

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Team Leader Offshore Higher Research Degrees

Reports to:	Higher Research Degrees Manager
Division:	School of Graduate Research
Tenure:	Full-time
Location:	Hillcrest campus, Hamilton
Date:	May 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

Te Mata Kairangi School of Graduate Research sits under the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research. The School is responsible for the strategic leadership and provision of services and support for all postgraduate higher research degree programmes, including Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Higher Doctorates (DLit, DSc, LLD), Professional Doctorates (EdD, DMA), Master of Philosophy (MPhil), and all Scholarships, Awards and Prizes at the University of Waikato. This includes offshore PhD programmes established under the University's transnational education programme.

2. POSITION PURPOSE

The Team Leader Offshore PhD Programmes provides operational leadership to the administration and ongoing development of offshore higher research degrees delivered through the University's transnational education programme. This is a senior role within the Higher Research Degrees Team that is responsible for developing new systems and processes that support effective, sustainable, and scalable offshore delivery of higher research degrees; providing expert advice to internal and external stakeholders on postgraduate research administration; and overseeing the admission, enrolment, candidature and examination of offshore higher research degree students. The position also provides training and leadership to administrative staff based offshore, ensuring compliance with relevant regulations, guidelines, and processes, and reporting on the effectiveness of offshore service delivery. Additionally, the Team Leader Offshore PhD Programmes coordinates the registration of external supervisors and the delivery of professional development in research supervision, and maintains effective communication regarding the offshore programmes across the wider Higher Research Degrees Team.

3. FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Internal:**
- Dean, Te Mata Kairangi School of Graduate Research
 - Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research
 - Vice-Chancellor International
 - Assistant Vice-Chancellor International
 - Staff of Te Mata Kairangi School of Graduate Research
 - Associate Deans Postgraduate Research (Divisions/Faculty)
 - Associate Deans International (Divisions/Faculty)
 - Student Services (Careers, Health and Wellbeing, Accessibility)
 - University business units (SITS team, ITS, PPA, Finance, Comms, Marketing)
 - Staff of Divisions, Faculties and Schools
 - Staff of International and Engagement Office
 - Prospective and enrolled Higher Research Degree students
 - Te Puna Ako Centre for Tertiary Teaching and Learning
 - Library
- External:**
- Staff of Offshore Partner Universities and Joint Institutes
 - Higher Research Degree examiners
 - Higher Research Degree external supervisors

4. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership

- Develop and maintain an operational plan to deliver offshore PhD programmes under the University's transnational education programme.
- Collaborate across academic and business units of the University to manage complex projects and develop new systems and processes that support sustainable and scalable implementation of transnational doctoral education.
- Maintain up to date knowledge of university policies, procedures and business processes as they relate to higher research degrees and the transnational education programme.

- Provide leadership to administrative staff based offshore including providing training in UoW doctoral systems and processes, ensuring clear task expectations, providing guidance if issues or questions arise, and ensuring ongoing compliance with relevant regulations and guidelines.
- Act as delegated authority for the Dean of the School of Graduate Research in higher research degree matters relating to offshore PhD programmes, as agreed in advance.
- Provide effective project management to new initiatives that deliver an improved experience for offshore Higher Research Degree students and supervisors, promote increased recruitment, and support successful and timely completions.
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- Provide support to the Dean, Te Mata Kairangi School of Graduate Research in preparing materials for the Global Academic Programmes Board and other University committees.
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- Uphold the University's commitment to the principles and articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Operational and Administrative

- Oversee the administration of higher research degree students within offshore PhD programmes from application through to submission, examination and completion, as required. This includes coordination and tasking of administrative staff based offshore.
- Contribute to the ongoing digitalisation of forms and processes relating to higher research degrees, providing leadership in ensuring consistency and compatibility between onshore and offshore PhD programmes.
- Work with offshore students, supervisors, and senior leadership to resolve any issues or disputes. Advise the Higher Research Degrees Manager of any issues arising and provide recommended actions if escalation is needed.
- Monitor and report on the enrolment and progress of higher research degree students within offshore PhD programmes and/or overdue administrative milestones.
- Manage the registration of offshore supervisors and coordinate delivery of appropriate professional development in research supervision.
- Be responsible for coordinating and/or delivering induction activities, doctoral workshops, and other events for offshore higher research degree students and research supervisors, in collaboration with staff at offshore partner universities.

School of Graduate Research

- Contribute to advancement in the strategic priorities of the University Strategy and achieving the objectives of the Postgraduate Research Plan, through proposing and taking responsibility for strategic initiatives, including those based onshore where capacity allows.
- Contribute to the recruitment of new Higher Research Degree advisors.
- Act as a mentor for Higher Research Degree Advisors in handling complex enquiries or problems.
- Role model best practice and participate in the continuous improvement of good practice in meeting the needs of internal and external stakeholders.
- Work with integrity and ensure confidentiality when handling personal information and enrolment details of higher research degree students.
- Ensure current and accurate documentation is maintained, and shared as appropriate, regarding all aspects of higher research degrees and for any other responsibilities within the School.

- Be responsible for co-monitoring all email and other forms of contact for Higher Research Degrees, and the wider school, with a focus on enquiries related to offshore programmes.
- Proactively contribute to and demonstrate leadership in team meetings, operational planning and decision-making processes of the School of Graduate Research.
- Be willing and able to take on team-members portfolios when they are on leave or during periods of high work volume across the team, including administration of the onshore PhD programme where capacity allows.
- Undertake special projects as required by the Dean of the School of Graduate Research or Higher Research Degrees Manager.

Outreach and stakeholder engagement

- Provide informed and professional advice and information to stakeholders (e.g., current and prospective students, professional and academic staff at UoW and overseas, University Leadership Group), consulting with the Higher Research Degrees Manager and Dean of the School of Graduate Research as required
- Be willing to travel overseas to offshore partner universities by agreement and with sufficient notice.
- Develop and maintain content relating to offshore PhD programmes on external postgraduate research webpages, internal postgraduate supervision webpages, Moodle sites, and contribute to social media supported by the University, the offshore partner university, or the School of Graduate Research.

Team Contribution

- Work effectively as a member of the Higher Research Degrees Team 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-performing team.
- Support a positive culture and morale.
- Comply with and undertake responsibilities set out in the University's Health and Safety Policy.

Any other duties as required that are consistent with the position held and work in the best interests of the School and University (including its community of students and staff), within relevant legislation and in accordance with the University Charter.

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

5. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The Team Leader Offshore Programmes will be performing satisfactorily when:

- Operational plans, systems and processes are developed and maintained to support sustainable, scalable and consistent delivery of offshore PhD programmes.
- Offshore PhD students are administered effectively across the student lifecycle, with accurate reporting and overdue or complex matters escalated appropriately.
- Effective leadership is demonstrated in managing operational priorities, coordinating complex activities and projects, resolving issues, and contributing to strategic initiatives that improve the offshore higher research degree experience.

- Offshore administrative staff are provided with appropriate training, guidance and task direction, and their work complies with University regulations, policies and processes.
- Accurate, timely and professional advice is provided to students, supervisors, offshore partner staff, University staff and other stakeholders.
- Offshore supervisors are registered and relevant professional development and workshops for students and supervisors are coordinated effectively.
- Strong working relationships are developed and maintained with key internal and external stakeholders, including offshore partner universities and relevant University business units
- Documentation, communications and records relating to offshore PhD programmes are current, accurate, accessible and maintained in accordance with University and School requirements.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Essential

- A bachelor's degree or relevant work experience.

Preferred

- Postgraduate qualification.

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE and EXPERIENCE

Essential

- Substantial role-specific experience in the provision of services and administration relating to higher research degrees.
- Proven staff leadership experience.
- Ability to think strategically, identifying relevant opportunities and risks..
- Ability to communicate with stakeholders in a professional manner.
- High-level written and interpersonal communication skills with attention to detail.
- Moderate ICT skills and experience, particularly Microsoft Office Suite (especially Excel) and working with databases.
- Ability to communicate with stakeholders in a professional and succinct manner.
- Proven planning, organisational, analytical and problem-solving skills, with ability to prioritise and meet tight deadlines.
- Ability to manage complex projects and organise events.
- Proven ability to demonstrate initiative and to work both independently and as a team.
- Ability and willingness to facilitate and/or deliver training and workshops relevant to the role.
- Demonstrated ability to work in accordance with regulations and policies
- Knowledge of the New Zealand tertiary education environment.

Preferred

- Ability to use SITS/e-Vision Student Management System.
- Skills in maintaining website content and other public facing materials.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Complete discretion and confidentiality.
- Genuine commitment to the mission, values and work of the University of Waikato.
- Ability to relate well to a wide range of people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures in a pleasant, professional, courteous and sensitive manner.
- Client-focused and professional approach and an ability to build effective working relationships.
- Team leadership attributes.
- Ability to prioritise and make sound judgements.
- Ability to manage challenging conversations and maintain performance standards in a sometimes high pressure environment.
- Ability to work individually and collaboratively with a flexible attitude to work tasks.

- Commitment to equal opportunity and to upholding the University's commitment to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Commitment to a culture of openness, flexibility and co-operation to achieve excellence in academic programmes, research and service.
- Commitment to ongoing professional development and building capability.