

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Teaching Innovation 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.

17 June 2026

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

Drive pedagogical innovation across the University by identifying, piloting, evaluating, and scaling emerging teaching practices and technologies that enhance learning outcomes and teaching effectiveness.

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 leads and student support partners
- Teaching Design and Innovation Studio colleagues
- Information Technology Services
- People and Capability and other professional services teams
- Office of the DVC Māori
- Accessibility and inclusion partners across the University
- Students and student representatives
- Other divisional and faculty staff

External:

- Relevant Higher Education 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

- Scan the horizon for emerging pedagogical trends and innovative teaching practices
- Design and lead teaching innovation pilots and experiments
- Establish and coordinate Communities of Practice for teaching innovation
- Develop frameworks for evaluating innovative pedagogies, with consideration of potential for scalability
- Curate artefacts to encourage and guide others in the use of evidence-based innovative practices
- Advise on pedagogical implications of emerging technologies

- Build innovation capability among academic staff through mentoring and professional development

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 Innovation Lead will be performing satisfactorily when:

- Academics demonstrate a growing willingness to experiment with teaching practices, approaching challenges as opportunities for innovation and embracing iterative improvement as a normal part of professional practice.
- Academics show greater comfort with pedagogical experimentation, implementing and refining innovative practices while maintaining appropriate scaffolding and support for students.
- Emerging communities of practice enable academics to regularly share teaching innovations, seek colleague feedback, and collaborate on solving pedagogical challenges.
- Engagement with the scholarship of teaching and learning grows, with academics documenting innovations, and contributing to pedagogical knowledge within their disciplines.
- Academics adapt innovations thoughtfully to their specific disciplinary, student, and institutional contexts, demonstrating sophisticated pedagogical thinking rather than wholesale adoption of new practices.
- Successful innovations become embedded in regular practice and spread through informal networks, evidencing cultural shift rather than isolated experimentation.
- Academics routinely evaluate the outcomes of teaching innovations, using insights from both successes and challenges to refine their approaches, inform future decisions, and build a cumulative evidence base for effective 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 education, educational innovation, or related field, or
- The equivalent in relevant professional experience

Desirable

- Doctorate in education or related discipline

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE and EXPERIENCE

Essential

- Minimum five years' experience in higher education teaching, with a proven track record of identifying, implementing, and scaling successful teaching innovations.
- Strong background in the scholarship of teaching and learning, with experience in mixed methods research design, evaluation methodologies, and evidence synthesis.
- Working knowledge of contemporary learning theories and emerging pedagogies, including approaches such as authentic learning and challenge-based learning.
- Familiarity with emerging educational technologies, learning analytics, and the implications of AI for teaching and learning in higher education.
- Experience applying design thinking, innovation frameworks, and change management approaches to drive sustainable improvements in teaching practice.
- Skilled facilitator and community builder, with the ability to mobilise knowledge, build networks, and support academics across disciplines to engage with and adopt pedagogical innovations.
- Strong communication skills, and the ability to translate complex pedagogical ideas into compelling narratives for diverse audiences.
- 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

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- Experience developing compelling business cases and funding proposals that have successfully secured resources to pilot and scale teaching innovations.
- Experience gaining, or contributing to a team that has gained, recognition for the adoption and impact of teaching innovations at a national or international level.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Entrepreneurial mindset with tolerance for ambiguity and risk
- Intellectually curious and forward-thinking
- Strong networker and relationship builder
- Evidence-driven decision maker
- Inspirational communicator who can build enthusiasm for innovation
- Reflective practitioner committed to continuous improvement

- Cultural sensitivity and commitment to equitable innovation
- Consultative, inclusive and adaptable to successfully engage with a diverse range of stakeholders and at all levels of the organisation.
- 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.