The University of Waikato
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Teaching Design Lead

Reports to:	Associate Director, Teaching Design and Innovation Studio
Division:	Deputy Vice chancellor Academic
Tenure:	Continuing
Location:	Hamilton
Date:	17 June 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) is responsible for teaching and learning, curriculum oversight, academic governance and quality assurance, student administration and enrolment, and the pastoral care and support of students. The DVCA portfolio integrates academic leadership and professional services to ensure a coherent, high-quality and student-centred academic experience, from admission through to progression, completion and graduation.

Situated within the DVCA portfolio, the Teaching Design and Innovation Studio leads the University's academic-facing approach to teaching excellence, curriculum and assessment design, and the development of future teaching capability.

The Studio provides specialist expertise and works in partnership with academic staff and programme teams to design, implement, and refine teaching in a rapidly evolving educational environment. Its work spans programme-level curriculum design, assessment and academic integrity, digital and blended learning, academic development and induction, and the evaluation and recognition of teaching.

The Teaching Design and Innovation Studio brings together pedagogical, design, and disciplinary expertise to support high-quality, coherent, and future-focused teaching. It plays a central role in advancing institutional priorities for student success, academic quality and innovation, ensuring that teaching practice remains current, effective, and aligned to the University's strategic goals.

2. POSITION PURPOSE

Lead initiatives that build teaching across the University, advancing our commitment to teaching excellence through the development and delivery of evidence-informed approaches to pedagogical sound and innovative curriculum design and course development.

3. FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Internal

- AVCs, Directors, Associate Directors and staff across the DVCA portfolio
- Associate Deans, Heads of School and Division Directors
- Academic staff across Divisions and Faculty
- Teaching and learning lead and student support partners
- Information Technology Services
- Teaching Design and Innovation Studio colleagues
- People and Capability and other professional services teams
- Office of the DVC Māori
- Accessibility and inclusion partners across the University
- Students and student representatives

External

- Relevant higher education teaching and learning innovation networks
- Peer institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally
- Waikato Students' Union
- Other external stakeholders relevant to the portfolio

4. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Role specific Responsibilities

- Lead the development and implementation of learning design frameworks and standards that guide curriculum and course design across the University.
- Lead complex curriculum and programme redesign projects across multiple disciplines, ensuring pedagogically sound and evidence-informed outcomes.
- Mentor and guide the Teaching and Learning Designer, supporting their professional growth and ensuring consistency and quality in their work.
- Consult with senior academic leaders and programme teams on learning design challenges, providing expert advice that is practical, evidence-informed, and aligned with institutional priorities.
- Design and deliver professional learning that builds teaching design capability in academic staff, enabling them to apply learning design principles independently and effectively.

- Establish and maintain quality benchmarks for course and programme design, ensuring coherence, constructive alignment, and inclusive design across the University's teaching portfolio.
- Lead the evaluation of learning design innovations, using evidence to assess impact, inform improvement, and share effective practice across the institution.

Shared Studio Expectations

- Model teaching excellence and pedagogical innovation in their own practice
- Contribute positively to Studio team culture and collaborative working relationships
- Engage in ongoing professional development relevant to their role
- Respond professionally and promptly to stakeholder needs and feedback
- Uphold University policies, procedures, and values in all activities
- Participate actively in Studio planning, evaluation, and improvement processes
- Demonstrate cultural competence and sensitivity in all interactions
- Contribute to the scholarship and knowledge base of the Studio's work

Team Contribution

- Work effectively as a member of the Teaching Design and Innovation Studio 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 Teaching Design and Innovation Studio’s systems and processes.

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

5. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The Teaching Design Lead will be performing satisfactorily when:

-
- Programmes show improved with academics creating more intentional connections between learning outcomes, assessment strategies, and teaching approaches at both course and programme level.
- Academic staff demonstrate growing understanding of learning design principles, making more explicit and considered pedagogical decisions and articulating clear rationale for their design choices.
- Academic staff progress from requiring intensive design support to independently applying learning design frameworks, seeking consultation for refinement rather than foundational guidance.
- Co-design approaches become more common within programme teams, with academics engaging colleagues in curriculum conversations and collective design decisions.
- Course design shifts from content-focused to learning-focused, with academics prioritising student learning processes, engagement strategies, and authentic learning experiences.
- Course design artefacts reflect progressively deeper pedagogical thinking, with greater attention to diverse learner needs, accessibility, and the coherence of learning activities and assessment tasks.
- Academic staff routinely evaluate and iterate on their designs based on student feedback, learning analytics, and pedagogical evidence, demonstrating a continuous improvement orientation toward their curriculum and course development practice.
- Interactions with colleagues and stakeholders are professional, respectful, and collaborative across all aspects of the role.
- Contributions to relevant meetings and projects are consistent, considered, and of demonstrable value to the team and institution.
- Advice and guidance comply with professional standards and University policies, and are aligned with 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

- Master's degree in educational design, instructional design, or related field.

Desirable

- Doctorate in education or related discipline
- Teaching qualification (e.g., Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice)

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE and EXPERIENCE

Essential

- Minimum five years' experience in learning design in higher education, with advanced expertise in learning design models and a proven track record of leading complex curriculum design projects.
- Deep understanding of learning theories, curriculum frameworks, assessment design, and Universal Design for Learning, with the ability to apply these to diverse disciplinary and learner contexts.
- Experience in needs analysis, co-design approaches, and facilitation, with the ability to guide programme teams through collaborative curriculum design processes.
- Familiarity with learning management systems, educational technology tools, and learning analytics, with the ability to interpret and apply data to inform design decisions and evaluate learning outcomes.
- Experience applying user experience design principles, design thinking methodologies, and accessibility standards to the development of high-quality, inclusive learning experiences.
- Experience in programme evaluation, with the ability to assess the effectiveness of curriculum and learning design innovations and use evidence to drive continuous improvement.
- Demonstrated understanding of and commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and mātauranga Māori, and the ability to apply this in decision-making and service delivery in ways that support meaningful partnership with Māori, advance equitable outcomes, and reflect the University's founding relationships and strategic obligations.

Preferred

- Experience across multiple disciplinary contexts

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Creative problem-solver with design thinking mindset
- Excellent interpersonal and consultation skills
- Attention to detail with systems-thinking capability
- Patient and empathetic educator of adult learners
- Intellectually curious and committed to continuous learning
- Diplomatic and politically astute in navigating academic contexts
- Consultative, inclusive and adaptable to successfully engage with a diverse range of stakeholders and at all levels of the organisation.

17 June 2026

- A demonstrated commitment to challenge the status-quo and drive continuous improvements.
- Strong technical ability with systems and processes
- Collaborative team player that develops positive working relationships with colleagues and stakeholders/users
- Ability to monitor multiple tasks, prioritise and maintain progress..