

# POSITION DESCRIPTION

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE (DESIGNATE) – TE KURA MATATINI KI OTAGO/ OTAGO POLYTECHNIC

### DETAILS

**Role title:** Chief Executive (Designate), Te Kura Matatini ki Otago/Otago Polytechnic (Otago Polytechnic)

**Reports to:** Chair, Establishment Advisory Group of the Otago Polytechnic (until formal Institute of Technology and Polytechnic (ITP) Council for the Otago Polytechnic is confirmed)

**Delegations:** Executive delegations granted by the ITP Council, including full operational, financial, academic, and strategic authority as governed by the Education and Training Act 2020, the Crown Entities Act 2004, and the Employment Relations Act 2000.

### ABOUT TE KURA MATATINI KI OTAGO/ OTAGO POLYTECHNIC

Te Kura Matatini ki Otago / Otago Polytechnic (Otago Polytechnic) is one of Aotearoa New Zealand's most respected and innovative tertiary education institutions — renowned for excellence in applied learning, strong industry partnerships, and a deep connection to its community.

Based in Ōtepoti Dunedin and serving learners across the wider Otago region and beyond, Otago Polytechnic delivers a full range of vocational and professional programmes from certificates and diplomas to degrees, micro-credentials, and work-based training through to a Doctorate in Professional Practice, reflecting its academic depth and commitment to lifelong learning. Its teaching and research are grounded in real-world experience, ensuring learners are equipped with the skills, creativity, and confidence to succeed in a changing world.

Otago Polytechnic will again operate as an independent organisation under the Education and Training Act 2020 restoring regional leadership, strengthening governance, and returning decision-making authority closer to learners, employers, and the community.

A large and diverse organisation, Otago Polytechnic spans multiple campuses and delivery sites, supported by a highly skilled workforce across academic, professional, and operational teams. The Polytechnic manages extensive quality facilities and specialist infrastructure, from advanced trades and technology workshops to design, health, and sustainability centres that reflect the region's strengths and future workforce needs.

With a proud history of innovation, research leadership, national teaching awards and strong sense of purpose, Otago Polytechnic continues to shape opportunity for learners, its staff, for industry and for the communities of the South.

### Otago Polytechnic statutory responsibilities include:

- Delivering high-quality academic programmes and maintaining NZQA quality assurance.
- Ensuring equitable access and learner success for all student groups, including vulnerable communities including prior achievement, Māori and Pasifika and disabled learners;

- Managing public funding and commercial revenue streams in a financially sustainable and accountable manner;
- Maintaining robust governance, public reporting, and compliance frameworks in line with Crown entity standards;
- Ensuring employment practices and organisational culture align with obligations under the Employment Relations Act 2000 and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

## **ROLE PURPOSE**

The Chief Executive (Designate) is accountable for the full leadership and management of the Otago Polytechnic, ensuring all operational, financial, academic, and public accountability functions are delivered effectively and sustainably from 1 January 2026.

The Chief Executive holds overarching responsibility, for establishing the new independent Otago Polytechnic to ensure that it meets all statutory requirements and community expectations. This includes ensuring the continued smooth transfer of staff, students, assets, systems, and governance processes while safeguarding education delivery and student wellbeing.

The role requires large-scale organisational leadership: setting strategic direction, overseeing academic governance, managing financial resources, leading multi-layered leadership teams, and building robust stakeholder relationships across industry, government, iwi/Māori partners, and the community as well as working collaboratively across all ITPs.

The Chief Executive must ensure that the Otago Polytechnic operates as a financially sustainable, academically credible, and socially responsive public institution. This includes managing risk, maintaining compliance with all legislative frameworks, and leading organisational culture and people development across a broad and diverse workforce.

The Chief Executive is fully accountable to the Te Kura Matatini ki Otago/ Otago Polytechnic Council for all aspects of organisational leadership, performance, and compliance, including delivery against strategic objectives, achievement of key performance indicators, financial sustainability, and academic quality.

This accountability covers statutory obligations, employment relations, asset and infrastructure management, risk management, and equity outcomes. The Chief Executive is responsible to the Council for maintaining robust organisational culture, upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations, ensuring good employer practices, and providing free, frank, and timely advice that enables effective governance decision-making.

## **ABOUT THE ROLE**

The Chief Executive (Designate) carries full responsibility for establishing and leading the Otago Polytechnic as an independent statutory organisation. The Chief Executive must ensure robust academic governance processes are in place, maintaining programme quality and compliance with NZQA requirements across all delivery sites. This includes managing curriculum development, teaching and learning innovation, assessment, and moderation systems.

Alongside academic responsibilities, the Chief Executive is accountable for financial leadership at a level consistent with large public institutions. This involves overseeing public funding from the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), managing commercial revenue streams, and maintaining capital asset portfolios, including facilities and infrastructure.

The Chief Executive must support strategic delivery, organisational design, workforce planning, employment relations, and staff wellbeing frameworks, ensuring alignment with the Employment Relations Act 2000 and Crown entity expectations for good employer conduct.

Public accountability is a core focus. The Chief Executive is responsible for transparent reporting to the Otago Polytechnic Council, TEC, Ministers, and other oversight agencies. This includes regular performance reporting on financial health, student outcomes, equity measures, and stakeholder satisfaction.

Community and stakeholder engagement forms a critical part of the role. The role involves direct engagement with industry representatives, regional industries, employers, and community organisations to ensure education delivery meets current and emerging workforce need across the region and the rest of New Zealand. The Chief Executive will foster strategic collaboration with the University of Otago and regional education providers to enhance applied research, innovation, and workforce pathways across the Otago region.

The Chief Executive is fully accountable to its Council for the overall performance of the organisation, delivering against strategic priorities, operational requirements, and key performance indicators as formally set and reviewed by the Council. This includes ensuring that organisational objectives are met within approved financial parameters and that all statutory obligations are consistently upheld.

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

### **Professional Qualifications and Experience:**

This role requires an executive with extensive experience leading large public sector or tertiary education organisations, preferably at Chief Executive or equivalent level.

Candidates must demonstrate a thorough understanding of tertiary education delivery, academic governance, and public sector financial management frameworks in the New Zealand context. Experience managing multi-campus, multi-site operations with complex staffing structures are essential.

Candidates must also show experience in leading structural or organisational transitions, including managing asset transfers, workforce integration, and system establishment within a Crown entity or equivalent context.

Understanding and experience with New Zealand's public accountability frameworks, including the Education and Training Act 2020, Crown Entities Act 2004, and Employment Relations Act 2000, is required.

### **Leadership Capabilities:**

The Chief Executive (Designate) must demonstrate capacity to:

- Develop and lead large-scale organisational strategy while ensuring operational detail and performance are maintained.
- Provide clear advice and support to its Council.
- Manage substantial financial resources, including public funding, revenue generation, and capital asset portfolios.
- Lead complex people structures, managing multiple leadership layers and workforce planning needs.
- Develop a values based organization culture

- Oversee academic programme delivery and compliance at scale.
- Have a deep understanding of the community in which Otago Polytechnic operates across a broad geographical area.
- Lead ongoing innovation in digital learning, applied research, and technology-enabled education to future-proof Otago Polytechnic's delivery and reach.
- Engage effectively to build enduring partnerships with diverse stakeholders, including Māori and iwi partners, regional industries, central government agencies, and community organisations.

#### **Attributes and Approach:**

The Chief Executive (Designate) must operate with a high level of integrity, public sector discipline, and strategic foresight. A structured, outcome-focused, and evidence-based leadership approach is essential.

This role requires a leader who is equally comfortable with high-level governance engagement and day-to-day organisational management, ensuring that both strategic direction and operational performance meet the highest standards of public service, academic quality, and financial sustainability.

#### **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

The Chief Executive (Designate) must operate with integrity, impartiality, and accountability at all times. A structured, analytical, and outcome-focused approach is required, along with resilience in managing ambiguity and organisational change.

The Chief Executive moves fluently between public sector governance expectations and industry-led decision-making, ensuring both are balanced and reflected in all organisational activities.

The Chief Executive is required to undertake national travel and work outside regular office hours as necessary to meet the demands of the role and maintain stakeholder engagement.

- Must meet all legal eligibility requirements under the Crown Entities Act 2004 and Education and Training Act 2020.
- Subject to Police vetting and full declaration of any potential or actual conflicts of interest.
- Required to undertake regular national and regional travel, including attendance at all ITP campus sites.