

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

### Programme Communications Lead

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| <b>Reports to:</b> | Programme Manager, Student Support Programme |
| <b>Division:</b>   | Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic (DVCA)       |
| <b>Tenure:</b>     | Fixed Term, 2 years                          |
| <b>Location:</b>   | Hamilton                                     |
| <b>Date:</b>       | 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 Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic (DVCA) portfolio leads academic strategy, student experience, and key transformation initiatives across the University. The Student Support Programme is a major cross-University initiative focused on building a more cohesive, equitable, and student-centred service environment.

As the DVCA portfolio continues to evolve, there is a need for clear, coordinated, and strategically aligned communication that supports both programme delivery and portfolio-wide priorities.

## 2. POSITION PURPOSE

The Programme Communications Lead is responsible for developing and delivering an integrated communications approach that supports:

- The successful implementation of the Student Support Programme
- Clear, consistent, and coordinated communications across the broader DVCA portfolio, and
- Is aligned with the internal communications strategy at the University

The role will translate complex strategic and operational initiatives into clear, engaging messages tailored to diverse audiences including academic staff, professional staff, leadership, and students. The role works closely with the central Communications team who deliver broadcast communications to staff and students.

The Programme Communications Lead will ensure messaging is aligned with the University Strategy, reflects partnership with Māori, supports equity outcomes, and strengthens trust and engagement during periods of change.

## 3. ACCOUNTABILITY

The Programme Communications Lead is accountable to the Programme Manager, Student Support Programme and works closely with the DVCA and senior leadership across the portfolio.

## 4. KEY RELATIONSHIPS

- Internal:** Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic  
Programme Manager, Student Support Programme  
DVCA Leadership team  
Student Support Programme team members  
Communication team  
Division/Faculty Directors and student support teams  
Equity, wellbeing and support units  
Marketing and culture teams  
Students and student representatives
- External:** Vendors, consultants or external service providers (as required)

## 5. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

### Strategic Communication Planning

- Develop and implement a communications strategy for the Student Support Programme aligned with change milestones.
- Coordinate communications planning across the DVCA portfolio to ensure consistency, sequencing, and alignment.
- Collaborate with the central Communications team on internal communications plans and approaches.
- Provide advice to senior leaders on communication risks, opportunities, and messaging.

### Change Communications

- Design and deliver change communication plans that support adoption of new service models and ways of working.
- Translate complex business improvement and transformation work into accessible, audience-appropriate content.
- Develop key messages, FAQs, briefings, presentations, and updates for multiple channels.

- Monitor sentiment and feedback, advising on communication adjustments as required.
- Regularly update online information channels including Sharepoint/web pages.

### **Stakeholder and Engagement Support**

- Work closely with programme and division leaders to understand stakeholder impacts and engagement needs.
- Support leaders with communication toolkits, speaking notes, and structured engagement approaches.
- Ensure communication channels enable two-way dialogue and feedback loops.

### **Portfolio Coordination**

- Act as a central coordination point for DVCA portfolio communications to avoid duplication and message fatigue.
- Maintain forward communication planning calendars.
- Ensure messaging reflects institutional strategy and reinforces a cohesive student experience narrative.

### **Equity and Cultural Responsiveness**

- Ensure communications reflect partnership with Māori and are inclusive of diverse communities.
- Support communication approaches that are culturally responsive and promote equity for Māori and Pacific students.
- Incorporate plain language and accessible communication principles.

### **Monitoring and Continuous Improvement**

- Track engagement metrics and qualitative feedback.
- Evaluate effectiveness of communications and recommend improvements.
- Identify opportunities to streamline and strengthen communication practices across the portfolio.

**NOTE:** Staff have annual objectives, development and reflection (ODR) meetings with their manager. New staff normally attend such a meeting approximately three months after taking up their appointment.

## **6. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

The Programme Communications Lead will be performing satisfactorily when:

- Programme Communications are timely, clear and well understood.
- There is clear integration with the central Communications team and alignment with the University's wider approach to internal communications.
- Change communications support adoption and reduce confusion during transitions.
- Staff report improved clarity and reduced duplication of messaging.
- Portfolio-level communications are coordinated, forward-planned, and strategically aligned.
- Communications demonstrate cultural responsiveness and support equity objectives.
- Strong, trusted relationships are established with senior leaders and programme teams.
- Conduct demonstrates integrity, respect, and alignment with the University's values and partnership with Māori.
- 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

- Relevant degree, or equivalent experience, in communications, public relations, marketing or journalism.

## TRAINING, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

### Essential

- Demonstrated experience in strategic communications, ideally in a complex organisation.
- Experience supporting change or transformation initiatives.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills across multiple formats.
- Ability to translate complex initiatives into clear, compelling messaging.
- Experience advising senior leaders.
- Strong stakeholder engagement and coordination capability.
- 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 tertiary education or public sector.
- Familiarity with change management principles.
- Experience coordinating communications across multiple concurrent initiatives.

## PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Strategic thinker with strong delivery capability
- Highly organised and able to manage multiple priorities.
- Calm and credible under pressure.
- Collaborative and relationship-focused.
- Pragmatic, adaptable and solutions-oriented.
- Comfortable working with ambiguity and phased discovery.
- Values driven and culturally responsive.
- Committed to continuous improvement and service excellence.
- Demonstrated integrity, professionalism, and sound judgement in decision-making.
- Committed to upholding the University's values and fostering a positive, respectful workplace culture.
- Commitment to diversity principles and the University's partnership with Māori as intended by the Treaty of Waitangi.