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New Zealand Herald, Auckland



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By Ruby Harfield

The University of Waikato's Management School has received worldwide recognition.

It was ranked the best in the country for business and economics in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

It is also the only university in New Zealand to make it in the top 101-125 in the world for business and economics.

Our reporter Ruby Harfield speaks to Waikato Management School pro vice-chancellor Matt Bolger about what makes the school stand out.

How did WMS get its Times Higher ranking?

It is a result of a lot of hard work by researching, taking into account teaching and a sustained amount of effort. There is a focus on research and students which has led to these results.

What makes WMS a great place to study?

The quality of the academic experience is excellent. The researchers and lecturers are thought leaders in their field who are involved in giving advice to businesses on their experiences as well as teaching students. Their expertise is fantastic. I have coffee with students every few weeks (more recently zoom) to get a sense of their experiences. The main messages are of how supportive the staff are and that the work is challenging but the small class sizes mean students get a lot of support and guidance.

What can students expect from their time at WMS?

We make sure that students get real-world experiences as part of their academic study. Every student needs to do an internship. This often leads on to jobs after graduating. I am frequently out visiting businesses and I will meet recent graduates who say they now have jobs at the place they did their internship.

Where will it take them?

We think the big challenge that we need to address is not just creating business graduates but preparing students to make a positive difference for organisations and that those organisations themselves make

a positive impact on society and the natural world. The ways for people to do that will vary, whether it be becoming entrepreneurs, political leaders, business owners or senior managers. Our goal is to help students uncover their interests, uniqueness and encourage them to make a difference. We give them the skills and character to go on and make what they want of the world.

What other experiences are on offer?

Excellent teaching experience in class and online. There is also a real sense of community among the students. Our main campus is a single, beautiful campus and most students live nearby so they really get to know each other and create friendships. We also have our brand new Tauranga CBD campus which is stunning. We run some work ready-ness programmes to help students prepare for the real world. These include practical skills and interviewing techniques. We also have a great range of student clubs.

What sets it apart from others?

Our experiential learning. Universities have always been fantastic at building capable students by learning from an expert. It's a model that's done a lot of good. I come from a business background and have hired many people before. When you're a hiring manager it's not just about capability but their character, whether they will be a good team fit, their sense of values and identity. These aren't teachable but students they can learn them through challenges and experiences such as internships. The way we structure the programme is that there is more emphasis on group work, case competitions and real world connections. Realising their own values and talking to people from diverse backgrounds. It makes them more work ready. WMS also offers a four-year Bachelor of Management



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with honours. This is quite unique in New Zealand. The fourth year really challenges them and sets them apart. It's for people who are ambitious and want to stretch themselves. The fourth year is an investment but it has a fantastic pay off. It really helps them achieve more by setting them on a faster trajectory in their career.



Waikato Management School pro vice-chancellor Matt Bolger. Photo/Supplied