The University of Waikato
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Project Change Specialist

Reports to:	Head of Project Delivery
Division:	ITS
Tenure:	Permanent
Location:	Hamilton Campus
Date:	February 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 Information Technology Services (ITS) Division is responsible for the coordination of information and communications technology (ICT) planning for the University; the delivery of robust, reliable core ICT infrastructure and enterprise systems, and the provision of professional ICT consultancy and customer-focused support services.

The ICT vision is "To engage, enable, innovate and protect our ICT services, and empower the University of Waikato to leverage the value of ICT to achieve its strategic goals."

2. POSITION PURPOSE

The Project Change Specialist is responsible for supporting the successful delivery of ITS projects by enabling staff and stakeholders to adopt and effectively use new systems, processes, and ways of working. The role provides change expertise across the ITS project portfolio, integrating structured change management and communication activities into project delivery from initiation through to operational handover.

The role strengthens change practice within ITS by coaching project managers, business analysts, and project stakeholders in applying consistent methodologies and tools. It works alongside project and business leaders to ensure change impacts are understood, risks are identified early, and appropriate engagement and readiness activities are embedded into delivery plans.

This position acts as a key link between ITS project teams, impacted business areas, and relevant governance groups to support coordinated, user-focused change outcomes aligned with the University's strategic direction and values.

3. FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Internal:
- Project Delivery Office (project managers, business analysts, test analysts)
- Project sponsors, steering groups and governance forums
- ITS Senior Leadership Team
- ITS Enterprise Systems, Infrastructure, Architecture, Security and Operations teams
- Faculties, Schools and Divisional leadership teams
- Office of the Chief Operating Officer
- Organisational Development and People & Capability
- Communications and Marketing
- Student Services teams
- Change champions and stakeholders across the University

External:
- Technology vendors and implementation partners
- Consultants and specialist change providers
- External training, professional, or sector networks
- Peer institutions in the tertiary sector (as required)

4. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Change Leadership & Strategy
- Lead the planning, design and delivery of change management strategies for ITS projects and programmes.
- Apply structured change methodologies (e.g. Prosci/ADKAR) to ensure readiness, adoption, and sustained behaviour change.
- Conduct impact assessments, stakeholder analysis, change readiness assessments, and risk assessments.

- Provide advice to project sponsors and senior leaders on change implications and required leadership actions.
- Provide expert advice to project teams and governance forums on adoption risk, organisational readiness, and sequencing decisions.
- Identify and manage cumulative change impacts across the digital portfolio to ensure sustainable change capacity.
- Align ITS change activity with the University's strategic goals, Te Tiriti obligations, and organisational change frameworks.

Change Planning & Execution
- Determine the appropriate change approach based on complexity, risk, and organisational maturity, exercising professional judgement without requiring direction on methodology.
- Escalate material adoption risks directly to governance where required.
- Develop and maintain change plans integrated into overall project plans.
- Manage change activities including engagement, training, resistance management, and benefits realisation.
- Coordinate and facilitate change workshops, briefings, training sessions, and stakeholder engagement forums.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of change interventions and adjust approaches as needed.
- Ensure smooth transition to operational teams with clear post-go-live support mechanisms.

Communications & Engagement
- Apply and promote organisational communication principles and standards to ensure consistency and alignment across the digital portfolio.
- Develop communications strategies tailored to diverse audiences including staff, students, researchers, and senior leaders.
- Produce high-quality written and visual communication that clearly explains changes, timelines, and impacts.
- Manage communications channels in partnership with Marketing & Communications and internal ITS teams.
- Ensure messaging is consistent, accessible, and aligned with University values and change principles.
- Support project teams to create and maintain user-centred documentation and learning materials.

Stakeholder & Relationship Management
- Build trusted relationships across faculties, divisions, and project teams.
- Manage expectations and ensure transparent, timely communication with all impacted stakeholders.
- Engage and influence senior academic and professional leaders in contentious or high-impact change contexts, facilitating resolution of competing priorities.
- Support leaders and sponsors to demonstrate effective change leadership behaviours.
- Develop change champion networks and communities of practice that promote adoption and continuous improvement.

Capability Building & Coaching

- Coach project managers, business analysts, and ITS staff in applying change methodologies and tools.
- Support the integration of change practices into project and business analysis frameworks.
- Build organisational capability in digital adoption, change readiness, and communication best practice.
- Provide mentoring, guidance and knowledge transfer to uplift maturity within the Project Delivery Office.
- Establish and continuously evolve change frameworks, tools, and maturity models to uplift capability.

Reporting, Measurement & Benefits Realisation

- Report change progress, risks, issues, and adoption metrics to governance forums, as required.
- Define and monitor success measures for people-side change outcomes.
- Collect and analyse feedback to inform improvements and measure benefits realisation.
- Ensure project close-outs include change lessons learned and sustainability planning.

Team Contribution

- Work effectively as a member of the Project Delivery Office to support other team members and provide support and/or coverage of functions.
- Report material people-side risks that may compromise programme outcomes, operational stability, or benefits realisation.
- 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 Project Delivery Office systems and processes.

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

5. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The Project Change Specialist will be performing satisfactorily when:

- Change management is integrated into project planning and delivery, leading to successful adoption outcomes.
- Stakeholders report clear, timely, and relevant communication that supports their readiness and engagement.
- Adoption risks across the portfolio are proactively identified, mitigated, and transparently reported to governance.

- Change artefacts (impact assessments, plans, communications, training materials) are high quality, accurate, and strategically aligned.
- Measurable improvements in adoption, usage, and user experience are demonstrated across ITS projects.
- Project teams consistently apply embedded change standards and demonstrate sustained uplift in change maturity.
- Relationships with faculties, divisions, and governance bodies are constructive, transparent, and outcomes focused.
- Interactions while performing duties are conducted professionally, respectfully and collaboratively.
- 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

- A relevant tertiary qualification in communications, organisational change, business, or a related discipline.
- Change management certification or practical training (e.g. Prosci/ADKAR or equivalent).

Desirable

- Qualifications that will aid the success of this role
- Post-graduate study in organisational change, leadership, or communications.
- Project management qualifications (e.g. PRINCE2, PMP) or equivalent experience.

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE and EXPERIENCE

Essential

- Demonstrated expertise in leading change management for complex, technology-enabled change initiatives.
- Proven ability to design and deliver structured change plans, engagement strategies, and communication campaigns.
- Experience working in complex organisations, preferably within ICT environments.
- Demonstrated experience influencing senior leadership and governance decision-making in high-stakes environments.
- Functional knowledge of project delivery lifecycles and methodologies.
- Experience providing advice to senior leaders and supporting governance forums.
- Excellent interpersonal, verbal, and written communication skills; can tailor messages to diverse audiences.
- Ability to build strong, trust-based relationships across a wide range of stakeholders.
- 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 the tertiary or public sector.
- Experience developing training materials or leading training activities.
- Familiarity with digital adoption tools or enterprise change platforms.
- Experience working with vendors or multi-disciplinary ICT implementation teams.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Consultative and adaptable, with the ability to engage constructively across all levels of the organisation.
- Strategic thinker able to simplify complexity and communicate with clarity.
- Confident facilitator who can influence, challenge constructively, and enable better decision-making.
- Resilient, organised, and able to manage multiple priorities in a changing environment.

- Strong team player who contributes to a positive culture and high trust environment.
- Commitment to continuous improvement, equity, diversity, and partnership with Māori. Commitment to diversity principles and the University's partnership with Māori as intended by the Treaty of Waitangi.