

# 2025 Sharing Information on Progress **(SIP) Report**

University of Sussex Business  
School

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## About the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME)

The Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) is a United Nations-supported initiative founded in 2007 that aims to raise the profile of sustainability in their classrooms through Seven Principles focused on serving society and safeguarding our planet.

PRME engages business and management schools to ensure they provide future leaders with the skills needed to balance economic and sustainability goals, while drawing attention to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and aligning academic institutions with the work of the UN Global Compact. Driven by its mission to transform management education, PRME equips today's business students with the understanding and ability to deliver change tomorrow. As a voluntary initiative with over 800 signatories worldwide, PRME has become the largest organized relationship between the United Nations and management-related higher education institutions.



“*The PRME initiative was launched to nurture responsible leaders of the future. Never has this task been more important. Bold leadership and innovative thinking are needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).*

**Antonio Guterres**

Secretary-General (2017 - Present)

United Nations

”

## Principles of PRME



### Purpose

We advance responsible management education to foster inclusive prosperity in a world of thriving ecosystems.



### Values

We place organizational responsibility and accountability to society and the planet at the core of what we do.



### Teach

We transform our learning environments by integrating responsible management concepts and practices into our curriculum and pedagogy.



### Research

We study people, organizations, institutions, and the state of the world to inspire responsible management and education practice.



### Partner

We engage people from business, government, civil society, and academia to advance responsible and accountable management education and practice.



### Practice

We adopt responsible and accountable management principles in our own governance and operations.



### Share

We share our successes and failures with each other to enable our collective learning and best live our common values and purpose.

## The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In September 2015, all 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted a plan for achieving a better future for all – laying out a path over the next 15 years to end extreme poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and protect our planet. At the heart of Agenda 2030 are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 related targets that address the most important economic, social, environmental and governance challenges of our time. The SDGs clearly define the world we want – applying to all nations and leaving no one behind. Successful implementation of the SDGs will require all players to champion this agenda; the role of higher education is critical to this.





# Getting Started



This section provides foundational information about University of Sussex Business School, including key details and basic institutional data.

## Graduates & Enrollment




2024 Statistics	Number
Graduates	2454
Faculty & Staff at the University	3665
Faculty & Staff at the Institution	414
Student Enrollment at the University	16380
Student Enrollment at the Institution	4282
Undergraduate Attendance	3022
Masters-Level Postgraduate Attendance	1185
Doctoral Student Attendance	75
Certificate, Professional Development, or Continuing Education Attendance	0

## Degrees Offered

### Bachelor Programs

-  Bachelor of Science (B.Sc. or B.S.)
-  Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)

### Masters Programs

-  Master of Science (M.Sc. or M.S.)
-  Master of Arts (M.A.)
-  Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.)

### Doctoral Programs

-  Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)



# Purpose

We advance responsible management education to foster inclusive prosperity in a world of thriving ecosystems.



## Definition of Purpose

At Sussex, we define Purpose as cultivating ethically responsible, sustainability-literate leaders through critical inquiry, interdisciplinary research, and inclusive education. As a PRME signatory and the UK's first TASK Change Leader, we embed sustainability and social impact into management education to address global challenges and foster equitable, thriving futures.

## Institutional Engagement

**51% - 75%** of faculty at University of Sussex Business School actively contribute to our work with PRME, advancing responsible management education, or addressing sustainable development challenges through their work.



# Values

We place organizational responsibility and accountability to society and the planet at the core of what we do.



## How We Define Values

The University of Sussex Business School (USBS) was established within an institution that prioritises ethics, responsibility and sustainability, placing organisational responsibility and accountability to society and the planet at the heart of all its activities. The School is guided by the University's values of kindness, integrity, inclusion, collaboration and courage. USBS does not simply espouse these values but acts as a central agent for their enactment in teaching, research and engagement.

## Who Champions Responsible Management Education at Our Institution

- ❖ Centralized sustainability office
- ❖ Disciplinary efforts within business school
- ❖ Individual leader
- ❖ Interdisciplinary efforts across business school
- ❖ Interdisciplinary efforts across parent organization
- ❖ Research or issue group, society, or club leading sustainability efforts
- ❖ Senior leadership office

## Student Voices

The following narrative demonstrates how University of Sussex Business School has influenced students' academic journey and personal growth.

### Values\_Student Voices\_Sussex Business School Student Testimonials on RME and Sustainability

**Sussex Business School Student Testimonials that showcase how RME has influenced their academic journey and personal growth.**

*"Social responsibility and sustainability were integral parts of our teaching at the Business School. We learned about the importance of ethical business practices, environmental conservation, and social impact. This awareness has been invaluable in my current role, as it enables me to make informed decisions that consider the broader impact on society and the environment. By understanding the principles of sustainability, I can contribute to creating more responsible and sustainable business strategies. This not only aligns with societal expectations but also fosters long-term success by addressing environmental and social challenges proactively".*

**Ved, BSc Economics**

*"I am now more environmentally aware than ever before; through learning about the circular economy and corporate social responsibility. This has given me the motivation to contribute positively to the environment".*

**Jude, BSc Marketing Management with Psychology**

*"It is carefully woven into many of the modules taught at the Business School. Whilst in interviews for my placement year and graduate scheme thereafter, I was asked frequently by employers about my knowledge on social responsibility and sustainability, and I felt incredibly well equipped to answer their questions with confidence. Social responsibility and sustainability is built into many of the business modules, and it also has its own dedicated module, which I have studied and enjoyed immensely. The Business School truly cares about equipping its graduates with the correct, most up to date knowledge needed to thrive in industry, and its extensive research and industry case studies of the topics of social responsibility and sustainability are carefully woven into your weekly studies. This makes learning engaging, practical, and thought provoking. The teaching staff are constantly feeding in the most up to date research and industry insights into the classroom, which makes for incredibly engaging learning".*

**Matthew, Marketing Management BSc with Placement Year**

*"This year the Business School has introduced the opportunity for students to take part in the TASK certificate by Sulitest based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As the University of Sussex Business School is the first UK university to offer the TASK Certificate award, there is an opportunity to demonstrate our knowledge of sustainability and have yet another unique experience. Alongside this, due to the nature of the degree, International Business BSc places sustainability and social responsibility at the core of several modules. As someone who would like to start their own business one day, this has taught me about the importance of incorporating sustainability and acting ethically when embarking on business ventures".*

**India, International Business BSc with Italian**

*"There are many social responsibility and sustainability modules within the business and management course at the university of Sussex, however, even if the module isn't specifically CSR related, there are always elements of this included. I feel the continuous incorporation of social responsibility and sustainability into teaching and learning throughout my time at the university of Sussex business school has helped me a great deal. This is through enhancing my awareness and when it came to applying for placement and graduate roles it enabled me to filter out companies and roles that didn't align with socially responsible and sustainable practises that I was able to understand due to the incorporation of this within my course, this saved me a great deal of time and made sure I only applied to companies and positions that aligned with a socially responsible and sustainable vision".*

**Maisie, BSc Business and Management Studies**

*"In my third year at the Business School, I took a sustainability reporting module that significantly shaped my understanding of social responsibility and sustainability in business. This course was expertly designed to weave these essential concepts into our learning process, emphasizing the importance of sustainable practices in today's business landscape.*

*This practical experience has proved invaluable in my current role. The skills I developed enable me to actively contribute to sustainability initiatives within my company. I am now proficient in sustainability reporting and advising on best practices, which allows me to guide my company towards more environmentally and socially responsible behaviors. This knowledge also enhances my ability to engage with stakeholders who prioritize sustainability.*

*Overall, the sustainability reporting module was a critical component of my educational journey, equipping me with the tools to make a meaningful impact in my career and assist my company in meeting the increasing demands for corporate responsibility".*

**Mateo, BSc Accounting and Finance**

## Student Awareness

**76% - 100%** of students at University of Sussex Business School are aware that we are a PRME Signatory Member.

## Student Engagement

**76% - 100%** of students at University of Sussex Business School actively contribute to our work with PRME, advancing RME, or addressing sustainable development challenges through their work.

## Values Voices

### Sussex Values Voices\_Narrative provided by Associate Dean

The University of Sussex Business School Faculty values are built upon and advance our University of Sussex values of kindness, integrity, inclusion, collaboration, and courage. We actively celebrate these values by demonstrating them to staff, students, and the wider community and embedding them in our policies, practices, teaching, and research.

We embrace the rich and diverse faiths and beliefs of our students through a wide array of faith-based societies supported by the Student Union including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism and more. Our University Chaplaincy offers pastoral care to all members of our Sussex community, regardless of faith. We hold in-person and/or online meditation sessions at the Chapel during lunch hours to provide opportunities for quiet reflection and mindfulness.

In recognition of our practical impact on sustainability and creating positive change, the Business School won a Bronze Award in the 2024-2025 Green Impact Programme. We also engage students directly, for example, we hosted Climate Fresh workshops to deepen understanding about climate change and its impact. Over 320 students participated in just one week. We were also the first UK institution to become a UK Change Leader in sustainability. The Sulitest, consisting of the The Assessment of Sustainability Knowledge (TASK) based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), is integrated into our curriculum and offered to all our first students in their 'Introduction to Business Management' module. Our students receive a certificate on completion that be added to their CVs and professional profiles.

Our commitment to our values is celebrated in many other ways too. For example, we host weekly Community Cafés during term time, open to all staff and students to foster inclusivity, belonging, and communication. We celebrate community-building events, groups, and spaces such as Black At Sussex, the Carers' Network, Pride etc. In these ways and many more, we ensure that our values are lived, practiced, and shared with our community and beyond.

*Lilith Whiley, Associate Dean in Culture, Equality and Inclusion  
University of Sussex Business School*

## Celebrating Values

The following demonstrates a way in which our institution celebrates values in various specializations.

3. Sussex\_Celebrating Values

View document  Download document 



# Teach

We transform our learning environments by integrating responsible management concepts and practices into our curriculum and pedagogy.

## How We Define Teach

The University of Sussex Business School is deeply committed to the United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education (UN PRME), ensuring that themes of Ethics, Responsibility, and Sustainability (ERS) are explicitly embedded across the curriculum.

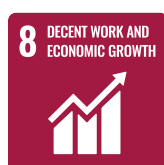
## Courses that support RME

University of Sussex Business School reports 4 courses in 2024 that support responsible management education and sustainable development goals.

### Sustainable Marketing

| N1640

Course Convenor: Alison MacGregor This module explores the marketing discipline from a Macromarketing perspective and seeks to explain how business can benefit from taking a more holistic approach to the marketplace by taking a systems view of the interplay between marketing and society. Focusing on an enterprise approach it explores how marketing can operate in the marketplace with a social conscience and achieve profits whilst also addressing reservations about sustainable business practices. It provides Macromarketing as a frame for understanding what is occurring in marketplaces, such as market dynamism, empowered consumers and globalisation, as well as engaging with concepts such as citizenship and stewardship in relation to business activity. The module explores sustainable leadership, changing appreciation of business and marketing structures in addressing sustainability challenges, as well as the role of entrepreneurship and new approaches to address concerns identified within the Macromarketing discipline and for marketing sustainability.



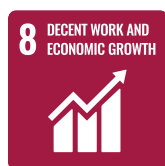
### Macroeconomic Analysis

| 807L1

Course Convenor: Gabriella Cagliesi This module explores advanced macroeconomic frameworks used to analyse long-run equilibrium, short-run fluctuations, and policy responses in open economies. Students will engage with contemporary macroeconomic issues such as inflation dynamics, exchange rate regimes, debt sustainability, and green growth. Emphasis is placed on applying models—such as



the IS-MP-AD-IA framework—to real-world challenges including fiscal shocks, climate-related risks, and structural constraints in developing economies. Taught through a flipped classroom and Team-Based Learning approach, the module integrates AI tools for scenario simulation, policy analysis, and critical engagement with digital outputs. Students develop analytical rigour, economic reasoning, and digital competencies relevant for careers in economic policy, consultancy, and research.



## Climate Finance

| 122N1

Course Convenor: Sarada Krishnan The module provides a foundation in economic theory for carbon pricing, and a detailed understanding of carbon markets. Initially, we will distinguish between climate finance and sustainable finance, as the latter is a broad category of topics, including climate finance. In addition, the module will provide insights in the practice of carbon market design, its problems and the proposed solutions. Empirical methods for appraising the effectiveness and efficiency of carbon markets as policy instruments for mitigating climate change will be discussed. Moreover, we will explore the investment performance of renewable energy funds, green bonds and we will analyse green revenues models. The group assessment of the module is related to the green revenues model. Data from FTSE green revenue dataset will be given to students and they will be asked to analyse them and provide investment solutions. We will also cover the role of different participants within emissions trading schemes, the implications of the Paris Agreement and we will discuss the recommendations of IPCC for climate change mitigation. Particularly, the module will cover topics such as sustainable finance and climate finance, environmental policy, energy finance, carbon markets, green bonds, climate risk analysis, low carbon investment portfolio, environmental and financial performance, and green revenues data model.

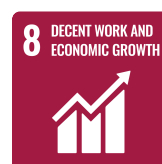


## Sustainability Accounting and Reporting

| 120N1

This module focuses on the non-financial reporting practices adopted in both the public and private sectors, specifically in the context of sustainability. Examples of key topics covered include carbon and climate change accounting, corporate sustainability footprints as well as financial consequences of climate change impacts and adaptation. Along with a focus on the ongoing standardization process in sustainability accounting, this module being research-informed, also explores the role of

institutional actors in the standard-setting processes of sustainability accounting standards and the multi-dimensional actor-networks that drive such processes. The module explores issues related to reporting standards framed by standard-setting agencies such as the GRI as well as the latest standards framework on sustainability being developed by the ISSB. It also examines the practices of measuring and reporting social and environmental performance such as social accounting and TBL (Triple Bottom Line) reporting as well as the role of capital market stakeholders in shaping the development of these standards and practices. Case studies will be used to examine and analyse the emergence and development of standards and practices in sustainability reporting. The discourse surrounding these issues will be framed using theories such as agency theory, stakeholder theory and institutional theory for critical analysis.



## Teaching Awards

In 2024, 4 awards were given to faculty and educators at University of Sussex Business School.



### University of Sussex Teaching Award 2 - Environmental Sustainability Award

**Granter:** University of Sussex Business School

**Grantee:** The Climate Fresk Team (Alexandra Pearson, Claire Tymoshyshyn, Alison Bailey)

#### Award Description:

The Climate Fresk team was awarded for embedding climate awareness into the curriculum through Climate Fresk workshops. Over 500 students were trained in the autumn term, with more than 20 going on to become facilitators.



### Business School Teaching Grant 1

**Granter:** University of Sussex Business School

**Grantee:** Malgorzata Sulimierska

### **Award Description:**

Sustainable Finance Education Project. Dr Malgorzata Sulimierska was awarded a small grant to advance education in sustainable finance.

## **Business School Teaching Grant 2**

**Granter:** University of Sussex Business School

**Grantee:** René Moolenaar, Gabriella Cagliesi, Rashaad Shabab, Seun Osituyo

### **Award Description:**

SAISA (AI Student Academic Success Advisor) Project – René Moolenaar, Gabriella Cagliesi, Rashaad Shabab, Seun Osituyo This innovative project enhances academic advising using AI to provide inclusive, timely, and personalised student support. SAISA is designed for scalability across faculties, promising wide-reaching impact.

## **University of Sussex Teaching Award 1**

**Granter:** University of Sussex Business School

**Grantee:** Alison Bailey

### **Award Description:**

Title of project: Community Impact, Scholarship and Social Responsibility award. Alison Bailey was recognised for her collaboration with Rewired Earth during the second-year Leadership Foundation module. Students participated in a sustainability challenge offering £1,000 and internships to the winning team. Guided by mentors from Rewired Earth and other organisations, students applied their leadership skills to local sustainability issues and presented their solutions at the House of Lords. Two Sussex teams emerged as competition winners.

## **Educator Recognition**

At University of Sussex Business School, we recognize educators for quality of teaching in the following ways:

- ❖ Annual teaching excellence awards
- ❖ Course evaluation scores
- ❖ Faculty promotion and tenure consideration
- ❖ Financial incentives
- ❖ Institutional recognition events
- ❖ Pedagogical innovation grants
- ❖ Professional development opportunities

❖ Student-nominated teaching awards

## Teaching Voices

The following statement demonstrates ways in which educators at University of Sussex Business School support sustainability and responsible management in their classrooms.

### Teaching Voices 1

Sussex Business Schools educators are embedding innovative teaching approaches and methods to support student learning on the field of Responsible Management and Sustainability Education. In this Teaching Voices contribution, you can find two examples from two Business School academics outlining their innovative approaches in teaching and learning that support students prepare to meet global challenges.

**Professor Gabriella Cagliesi, Department of Economics, University of Sussex Business School**

As part of my teaching innovation, I have integrated Artificial Intelligence (AI) into both undergraduate and postgraduate macroeconomics modules through a combination of **Team-Based Learning (TBL)** and **AI-augmented instruction**. This approach repositions AI not as a passive content generator, but as an active participant in the learning process—functioning as a *classmate, tutor, mentor, simulator, and Socratic guide*.

AI is embedded into team-based classroom tasks and assessments in ways that deepen critical thinking and promote responsible digital fluency. In line with TBL principles, students, during the application workshops (that follow the flipped classroom lectures and the readiness quizzes) work in diverse teams to solve macroeconomic problems, engage with data, and critique policy scenarios to deepen their understanding of the topic. Here, AI plays multiple roles: it challenges assumptions (as a teammate), guides conceptual understanding through questioning and analogies (as a tutor), helps synthesize research and detect misinformation (as a mentor), generates synthetic data and dynamic policy simulations (as a simulator), and provokes analytical debate by prompting students to question and critique economic models (as a Socratic guide).

Assessment has also evolved: students use AI to create and critique simulated economic scenarios, draft policy memos, detect misinformation, and reflect on the ethical dimensions of AI in economic analysis. These tasks are designed to maintain academic integrity while fostering originality, analysis, and digital competence.

This model not only cultivates higher-order thinking and inclusive collaboration but also prepares students for an AI-integrated future in research, policy, and industry. Crucially, it allows the educator to move beyond content delivery toward deeper facilitation, and it redefines the classroom as a space for active, interdisciplinary dialogue grounded in real-world macroeconomic challenges.

This pedagogical experiment reflects broader institutional priorities: ethical innovation, inclusive learning, and sustainable development—all cornerstones of our PRME commitments.

**Dr Angela Gao, Department of Accounting and Finance, University of Sussex Business School**

My teaching approach integrates real-world relevance, applied learning, and forward-thinking content by embedding **AI and sustainability** into business finance education. I designed and developed the postgraduate core module *121N1 Sustainable Business Finance*, now in its third year, to help students understand the financial dimensions of sustainable development. This includes analysing the impact of corporate finance decisions on long-term environmental, social, and governance (ESG) outcomes.

The course is structured using **blended pedagogy**, combining lectures with case-based workshops, simulation activities, and interactive discussions to engage students actively in solving practical problems. I also integrate **AI tools** into the learning environment, equipping students with digital literacy while ensuring they follow responsible use policies aligned with academic integrity.

Assessment methods are designed to reflect both critical thinking and professional relevance, including scenario-based evaluations, investment appraisals with ESG implications, and sustainability-linked budgeting tasks. Students are encouraged to consider not just profitability but also the broader implications of financial decisions on society and the environment – directly addressing **UN Sustainable Development Goals** such as **SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)** and **SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production)**, as well as **SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)**, by highlighting the role of finance in fostering collaboration and sustainable development at organisational and global levels.

Beyond module delivery, my role as **Founder of the Sustainability and AI Business Action Centre (SABAC)** allows me to bring fresh insights from consultancy and training work with businesses into the classroom. This ensures that students benefit from up-to-date, practice-informed learning that prepares them to lead responsibly in a rapidly evolving business environment.

## **Fostering Innovation**



### **To a great extent**

Teaching and learning at our institution strongly foster innovation.

## **Experiential Learning**



### **A lot**

Our institution supports experiential learning significantly through teaching and learning.

## **Learning Mindset**



### **A lot**

Our institution supports a lifelong learning mindset significantly through teaching and learning.

## **Method of Teaching and Learning**



### **In person**

Traditional classroom-based learning with face-to-face instruction.

## **Barriers to Innovative Curriculum**

In 2024, University of Sussex Business School identified the following barriers to innovating, updating, or taking risks in existing curriculum:

- ❖ Compliance and legal concerns
- ❖ Faculty resistance
- ❖ Learning curve for faculty
- ❖ Time constraints

## Barriers to Innovative Pedagogy

In 2024, University of Sussex Business School identified the following barriers to innovating, updating, or taking risks in existing pedagogy:

- ❖ Administrative hurdles
- ❖ Budget constraints
- ❖ Change resistance
- ❖ Compliance concerns
- ❖ Faculty resistance
- ❖ Learning curve for faculty
- ❖ Time constraints



# Research

We study people, organizations, institutions, and the state of the world to inspire responsible management and education practice.



## How We Define Research

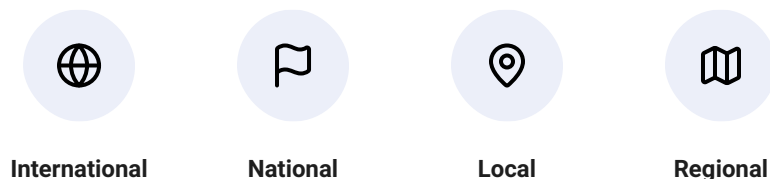
Our research tackles pressing economic, social, and environmental challenges through collaborative, interdisciplinary inquiry. By connecting scholarship with practice, we generate actionable insights that influence policy, shape organisational strategies, and improve lives. Grounded in rigor and relevance, our work advances knowledge while addressing urgent global and local issues.

## Research vs Research for RME/Sustainable Development



## Research Funding

In 2024, University of Sussex Business School was awarded funding for research that is:



## Socializing Research

In 2024, University of Sussex Business School contributed research findings to:

- ❖ Community organizations
- ❖ Government and policy makers
- ❖ Industry and business networks
- ❖ International media
- ❖ Local media
- ❖ National media
- ❖ Open-access platforms

## Research Projects

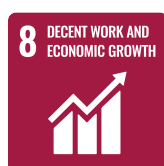
In 2024, University of Sussex Business School reported 2 research projects that implemented responsible or sustainable activities.

### Shoreham Port Industrial Decarbonisation

**Period Covering:** September, 2021 - July, 2025

**Department:** Management

The School co-directs the Industrial Decarbonisation Research and Innovation Centre (IDRIC), a program that works across industry and government to influence infrastructure and system planning for net-zero clusters, with a focus on policy implementation. The initiative aims to support UK industries in lowering costs, enhancing energy efficiency, and protecting jobs during the green economy transition. Sussex's expertise has been cited in government reports, training materials, and strategy proposals by organizations like UKRI, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, and multiple Local Enterprise Partnerships, as well as various local authorities and ministerial sub-committees.



### Responsive Organising for Low Emission Societies (ROLES)

**Period Covering:** September, 2023 - August, 2025

**Department:** Management

Responsive Organising for Low Emission Societies created a toolkit for local councils and EU policymakers, providing strategies for accelerating decarbonisation in European city-regions.



## Research Awards

In 2024, University of Sussex Business School was awarded 2 research awards for responsibility- and/or sustainability-related research.

### **PMI Research Achievement Award**

**Granter:** Project Management Institute

**Grantee:** Professor Andrew Davies

**Award Description:**

Celebrates an individual or group of individuals whose work has significantly advanced the concepts, knowledge, and practices of Project Management.

### **Financial Times Award for Academic Research with Impact**

**Granter:** Financial Times

**Grantee:** Professor Matthew Agarwala

## Publications Related to RME and/or Sustainability

### **Transformative Innovation Policy Consortium**

**Authors:** Victoria Shaw, Programme Manager, University of Sussex

**Date of publication:** September, 2025

**Presented at:** National or international issue or theme-specific conference

**Department:** Management

This policy brief examines global public research and development (R&D) funding trends between 1990 and 2020, focusing on climate change, energy, transport, and industrial decarbonisation, with implications for Africa. Analysis of over 150,000 projects from 165 agencies shows heavy concentration of funding in the UK, EU, and US, leaving African and other Global South regions underrepresented. Investment is skewed towards adaptation (36%) and energy systems (28%), with industrial decarbonisation (11%) and geoengineering (12%) lagging. While engineering and social sciences receive comparable funding, fields such as neuroscience and theology remain underfunded despite their relevance to behavioural and ethical dimensions of climate action. Encouragingly, 74% of projects demonstrate transdisciplinary engagement. The study recommends rebalancing funding geographically, boosting neglected technologies (hydrogen, carbon capture, geoengineering),

strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration, and leveraging public–private partnerships. Addressing these gaps is critical to ensuring that climate R&D advances not only technological progress but also inclusive, locally relevant innovation for sustainable futures.



## Work indifference: a sign of burnout for agile workers that reduces staff support and empathy

**Authors:** Dr Emma Russell, University of Sussex | Dr Smadar Cohen-Chen, University of Sussex | Deepali D'Mello, University of Sussex

**Date of publication:** September, 2025

**Department:** Management

This report explores *work indifference*—a flat, disengaged emotional state—as a potential late-stage indicator of burnout among NHS agile workers. Phase one research showed that expressions of indifference provoke hostility and low empathy from colleagues, unlike other emotional responses. Phase two, a survey of 321 workers, confirmed that indifference is strongly associated with burnout, particularly the depersonalisation/cynicism dimension, and is exacerbated when workers strongly identify with their roles. Phase three tested whether an awareness intervention could improve empathy and support. While participants trained to recognise indifference as a burnout signal were more likely to signpost colleagues to help, they remained unwilling to offer personal support, continuing to judge indifferent colleagues as ungrateful or undeserving. Findings suggest that NHS workers may lack the personal capacity to support peers showing indifference due to their own strain. The report recommends treating indifference as a “red flag” for burnout, integrating it into staff wellbeing monitoring, and directing organisational—not peer—support towards affected workers. A RESET strategy (Raise awareness, Encourage empathy, Support, Embed in burnout advice, Track) is proposed to help NHS Trusts recognise, respond to, and prevent burnout linked to work indifference.



## Research Barriers

In 2024, University of Sussex Business School identified the following barriers to conducting research related to sustainability and/or responsibility:

- ❖ Funding challenges
- ❖ Time constraints



# Partner

We engage people from business, government, civil society, and academia to advance responsible and accountable management education and practice.

## How We Define Partner

At Sussex Business School, a Partner is a business, policymaker, civil society organisation, or academic network that works with us to address global challenges. Through collaboration, we co-create knowledge, embed sustainability in education and research, and deliver impact in line with our mission and values.

## Institutional Partnerships

- ❖ AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business)
- ❖ AMBA (Association of MBAs)
- ❖ EFMD (European Foundation for Management Development)
- ❖ Financial Times
- ❖ Local institutions and associations
- ❖ Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)
- ❖ Sulitest
- ❖ Times Higher Education (THE)
- ❖ University Councils

## Student Organization Partnerships

- ❖ Enactus
- ❖ Sikh Students Association
- ❖ Hillel International
- ❖ Hindu Students Council
- ❖ Muslim Student Association
- ❖ Students for Global Health

## Partnerships

The following provides more details on 1 key partnership at University of Sussex Business School.

### **Business School aligns efforts for fairer food systems in Brighton and Hove**

Over [6,000](#) people in Brighton and Hove rely on weekly food support. To help tackle this and other pressing food-related issues, the University of Sussex Business School brought people from across the University and the city into a room on Wednesday, 18 June 2025, to identify clear-cut actions to take together.

The event, led by [Professor Adrian Ely](#) and [Dr Katerina Psarikidou](#), and sponsored by the UKRI-funded [FoodSEqual](#) project, focused on the city's new [Food Strategy and Action Plan \(2025–2030\)](#), which Sussex research helped to inform [at another event last year](#). It sought to find out how the University's various food initiatives – from campus catering to sustainability research – could align with the Strategy to help address rising food inequality and insecurity.

Food practitioners, local businesses, students and academics, including Professor Robin Banerjee, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Global and Civic Engagement, University of Sussex, attended the event alongside Ali Ghanimi, Senior Manager, Brighton & Hove Food Partnership. Other participants included members of the Black and Minority Ethnic Community Partnership as well as stakeholders from Brighton & Hove City Council. Banerjee, in his welcome remarks, highlighted how the work benefits society, reinforcing the University's commitment to social good.

On launching the Food Strategy, Ghanimi highlighted some of the city's planned actions for improving food systems, including prompting major city caterers to adopt sustainable food practices.

[Watch Ali Ghanimi on the University's role in the city's food strategy](#)

An interdisciplinary panel discussion and audience break-out session then considered practical ways of aligning the Strategy with the University's food initiatives. Sandra Juan Delgado, Sustainability Manager at Chartwells, the University's caterer, highlighted the success of the "Sussex Saver" that offers £2 healthy meals on campus. Dr John Thompson, Deputy Director, [Sussex Sustainability Research Programme](#) (SSRP), emphasised the need to strengthen links with local food producers and shared SSRP's plan for regional research hubs. Dr Katerina Psarikidou, the policy lead of the FoodSEqual project, emphasised the power of community-led research. PhD student Viola King Forbes advocated for deeper student engagement in food initiatives, and Adam Batchelor from the Sustainability Team recommended looking into tested strategies, like London's "[School Superzones](#)", which limit fast food outlets near schools. Angela Blair (Brighton and Hove City Council) contributed to discussions on city-level food policy.

Reflecting on the event and the Strategy, Ely noted: "The University has an important part to play, not only through research and teaching, but also through the food decisions we make every day as consumers and as citizens of Brighton and Hove."

## Partner Voices

The following statement from our partners demonstrates ways in which our collaborations at University of Sussex Business School support sustainability and responsible management education.

### **Sulitest: University of Sussex Business School Case Study**

The case study overview has been written by the School's partner Sulitest. The full article is available via this link <https://www.sulitest.org/news/sussex-embedding-sustainability-assessment>



The University of Sussex Business School is committed to integrating the values of social responsibility, ethical practice, and sustainability into curricula, teaching, and research. To enhance this effort, the School was the first British institution to join the TASK™ Change Leader program!

“This is an excellent opportunity for us to enhance our sustainability literacy in pursuing our School's vision and strategy to align our education with the global challenges and opportunities of the 21st century,” stated Gabriella Cagliesi, Professor in Economics and former Associate Dean For Education and Students.

Upon joining the community, and in line with the Sulitest mission to mainstream sustainability literacy, the school quickly analysed its programmes and how it could reach the majority of their students with TASK™. This work was led by Gabriella Cagliesi and Alison Bailey, Senior Lecturer, in collaboration with key teaching and professional services staff. TASK™ was then **officially launched at the School during their “Festival of Sust(AI)nable Education”**, with Jean-Christophe Carteron, Sulitest’s co-founder, contributing through an insightful keynote presentation, highlighting the urgency of sustainability literacy and competencies in an era of AI-driven challenges and opportunities.

Moreover, Alison Bailey and Madina Tash, PRME Lead at Sussex, presented this case study at the latest **PRME UK & Ireland Conference**, alongside our Account Manager, Estela C F Pilz. Additionally, Farai Jena, Associate Dean for Education & Students contributed to the panel organised by Sulitest at the [EFMD Annual Conference](#) discussing assessment as a lever for driving positive change. These two occasions, besides bringing visibility to the inspiring initiatives taking place at Sussex, provided a great opportunity to exchange best practices with the academic community.

The first year of deployment was focused on raising awareness about TASK™ and setting a foundation for sustainability education, which engaged many of the University of Sussex Business School students. **For undergraduate students**, TASK™ is offered to **first-year, first semester students through the core module “Introduction to Business Management”** which incorporates a business simulation through which SDGs must be applied. This enables both the school and the students to establish a baseline of their initial sustainability knowledge level.

For their **exit-assessment**, the School will **include assessments based on completion of TASK™ in a range of core and non-core modules** requiring them to reflect and discuss sustainability in different ways, depending on the programme they are following. By adopting this approach, the vast majority of undergraduate students will take TASK™.

At **postgraduate level**, TASK™ is offered **as students prepare for their dissertation** through an ethics assessment. TASK™ allows them to reflect and position their research in the context of the global environmental and social challenges.





# Practice

We adopt responsible and accountable management principles in our own governance and operations.

## How We Define Practice

The University of Sussex Business School was established within an institution that prioritises ethics, responsibility and sustainability, placing organisational responsibility and accountability to society and the planet at the heart of all its management, governance and operational practices. This reputation attracts staff and students who seek such an environment and remains a source of pride for the USBS community.

## Institutional Policies and Practices

- ❖ Buildings/real estate
- ❖ Carbon reduction or offset commitments
- ❖ Climate action plan
- ❖ Employee equity, diversity, inclusion
- ❖ Environmental stewardship policies
- ❖ Ethical leadership or good governance policies
- ❖ Greenhouse gas emissions
- ❖ Local staff/student/faculty transportation
- ❖ Responsible procurement policies
- ❖ Student equity, diversity, inclusion
- ❖ Sustainability strategy or strategic plan (school or university level)
- ❖ Travel guides
- ❖ USGBC building guides
- ❖ Water
- ❖ Zero-waste guides
- ❖ Ethical data sourcing guides
- ❖ Faculty hiring, tenure, and promotion guidelines
- ❖ Professional training opportunities
- ❖ Open-access guides
- ❖ Curriculum guidelines
- ❖ Ministry of education recommendation documents
- ❖ Accreditation body recommendation documents

## Policy Documents Related to RME and/or Sustainability

Sustainability\_strategy\_FINAL\_30june\_2nd

View document  Download document 

Sustainability_strategy_ACTION_PLAN1st	<a href="#">View document</a>	<a href="#">Download document</a>
Active and sustainable Commuting Policy_AW	<a href="#">View document</a>	<a href="#">Download document</a>
Decarbonising_the_economy	<a href="#">View document</a>	<a href="#">Download document</a>
Carbon_Management_Plan_FINAL	<a href="#">View document</a>	<a href="#">Download document</a>
Biodiversity_policy	<a href="#">View document</a>	<a href="#">Download document</a>
Sustainability_Food and Agriculture Policy_AW	<a href="#">View document</a>	<a href="#">Download document</a>
Waste, Reuse and Recycling Policy_AW (1)	<a href="#">View document</a>	<a href="#">Download document</a>
Water_management_policy_final	<a href="#">View document</a>	<a href="#">Download document</a>
EDI Policy	<a href="#">View document</a>	<a href="#">Download document</a>
Modern Slavery Act Statement	<a href="#">View document</a>	<a href="#">Download document</a>
The Sussex People Strategic Plan 2022 - Accessible version	<a href="#">View document</a>	<a href="#">Download document</a>

## Practice Awards

In 2024, University of Sussex Business School received 3 awards for responsible and/or sustainable practices.

## **People and Planet**

**Granter:** People and Planet

**Grantee:** University of Sussex

**Award Description:**

University of Sussex has been ranked top 5th University in the UK for Staff and Student Engagement by People and Planet.

## **Sussex Chambers Green Business of the Year award**

**Granter:** Sussex Chamber of Commerce

**Grantee:** University of Sussex

**Award Description:**

The University of Sussex was awarded the 2nd Place as Green Business of the year by the Sussex Chamber of Commerce. For more information please see the link provided: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7344983341571424257/>

## **Ecocampus Award**

**Granter:** Ecocampus Award

**Grantee:** University of Sussex

**Award Description:**

University of Sussex has been awarded with a Bronze Award for EcoCampus to demonstrate its commitment to Environmental Sustainability through introducing the first phase of an Environmental Management System. For more information, please see the link provided below, including the bronze award logo provided at the end of this page.



# Share

We share our successes and failures with each other to enable our collective learning and best live our common values and purpose.



## How We Define Share

In the UN PRME context, Share means exchanging knowledge, values, and practices that advance responsible management education. At the University of Sussex Business School, Share reflects our commitment to collaboration with students, staff, and partners, ensuring research insights, teaching innovations, and community engagement contribute to positive societal impact.

## Engagement Opportunities

University of Sussex Business School offers transparent engagement opportunities for members of our institution and community to contribute to our sustainability and responsibility efforts in the following ways:

- ❖ [https://staff.sussex.ac.uk/news/article/65650-celebrating-the-un-sdg-flag-campaign-at-the-university-of-sussex-business-school?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://staff.sussex.ac.uk/news/article/65650-celebrating-the-un-sdg-flag-campaign-at-the-university-of-sussex-business-school?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- ❖ publicly reported data
- ❖ Feedback mechanisms (e.g., surveys, suggestion boxes)
- ❖ Community events and consultation forums
- ❖ Partnerships with local organizations

## Communication Audiences

University of Sussex Business School communicates its policies and progress on sustainable development and responsibility with:

- ❖ Government and policy makers
- ❖ Alumni and donors
- ❖ Faculty and staff
- ❖ Media and public relations channels
- ❖ Research and academic networks
- ❖ Accreditation bodies
- ❖ Boards and advisory committees
- ❖ Chamber of commerce and local communities
- ❖ Business and industry partners
- ❖ Prospective and current students
- ❖ Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

## Communication Barriers

University of Sussex Business School faces the following barriers in transparent communications:





**Donor  
sensitivities**

SIGNATORY

# University of Sussex Business School

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Jubilee Building, Falmer, Brighton, BN1 9SL  
United Kingdom



## Website

<https://www.sussex.ac.uk/business-school/>