and Operations teams, the Architecture Practice Lead ensures architecture expectations are realistic, documentation is current and fit for purpose, and the University's technology landscape advances in a deliberate, well-governed way.

FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Internal: Architecture team (direct reports): three Solution Architects, one Infrastructure Architect
Applications, Data & Cloud Infrastructure teams
ITS Project Delivery Office
Chief Information Officer
Vice Chancellor's office, Pro Vice Chancellors and Directors
University staff and students

External: Vendors and strategic service providers
Sector peers and professional networks

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

People Leadership

- Provide day-to-day people leadership for the architecture team of four, including workload allocation, performance management, professional development, and recruitment.
- Set clear objectives and role expectations for each architect, ensuring individual contribution connects to team and Digital Plan priorities.
- Build a high-performing, collaborative team culture where knowledge is shared, peer review is normalised, and architecture decisions are well-reasoned and well-documented.
- Conduct regular one-on-ones, mentoring, and career development conversations, building capability and depth across the team.
- Manage team resourcing and capacity, including sourcing specialist or contracted architecture support where required for project delivery.
- Actively contribute to ITS workforce planning, including succession and capability planning for the architecture discipline.

Architecture Standards & Governance

- Define, maintain, and manage the enterprise architecture framework, principles, design standards, and governance processes, ensuring consistent application across all Digital projects, services, and software selection processes.
- Own and manage the architecture governance process, so technology choices, designs, and investments are assessed and assured against agreed principles and standards before they proceed to delivery.
- Ensure the enterprise architecture modelling tool(s) and design documentation remain accurate, current, and accessible to the team and the wider ITS division.
- Provide architecture assurance sign-off on solution designs, escalating unresolved architecture risks appropriately.
- Maintain a current and comprehensive understanding of the University's business applications, systems, data architecture, and broader Digital landscape.

Strategic Alignment

- Assist in aligning IT strategy and the technology roadmap with the University's long-term business goals, translating University and Digital strategy into architecture direction that guides investment decisions.
- Evaluate emerging technologies and assess their potential value within the University's Digital landscape, translating findings into actionable recommendations for ITS leadership.
- Actively contribute to Digital and ITS strategy development and investment planning processes, providing well-reasoned architecture input.
- Prepare and present reports and papers for Digital Governance, University Executive, or Council committees on key technology topics as required.

Hands-on Architecture Delivery

- Act as Senior Solution Architect on selected complex, high-risk, or strategically significant projects, providing direct solution design alongside the wider architecture team.
- Model best-practice architecture standards and design discipline through personal delivery, reinforcing the standards the team is expected to follow.
- Provide peer review and design assurance on solutions delivered by the wider architecture team, ensuring designs are fit for purpose and aligned to agreed principles.
- Balance hands-on delivery against people leadership and governance accountabilities, escalating capacity conflicts to the Deputy CIO where they cannot be resolved within the team.

ITS Leadership Contribution

- Actively participate in the ITS leadership team, contributing to transparency, knowledge sharing, risk ownership, and a high-performance culture.
- Represent the ITS Division, in a Digital leadership capacity as required.
- Contribute to Digital governance groups through activity reporting and specialist technical advice to mitigate risk and maximise investment value.

Health & Safety

- Maintain a safe and healthy work environment for self, the architecture team, and others, including students.
- Comply with and fulfil responsibilities set out in the University's Health and Safety Policy, including line manager obligations for the architecture team.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The Architecture Practice Lead will be performing satisfactorily when:

People Leadership

- The architecture team is well-led, with clear objectives, regular feedback, and visible growth in individual and collective capability over time.
- Team engagement, collaboration and retention are strong, with architects reporting confidence in direction, workload, and support from their peers and manager.
- Resourcing and capacity across the team are actively managed, with capacity risks identified and addressed before they affect delivery.

Architecture Standards & Governance

- The enterprise architecture framework, design standards, and governance processes are current, well-documented, and consistently applied across ICT projects, services, and software selection processes.
- Architecture governance is operating effectively, with technology decisions demonstrably aligned to agreed principles and the University's strategic direction, and assurance sign-off occurring before solutions proceed to delivery.
- Architecture documentation and modelling tools are complete, fit for purpose, and accessible to relevant stakeholders at all stages of project and service delivery.

Strategic Alignment

- IT strategy and the technology roadmap are demonstrably aligned to the University's long-term business goals and used as active inputs to investment planning and decision-making.
- Emerging technology assessments are completed in a timely manner and translated into actionable recommendations rather than informational reports.
- Reports and papers prepared for ICT Governance, University Executive, or Council committees are of high quality, delivered on time, and presented with clarity.

Hands-on Delivery

- Architecture delivered personally on selected projects meets the same standard of quality and governance expected of the wider team.
- Peer review and design assurance activities are conducted consistently, with findings clearly communicated and acted upon.
- Hands-on delivery commitments do not compromise the currency of people leadership or governance accountabilities; capacity conflicts are escalated early.

Leadership & Risk

- Architecture related risks are identified early, documented, and managed within agreed frameworks, with escalation occurring before risks become issues.
- Active and constructive contribution to the ITS leadership team is evident through knowledge sharing, cross-team collaboration, and a demonstrated commitment to a high-performance culture.

Health & Safety

- Safe and healthy work practices are consistently followed by the Architecture Practice Lead and the wider team, in compliance with University policies, relevant standards, and statutory obligations.

Other

Please note that Staff have an annual Objectives, Development and Reflection (ODR) meeting with their manager.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Essential

- Bachelor's degree in information technology, Business, Computer Science, Engineering, or a related field, or equivalent experience.

Desirable

- Industry certifications, such as COBIT, TOGAF, ITIL, Vendor/Product Architecture certifications etc.
- Project Management certification (e.g. PMP, PRINCE2, Agile).
- People leadership or management qualification or training (formal training or equivalent demonstrated experience).

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE and EXPERIENCE

Essential

Architecture & Technical Expertise

- Substantial experience in a senior architecture role within large, complex organisations, with a proven track record of developing and applying architecture frameworks, design standards, and governance processes.
- Strong working knowledge of enterprise and solution architecture frameworks and methodologies (e.g. TOGAF or equivalent) and their practical application in a large organisation.
- Demonstrated experience leading architecture governance, assessing technology decisions against agreed principles and guiding investment choices at an institutional level.
- Current, hands-on solution architecture capability, sufficient to design and deliver complex projects personally, not solely through others.
- Sound understanding of integration patterns and technologies (e.g. REST, event-driven architecture, API management, data integration), sufficient to provide authoritative guidance.
- Solid understanding of cloud architecture across SaaS, PaaS, and IaaS models, including the architectural implications of hybrid and multi-cloud environments.
- Strong understanding of data architecture concepts, including data modelling, relational and non-relational design, and the architecture of data platforms.
- Demonstrated ability to align technology roadmaps and architecture direction with organisational strategy and long-term business goals.

People Leadership

- Proven experience as a formal people leader of technical specialists, with direct accountability for performance management, development, and workforce planning.
- Demonstrated ability to balance hands-on technical delivery with people leadership, without either accountability being compromised.
- Experience establishing or maturing an architecture practice, including operating models, ways of working, and quality frameworks.

- Strong track record of mentoring and developing architecture professionals at varying levels of experience.

Stakeholder Engagement & Communication

- Demonstrated ability to translate complex technical concepts for non-technical audiences, including executive and governance-level stakeholders.
- Proven capability to engage with confidence across all organisational levels, building productive relationships, aligning expectations, and navigating difficult conversations constructively.
- Experience preparing and presenting reports, papers, and recommendations for senior governance forums.
- Strong written and oral communication skills, with the ability to produce clear, well-structured documentation and present complex material with clarity.

Strategic & Organisational Awareness

- Demonstrated ability to analyse complex information, identify patterns, and develop pragmatic, well-reasoned recommendations.
- Active awareness of emerging technology trends and the ability to assess their relevance and implications for a large, complex organisation.
- Understanding of the tertiary education sector or demonstrated ability to rapidly develop sector knowledge and apply it to technology strategy.
- 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

- Experience in higher education or other complex organisations.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- A demonstrated commitment to challenge the status-quo and drive continuous improvements.
- Ability to manage multiple tasks, prioritise and maintain progress across leadership, governance, and hands-on delivery accountabilities.
- Communicates with confidence and clarity across all levels of the organisation, with a consultative and inclusive style.
- Comfort with ambiguity and evolving technology landscapes.
- A genuine interest in developing people, not just technology.

August 2026