

UNIVERSITIES NEW ZEALAND – TE PŌKAI TARA

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title	Programme Director – Complex Workstreams
Reports to	Chief Executive
Tenure	Open tenure (permanent)
Hours	Full time (normally 37.5 hours a week)
Location	Wellington
Date	May 2022

BACKGROUND AND POSITION CONTEXT

The Chief Executive of each of Aotearoa New Zealand’s eight universities is its Vice-Chancellor.

The Vice-Chancellors of the universities have been meeting and collaborating across a range of areas since the early 1960s (when the University of New Zealand was disestablished and a number of separate independent universities came into existence). Since the early 1960s, they have been referred to as the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors’ Committee (NZVCC).

The NZVCC operates as the peak body for New Zealand’s university sector.

The Education Act (1989) established the NZVCC as a statutory body with formal responsibilities that include (a) recognising academic programmes and qualifications and listing them on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework, and (b) granting scholarships.

Outside of these statutory functions, the Vice-Chancellors also work collectively in the following areas:

1. Engaging constructively and effectively with government to shape policy, strategy and funding settings in ways that advance both government and the university sector.
2. Fostering knowledge sharing and good practice across the university sector to improve outcomes, effectiveness and efficiency.
3. Collaborating where there are opportunities for the sector collectively to drive improvements more efficiently or effectively than any one or two universities would be able to individually.

There are currently 25 cross-sector entities that report directly or indirectly to the NZVCC working across one or more of these areas. They include standing committees, expert working groups and short-life projects.

The Vice-Chancellors have a small office of 15 staff in Wellington to support and advance all this for them. This is Universities New Zealand – Te Pōkai Tara (UNZ).

UNZ is wholly funded by the university sector and its budget is set at the complete discretion of the NZVCC.

Over the past seven years, UNZ's work programme has evolved significantly. Where it was operating largely as a secretariat for the NZVCC and its sub-committees, the NZVCC now looks increasingly to UNZ to coordinate or drive a growing number of complex strategic workstreams. Workstreams are complex and strategic where (a) they require working across multiple university sector committees and functions, and/or multiple government agencies, and where (b) they affect the sector as a whole in areas such as strategy, mandate, resourcing and future shape.

These complex strategic workstreams are made particularly challenging due to features such as:

1. Needing to get eight universities (and often two to three government agencies) to all agree on scope and objectives.
2. UNZ has no ability to direct or command anyone to do anything. All workstreams require a lot of careful influencing, advising and facilitating. UNZ's involvement is often determined by the extent to which it is perceived as being likely to add value.
3. Each university is structured differently below the level of Vice-Chancellor. For example, responsibility for international education sits in a different part of every university.
4. The people involved in complex strategic workstreams are typically in different cities and dealing with a range of competing priorities and pressures.
5. Complex strategic workstreams require a wide range of approaches and skills. They can involve any or all of the following elements singly or in combination – strategy, planning, financial analysis, economic analysis, solution design, solution implementation, facilitation/coordination, project management/administration/coordination, etc.

Some workstreams will be relatively small and low level, but need support and expertise around framing up the approach and rationale. Others will be large and high level, with significant oversight and many different parties involved in governance and implementation.

We are looking for someone who can comfortably and successfully work in this environment to help advance our complex strategic work programme.

UNZ portfolio managers and NZVCC committees

UNZ has several portfolio managers who facilitate and support the work of the various NZVCC sub-committees and working groups where (a) the committee is working regularly in the complex strategic workspace, and/or (b) the committee's work programme requires collaboration or coordination with the work programmes of other committees, and/or (c) the committee routinely meets with ministers and/or government officials in key policy and funding agencies.

There are some committees and working groups that don't meet these requirements and that, therefore, don't have a dedicated portfolio manager.

POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Complex workstreams

Working closely with or to the Chief Executive and any agreed workstream sponsor/owner (usually a Vice-Chancellor).

- A. Develop a workstream outline covering the following (noting that each workstream will be different and therefore each workstream outline will necessarily vary in size and form accordingly):
 - a. Critical success factors (from the perspective of the Vice-Chancellors).
 - b. Scope of the workstream.
 - c. Purpose/reason for the workstream.
 - d. Process.
 - e. Key deliverables in each stage and overall.
 - f. Key stakeholders and how they will be engaged (involved, consulted, informed, etc).

- B. Implementation may involve some or all of the following:
 - a. Build support for the preferred approaches agreed in the workstream outline with all key stakeholders.
 - b. Maintain the support of stakeholders through effective engagement.
 - c. Allow sufficient flexibility to ensure the workstream remains on track to realise objectives.
 - d. Where necessary build the evidence case for the workstream. This may include:
 - i. Procurement and management of contractors and/or consultants.
 - ii. Quantitative and qualitative analysis.
 - iii. Financial and/or economic analysis.
 - iv. Business case drafting or review.
 - e. Generate management reporting and recommendations.

2. Support to UNZ staff and NZVCC committees and working groups

- A. Work collegially and provide support and advice to UNZ staff as they work through their own projects and complex work programmes. This may include any or all of the following:
 - a. Help them develop workstream and project outlines.
 - b. Peer review workstream reports and analyses.
 - c. Assist with framing business cases and/or other management proposals.
 - d. Assist with financial and economic analyses.
 - e. Help link and coordinate overlapping and sometimes potentially conflicted priorities and workstreams.

- B. As required, provide support to committees and working groups that do not have an assigned portfolio manager. This will mostly be where:
 - a. The committee or working group has a discrete piece of work that will take it into the complex strategic workspace, and/or that will require coordination across UNZ or the university sector.
 - b. The committee or working group needs in-house consultancy-type support in areas such as scoping up a work programme, project or strategy.

- C. Work closely with the Chief Executive and any agreed workstream sponsor/owner (usually a Vice-Chancellor).

3. Other duties

- Ensure adequate records are maintained of meetings associated with any workstream or meeting overseen by you.
- Act as central coordination and communications point for all workstreams you are overseeing.
- Keep adequate records and ensure they are accessible to everyone in UNZ, as appropriate.

- Assist the Communications Manager with information, analysis and contacts across areas relevant to your role.
- Ensure the content of the website, intranet and other online systems relevant to the role are kept up to date.
- Contribute to wider UNZ planning, projects and operations as required by the Chief Executive.

KEY WORKING RELATIONSHIPS – GENERIC

Internal

- New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee.
- Chairs and members of committees and short-life working groups relevant to the role.
- Staff across the universities working in or around areas relevant to the role.
- Staff of Universities New Zealand and the Academic Quality Agency.

External

- Staff in government agencies with policy, advisory or operational management responsibilities in areas relevant to the portfolio.
- Non-government agencies and other organisations working in areas relevant to the portfolio.
- Consultants, contractors and other specialists who contribute to workstreams overseen by the role.
- Students and bodies representing students.
- The public.

KEY PERSON REQUIREMENTS

- A postgraduate qualification. An MBA or equivalent would be desirable.
- Substantial (five-plus years) experience in roles with a focus on organisation or system design, improvement and development working with stakeholders at tier 1 (chief executive) and tier 2. Ideal candidates will come from a management consulting background or the equivalent role within an organisation.
- Substantial experience in the university sector and/or a government sector.
- Key competencies and experience:
 - Developing strategies and plans – evidence of development strategies at sector or whole-of-organisation level and converting them into effective implementation plans.
 - Writing for an executive audience – ability to communicate simply and effectively to audiences primarily at tier 1 and 2 levels.
 - Qualitative skills – ability to assess and/or develop intermediate-level financial analyses, including cashflows and project economic analyses (NPVs, IRRs, etc).
 - Project management/coordination – ability to apply project management disciplines to all workstreams to ensure dependencies and project critical paths are well managed.
- Key attributes:
 - Creative, and innovative – able to manage a complex set of problems, risks, opportunities and issues and identify creative but realistic solutions and strategies.

- Resilience and adaptability – ability to cope with a high degree of ambiguity and to work well in an environment where you can only influence and advise.
- Political nous – ability to understand and work across often conflicting priorities, agendas and personalities in the university and government sectors.
- Interpersonal skills – ability to manage relationships with internal and external stakeholders and to foster sound working relationships between members of a working group.
- Treaty of Waitangi/Partnerships – demonstrates an understanding of the implication of the Treaty on today’s society. A commitment to equity and operating in a partnership and bicultural environment.

KEY INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

- The project requires someone who is physically located in or near Wellington given the number of meetings that will be required with government agencies and/or at Universities New Zealand.
- There will be some travel – mostly domestic, but possibly some trans-Tasman.

HOURS OF WORK

Although the role can usually be done within 37.5 hours a week, this is a senior role and some flexibility will be expected in hours of work (to accommodate meetings, travel and functions) and hours worked (to accommodate periods of unusually high workload). Flexitime is available.

REMUNERATION

Universities New Zealand sets remuneration between 85% and 110% of a market median. For this role, 85% is \$119,000, the median is \$140,000, and 110% is \$154,000. The exact point a person is appointed within the range will be determined by particular knowledge and experience.