

# POSITION DESCRIPTION

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE – FOOD AND FIBRE INDUSTRY SKILLS BOARD (ISB/ BOARD)

**Role title:** Chief Executive, Food and Fibre Industry Skills Board

**Reports to:** Chair, Establishment Advisory Group (until formal ISB Board is confirmed)

**Location:** Wellington

**Organisational Size:** 25 - 30 FTE

**Delegations:** Executive delegations granted by the Board, enabling full operational, financial, and strategic leadership of the ISB

### ABOUT INDUSTRY SKILLS BOARDS

Industry Skills Boards (ISBs) are statutory bodies established to provide structured, industry-led leadership within New Zealand's vocational education and training (VET) system. From 1 January 2026, ISBs assume legislated responsibility for developing and approving qualifications and standards in specified industry sectors for vocational education. They have responsibility for ensuring that vocational education is delivering the skills that industry require in the workplace.

The creation of ISBs forms part of the reform programme formalised under the Education and Training (Vocational Education and Training System) Amendment Bill. ISBs are accountable to their Boards and operate as independent statutory bodies, governed by New Zealand's public sector employment and accountability frameworks.

ISBs are designed as lean, agile organisations. Each ISB operates with a small team of directly engaged staff, requiring a Chief Executive who can lead effectively without reliance on traditional hierarchical or middle-management structures. This necessitates both high-level strategic leadership and a strong focus on direct operational delivery, strong stakeholder engagement and people management, consistent with New Zealand's good employer obligations under the Employment Relations Act 2000.

### ROLE PURPOSE

The Chief Executive is responsible for leading the formal establishment, operational readiness, and ongoing delivery of all functions assigned to the ISB under its legislative mandate. This is both a strategic and operational role, requiring comprehensive oversight across sector engagement, qualification system leadership, work-based learning management, organisational performance, and public accountability.

The role is pivotal in ensuring that from its inception, the ISB operates with full credibility and effectiveness as a publicly funded body, working closely with the senior leadership of all ISBs and across the vocational system to collectively maintain the agility and responsiveness required to reflect the leadership industry is seeking. This includes direct responsibility for managing staff, systems, financial resources, and engagement across a wide range of sector and government stakeholders.

The Chief Executive is fully accountable to the Industry Skills Board for the overall performance of the organisation, including delivery against the Board's strategic priorities, achievement of key performance indicators, sound financial management, compliance with statutory obligations, and the active management of organisational risk. The Chief Executive is also responsible to the Board for upholding good employer obligations, maintaining organisational culture and staff wellbeing, embedding Te Tiriti o Waitangi commitments, and

ensuring that all governance reporting is timely, accurate, and complete. This accountability extends to all statutory functions, operational activities, and sector engagement required under the Education and Training (Vocational Education and Training System) Amendment Bill, Crown Entities Act 2004, and related legislation.

## **ABOUT THE ROLE**

The Chief Executive holds full delegated authority to lead all operational, strategic, and public-facing aspects of the ISB's work. This includes the immediate task of ensuring a seamless transition from predecessor organisations (WDCs and Te Pūkenga) to the ISB, alongside establishing the systems, frameworks, and relationships required to fulfil statutory responsibilities.

The Chief Executive must balance the demands of establishing a new organisation with maintaining service continuity for providers, learners, employers, and assessors during the transition period. Work-based learning functions must be managed and safeguarded through to 31 December 2027, requiring effective risk management, compliance assurance, and system development.

Once statutory functions are fully assumed, the Chief Executive is accountable for ensuring that all aspects of qualifications development, moderation, programme endorsement, workforce planning, and investment advice are delivered.

The role is defined by its dual focus: maintaining statutory integrity and delivering industry credibility. Both are essential for ensuring that the ISB is regarded as a trusted and capable partner by government agencies, industry bodies, and Māori and Pacific partners. A strong focus on learner outcomes to support industry is integral to the success of the Food and Fibre ISB.

The Chief Executive must operate as both a system leader and a direct organisational manager. This includes setting strategic direction, managing financial resources prudently, leading employment relations and people management within a lean team structure, and advising the ISB Board on all governance matters.

The Chief Executive is fully accountable to the Board for the overall performance of the organisation, delivering against strategic priorities, operational requirements, and key performance indicators as formally set and reviewed by the Board. This includes ensuring that organisational objectives are met within approved financial parameters and that all statutory obligations are consistently upheld, including but not limited to the role of ISB Chief Information and Security Officer (CISO).

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

### **Professional Qualifications and Experience**

The role requires a senior executive with demonstrable experience leading small-to-medium-sized public or private sector entities, or equivalent organisations with direct statutory accountabilities.

Candidates will ideally have a thorough understanding of the New Zealand vocational education and training system, including qualification development processes, standards moderation, programme endorsement, and the strategic workforce planning landscape.

Experience managing funding sources, statutory obligations, and complex government stakeholder relationships is essential, as is a strong understanding of Employment Relations

Act 2000 obligations relating to good employer conduct, staff wellbeing, and organisational culture.

The ideal candidate's background may include experience in the food and fibre sector. Broad leadership capability -particularly in dynamic, change-driven environments such as other primary industries or adjacent sectors will be highly valued. Practical leadership, commercial acumen, and the ability to operate across diverse industries are more critical than a narrow, sector-specific pedigree.

The role is open to both established Chief Executives and those stepping up from a significant leadership role for the first time. Candidates must demonstrate the capacity to build and lead a team, form structure at pace, and bring confidence in operating hands-on during the formative stages of the organisation.

The Chief Executive must also demonstrate experience in corporate accountability reporting, compliance, industry engagement processes, and preferably, exposure to shared services or collaborative partnership models. A decision on a shared service model to support the food and fibre ISB will be a decision point for the Chief Executive in the first 90 days in the role.

### Leadership Capabilities

The Chief Executive must demonstrate clear, structured, and disciplined leadership. This includes the capacity to:

- Set and execute strategic direction while maintaining direct operational oversight. Lead people effectively within a flat organisational structure without relying on middle-management layers.
- Build and rebuild team culture, leading people with empathy and resilience through change.
- Manage financial resources and public funding with prudence and transparency.
- Provide clear, evidence-based advice to a governance Board.
- Build trusted relationships with diverse stakeholders across industry, education, and government.
- Engage effectively with Māori and Pacific partners, ensuring Te Tiriti obligations are fully embedded.
- Navigate complex regulatory environments and legislative requirements.
- Represent the organisation credibly with stakeholders and, where required, in public or media-facing contexts.

### Attributes and Approach

The Chief Executive 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 role requires a balance between strategic foresight, anticipating future workforce needs, identifying opportunities for revenue streams and partnerships, and strong operational execution, ensuring expectations are managed and value is consistently delivered.

An energetic, adaptable, and enthusiastic Chief Executive with the willingness to “dig in” and drive the organisation forward. The organisation will start from a lean base before a strategic plan directs resources for growth. Leading collaboratively with strong people leadership capability, and a proven ability to foster culture, morale, and shared success.

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 engagement with industry sites and partners.
- Flexible working hours, including early morning, evening, or weekend commitments, as required by Board and stakeholder engagement responsibilities.