

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Vice-Chancellor Tumu Whakarae

Tangata Tū, Tangata Ora
Engaged, Empowered and Making a Difference

January 2026

Contents



3	An invitation from the Chancellor	18	Engagement
4	About the University of Canterbury	19	Education
8	Why Aotearoa New Zealand?	21	Research
10	Living in Christchurch	22	People
12	UC Council	23	Internationalisation
13	Governance	24	Environmentally Sustainable
14	Our People	24	Organisational Efficacy
15	Commitments, Opportunities and Challenges	25	Position Description and Selection Criteria
16	Strategic Vision 2020-2030	28	How to apply
17	Our Strategy Chapters		

Tēnā koutou,

It is my pleasure to invite your consideration for the position of Tumu Whakarae Vice-Chancellor at Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury (UC) in Ōtautahi Christchurch, Aotearoa New Zealand.

With more than 26,000 students, our highest enrolment in over 150 years, UC is experiencing a period of exciting growth and innovation. We look forward to welcoming a new Vice-Chancellor who will continue to propel the University's success and shape our local, regional and international impact.

Our University's top 300 global ranking alongside Christchurch's top 100 best student city ranking reflects our commitment to accessible, flexible education that responds to the evolving needs of students. This includes new programmes such as the Bachelor of Digital Screen with Honours, and major infrastructure developments such as new student accommodation and a contemporary student facility to replace the existing Recreation Centre.

From the beginning, UC has been a home to many firsts, including Helen Connon, the first woman in the British Empire to earn an Honours degree, and Tā Apirana Ngata, the first Māori graduate of a New Zealand university.

Our students are motivated, passionate, and driven by a desire for continuous learning. They are supported by exceptional academic and professional staff whose innovation, expertise, and leadership bring to life the University's

vision, Tangata Tū, Tangata Ora – Engaged, Empowered, Making a Difference, as set out in our Strategic Vision 2020–2030.

The University Council seeks a Vice-Chancellor who understands the complex and evolving landscape of tertiary education; someone who can lead with agility and vision, fostering growth while strengthening UC's reputation for high-quality education and impactful research. This leadership will also encompass supporting staff and student success and ensuring UC's ongoing economic and environmental sustainability.

As a locally engaged, globally connected university, UC is proud of our strong international relationships which we continue to cultivate and expand upon.

Our main campus, situated on the Canterbury Plains between the Southern Alps and the sea, is complemented by research field stations across New Zealand and the world, advancing our global research plan. UC not only contributes strongly to the workforce through our highly employable graduates, but also to the region, contributing over \$790 million annually for the local economy, playing a vital role in regional prosperity.

In 2019 UC partnered with mana whenua, Ngāi Tūāhuriri, through a formal Partnership Agreement. Guided by our Pou Whakarae Professor Te Maire Tau, and the Office of Treaty Partnership, this relationship is central to our identity and success.

It is an exciting time to join UC through this unique and rare opportunity, and I welcome your interest in this role.

Ngā mihi nui,

Honourable Amy Adams
Tumu Kaunihera | Chancellor



About the University of Canterbury

Established in 1873, UC was New Zealand's second university. We strive to be a welcoming community that supports and encourages our students, our staff and our community to succeed.

Over 150 years of educational excellence

Starting as Canterbury College, UC was renamed Canterbury University College in 1933 before becoming the University of Canterbury in 1957.

For our first 100 years, the University was situated in the centre of Christchurch (now the Arts Centre), and moved to its current location in 1975. We are located in a spacious, purpose-built 76-hectare site in the suburb of Ilam — like a small city between the sea and the mountains.

The 'new' campus has a central complex of libraries, lecture theatres, laboratories, and student accommodation surrounded by playing fields, a river, and the renowned Ilam Gardens.

Our University has a network of research field stations including in Cass, Westport, Harihari (South Westland) and Aotearoa New Zealand's premier astronomical research facility, the Mount John Observatory, near Lake Tekapo.

UC AT A GLANCE



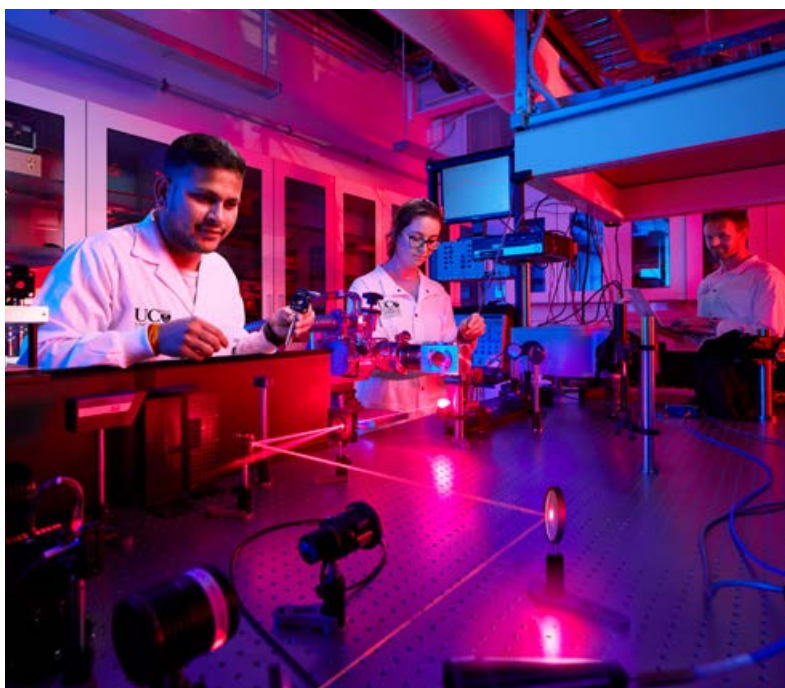
26,433
students enrolled
in 2024



1,549
international students
enrolled in 2024



257
research degree
enrolments (doctorates)



Office of Treaty Partnership

The Office of Treaty Partnership was established in 2021 to acknowledge mana whenua, Ngāi Tūāhuriri as the Treaty partner and is believed to be a first for Aotearoa New Zealand universities. The office creates a tangible space that represents the partnership and works directly with Tumu Whakararae | Vice-Chancellor to oversee the implementation of the partnership agreement and provide strong Māori academic leadership across the university.

The Ngāi Tahu Research Centre works with Ngāi Tahu communities and entities and international partners to generate high quality research. Their goal is to be a leading indigenous research institution within Aotearoa.

An enduring vision

Our vision for the University of Canterbury is a contemporary university, a place of learning that is grounded in our shared history, values our differences, and aspires towards research and tertiary education that is equitable and accessible to all. We are determined to remain agile, responsive and pioneering, pushing boundaries to meet the

evolving needs of our students. Since the Canterbury Collegiate Union was founded with Henry John Tancred's inaugural address, the University of Canterbury has stood for the encouragement of talent without barriers. During our 150th anniversary in 2023, we reflected on our past to take our successes and our learnings into the future, and set our aspirations for the next 50 years.



UC's Momentum Builds Across Campus and Community



UC graduated more than 4,000 students in 2025. Graduation is one of the highlights of UC's calendar year.



2025 marked UC's third consecutive year of international enrolment growth, contributing to total student numbers exceeding 26,000.



UC is the second largest employer in Waitaha Canterbury and contributes \$790 million annually through direct and indirect spending in our local economy.



60% of UC graduates who work in Aotearoa New Zealand are employed in the Ōtautahi Christchurch area.

(Graduate Destinations Survey 2025)



76% (3 in 4) UC students experienced work/career related learning within courses/degree.

(Graduate Destinations Survey 2025)



UC works alongside many communities to make a positive difference.

2,860 hours of volunteering were carried out by the University of Canterbury Student Volunteer Army in 2024.



Why Aotearoa New Zealand?

Aotearoa New Zealand is a visually beautiful country with friendly people, pleasant climate that enhances the landscape and enables a balanced lifestyle.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi | Treaty of Waitangi

Aotearoa New Zealand is premised on Te Tiriti o Waitangi | Treaty of Waitangi, the founding partnership document of the nation signed in 1840. While it was originally an agreement between Māori and representatives of the British Crown, in a modern day context it can be viewed as an agreement between Tangata Whenua, the people of the land, the indigenous Māori people, and Tangata Tiriti, people of the Treaty; this includes descendants of original settlers and people of all other ethnic origins who now reside in Aotearoa.

The high quality of life Aotearoa New Zealand offers is what draws people from all over the world to the country, and New Zealanders pride themselves on welcoming newcomers. The country is multicultural with different cultures and belief systems living together in the community.

Aotearoa New Zealand ranks very high globally for safety, including 3rd in the 2025 Global Peace Index published by the Institute for Economics and Peace. Low violent crime, political stability, low corruption, and natural isolation all contribute to Aotearoa New Zealand's high safety score.

Aotearoa New Zealand offers year-round activities, beautiful beaches and lakes in summer and some of the best ski fields in the Southern Hemisphere in winter. It offers vibrant modern cities, like Ōtautahi Christchurch, and the opportunity to go off the beaten track and enjoy the outdoors and adventure and leisure sports.

Climate

Aotearoa New Zealand has a temperate climate: relatively mild winters and warm dry summers, with many hours of sunshine.

Being a maritime country, the weather can change from day to day or even during the same day.

Population

Size-wise, Aotearoa New Zealand has a relatively large land mass, slightly larger than the United Kingdom, but has a much smaller population of approximately 5.1 million.

Wherever you are in New Zealand the opportunities to live, work, play and explore are limitless.



University of Canterbury
Mt John Observatory
Lake Tekapo



Living in Christchurch

Christchurch is the second largest city in the country, where you can balance study, work, and leisure.

Explore our part of the world

Christchurch is a city where you can breathe, with over 700 parks and gardens to explore including Hagley Park, the largest in the southern hemisphere. Low traffic congestion means that you can reach most parts of the city within a 20-minute drive.

As the largest and most central city in the South Island, it is the perfect base from which to explore — you can ski and surf in the same day!

Join our community

Christchurch is one of the world's most modern and sustainable cities — a place where innovation and cultural identity go hand in hand. Its transformation has been shaped through a close partnership with Ngāi Tūāhuriri, the mana whenua (tribe with authority over the land), whose stories and values are woven into the city's design. Across Christchurch, you'll experience a living cultural narrative — reflected in its architecture, public spaces, and the University of Canterbury campus — where tradition and progress come together to create a truly unique sense of place.



QUALITY OF LIFE

85th

Top 100 best student cities¹

1st

for greatest place to live in New Zealand²

1st

for work life balance in New Zealand²

1300+

parks and reserves

¹QS Best Student Cities, 2026.

²Quality of Life survey, New Zealand, 2024.

Find out more about living and working in Christchurch, New Zealand



New Brighton Pier





489,000

people live in Christchurch

Christchurch City

What sets Christchurch apart?

We are in a city of entrepreneurial spirit — for future-focused, sustainable businesses and people who want to do things differently.

You will find:

- new infrastructure
- favourable rent-income ratio
- affordable housing
- a diverse, innovative community
- a strong education sector.

A digital city in the making

Christchurch leads the way in innovation, research, and technology, and is home to the country's 2nd largest tech sector. Our graduates are highly sought after for this growth sector.

The Canterbury economy is growing at a higher rate than the national average. We have an estimated long-term skills shortage of over 50,000 workers by 2030, meaning there will be a greater scope for employment in our city.

Growing future industries

Christchurch is ranked in the world's top 250 cities for start-ups. Sectors where Canterbury has a competitive advantage, opportunity of scale, and value chain collaboration are:

- aerospace
- IT and high-tech services
- health and medical technology.



Future Growth Industries

2nd largest tech sector

168th

Christchurch is ranked in the world's top 250 cities for start-ups

christchurchnz.com/business/growth-sectors



Diversity

1/4 of Christchurch residents are from a different country

Statistics NZ, Census 2023



Cost of Living

18% cheaper rental homes than Wellington

17% cheaper rental homes than Auckland

Trademe Property news and advice

UC Council

The composition of the University Council | te Kaunihera for 2026 is:



**Chancellor
Tumu Kaunihera**
Hon. Amy Adams
LLB (Hons) (Cant)

**Pro-Chancellor
Tumu Tuarua Kaunihera**
Hon. Poto Williams
MBA (SCU)

**Council member
Mema o te Kaunihera**
Bruce Irvine
BCom (Cant), LLB (Cant),
FCA, AFIOD, FIOM

**Council member
Mema o te Kaunihera**
Professor Jack Heinemann
BSc, BSc (Hons) Biochemistry,
BSc (Hons) Molecular Biology
(UW-Madison), PhD (UO-
Eugene), FHEA



**Council member
Mema o te Kaunihera**
Tumaru Mataio
BCJ (Cant)

**Council member
Mema o te Kaunihera**
Sina Cotter-Tait
BE(Hons) (Cant), MBA(Dist)
(Cant), PhD CPEng FEngNZ
CMInstD (Cant)

**Council member
Mema o te Kaunihera**
Gillian Simpson
BSc (Massey), DipTchg (Cant),
PGDipEdMngt (Auckland),
MIOD

**Council member
Mema o te Kaunihera**
Lisa Tumahai, CNZM
(Ngāi Tahu, Tainui, Ngāti
Hikairo, Ngāti Kahungunu)
BCom (Cant), MIOD



**Council member
Mema o te Kaunihera**
Rachel Robilliard
(Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti
Te Ruahikihiki)
LLB, BSc (Cant)

**Council member
Mema o te Kaunihera**
Catherine Woods
DipBusAdmin (The Skills
Organisation), MemAdminz

**Council member
Mema o te Kaunihera**
Steve Wakefield
BCom, BSc (Cant),
M. Civil Eng, FCA and CFInstD



Governance

The University is governed by the Education and Training Act 2020 and the University of Canterbury Act 1961, which is administered by the Ministry of Education. The University is also required to comply with the Crown Entities Act 2004, as it applies to tertiary education institutions.

Role of the Council

The Council is the governing body of the University. It is responsible for the governance of the University, and its functions, duties and powers are set out in the Education and Training Act. Its powers include the oversight of the University's policy, academic, financial and capital matters. On a day-to-day basis, many of these functions, powers and duties are delegated to the Vice-Chancellor and others, to ensure the smooth running of the University.

Council Committees

The following standing committees have been established to assist in the execution of the Council's responsibilities. Each of these committees has terms of reference outlining its responsibilities and objectives.

1. Audit and Risk Committee
2. Executive Committee
3. Honours and Appointments Committee
4. University Appeals Committee
5. People Committee
6. Capital and Investment Committee

Tertiary education in Aotearoa New Zealand

New Zealand has eight universities, which are all ranked in the world's top 500. They are autonomous, publicly funded institutions, and along with all other New Zealand tertiary education institutes, fall under the Crown Entities Act 2004.

The Tertiary Education Commission funds and monitors New Zealand universities performance and is accountable to the Minister of Education. The key sector document is the Tertiary Education Strategy, which sets out the Government's long-term strategic direction and current and medium-term priorities for tertiary education. In 2025, the Government approved a new Tertiary Education Strategy for 2025-2030, setting priorities of achievement, economic impact and innovation, access and participation, integration and collaboration, and international education. This will guide future policy and funding decisions, including the level and subject mix of government tuition subsidies for UC domestic students, which account for around \$200 million per year in UC revenue. The Government is also changing a number of policy, structural and funding settings for research, science and innovation. This too will guide how UC research strategies are developed and how research will be funded in the coming years.

Financial Position

UC is in a strong financial position, supported by planned and consistent growth over the past four years as both international and domestic enrolments have increased. With over \$2 billion in assets, no debt, and strong cash reserves, we have been able to invest steadily in our digital and physical infrastructure to support continued growth.

[SEE MORE](#)

Our People

University Management Structure

Vice-Chancellor
Tumu Whakarae

**Office of Treaty
Partnership**
Pou Whakahaere
Professor Te Maire Tau
BA, MA, PhD (Cant)

Executive Dean of Arts
Amo Matua, Toi Tangata
Professor Kevin Watson,
BA (Hons), PhD (Lanc)

Executive Dean of Business
Amo Matua, Umanga
Professor Paul Ballantine,
MCM (Lincoln),
PhD (Cant)

Executive Dean of Education
Amo Matua, Ako
Professor Joce Nuttall,
BEd (Otago),
MEd (Distinction) (Cant),
PhD (VUW)

**Executive Dean of
Engineering**
Amo Matua, Pūhanga
Professor Saurabh Sinha,
BEng, MEng, PhD (Pret),
AMP (Wharton),
CPEng, Pr Eng

**Executive Dean of
Health | Amo Matua, Oranga**
Associate Professor
Cathy Andrew,
BA (Massey), MA (Hons),
PhD (Newcastle)

Executive Dean of Law
Amo Matua, Ture
Professor Petra Butler,
LLM Well, Dr Jur Gött
From 5 Feb 2024

Executive Dean of Science
Amo Matua, Pūtaiao
Professor Stuart Parsons,
BSc (Hons), PhD (Otago)

**Executive Director of
Planning, Finance
and Digital Services**
Kaihautū Matua, Kōahu
Mr Keith Longden,
BCom (Cant), CA

**Executive Director of
People, Culture and
Campus Life**
Kaihautū Matua
Pūmanawa Tangata
Mr Paul O'Flaherty,
MBA (Otago)

**General Counsel and
Registrar | Pouroki**
Ms Adela Kardos,
LLB(Hons), BA (Cant),
CELTA (Camb)

**Assistant Vice-Chancellor
Engagement**

**Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Academic | Tumu Tuarua**
Akoranga
Professor Catherine Moran,
BSc (Ontario),
MSc (Ontario), PhD (Cant)

**Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Research | Tumu Tuarua**
Rangahau
Professor Lucy Johnston,
BA (Hons) (Oxford),
PhD (Bristol),
MSc (Staffordshire)

**Pro-Vice-Chancellor
Pacific Te Amorangi**
Distinguished Professor
Steven Ratuva,
BA, MA (S.Pac),
PhD (Sussex)

Commitments, Opportunities and Challenges

UC plays a central role in the city's regeneration and the Canterbury region's growth. Following the earthquakes, UC has rebuilt and reimagined itself, emerging as a financially stable, future-focused institution with strong domestic enrolments, a vibrant one-campus student experience, and a commitment to research and innovation.

Ngā Uara / Values

[SEE MORE](#)


At UC we value manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, and tiakitanga. These values guide what we do and how we do things. They challenge and inspire us to empower others and be the best we can in our work, studies, and interactions with each other.

- **He mana tō te tangata / We value people and their differences**
- **He kaitiaki tātou katoa / We will enhance and nurture our resources**
- **Kia aroha ki te tangata / We extend care and empower others**

Underpinning our values are the attributes of:

- Tika - doing what is right, being professional and maintaining high standards,
- Pono - being honest, truthful, and acting with integrity,
- Aroha - being respectful, responsive, and empathetic.

Kia tika, kia pono, kia aroha - doing what is right with integrity and empathy - This is how we check in on how well we are living the values.

At the centre of our attributes is utu - reciprocation and balance. Utu is linked to retaining mana and recognises the link between actions and reactions and that all actions require an appropriate response, whether positive or negative.

- **Kia tika, kia pono, kia aroha / Doing the right thing with integrity and with empathy**
- **Utu | Reciprocity and balance. For every action there is a reaction.**

UC is deeply committed to:

- Academic freedom and integrity as the foundation of scholarly life.
- Te Tiriti o Waitangi, with authentic partnership and engagement with Ngāi Tahu.
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring all students and staff feel a sense of belonging.
- Societal impact, contributing to the wellbeing and prosperity of Aotearoa New Zealand and the world.

Major Opportunities

- UC is well-positioned for growth and transformation.
- Our next strategic plan will shape UC beyond 2030, with priorities including research intensity, global positioning, innovation, and cultural inclusivity.

Key Challenges

- Diversifying income amidst declining government funding.
- Elevating research performance and global rankings.
- Maintaining strong student experience while scaling innovation.
- Building engagement and cohesion across UC's academic community.
- Navigating technology adoption and sector-wide change.

Strategic Vision 2020–2030

The UC Strategic Vision advances engagement, future focused accessible education, research with impact, internationalisation, staff and student wellbeing, sustainability and organisational efficacy.



Our Strategy Chapters:

The University of Canterbury continues its journey to achieve the goals and ambitions set out in its Strategic Vision 2020 to 2030 (the Strategy) in line with the inaugural address at the founding of the Canterbury Collegiate Union in 1872, where Henry Tancred set out a vision for accessible higher education, service to community, and the encouragement of talent without barriers of distance, wealth, class, gender or ethnicity.

The Strategy is based on the Vision of Tangata Tū, Tangata Ora | Engaged, Empowered, Making a Difference, and comprises seven chapters. Each of these chapters, led by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and overseen by the Vice-Chancellor, has a set of key objectives and a number of performance metrics to monitor quantitative progress towards the goals of the strategy.



Engagement –
UC as an Engaged
University



Education –
Accessible, Flexible,
Future Focused



Research –
Impact in a
Changing World



People –
Nurturing Staff,
Thriving Students



Internationalisation –
Locally Engaged,
Globally Networked



**Environmentally
Sustainable**



**Organisational
Efficacy**

#2

for employability outcomes
in Aotearoa New Zealand
(QS World Rankings, 2026)



Engagement

UC as an Engaged University

Aligning with UC's vision to support and empower our local business community, develop local talent and drive economic growth, the University continues to grow and strengthen its strategic partnerships in the region, including a strategic partnership with Business Canterbury.

UC is the second-largest employer in Waitaha Canterbury and plays a crucial role in developing the talent pipeline for the region. Contributing over \$790 million to the local economy annually, UC is a huge driver of economic growth. 60% of UC graduates who remain in Aotearoa New Zealand opt to join the Canterbury workforce, and 92% of graduates are either employed or in further education six months after completing their degree.

University ranking organisation QS reported that employment outcomes for students graduating from UC are some of the best in New Zealand, placing UC second for employment outcomes in the 2025 rankings – and ranking Christchurch

one of the top 100 student cities in the world. This is an excellent example of how UC is enhancing Christchurch's global reputation, making it a magnet for international talent.

The attraction of high-quality international students, which grew 11% in 2025, stimulates economic growth, enriches the cultural landscape, and fosters a vibrant, diverse community. It also encourages investment in infrastructure and education, benefiting both residents and visitors alike.

Strong industry partnerships

UC's strong strategic partnerships with local organisations help integrate the University into the fabric of Ōtautahi Christchurch and Waitaha Canterbury. This provides our students with unique opportunities that will allow them to graduate with the right skills and attributes to succeed and contribute meaningfully to the world around them.



Education

Accessible, Flexible, Future Focused

UC is proud to offer an excellent education and holistic learning experience, ensuring our students are prepared to succeed and make a positive difference in the world around them.

Supporting tomorrow's leaders

UC's Te Kākau a Māui programme supports 130 new students each year with financial assistance and a comprehensive enrichment experience throughout their undergraduate studies. Delivered by the Kia Angitu Student Success Team, the programme combines success and careers coaching, alumni mentoring, and peer-led study support. Students build academic confidence, leadership skills, and community within an environment that supports the development of future leaders from all walks of life.

Work-integrated learning

At UC, students can turn theory into practice, by applying and building skills in real-world contexts with an internship or other type of placement. Internships and placements are offered in many subjects including Arts, Education, Engineering, and Commerce, and at a university-wide level through the Professional and Community Engagement (PACE) programme. UC's Faculties and Schools coordinate a range of internship, work experience and Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) opportunities.

Future-focused, practice-led learning

Kōawa Studios is UC's new, industry-standard film and production facility, providing students with authentic, practice-led learning opportunities. Kōawa Studio's enables students to gain real-world experience by interning on major screen projects, strengthening graduate capability and connections with the creative industries.



Supporting student success

UC's student success programme, Kia Angitu, focuses on the early experiences of students at UC. It brings together a range of initiatives designed to remove barriers and create an environment that gives students the opportunity to thrive and succeed. The programme pays particular care and attention to the journey of students who are Māori, Pacific, have disabilities, are first in their whānau to attend university, and from low-decile schools.

Initiatives include Analytics for Course Engagement (ACE), which provides real-time information on student engagement with online content; and Peer Assisted Learning Support (PALS), a peer-to-peer programme bringing together students in regular study sessions.

Empowering lifelong learning

UC is committed to delivering accessible, flexible, lifelong-learning opportunities for all. As part of this commitment, Tuihono UC | UC Online has worked with academic and industry experts to develop a range of undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications, including Bachelor's degrees from 2026, as well as master's degrees, postgraduate diplomas, online certificates and short courses that fit busy lives.

UC's fully online short courses focus on in-demand, industry knowledge and skills in a bite-sized format. Content can also be customised for an organisation, to create professional development training programmes.





Research

Impact in a Changing World

UC has a rich portfolio of world-class research that delivers real global impact relevant to societal challenges and encourages transdisciplinary research and focuses on its diverse strengths.

The University's flagship trans- and multidisciplinary research institutes combine world-class research, real-world impact and deep collaboration to tackle some of society's most pressing challenges.

From QuakeCoRE's nationally and internationally networked research strengthening earthquake resilience, to the Rose Centre's state-of-the-art stroke recovery and rehabilitation, UC leads at the intersection of science, health and community wellbeing. This excellence extends to advanced materials and nanotechnology through the Nanostructure Engineering Science and Technology group, molecular and life-science innovation via the Biomolecular Interaction Centre, culturally grounded geospatial research through the Geospatial Research Institute, and language, brain and behaviour research at the New Zealand Institute of Language, Brain and Behaviour. UC also incorporates holistic child and youth research through the Child Well-being Research Institute and interdisciplinary environmental research via Gateway Antarctica,

all working closely with industry, government and communities in Aotearoa and beyond.

UC is expanding its global research reach through targeted partnerships in Asia, North America and Oceania, including collaborative initiatives with leading Chinese universities in early childhood education, Antarctic science and smart healthcare, to strengthen international funding opportunities.

Postgraduate research at UC

Through Te Kura Tāura | UC Graduate School, UC is supporting growing numbers of postgraduate students and postdoctoral fellows, while nurturing early career researchers to strengthen research impact, quality and transdisciplinary collaboration

Authentic learning and research on location

UC has a network of field stations, providing high-quality, site-specific teaching and research opportunities.

The Cass Mountain Research Area in the upper Waimakariri, North Canterbury spans 1,775 hectares of South Island mountain land, supporting hands-on learning and research for staff and students.

The Westport Field Station on the West Coast offers a rich variety of ecological habitats and striking limestone geology.

The University of Canterbury Mount John Observatory at Lake Tekapo is an International Dark Sky Reserve that provides world-class conditions for observing the southern sky and advancing astronomical research. [#darkskyreserve](#)



People

Nurturing Staff, Thriving Students

At UC, we are proud of our people. Our talented staff and students uphold an ethos of excellence, relevance, impact and kotahitanga, fostering a positive, inclusive culture where staff and students are empowered to succeed - including the next generation of Aotearoa New Zealand's leading researchers and educators. Our supportive environment enables student success, and a diverse community where everyone feels a sense of belonging grounded in our bicultural foundations.

UC's commitment to equity is reflected through our wide range of wellbeing initiatives from our on-campus health centre, recreation centre, pastoral support and our globally recognised first year

support programme, Kia Angitu. This programme includes academic support from peers, and dedicated Kaitoko who help students navigate their first year. Our Student Accessibility Service supports students in finding the best pathway to achieve their academic goals, while the Student Care Advisors provide guidance to students in any part of their journey, whether personal or academic.

Together, our people, culture and collective aspirations ensure UC is a place where all members of our community are engaged, thriving and able to make a meaningful difference.



Internationalisation

Locally engaged, globally connected

A renewed focus in international partnerships supports UC's aspiration to provide a global experience that changes lives and shapes futures, while growing international student enrolments and developing international partnerships to increase research impact.

A sustained programme of events supports this, including substantial in-country recruitment activities in countries such as China, India and Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam) that maximise the relevance of UC for international students and include the development of new courses and new taught master's programmes. This approach has delivered results, with international enrolments growing year on year since 2022.

Annually the Erskine Fellowship plays an essential role in keeping the University connected with international academics and universities. Established 61 years ago, the Fellowship attracts academics from all over the world including Germany, Italy, Malaysia, the Netherlands, South Africa, Sweden, the United Kingdom and United States of America. Fellows spend up to three months at UC teaching and conducting research.





Environmentally Sustainable

Sustainability sits at the heart of UC's future. As human-made climate change drives the most significant global shifts affecting universities and societies alike, UC is accelerating its commitment to measurable impact.

Guided by the Strategic Vision 2020–2030, and an integrated network of sustainability policies and plans, UC is shaping its campuses, research and teaching to lead climate action locally and globally, aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

In accordance with Aotearoa New Zealand's sustainability priorities, UC is pursuing bold targets, including becoming net zero carbon in scope 1 and 2 omissions by 2030 through new energy infrastructure investment. UC is also strengthening efforts across sustainable transport, reduced waste, clean water, food security and campus biodiversity.

Strengthened by global, national, and Pacific partnerships—and guided by our values of Whanaungatanga, Tiakitanga and Manaakitanga—UC is expanding its influence and elevating its performance in global sustainability rankings to inspire a more sustainable future.



Organisational Efficacy

Organisational efficacy ensures that every chapter of our strategic vision can achieve its goals by supporting the university's digital and physical infrastructure, while also working towards financial sustainability by 2030.

This investment includes new student accommodation; Kōawa Studios - our in-house, industry-standard film and production facility that enables students to intern on major film projects; and key digital initiatives such as cloud enablement, a new website, and the implementation of Workday.

In 2025, our core business delivered an \$18.9M surplus, projected to grow to \$19.1M in 2026. This equates to a 3.9% surplus and represents approximately 80% of UC's total operations.

Our student growth is driven not only by the vibrant culture of Christchurch, but also by UC's flexible and accessible education offerings, including the rapid expansion of Tuihono UC | UC Online, which enables students to study from anywhere, at any time.





Position Description and Selection Criteria

University of Canterbury - Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha Vice-Chancellor

Primary Purpose

The Vice-Chancellor is the chief executive and academic leader of UC. Reporting to the University Council, the VC is responsible for shaping and delivering UC's strategic vision, ensuring academic excellence, financial and operational sustainability, upholding UC's commitments to Te Tiriti and Mana Whenua, and its societal impact in Christchurch, across Aotearoa New Zealand and around the world.

The VC will lead with integrity, collegiality, and courage, championing a culture of trust and inclusion while navigating a complex and evolving Tertiary environment.

Major Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Lead, shape and deliver UC's next strategic plan beyond 2030.
- Provide visible, values-driven leadership that engages staff, students, and UC's wide-ranging stakeholders.
- Ensure financial sustainability and resilience, balancing academic integrity with commercial imperatives.
- Drive innovation in research, teaching, and technology adoption.
- Embed Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles and deepen authentic partnership with Ngāi Tahu.

Academic and Research Leadership

- Advance rigorous academic standards and foster a collaborative, interdisciplinary culture that drives research innovation and amplifies global impact and reputation.
- Uphold academic freedom and foster interdisciplinary engagement.
- Promote innovative pedagogies and digital transformation to enhance learning outcomes.

Student Experience

- Preserve and build upon UC's strong student experience and focus on wellbeing – and ensuring equity, inclusion, and belonging.
- Support initiatives that enhance engagement and success across diverse student cohorts.

Management and Governance

- Lead and develop the Senior Leadership Team, fostering collaboration and accountability.
- Ensure effective governance engagement with the University Council.
- Oversee strategic use of UC's physical and technological resources to support research and learning.

External Engagement

- Act as UC's principal ambassador nationally and internationally.
- Build strategic partnerships with government, industry, iwi, alumni, and donors.
- Spearhead philanthropic initiatives to support research and student success.

Selection Criteria

The successful candidate will be inspired and motivated by the UC values (page 15).

Based on an extensive consultation process, the following criteria have been identified as key qualities and characteristics to be expected and assessed in a successful candidate.

The search committee recognises that no candidate is likely to possess all the following criteria in equal measure; nevertheless, the following provides a comprehensive list of desirable criteria. The search committee also encourages candidates to apply who may have atypical career paths.

Strategic Leadership and Vision

- Capacity to develop and articulate a compelling vision for UC that reflects its unique position as a comprehensive university in Ōtautahi Christchurch, balancing academic integrity with financial sustainability.
- Demonstrated strategic acumen and an ability to lead UC through a period of sector-wide uncertainty, including constrained government funding, increasing global competition, and rapid technological change.
- Proven success in implementing strategy effectively, aligning academic and operational delivery with institutional goals, and leveraging UC's strengths, such as its one-campus student experience and regional partnerships, to enhance national and global reputation.
- Understanding of the virtuous cycle in higher education: how mission drives reputation and rankings, which attract talent and resources to reinvest in the mission.

Operational Leadership and Governance

- Strong financial acumen and experience managing significant budgets and assets, ensuring resilience and sustainability in a challenging funding environment.
- Demonstrated ability to lead large, complex organisations with inclusive and effective leadership, building accountable, high-performing teams.
- Experience engaging with university governance bodies and an appreciation for the role of collegial governance in tertiary education.

Culture, People, and Community

- A leader who embodies UC's values of manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, and tiakitanga.
- Ability to build trust and a culture of respect and collaboration across the institution, fostering an environment where staff and students feel valued, engaged, and included.

- Capacity to attract, retain, and empower world-class talent to strengthen UC's research and teaching profile globally.
- Commitment to visible leadership on campus and active engagement with the UC community.

External Engagement and Communications

- Exceptional communicator who builds trust and inspires confidence across diverse stakeholders.
- Skilled in external engagement and representing UC nationally and internationally, forging strategic partnerships with government, industry, iwi, alumni, donors, and global institutions.
- Proven track record in fundraising and advocacy to advance UC's mission and the wider tertiary sector.

Treaty Partnership and Cultural Competence

- Clear commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, with experience embedding Treaty principles in leadership and operations.
- Proven ability to build and maintain respectful relationships with Māori communities, including Ngāi Tahu, mana whenua, and tangata whenua. *For candidates without direct experience in Aotearoa New Zealand, the Committee will be looking for evidence of commitment to Indigenous engagement in other global contexts.*

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

- Commitment to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion across all aspects of university life.
- Ability to lead inclusively and in a culturally responsive manner that reflects Aotearoa New Zealand's unique context and values.
- Experience fostering environments that support under-represented communities, including Pacific peoples.

Academic and Research Leadership

- Deep understanding of scholarly excellence and the nature of academic life, consistent with UC's aspiration to strengthen research intensity and impact.
- Experience leading in a multi-disciplinary research environment and supporting academic units to build research capability and global partnerships.
- A recognised higher degree (such as a PhD in a discipline represented at UC) and strong academic credibility, or equivalent professional standing.

Innovation in Learning and Student Success

- Strong understanding of the evolving role of tertiary education in society, both locally and globally.
- Experience promoting innovative pedagogies and flexible learning models, including online and blended delivery.
- Familiarity with digital transformation and integration of technology to enhance teaching, learning, and student success.

Personal Attributes

- Visionary and strategic thinker with global outlook.
- Collegial, collaborative, and visible leadership style.
- Evidence-based decision-making and organisational design capability, with resilience and optimism to lead through adversity.
- Integrity, humility, resilience, and courage.
- Results-oriented, adaptable, and committed to societal impact.



How to apply

If you wish to discuss this role further in confidence, please contact Dr Gordon Lobay or James Boyd via UCanterburyVC@perrettlaver.com

For more information, including a full role description and person specification, and to submit your application please visit the Perrett Laver website quoting reference 8081.

The deadline for applications is **9am NZT on Monday 2 March 2026**.

Perrett Laver will conduct an executive search process in parallel with the public advertisement of the role. Longlisted candidates will be invited to interview with Perrett Laver in March and the Selection Panel will subsequently meet to decide upon a final shortlist for the post in early April, following which, formal interviews with the University of Canterbury will take place in late April and mid-May. If you require any reasonable adjustments to assist you in the selection process, please advise us of these so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

Perrett Laver's Data Protection Policy

Protecting your personal data is of the utmost importance to Perrett Laver and we take this responsibility very seriously. Any information obtained by our trading divisions is held and

processed in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation. The data you provide us with is securely stored on our computerised database and transferred to our clients for the purposes of presenting you as a candidate and/or considering your suitability for a role you have registered interest in.

Perrett Laver is a Data Controller and a Data Processor, and our legal basis for processing your personal data is 'Legitimate Interests.' You have the right to object to us processing your data in this way. For more information about this, your rights, and our approach to Data Protection and Privacy, please see our [Privacy Statement](#).

If you have comments that would support us to improve access to documentation, or our application processes more generally, please do not hesitate to contact us via accessibility@perrettlaver.com

