

# VIP Visitor Protocol

This protocol should be read in conjunction with the [University of Waikato Event Guidelines](#).



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

The University of Waikato regularly hosts VIPs and such visits help raise the profile and reputation of the University. In order to ensure that visits and events involving VIPs run smoothly it is important that key people are advised of the potential presence of VIPs at an early stage and kept informed throughout the visit or event planning process.

## DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this protocol, **VIP** means an external visitor of significant importance or influence who commands special treatment. Their significance usually stems from their position in the educational, political, social, diplomatic or commercial environment.

VIP categories are:

- Government (Members of Parliament including government ministers, local government and international politicians)
- Diplomats and senior public servants
- Royalty, royal representatives and international dignitaries
- The Māori monarch
- Chairpersons or Chief Executive Officers of major companies and organisations
- High profile and notable Academics (Nobel prize winners)
- Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors or equivalent of other universities
- Religious leaders/Heads of Church
- Honorary Doctors and Distinguished Alumni of this University

Events that may involve VIPs include:

- Official functions, e.g. graduation ceremonies, award functions, pōwhiri, Kīngitanga Day
- Conferences, seminars and lectures
- Royal visits
- Foreign National visits
- Private visits
- Meetings

*NB: The University regularly hosts visits by representatives of partner organisations. Such visits are typically outside the scope of this protocol and may be coordinated by the relevant Faculty, Division or equivalent. Notification of such visits to the Director of the Office of the Vice-Chancellor is encouraged.*

## NOTICE OF VIP VISITORS

It is essential that the Vice-Chancellor is aware of the intentions of VIPs to visit the University or of staff proposals to extend invitations to VIPs prior to their visit. If you propose to invite a VIP to the University or become aware that a VIP wishes to visit the University you should notify and seek the advice of the Director of the Vice-Chancellor's Office as early as possible. The Director of the Vice-Chancellor's Office will brief the Vice-Chancellor and ascertain his or her advice or instructions, if any, concerning the visit. Where the Chancellor and/or Vice-Chancellor is expected to host the visit, checks should be made against their diaries.

### Contacts

Director of the Vice-Chancellor's Office

Duanna Fowler

[duanna.fowler@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:duanna.fowler@waikato.ac.nz)

## ▼ INVITATIONS TO EVENTS

This protocol should be read in conjunction with the [University of Waikato Event Guidelines](#).

Invitations to VIPs to attend any University event are issued by the University Events Office. Invitations are to be sent on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor or, where appropriate, the Chancellor. The invitation format and wording, and the proposed guest list (if relevant) must be approved by the Vice-Chancellor prior to invitations being issued.

Sufficient time should be allowed for invitations to be delivered, considered and responded to. Ministerial visits, for example, can take 6 to 12 months to organise.

### Contact

Events Manager, University Events	Rebecca Isaacs	<a href="mailto:rebecca.isaacs@waikato.ac.nz">rebecca.isaacs@waikato.ac.nz</a>
Events Manager, University Events	Shaun van Praagh	<a href="#">Shaun van Praagh</a>
Events Manager, University Events	Jess Vanxay	<a href="#">Jess Vanxay</a>

## ▼ MĀORI PROTOCOL

When hosting visitors who are of a high standing in the Māori community it is important to ensure that appropriate protocol is followed. For advice, check first with colleagues who are familiar with tikanga Māori. For additional support and guidance contact the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Māori.

The [Guidelines for Powhiri on the University Marae](#) may also be useful.

### Contact

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Māori	Sarah-Jane Tiakiwai	<a href="mailto:sarah-jane.tiakiwai@waikato.ac.nz">sarah-jane.tiakiwai@waikato.ac.nz</a>
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## ▼ INTERNATIONAL VIPS

To ensure that international connections are managed appropriately, the Director International, should be kept informed of plans and arrangements for visits and events involving international VIPs as they unfold. The University is actively building relationships overseas so it is important that the International Office is able to take the opportunity to build and cement relationships in this area.

### Contact

Director International	Sharon Calvert	<a href="mailto:sharon.calvert@waikato.ac.nz">sharon.calvert@waikato.ac.nz</a>
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When hosting overseas VIPs it is important to remember that their ways of conducting business, meetings or simply interacting with others may be different from accepted practices here in New Zealand. Examples of differences include the use of titles, appropriate dress, the serving of alcohol and food, handshakes, bowing, the exchange of business cards. Staff in the International Office may be able to assist with advice on appropriate etiquette. As part of prior planning for the visit, it is also important to establish whether interpreter services for visitors whose language is other than English will be required. It may also be appropriate to consider the offering of a welcome by an appropriate member of the Senior Management Team, refreshments and the presentation of a gift. [Communications, Marketing and Engagement](#) maintain a list of suitable corporate gifts, which can be ordered on your behalf.

## ▼ SECURITY, TRAFFIC AND PARKING

Events involving VIPs are likely to attract media and public interest, and in some cases may generate controversy. Some visits may pose a security risk, particularly those that generate large audiences or that involve protestors.

No major event may proceed until security and safety matters have been considered and approved by the Security Manager. They should be provided with information about the event, any VIPs likely to attend and any threats or areas for concern (controversial topic, high media interest, etc.) as soon as possible prior to the event. VIPs should be asked about any security concerns they may have and whether external security personnel will accompany them on campus. In cases where VIPs move around the campus, such as when touring the campus or attending meetings in different buildings, management of that movement may be required. The Security Manager will make a risk assessment based on the information provided, as well as intelligence local police or government security agencies provide, if necessary, and will organise security staff to be present for the duration of the event or visit if required.

Access to campus and car parking for VIPs may require special arrangements. If an event or visit will generate large numbers of visitors, the Security Manager may need to organise for extra staff to be on duty. A VIP may wish their vehicle to stop directly outside the venue or be parked in a secure area. Car parks can be reserved using the [Signage Request Form](#).

**Contact**

Security Manager

[security@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:security@waikato.ac.nz)

**INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PROMOTION**

To ensure that VIP visits and events are leveraged to their full potential for the benefit of the University, the Director Communications and External Relations, should be kept informed of plans and arrangements as they unfold.

Depending on the nature of the event or visit the Director Communications and External Relations, may wish to coordinate internal and external publicity of the attendance of the VIP. This can take the form of publicity within the University: public website; e-newsletter; notices in Community and the Official Circular. In terms of external promotion, information could be sent to relevant press or to general media.

There may be circumstances when promotion is not advisable or permitted for security reasons.

**Contact**

Director Communications and External Relations

Alice Clements [alice.clements@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:alice.clements@waikato.ac.nz)

**VIP VISITOR SUMMARY CHECKLIST**

When planning an event or visit involving a VIP, consider the following:

- Who is the VIP, where are they from and what position do they hold?
- Is the VIP visiting alone or as part of a larger delegation?
- If the visit is initiated by a member of the University, what is their relationship with the VIP?
- Who is to host of the visit or event?
- Is it proposed that the Chancellor and/or Vice-Chancellor attend? Who else?
- What is the primary purpose of the visit or event? What outcomes are anticipated, e.g. the signing of a formal agreement?
- When and where is the visit or event to take place? For what duration?
- What is the likely order of proceedings?
- Have matters of relevant cultural protocol and etiquette been considered? Is an interpreter required? Will gifts be exchanged?
- What are the arrangements for arrival, parking, and departure?
- Is the event or visit likely to be controversial? Are security arrangements needed?
- Will internal or external communications be prepared? Will the media be notified?
- Is photography and/or filming of the event or visit allowed?