

# Career Market

## Key Appointments



## General Manager

### External Relations

Callaghan Innovation is an exciting organisation that helps New Zealand firms realise value from their ideas faster.

We are on a mission to inspire and support businesses to transform their ideas into new products, services, and processes. We connect smart New Zealand businesses to the technical and product development capability, talent, markets and funding they need to grow and succeed. Ultimately, our goal is to help drive a stronger and more diverse New Zealand export economy.

We are seeking a high-calibre General Manager to lead an important part of our business and contribute as a key member of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).

Reporting to the Chief Executive, the role of General Manager - External Relations leads a talented team responsible for managing key government relationships and external reputation. The External Relations Group manages Callaghan Innovation's ownership and policy-based relationships with the Crown, including Ministers, central government, monitoring and other agencies. It works with Callaghan Innovation's operational groups to translate government policy into programmes and actions that help grow high-value technology businesses.

This Group is responsible for planning, measuring and reporting on our progress toward achieving our mission, delivering on ownership obligations to our Minister, and managing external reputation including media and stakeholder relationships. The team also provides the primary point of contact for international innovation networks and organisations, and coordinates New Zealand's membership in offshore programs and partnerships.

The successful candidate will have the following experience and attributes:

- A passion for the High Value Manufacturing and Services sector and the application of new technologies to business problems
- Extensive experience working within a government context and the ability to perform effectively and positively within a Crown Agency framework
- Demonstrated business and political savvy
- Strategic vision coupled with a successful track record of operational leadership
- Demonstrated capability in building and sustaining sound stakeholder relationships
- Demonstrated leadership and management experience, and capability to perform effectively as part of an executive team

To apply for this job, please go to our job site vacancies.callaghaninnovation.govt.nz and enter the job code 3963DOM.

Alternatively, for a confidential discussion, please contact Esther Livingston, GM People and Capability by email Esther.Livingston@callaghaninnovation.govt.nz or on (04) 931 3717.

**CallaghanInnovation**



Sashi Meanger, executive director of the NZ Film & Television School in Wellington. Mark Jackson, tutor and tech support, is operating the Arri camera. Photos: JOHN NICHOLSON/FAIRFAX NZ

## It's the arts, any way you slice it

Sashi Meanger helps creative types keep in good with the bean counters.

**P**ERSUADING any team to keep within its budget can sometimes be difficult but Sashi Meanger, executive director of the NZ Film & Television School, says it's literally a piece of cake.

"It's quite simple," he says, with an example of how he shows people how to divvy up available funds.

"I say here's the cake, this is how many slices we can make – you tell me how many slices we need here, and if you take those, this is what's left."

Meanger's background is in business education, not baking, and he came to the film school from Victoria University's School of Management, where he still teaches.

The trickiest part of the job in the transition to the film business was picking up the jargon, he says.

"I didn't know anything about film then, so I had to learn fast – all the acronyms and such. It took me about six months."

While learning the difference between blonde and redhead lights, a gaffer and a grip took time, coming to grips with the running of the place wasn't an issue.

"I'd managed a private training establishment earlier on," he says. "And I've always enjoyed involvement in the arts – I was the dean of the Faculty of Arts at NMIT [Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology]."

"I suppose some people might argue against it, but in managing the arts you do need someone with a business head."

"Having said that, this is a very applied, practical school with a very strong involvement from the film industry personnel, which is how the Film School maintains its credibility and name."

Meanger says that means sometimes there are healthy debates about resources.

"Where does one spend the money? Everyone wants their Rolls Royce but can we do it with a Mazda? Those decisions come to me. I've been fortunate enough to be in senior leadership positions and my style is always listen to



everybody, make a decision based on that and communicate it."

The Film & Television School, a subsidiary of Whitireia New Zealand, offers a year-long course, with two intakes of 24 students a year, in February and July. Courses are fully booked, with a mix of domestic and international students.

"We get a lot of students from the USA, Canada, Europe, South America," Meanger says. "That's because it's Wellington, and we're blessed to have the big names, like the Wetas, right here."

Because film and television work is project-by-project, Meanger says it's hard to nail down how many graduates find fulltime work.

"I'd say about 80 per cent of our students would end up in the industry – some form their own little companies, making commercials, music videos and that sort of thing."

"Our high-achieving students – and there are a lot of those – will end up at Weta and the likes of Gibson Group on different projects. From the feedback we get, they do pretty well."

He says a lot of that has to do with the calibre of the teaching.

"We get film industry personnel coming to teach here, so the students are learning from the best. And those tutors will swipe the top graduates." The 12-month course becomes for some, an extended interview.

Meanger says one recent graduate ended up working as a researcher for their tutor, a documentary producer.

"That's incredible kudos – someone of that calibre taking on one of our graduates."

Across town at Victoria University, Meanger is a teaching fellow at the School of Management, now known as the Business School. After a year-long stint as acting director of the MBA course – immediately before taking on the Film School job – he lectured in a number of level two and three courses and now co-ordinates the level one management course.

"It's a huge course," he says. "with around 1000 students per annum. I also supervise some of the Malaysian and Vietnam courses and guest lecture on some of the MBA programmes."

Going back even further, Meanger was a founding member, and now a life member, of the NZ Communication Association and chaired the Pacific Island Polynesian Education Foundation, for about 15 years.

"It was a very satisfying role," he explains. "We were giving out scholarships to New Zealand Pacifica students, and there were amazing leaders of the Pacific community on that board."

Later, during his time at NMIT, Meanger decided it was time to move away from education and into

business for himself.

"It was my midlife crisis," he laughs. "Some people get a Harley, I wanted to start my own business."

So the Guava Tree was born – a retail business importing gifts, homeware and fabrics from India.

Meanger was born in Fiji of Indian descent and arrived in New Zealand as a young child.

"I was sent to Wairarapa College as a boarder – that was my introduction to New Zealand as a young lad," he says. "I immersed me in the culture – and I made lifelong friends from the Wairarapa and the farming community."

Guava Tree is like a mini India, he says. "I saw an opportunity – all these beautiful things made in India that nobody was selling here – and my extended family are all in business, so I thought 'I've done everything else so let's try my hand at the practical'."

"It's exciting – and also a damn good excuse to go to India on buying trips – who doesn't like that?"

With only so many hours in the day, Meanger has his work cut out managing his time.

"I'm a workaholic, there's no denying it," he says. "I love it, and I'm at a stage of life where I'm doing stuff that I enjoy. I do put in long hours – but it's work that I get a buzz out of, and that I enjoy."

Meanger found the Film School's finalist placing in last year's Wellington Gold Awards' Creative category especially pleasing.

It was an incredible opportunity to be in the category along with other big names in business, he says.

"It makes me proud, a small film school – admittedly the best in the country – is up there. Wait till we get to the new combined creative industries campus."

The campus is being built on the Cuba-Dixon street corner and opens in 2018. The creative technologies and applied arts programmes from Whitireia and WelTec will come together. This means the Film School, performing arts, radio broadcasting, journalism, creative writing and publishing, music, visual arts, digital design and computer animation, dance and drama, special effects make-up and hairdressing will be under the same roof.

"It's going to be quite amazing," he says. "The first of its kind in the country and to be in Wellington's central city is fantastic."

Meanger feels fortunate in how his career's gone, with one slight regret.

"The one thing I didn't do was get into the corporate world, and I wonder what that would have been like. I may have burnt out pretty fast I reckon, either that, or my life would have been quite different, but I would have missed out on the amazing experiences I have had in the arts and education sector."

"Now when I'm teaching business students I come across absolutely amazing kids and you look at them and know they're going to make it big. To be able to help them on that path is incredible."

Q+A

### QUICK QUESTIONS

**NAME:** Sashi Meanger

**BORN:** Fiji.

**FIRST JOB:** Research assistant, NZCER.

**FAVOURITE MOVIE:** *Cinema Paradiso*

**FAVOURITE MUSICIAN:** Loreena McKennitt

**FAVOURITE FOOD:** Crab or prawn curry.

What if you could be part of it?



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### Programme Director, UC Student Management System

- Full-time at 37.5 hours per week
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Being prepared to make a difference and leading UC through a time of change with our Student Management System (SMS) will be a fascinating journey for this critical senior appointment.

You will be responsible for leading the successful delivery of the next stage of the SMS programme at both a strategic and operational level. As an expert at keeping cool under pressure, you will actively engage and develop positive partnerships across UC, whilst understanding individual needs and the importance of bringing these diverse groups together across this large organisation to ensure achievement of our institutional goals.

Your previous experience of facilitating process change in complex organisations will be essential in ensuring your relationships within the UC are productive, with their needs being the priority.

You will need to have proven experience managing large, complex programmes/projects, and leading the thinking, attitudinal change and process improvements required to support and enhance our student experience. In addition, you will have a reputation for building engagement and driving change. You will be driven by the vision for what is possible!

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For information about the range of benefits in joining UC please visit us online at: <http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/joinus>

The closing date for this position is: Sunday, 3rd April 2016.

Applications for this position should include a cover letter, resume and any additional attachments combined into one document and submitted online. Further information about this role can be obtained by contacting Katie Perry, Senior HR Advisor: [katie.perry@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:katie.perry@canterbury.ac.nz)

The University of Canterbury is an EEO employer and actively seeks to meet its obligation under the Treaty of Waitangi.



[www.canterbury.ac.nz/joinus](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/joinus)



'The first two letters of the word goal are GO' S.P. SAUSAN