



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

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POSITION DESCRIPTION

Head of School of Health Equity and Innovation
Division of Health

Reports to:	Pro Vice-Chancellor of Health
Division:	Division of Health
Tenure:	Three years
Location:	Hamilton
Date:	September 2025

Vision

We will

- deliver a world-class education and research portfolio
- provide a full and dynamic university experience which is distinctive in character
- pursue strong international linkages to advance knowledge

The over-arching themes of this *Vision* are:

- Excellence
- Distinctiveness
- International Connectedness

Values

Ko te mana o Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato ka herea ki tō tātou:

- Tu 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 Division of Health is committed to addressing health inequities and preventable conditions, with a particular focus on improving outcomes for Māori and Pacific communities. It advances equitable health outcomes across Aotearoa through innovative research and high-quality teaching in Biomedical Sciences, Health Promotion, Healthy Active Living, Human Performance Science, Midwifery, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Sport Development and Coaching. In 2028, the Division of Health will welcome the inaugural cohort of students to the New Zealand Graduate School of Medicine (NZGSM).

The School of Health Equity and Innovation contributes to the education of a culturally grounded, future-focused health workforce. It leads scholarship in Māori and Pacific Health, provides strategic leadership in cultural safety, and prepares graduates to champion access, inclusion, and social justice. The School is responsible for key undergraduate programmes, including the Bachelor of Health degree and the Health Promotion major, and it leads interprofessional taught postgraduate programmes for the Division that support ongoing health workforce development. These programmes focus on equipping multidisciplinary teams to address complex health challenges and drive innovation in health service delivery.

2. POSITION PURPOSE

The Head of School of Health Equity and Innovation will provide academic, strategic, and operational leadership to a School focused on advancing health equity and driving innovation in health education, research, and community engagement. The role is pivotal in cultivating an inclusive, transdisciplinary environment that responds to regional, national, and global health priorities, with a strong focus on Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations and Māori and Pacific worldviews of health.

The Head of School will oversee the delivery and continuous improvement of existing offerings and lead the development of an expanded suite of taught postgraduate programmes, including a Master of Public Health (or equivalent). The Head of School will also establish opportunities for professional development beyond traditional credit-bearing study, enabling health professionals to upskill through flexible learning pathways.

As a member of the Division of Health Senior Leadership Team, the Head of School will work closely with the Pro Vice-Chancellor, other Heads of Schools and Programmes, and Associate Deans. They will foster a collaborative, inclusive environment that encourages excellence in teaching, research, and service, with a shared commitment to addressing inequities in health outcomes.

3. ACCOUNTABILITY

The Head of School of Health Equity and Innovation is responsible to the Pro Vice-Chancellor for the Division of Health.

4. FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS:

Internal:

- Pro Vice-Chancellor, Division of Health
- Associate Deans
- Heads of School and Programme within the Division
- Director, Division of Health
- Division Managers
- The Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellors
- Assistant Vice-Chancellor Pacific
- Staff from the Office of the DVC Māori
- Directors of Research Institutes and Centres
- Other academic and professional staff in the Division and the University.

External:

- Māori and Pacific health provider organisations
- Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora (regional and national)
- Community and iwi partners involved in health equity initiatives
- Professional and regulatory bodies across health disciplines
- Innovation and public health networks
- Ministry of Health and other government agencies
- Research funding bodies (e.g. HRC, MBIE)
- NGOs, primary care networks, and local health alliances

International academic and research partners
External clients and organisations, contractors and suppliers
Other external stakeholders

5. KEY TASKS

5.1 Provide academic and business leadership within the School of Health Equity and Innovation:

- Ensure alignment with regulatory, policy, and strategic frameworks, including the expectations of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the University Strategy, and health sector reform priorities.
- Lead the development, implementation, and continuous review of academic programmes that are culturally grounded, future-focused, and responsive to the priorities of Māori, Pacific, and underserved communities.
- Foster strong working relationships with key health sector partners, including Te Whatu Ora, Māori and Pacific health providers, and innovation networks, to support student placements, research collaboration, and system transformation.
- Co-design programmes and research initiatives with Māori, Pacific, and underserved communities to ensure teaching and scholarship reflect the needs, values, and aspirations of those most impacted by health inequities.
- Provide visionary academic leadership that fosters a culture of equity, innovation, and excellence in teaching, research, and engagement.
- Provide academic oversight and leadership for the Health Promotion and Healthy Active Living undergraduate majors, as well as postgraduate papers within the Master of Health Science, ensuring they remain relevant, evidence-based, and equity-led.
- Strengthen and expand undergraduate pathways that support progression into clinical, postgraduate, and professional health programmes, particularly in areas of identified workforce need.
- Guide curriculum innovation to ensure programmes embed equity, cultural safety, and interdisciplinary approaches that prepare graduates to lead in complex health systems.
- Create an inclusive and high-performing academic environment that supports the wellbeing, capability, and career development of staff and students.
- Develop and monitor the School's operational plan, ensuring alignment with the Division of Health Strategic Plan, Business Plan (2026–28), and University priorities.
- Lead the development of a School-wide research strategy that enhances equity-centred research capability, strengthens community-led and transdisciplinary research partnerships, and increases research impact and funding success.
- Contribute to the financial sustainability of the School by ensuring efficient use of resources, supporting external income generation, and aligning activities with performance expectations.

5.2 Strengthen partnerships with iwi, community-led, and Pacific health organisations to ensure the School's programmes and research are grounded in regional and national health priorities.

5.3 Manage staff within the School of Health Equity and Innovation:

- Implement and maintain Human Resource strategies and policies.
- Plan for the most suitable workforce and manage appropriate staffing levels.
- Implement performance management and professional development, including coaching and feedback, to develop staff.

5.4 Manage finances and resources, including preparing and monitoring the School of Health Equity and Innovation budget and planning and managing physical resources.

5.5 Lead the development, planning, and delivery of high-quality postgraduate programmes and other workforce development opportunities, including expanding the School's portfolio to meet emerging sector needs and support academic and professional pathways in health equity and innovation.

5.6 Develop and maintain networks and relationships within and external to the University that enhance the Division's ability to foster innovation and deliver interdisciplinary, equity-led teaching and research that responds to evolving sector needs.

- 5.7 Develop opportunities and initiatives that support the Division's and University's strategy, including contributing to the Divisional Leadership Team and acting as a key advisor to the Pro Vice-Chancellor.
- 5.8 Undertake teaching and research at an appropriate level.
- 5.9 Participate in maintaining a safe and healthy work environment for self and others including students. Comply with and undertake responsibilities set out in the University's Health and Safety Policy. Undertake line manager health and safety responsibilities as 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 Division and University (including its community of students and staff), within relevant legislation and in accordance with the University Charter.

NOTE: The Head of School of Health Equity and Innovation will have an annual Objectives, Development and Reflection (ODR) meeting with the Pro Vice-Chancellor. New appointees will normally attend such a meeting approximately three months after taking up the role.

6. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The Head of School of Health Equity and Innovation will be performing satisfactorily when:

- A demonstrable commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi is reflected in leadership practices, curriculum design, community partnerships, and staff development.
- The Head contributes actively and constructively to external engagement with iwi, hapū, Pacific communities, health sector organisations, professional bodies, as well as national and international partners.
- The School builds and maintains respectful, reciprocal relationships with Māori and Pacific communities to ensure their voices and aspirations inform health service delivery, policy development, and institutional priorities.
- The School demonstrates visible and credible academic leadership nationally and, where appropriate, internationally, to health system innovation through co-designed initiatives, applied research, and dissemination of new models of practice.
- The School is the preferred provider of professional development opportunities and taught postgraduate programmes for health professionals in Te Manawa Taki, with demonstrable uptake, impact, and alignment with workforce development priorities regionally and nationally.
- All School programmes and initiatives are delivering on agreed academic, operational, and strategic performance outcomes, including those aligned with the Division of Health Business Plan and University Strategy.
- Teaching responsibilities are fulfilled to a high standard, with consistently positive evaluations and contributions to curriculum enhancement, pedagogical innovation, and teaching quality.
- Research-led teaching is maintained at a high level across the School, contributing to academic leadership, scholarly excellence, and the integration of equity-focused research into teaching practice.
- Student learning and achievement are demonstrably supported and enhanced, in alignment with the University's goals for inclusive, culturally responsive, and high-impact education.
- A significant and effective contribution is made to School and Divisional leadership, governance, and operations, including active participation in the Division of Health Leadership Team and relevant University committees.
- The Head contributes significantly to Divisional and University leadership, including governance, strategy implementation, and cross-disciplinary collaboration.
- Health, safety, and wellbeing practices are actively promoted and upheld, in accordance with University policies, legislative requirements, and sector norms.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Essential

- A PhD or equivalent qualification in a health-related field (e.g. public health, health sciences, health equity, Māori and Pacific health, health innovation)

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Preferred

- Current appointment at the Associate Professor or Professor level

TRAINING, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Essential

- Deep understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its application within health education and institutional leadership
- Demonstrated academic leadership experience within health, public health, Māori and Pacific health, or related disciplines
- Proven ability to develop and maintain effective relationships with external stakeholders, including iwi, Pacific communities, sector partners, and health agencies
- Proven ability to lead diverse academic teams and provide strategic guidance across teaching, research, and engagement portfolios
- Sustained excellence in research-led teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels
- Evidence of leading curriculum development with a focus on cultural safety, equity, and health system transformation
- Demonstrated experience in applying innovative teaching methodologies, including blended learning, distance delivery, and co-designed pedagogy
- Strong research profile, including successful grant acquisition and community-engaged research outputs
- Demonstrated capability to engage with, and provide leadership to, interdisciplinary programmes (e.g. Health Promotion, Healthy Active Living, Health Science)

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- A strong commitment to equal opportunity, anti-racism, and to the University's strategic partnership with Māori as articulated through Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- Self-motivated and proactive, with a commitment to innovation, equity, and continuous improvement
- Demonstrated capacity to lead through influence, collaboration, and culturally grounded practice
- Resilient, adaptable, and solutions-focused under pressure
- Able to work effectively and respectfully with students and staff from diverse backgrounds, with cultural competence and humility
- Committed to creating a positive, inclusive academic culture based on openness, collegiality, and wellbeing

Term of Appointment

The term of appointment is three years and may, subject to review by the Pro Vice-Chancellor of Health, be renewed for a further period by mutual agreement. The appointee may have provision for reversion to a continuing academic position at an appropriate level.

September 2025