



WHANGANUI
founded in
1892



WAIRARAPA
founded in
1896



MANAWATŪ
founded in
1902



HOROWHENUA
founded in
1987

Executive Director Operations (1FTE)

Kaupapa | Purpose

The Executive Director Operations provides executive leadership for UCOL's organisational capability, operational effectiveness, resilience and long-term performance.

Reporting directly to the Chief Executive and as a member of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), the Executive Director Operations provides authoritative advice on people and culture, digital services, property and facilities, health and safety, corporate assurance and organisational risk.

The Executive Director Operations is responsible for developing and leading UCOL's operational direction, priorities, planning and performance across the enabling-function portfolio, ensuring services are integrated, responsive and aligned with organisational needs.

The role provides executive leadership, support and organisational advocacy for the portfolio. Functional managers retain professional and operational responsibility for their respective functions, while working within agreed plans, delegations, budgets and priorities.

The role leads operational integration, service performance, organisational capability, risk

management, regulatory compliance, investment planning for its portfolios and continuous improvement.

It ensures resources and systems are managed responsibly and that significant operational matters are identified, addressed and appropriately escalated.

As a member of the Executive Leadership Team, the Executive Director Operations shares collective responsibility for the leadership, culture, reputation, and strategic direction of UCOL.

The role actively participates in organisation-wide decision-making, shaping institutional strategy, leading enterprise-wide initiatives, and ensuring decisions support organisational capability, operational resilience and the long-term aspirations of UCOL.

The role builds confidence through authentic leadership, sound judgement, clear communication, and a commitment to shared organisational success.

Reports to: Chief Executive
Portfolio: Facilities Management, People and Culture, Health & Safety, Digital Services and Corporate Assurance and Risk

Tō mātou tirohanga roa | Our vision

Whakairohia he toki, tāraia te anamata | Learning with purpose, creating our futures.

Tō Mātou Pūtake | Our purpose

UCOL provides excellent and quality education opportunities that support learners, employers and communities gain the skills, knowledge, and capabilities Aotearoa needs now and for the future. Learners and their whānau are at the centre of all we do.

Tā mātou whakahaerenga | Our Organisation

UCOL's roots began in 1892 in Whanganui, joined by Wairarapa in 1896, Palmerston North in 1902 and Horowhenua most recently, in 2017. Adapting to the growing needs of a young nation, UCOL's innovation and agility has a compelling track record.

UCOL in its many forms has been part of the community for more than a century. We are a proud example of a successful Institute of Technology and Polytechnic. We have a rich heritage and much to contribute to the future of vocational learning. UCOL is a valued and essential partner and is known for leading vocational education and training opportunities

Ngā mahi | Do

Provide executive leadership across People and Culture, Digital Services, Facilities Management, Health and Safety, and Corporate Assurance and Risk, ensuring the functions operate cohesively and support UCOL's organisational direction.

Develop and lead operational priorities, plans and performance measures that strengthen organisational capability, service quality, efficiency and resilience.

Work with functional managers to agree priorities, plans, budgets and service outcomes, providing executive direction, support and organisational advocacy while managers retain professional, technical and day-to-day responsibility for their functions.

Sponsor cross-organisational systems and process improvements, ensuring UCOL has fit-for-purpose infrastructure, operating models and enabling services.

Champion innovation and continuous improvement across the portfolio, including digital transformation, workforce capability, operational efficiency and future-focused ways of working.

Support the Corporate Assurance and Risk Manager to lead enterprise risk management, corporate assurance, compliance, procurement, contract management and business continuity, ensuring significant matters are appropriately escalated and reported.

Support the Facilities Manager to lead facilities services, capital works, seismic remediation, asset planning and divestment, ensuring UCOL's property portfolio supports organisational priorities and is managed with a long-term perspective.

Provide executive sponsorship and active support for Health and Safety, working closely with the Health and Safety Senior Advisor to strengthen organisational capability, address critical risks and ensure statutory obligations, significant incidents and material concerns receive appropriate executive attention.

Support the People and Culture Manager to lead organisational culture, workforce planning, employment relations, capability, recruitment, retention and the consistent delivery of people services.

Support the Digital Services Manager to lead digital strategy, infrastructure, cybersecurity, systems, innovation, service delivery and technology investment.

Build effective relationships with regulators, government agencies, iwi, service providers and other stakeholders relevant to the portfolio.

Contribute fully to collective ELT leadership, organisation-wide initiatives, culture and the achievement of UCOL's strategic objectives.



Pūkenga | Have

- A relevant tertiary qualification in business, management, public administration, human resources, operations or a related discipline, or equivalent senior leadership experience.
- Substantial executive or senior operational leadership experience within a complex, multi-functional organisation.
- Experience leading managers and integrating a broad portfolio of enabling functions to deliver effective organisational outcomes.
- Proven ability to provide authoritative operational advice to a Chief Executive, executive team, governing body and governance committees.
- Strong understanding of governance, public-sector accountability, regulatory compliance and the responsible stewardship of organisational resources.
- Demonstrated experience developing operational plans, performance measures and service-delivery improvements aligned with organisational priorities.
- Broad understanding of People and Culture, Digital Services, Facilities Management, Health and Safety, and Corporate Assurance and Risk, with the ability to support and challenge specialist leaders appropriately.
- Knowledge of tertiary education, government funding and vocational education is desirable.
- Experience providing executive oversight of significant property, infrastructure, digital or organisational investment programmes.
- Proven ability to lead, support and develop functional managers through clear expectations, effective delegation, coaching and accountability.
- Strong analytical and commercial judgement, including the ability to evaluate priorities, risks, service performance and investment proposals.
- Demonstrated ability to communicate complex operational matters clearly to technical and non-technical audiences.
- Experience in advocating and leading the inclusion and application of Te Tiriti o Waitangi practices in a workplace setting is required
- Ability to support and advocate the use of te reo, tikanga and mātauranga Māori in the workplace
- Ability to support and advocate approaches that promote equity and prioritise the needs of priority groups

Waiaro | Be

Lead with integrity and accountability, demonstrating ethical stewardship of public resources and sound professional judgement.

Be an enterprise leader, contributing beyond the Operations portfolio through collective leadership and shared accountability for UCOL's success.

Be visible, connected and supportive, remaining close to the functions, managers and teams while respecting their professional and operational responsibilities.

Be strategic and future-focused, balancing immediate operational requirements with organisational capability, resilience and long-term aspirations.

Be commercially astute and evidence-led, identifying opportunities to improve service performance, efficiency and organisational value. Be collaborative and influential, building trusted relationships, connecting functions and enabling informed decision-making.

Be courageous and values-driven, raising material concerns, providing constructive challenge and supporting robust executive and governance decisions.

Be adaptable and resilient, leading confidently through complexity, organisational change and competing priorities.

Be people-centred, developing leadership capability and fostering a culture of service, learning, wellbeing and continuous improvement.

Ngā Uara | Our Values

Whanaungatanga | Relationships

Connecting with people and establishing meaningful relationships built on trust and integrity is vital. Great relationships result in collaboration, partnerships and unity. At UCOL, we embrace diversity and inclusivity for all people.

Kia eke panuku, eke Tangaroa | Excellence

Everywhere we look at UCOL we seek innovation and quality that defines us as a high performing institute. We strive for excellence in our programmes, our teaching methods, our resources and systems and processes. We want to see people excelling at what they do and are proud of what we achieve.

Te huringa tangata | Transformation

Transformation requires inspiration, and bold, courageous behaviour. We take pride in being a part of the transformation that occurs in our ākonga as they become successful graduates and alumni. UCOL is always looking at fresh ideas.

Kia kakamā | Agility

Agility is about us working in many different ways, being adaptable and agile in the way we work with others. Through engagement, empowerment and innovation we develop deeper understanding and discover new ways of achieving our goals.

Ngā Hononga Mahi | Working relationships

Internal:

Chief Executive: Acts as a trusted operational adviser to the Chief Executive, providing advice, early visibility of material issues and assurance on the performance, resilience and effectiveness of UCOL's enabling functions.

Executive Leadership Team: Contributes an organisation-wide operational perspective to collective leadership, strategy, performance, investment and prioritisation decisions.

Council and Council committees: Provides clear and timely reporting, advice and assurance on significant operational matters, including people and culture, digital services, property, health and safety, risk and assurance.

Chief Financial Officer: Works as an ELT peer to align operational priorities and investment with financial planning, affordability and assurance. Partners on workforce, technology, property, capital and enterprise-risk matters while retaining distinct professional accountabilities.

Portfolio Managers and Health and Safety Senior Advisor: Provides executive direction, support and organisational advocacy; agrees priorities, plans, budgets and outcomes; and ensures significant matters are appropriately escalated. Direct access to the Chief Executive is maintained where required by the nature, confidentiality or significance of a matter.

Academic and Operational Leaders: Partners with leaders to ensure enabling services support effective educational delivery, learner outcomes, organisational capability and operational performance.

Kaimahi: Maintains a visible and connected leadership presence, listens to organisational needs and supports confidence in UCOL's people, systems, services and working environment.

External:

Government agencies and regulators: Maintains effective relationships with the Tertiary Education Commission, Ministry of Education, NZQA, WorkSafe and other agencies relevant to the portfolio's statutory and accountability obligations.

Iwi, unions and employee representatives: Supports constructive, respectful and good-faith relationships consistent with UCOL's Te Tiriti commitments, employment obligations and organisational values.

Service providers, contractors and professional advisers: Maintains effective relationships supporting technology, property, procurement, legal, risk, health and safety, and other specialist operational services.

Sector networks and professional bodies: Represents UCOL, maintains awareness of emerging practice and contributes to sector collaboration and organisational learning.