

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO
ŌTĀKOU WHAKAIHU WAKA

JOB DESCRIPTION

ROLE TITLE:	Research Operations Manager
DEPARTMENT:	Educational Assessment Research Unit (EARU)
SCHOOL / DIVISION:	College of Education
REPORTS TO:	Academic Lead (Principal Investigator)
DIRECT REPORTS (FTE):	4
INDIRECT REPORTS (FTE)	2

1. PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE ROLE:

The primary purpose of this role is to provide leadership for all operational, administrative and technical components of the large-scale Curriculum Insights and Progress Study. The study is a significant multi-year national study, conducted on contract to the Ministry of Education (MoE), in partnership with the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER), Wellington. The Research Operations Manager is a key member of the study's leadership team and is responsible for management oversight of data collection and management, technical and multimedia output and support, project logistics, administration, information management, systems improvement, and budgeting, to ensure delivery of research and output objectives as defined through the University's contractual obligations with the MoE. This includes oversight of participant recruitment processes, research operations systems and tools, and ensuring efficient, high-quality delivery of research activities. As a member of the leadership team, the Research Operations Manager is also a key contributor to overall project management, strategic and resource planning, risk management, reporting and coordination of activities with project partners, the funding body (MoE) and other external and internal stakeholders.

2. ACCOUNTABILITIES:

Leadership and Strategic Planning

- As a member of the study leadership team, contribute to strategic planning and decision-making, including collaborating at leadership team planning meetings.
- Attend and deliver operational reporting and advice at:
 - weekly project management meetings with the study's partner organisation (NZCER)
 - fortnightly meetings with representatives of the study' funding body (MoE).
- Provide policy and professional advice to members of the study team to ensure effective governance, planning, and compliance with university policies and contractual requirements.
- Foster a positive team culture, and be responsible for the performance and wellbeing of the operations and technical team.

People Management

- Responsible for line management of the study's operations and technical teams, including staff performance, development, team building and workload management.
- Manage the process for all staff appointments across the study, including preparation and submission of university approval documentation.
- Manage the annual recruitment process for fixed term, casual and seconded researchers and markers, including preparation of agreements with contractors.
- Prepare staffing plans and oversee rosters for the study's marking operations. Monitor and authorise salary payments.
- Prepare, implement and review surveys of contracted researchers to identify opportunities for operational improvement.

Operational Control

Financial:

- Responsible for financial planning, budgeting, reporting and forecasting for the project's sizable research budget, in coordination with the University's Financial Services Division.
- Monitor financial transactions, identify and investigate any anomalies, and provide regular reporting and advice to the study's budget holder (Principal Investigator).
- Work closely with the University's Divisional Accountants and Senior Financial Services Divisional Staff as appropriate to:
 - ensure the transparency of the study's financial reporting
 - ensure that reports are robust and in line with contracted budgets
 - develop and maintain forecasts in line with the agreed budget
- As necessary, develop and monitor sub-budgets for specific project segments.

Information Management:

- Provide project partners and contractors with procedural and policy advice in respect of the study's digital and physical data, including managing compliance, authorising and facilitating access to study data and managing controls.
- Act as the single point of liaison with the study's contracted legal advisor in relation to information privacy advice and information sharing agreements.
- Establish and maintain appropriate system settings for data sharing and protection.
- Oversee the process for archiving and secure disposal of data.
- Ensure research outputs and associated documentation are systematically stored, maintained and accessible to support organisational knowledge and future research use.

Risk Management:

- Identify, assess and take appropriate steps to mitigate operational, technical, financial or resource risks relevant to the work undertaken in the study.
- Provide associated reporting and implement procedural controls as required.

Performance Delivery

- Lead and manage the provision of resources, processes and systems across the scope of the study, including planning and managing operations across multiple research workstreams, concurrent project activities, and annually-changing curriculum areas and school sample sets.

- Carry out analysis, substantiate, plan, initiate and project manage process and systems improvements for the study to streamline workflows, increase operational efficiency, and maximise resource utilisation.
- As required, source, draft and coordinate the provision of relevant and timely performance information to meet contractual reporting obligations to the funding body (MoE).
- Plan and oversee the annual operational process for recruitment of the study sample, including coordinating and approving communications, resources and procedures, and ensuring appropriate management of participant processes, including consent and privacy requirements.
- Oversee technical aspects of student assessment production (coding, printing, distribution etc.).
- Develop, revise and maintain policies and procedures, and other management tools for the study.
- Responsible for the ongoing configuration and optimisation of project management software used in the study, including training others in its use.
- On a day-to-day basis, identify and independently resolve operational, compliance and resourcing issues for the study as they arise.
- Draft and revise operational documents used by field researchers, and deliver training on specific aspects of their responsibilities.

Relationship Management

- Act as a key point of contact for the study's partner organisation (NZCER), including:
 - providing advice on compliance, policy and procedural matters
 - coordinating inter-organisational activities and providing key support, advice and information for the implementation of the foundation area assessments component of the study

Communication and reporting

- Develop and deliver optimal processes for project status reporting and interactive working, including regular provision of deliverables tracking reporting to the funding body (MoE), and generation of systems-driven project management workflows/communications used across the project.
- Maintain regular communications with team members, project partners and external stakeholders on operational matters.
- Collaborate with other team members to oversee and implement updates to the study's website.
- Convene and lead operational staff meetings as necessary and ensure that team members are provided with timely information and feedback in relation to their roles.

3. KEY RELATIONSHIPS:

Internal

- Curriculum Insights Leadership Team (Academic Lead, Project and Curriculum Lead, Conceptual Lead [NZCER] and Kaihautū Māori | Māori Lead).
- Management of Curriculum Insights project staff (administration, data management, communications, multimedia, programming, project logistics and records management).
- College of Education (students and staff).
- University Research & Enterprise.
- University Financial Services Division
- University Support Services (IT, HR, Divisional Services Administration, Uniprint etc.).

External

- NZ Council for Educational Research (management and task development teams).
- Contracted researchers.
- Contracted service providers.
- Schools (Principals and Teachers).
- Government contacts including the funding agency (Ministry of Education).

4. QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE:

Essential

- Tertiary level qualification (commerce/management, or similar) and/or a relevant professional qualification (e.g accounting, project management).
- Demonstrated leadership and management ability, with a minimum 6+ years' senior management/administrative experience (preferably some in an HE environment).
- Experience of managing significant budgets, staff and projects.
- Experience of providing analysis and strategic/policy advice to senior managers.
- Sound knowledge of the research funding and tertiary education sector.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills.
- Sound understanding of data security, information privacy, and records management principles and practices.
- An understanding of, or a commitment to learning about, data sovereignty in the context of research with hapū and iwi Māori.
- Excellent analytical, time/project management and IT skills.
- A professional, accountable, pro-active and service-oriented approach that values teamwork.
- A demonstrated commitment to a continuous improvement ethos in the workplace.

Preferred

- Management experience in the higher education sector.
- An understanding of Governance and meeting protocols.

5. TECHNICAL SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE:

Essential

- Experience working with project scheduling tools.
- Advanced MS Word and Excel skills.
- Sound knowledge of document management systems, particularly Microsoft SharePoint.

Preferred

- Marketing, communications and website maintenance skills and knowledge.

7. DIRECT BUDGET ACCOUNTABILITY:

- Responsible for financial planning, budgeting, reporting and forecasting for the project.
- Authorisation of project expenditure in accordance with delegated authority (\$20,000).

8. MĀORI STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Act in a manner consistent with the principles and implications, as well as the University's commitment to the Treaty as articulated in the Māori Strategic Framework.

9. PACIFIC STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Act in a manner consistent with the strategies and goals contained in the University’s Pacific Strategic Framework, role-modelling and promoting Pacific values, equity and diversity principles and cultural safety practices.

10. HEALTH & SAFETY:

Act and work in a manner compliant with current health and safety at work legislation and University procedures, frameworks and guidelines. Role model safe behaviour and practices, share the responsibility to prevent harm and contribute to a safe campus and work environment, including raising workplace health and safety concerns for self, students, visitors and other staff.

11. SUSTAINABILITY

Act in a manner consistent with the University’s sustainability commitments; role-modelling sustainable practices, with a particular emphasis on minimising the environmental impact of day-to-day activities.

SIGNATURES (for Job Evaluation where there is a current incumbent):

Incumbent Name: Signature: Date:

Supervisor Name: Signature: Date:

HoD Name: Signature: Date: