PRME
an initiative of the
United Nations Global Compact

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST | QUEEN'S BUSINESS SCHOOL

Sharing Information on Progress 2026

Queen's Business School

September 2026

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About Queen's Business School

Queen's Business School (QBS) at Queen's University Belfast offers world-class undergraduate, postgraduate, and executive education. The School has six core academic departments and one institute: the Departments of Accounting; Economics; Finance; International Business, Entrepreneurship, and Marketing (IBEM); Information Technology, Analytics, and Operations (ITAO); Organisation, Work, and Leadership (OWL); and the William J. Clinton Leadership Institute.

QBS is accredited by EQUIS, AACSB, AMBA, and the Small Business Charter, holds an Athena Swan Silver Award, and has served as a PRME Champion institution since 2020. In addition, as a member of the Global Business School Network (GBSN), the School is connected through strategic partnerships across the world. Our MBA programme was ranked in the top 40 globally by Corporate Knights as part of its 2023 Better World MBA ranking which assesses the extent to which business schools integrate sustainability-related content within their curriculum.



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 Queen's Business School, including key details and basic institutional data.

Mission



Image: The Lanyon Building at Queen's University Belfast. Opened in 1849, it is the centrepiece of the University estate.

Queen's Business School's **mission** is to educate and explore for the benefit of business and society.

Vision

Vision 2030

The School's **vision,** in alignment with Queen's University Belfast Strategy 2030, is to:

- Be pivotal in developing principled and effective leaders;
- Expand research-led dialogue and engagement with business, civil society, and government; and
- Grow international stature and esteem.

Values

Queen's University Belfast has five core **values**, which reflect the University's beliefs and its aspirations for staff conduct. These core values, which have the acronym ICARE, are **I**ntegrity, **C**onnectivity, **A**mbition, **R**espect and **E**xcellence.

- **Integrity** – leaders who hold themselves and others to account, and are mindful of their ethical, social and environmental responsibilities.
- **Connectivity** – leaders who play an active role in global society whilst embracing the unique history and culture of the region.

- **Ambition** – leaders who pursue personal development, embrace challenges and seek opportunities to shape business and society.
- **Respect** – leaders who act with humility and inspire others to create positive change in society.
- **Excellence** – leaders who pursue excellence and draw on the region's rich industrial and entrepreneurial heritage to pursue cutting-edge solutions to business and societal problems.

Strategy

Queen's Business School Strategy

Queen's University Belfast Strategy

Queen's University Belfast's Strategy 2030 outlines a ten-year vision to enhance the institution's role as a global research-intensive university while driving social, economic, and cultural progress in Northern Ireland and beyond. Established in 1845, Queen's seeks to shape a better world through transformative education, world-class research, and impactful partnerships. Strategy 2030 emphasises inclusion, sustainability, and responsiveness to global and local challenges.

The University's vision centres on excellence in research and teaching, underpinned by values of integrity, respect, ambition, connectivity, and academic freedom. Key ambitions include advancing within global rankings, strengthening financial sustainability, and becoming an anchor institution for social and economic progress. Four strategic priorities guide delivery, specifically:

- **Education and Skills**
- **Research and Innovation**
- **Global Reputation and Partnerships**, and
- **Social and Civic Responsibility, and Economic Prosperity**

These priorities are aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and require interdisciplinary, cross-sector collaboration.

Education and Skills focuses on widening access, embedding sustainability, and enhancing employability through partnerships with industry. Research and Innovation aims to address global challenges such as climate change, rapid technological advancement, health inequalities, and inclusive communities, while fostering a culture of creativity and collaboration. Globally, Queen's intends to expand partnerships, attract international talent, and strengthen alumni engagement. Locally, the University will contribute to economic growth, social inclusion, and a transition to net-zero.

Delivery of this vision is enabled by investment in people, financial resilience, world-class infrastructure, and digital innovation. Progress is measured through indicators such as global rankings, research excellence, social responsibility, and financial performance. Ultimately, Strategy 2030 seeks to position Queen's as both a university for Northern Ireland and a globally connected institution, committed to shaping a sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous future for all.

Queen's Business School Strategy

Queen's Business School's strategy aligns with the University's Strategy 2030 and is framed around seven core commitments, which underpin our mission and vision:

Vision – To be pivotal in developing principled and effective leaders

- Strategic Commitment 1: Continuous curriculum and programme refinement in line with evolving business and societal needs.
- Strategic Commitment 2: Providing a transformative experience for students.

Vision – To expand research-led dialogue and engagement with business, civil society, and government

- Strategic Commitment 3: Enhancing the region's competitiveness.
- Strategic Commitment 4: Embedding an ethos of engaged scholarship across the School.
- Strategic Commitment 5: Amplifying the School's research emphasis on creating socioeconomic impact and building inclusive societies.

Vision – To grow in international stature and esteem

- Strategic Commitment 6: Raising the School's international profile for impactful teaching and research.
- Strategic Commitment 7: Forging international partnerships that address a range of business and societal challenges.

The strategic commitments have been mapped to a series of sub-strategies to align the efforts of our staff. Each sub-strategy identifies a series of objectives and the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) used to evaluate them.

The following section outlines how our strategic priorities align with advancing sustainable development, the common good, and quality education.

Strategy Alignment

Queen's Business School Strategy Alignment

Queen's Business School's strategy places responsible leadership, societal impact, and inclusive education at the heart of our teaching, research, and engagement. Our seven strategic commitments support the University's Strategy 2030 and provide a framework for advancing sustainable development and the common good. The PRME Principles and UN SDGs inform this work, alongside our commitment to ethics, responsibility, sustainability, and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB). We translate these priorities into action through the following areas:

Developing principled and effective leaders through quality education. Strategic Commitments 1 and 2 support the continuous development of our curriculum and a transformative student experience. We integrate responsible management into teaching, assessment, and experiential learning, supported by our Assurance of Learning (AoL) competency of being "professionally responsible". Our 2026 curriculum mapping identified connections to the SDGs in 168 of the 213 modules reviewed (78.9%), providing a basis for evaluating coverage and identifying opportunities for further development. Teaching on the ethical and societal implications of emerging technologies further supports students in making informed, responsible decisions. *Primary alignment: SDG 4 Quality Education; PRME Principles 1 – Purpose and 3 – Teach.*

Supporting access, inclusion, and lifelong learning. Our commitment to a transformative educational experience includes widening participation, supporting students from diverse backgrounds, and providing opportunities for professional and executive education. These activities extend the benefits of management education and support learning at different stages of life and career. *Primary alignment: SDG 4 Quality Education and SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities; PRME Principles 2 – Values and 3 – Teach.*

Generating research that advances sustainable development and inclusive prosperity. Strategic Commitments 3, 4, and 5 connect regional competitiveness, engaged scholarship, and socioeconomic impact. Our research addresses challenges facing business, government, and society, including productivity, inequality, sustainability, and responsible innovation. Projects such as *NI Productivity 2040* illustrate how our research can inform policymaking and contribute to regional prosperity. The relevant SDGs vary by project, with significant connections to SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 9 Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, and SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities; PRME Principle 4 – Research.

Working with partners to address societal challenges. Our commitments to engaged scholarship and international partnerships bring together representatives from business, government, civil society, and academia. Community engagement and live student projects connect learning with organisational and

societal needs, while our collaboration within PRME supports the development and exchange of responsible management education practices. In 2026, we co-founded the PRME Working Group on Responsible Management Education and Emerging Technologies with the University of Exeter Business School and Woxsen University. *Primary alignment: SDG 4 Quality Education, SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, and SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals; PRME Principle 5 – Partner.*

Embedding responsibility in our organisational culture and practice. Our strategic ambitions are underpinned by a commitment to equitable, inclusive, and environmentally responsible ways of working. The School's Athena Swan Silver award, achieved in September 2025, recognises progress in advancing gender equality and supports continued action. We also contribute to the University's sustainability commitments, including its Net Zero Plan and associated local action. *Primary alignment: SDG 5 Gender Equality, SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities, SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production, and SDG 13 Climate Action; PRME Principles 2 – Values and 6 – Practice.*

Contributing to the common good in Northern Ireland and beyond. Our emphasis on regional competitiveness and inclusive societies recognises that economic development must be accompanied by social inclusion and opportunity. Through education, research, and engagement, we seek to support communities and institutions as Northern Ireland continues to address the legacy of conflict and division. *Primary alignment: SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities, SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities, and SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; PRME Principles 1 – Purpose, 4 – Research, and 5 – Partner.*

Sharing progress and supporting collective learning. Strategic Commitments 6 and 7 support international engagement and the exchange of knowledge and practice. Through our SIP reporting, PRME Chapter activities, Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) reporting support initiatives, and joint leadership of the PRME Chapter UK & Ireland Innovative Pedagogy Competition with Lincoln International Business School, we share experience and resources that support improvement across institutions. Our reporting also provides an opportunity to reflect openly on achievements, challenges, and priorities for further development. *Primary alignment: SDG 4 Quality Education and SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals; PRME Principle 7 – Share.*

This 2026 SIP report presents evidence of how these commitments are being put into practice. It provides a basis for assessing progress, identifying gaps, and strengthening the contribution of our education, research, partnerships, and organisational practices to sustainable development.

Institutional History

Queen's Business School Institutional History



Image: The Student Hub at Queen's Business School, which was named Northern Ireland Building of the Year 2025 by the Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA).

Queen's University Belfast is a public institution, the 9th oldest university in the United Kingdom (founded in 1845), and ranked joint 174th in the 2027 QS World University Rankings. Queen's is a member of the Russell Group comprising 24 leading UK universities which are committed to undertaking high-quality research. The University brings together over 26,000 students and 4,600 staff across three faculties and fifteen schools.

In July 2021, Queen's University launched Strategy 2030, which sets out our ambition to "Shape a Better World" through life-changing education and research. Strategy 2030 was developed through extensive engagement with staff, students, and external stakeholders, including the business community. Strategy 2030 is centred around our people with four Strategic Priorities, namely: Education and Skills; Research and Innovation; Global Reputation and Partnerships; and Social and Civic Responsibility, and Economic Prosperity. These build on our rich heritage of innovation, both economic and social, and focus on global challenges aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Strategic Priorities are underpinned by four enablers—Our People, Financial Sustainability, Infrastructure, and Technology—to ensure we have the optimum environment, resources, and systems needed to deliver our vision.

As a global institution, we understand that we have a major part to play in making a positive impact in our environment. Strategy 2030 sets out how we will embed the SDGs across all our activities, from research and education to adopting a leadership role in the promotion of the SDGs, and leading by

example in areas such as equality, diversity and inclusion, sustainable procurement, and a commitment to disinvestment from fossil fuels. Queen's is a signatory to the SDG Accord, which recognises the key role that global universities have in nurturing a culture of sustainability and advancing the Global Goals through research and education. In February 2023, Queen's University Belfast and University College Cork (UCC) established Ireland's first all-island network dedicated to delivering on the SDGs. The Sustainable Development Solutions Network Ireland (SDSN Ireland) works with local authorities, NGOs, civil society organisations, and policymakers to bring the latest research and best practice to bear on producing solutions for the SDGs. In October 2023, the University launched its Net Zero Plan, committing to achieving net zero emissions across our scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions by 2040. In August 2025, Queen's became the first university in the UK to be awarded a Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) rating, a significant milestone that highlights the University's dedication to sustainability. Further information about our work related to sustainability, including updates on our progress towards net zero, is available here.

Queen's Business School (QBS) offers world-class undergraduate, postgraduate, and executive education. The School has six core academic departments and one institute: the Departments of Accounting; Economics; Finance; International Business, Entrepreneurship, and Marketing (IBEM); Information Technology, Analytics, and Operations (ITAO); Organisation, Work, and Leadership (OWL); and the William J. Clinton Leadership Institute. The School is accredited by EQUIS, AACSB, AMBA, and the Small Business Charter, and has served as a PRME Champion institution since 2020. In addition, as a member of the Global Business School Network (GBSN), the School is connected through strategic partnerships across the world. Our MBA programme was ranked in the top 40 globally by Corporate Knights as part of its 2023 Better World MBA ranking which assesses the extent to which business schools integrate sustainability-related content within their curriculum.

Queen's is also expanding its international presence through the development of its GIFT City campus in Gujarat, India, with postgraduate provision in areas including finance, financial analytics, and business analytics. The initiative aims to strengthen educational and industry links between Northern Ireland and India, connecting postgraduate education with the needs of an international financial and technology hub.

As outlined within our 2026 PRME SIP report, the School is committed to advancing the sustainability agenda through our curriculum, research, and partnerships, as well as ensuring that we "walk the talk" in terms of our own organisational practices. Our work related to Ethics, Responsibility, and Sustainability (ERS) is led by our Director of ERS & PRME Lead, Dr Laura Steele. In 2023, we created the role of Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB), which is currently held by Dr Janine Swail. Dr Swail chairs the DEIB Committee, which is taking forward the work of the School's established Gender Equality Team. She is supported by the School's Athena Swan Champion, Dr Yang

Li. In 2022, a Wellness and Sustainability Committee was established comprising professional services and academic staff from across the School. The Committee has a wide remit, encompassing matters related to health, safety, and well-being, as well as sustainability.

In September 2023, we formally opened our Student Hub. The building sits alongside the listed red-brick Riddel Hall and serves as the base for a vibrant student and staff community, providing an enhanced social and educational experience. A commitment to sustainability, biodiversity, and protecting the natural environment was at the centre of the design and construction of the Student Hub, for example:

- The building integrates photovoltaic and geothermal technologies, with the latter representing the largest project of its kind to date in Northern Ireland;
- A wildflower meadow covers the lower roof, to encourage biodiversity;
- We incorporated "swift bricks" and a swift calling system, to help swifts, a bird that has been placed on the "red list" of conservation concern in the UK, locate a safe place to nest; and
- Staff have access to bike parking, showers, and lockers to encourage sustainable travel to work.

In 2025, the Student Hub was named Northern Ireland's Building of the Year 2025 by the Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA). The RSUA judges praised the Hub as "an outstanding achievement in holistic design, skilfully responding to a sensitive site, a complex brief and Queen's University's sustainability ambition".

We look forward to sharing this space with our stakeholders over the coming years and using it to facilitate high-quality teaching, research, and civic engagement focused on ethical, responsible, and sustainable business and management.

Graduates & Enrollment

2025 Statistics	Number
Graduates	1049
Faculty & Staff at the University	4631
Faculty & Staff at the Institution	210
Student Enrollment at the University	26610

2025 Statistics	Number
Student Enrollment at the Institution	3353
Undergraduate Attendance	2462
Masters-Level Postgraduate Attendance	744
Doctoral Student Attendance	67
Certificate, Professional Development, or Continuing Education Attendance	80

Degrees Offered

Bachelor Programs

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

Masters Programs

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

Doctoral Programs

- Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Undergraduate Degree Programmes

- BSc Economics
- BSc Business Economics
- BSc Actuarial Science and Risk Management
- BSc Business Management with Placement
- BSc Economics and Accounting
- BSc Finance with a Year in Industry
- BSc International Business with French
- BSc International Business with German
- BSc International Business with Mandarin
- BSc Financial Risk Management with a Year in Industry
- BSc International Business with Portuguese
- BSc International Business with Spanish
- BSc Accounting with Spanish
- BSc Accounting with French
- BSc Economics with French
- BSc Economics with Finance
- BSc Economics with Spanish

Masters Degree Programmes

- BSc/MAcc Advanced Accounting with Placement
- MSc Marketing
- MSc Management
- MSc International Business
- MSc Human Resource Management
- MSc Financial Analytics
- MSc Financial Risk Management
- MSc Finance
- MSc Business Analytics
- MSc Actuarial Science
- MSc Accounting, Finance, and Analytics
- Master of Business Administration (MBA) with Internship
- Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- MSc AI in Business
- MSc Digital Business
- MSc Finance and Trading

Postgraduate Degree Programmes

- Doctor of Philosophy (Accounting)
- Doctor of Philosophy (Economics)
- Doctor of Philosophy (Finance)
- Doctor of Philosophy (Management)

Certificates, Professional Development, or Associate Programmes

- Executive Education: Digital Transformation and Emerging Technologies
- Executive Education: Leading People and Productivity
- Executive Education: Beyond GEN AI
- Executive Education: Business Sustainability Essentials



Purpose

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

Letter of Commitment

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST | QUEEN'S BUSINESS SCHOOL

Queen's Business School
Riddel Hall
185 Stranmillis Road
Belfast
BT9 5EE

29 September 2026

To our stakeholders,

The purpose of this letter is to reaffirm the commitment of Queen's Business School (QBS) to the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME). The accompanying Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) report describes our ongoing efforts to integrate the Principles of PRME across our curricula, research, partnerships, and organisational practices. In addition, the SIP highlights our contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and support for the UN Global Compact.

QBS became a Signatory to PRME in 2017 and, since 2020, has served as a PRME Champion institution. Since becoming a Signatory, we have sought to demonstrate thought and action leadership across the PRME community. This includes the development and ongoing delivery of an "onboarding" initiative for new PRME Leads; a series of workshops and webinars supporting institutions with PRME SIP reporting; active promotion of the PRME Impactful Five (i5) pedagogy; the development and ongoing leadership of the PRME Chapter UK & Ireland Innovative Pedagogy Competition with Lincoln International Business School; and a large-scale project with Loughborough Business School analysing the content of SIP reports and making recommendations to improve the quality of submissions across signatory institutions.

In 2025, we were delighted to host the PRME Chapter UK & Ireland Annual Conference and Doctoral Colloquium. As well as being a highlight within the PRME calendar, it represented an important milestone, as it was the first time the event had been held in Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland. In 2026, we co-founded the PRME Working Group on Responsible Management Education and Emerging Technologies with the University of Exeter Business School and Woxsen University, providing a new global platform for exploring the ethical, responsible, and sustainable use of AI and other emerging technologies in management education and practice.

In 2022, we embedded the SDGs into our module review process, allowing us to obtain regular, detailed data in relation to the curriculum. In particular, our programmes and modules support SDG 5 Gender Equality; SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth; SDG 9 Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure; SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities; SDG 13 Climate Action; and SDG 16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. Our curriculum continues to evolve in response to emerging societal and business challenges. In 2025, QBS launched three new postgraduate programmes – MSc AI in Business, MSc Digital Business, and MSc Finance and Trading – which further embed responsible management and consideration of the SDGs within the School's postgraduate portfolio. Further details of our curriculum, PRME and SDG alignment, and approach to responsible management education are provided under Principle 3 – Teach.

In 2025, Queen's University Belfast announced the establishment of a new campus in Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City), India, with the first cohort beginning their studies in January 2026. The campus extends the University's international reach and provides postgraduate education in areas including finance, technology, and business analytics. For QBS, this development provides new opportunities to embed responsible management education within an international context, strengthen engagement with industry and other stakeholders, and contribute to the SDGs through globally connected, locally relevant education and partnership. We look forward to providing an update on the GIFT City campus in our next SIP report.

Since 2021, we have mapped our research and scholarship outputs against PRME and the SDGs. This exercise has allowed us to identify areas of particular strength, including SDG 3 Good Health and Well-being; SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy; SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth; SDG 9 Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure; and SDG 16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, as evidenced under Principle 4 – Research.

We engage with a wide range of stakeholders and promote dialogue on sustainability-related issues through conferences and symposia, publications in academic and practitioner journals, reports for government and industry bodies, and consultancy projects. Our commitment to engagement and impact is also reflected in initiatives such as the QBS Community Impact Project, our flagship postgraduate experiential-learning initiative. In 2025, more than 300 postgraduate students worked with Sólás na nÓg on a range of activities supporting young people with additional needs, community development, and social enterprise.

The School is accredited by three major international business school accrediting bodies – AACSB, AMBA, and EFMD (EQUIS) – with our commitment to sustainability and responsible management contributing to these achievements. In October 2025, our contribution to entrepreneurship, small business development, and regional economic growth was further recognised through the renewal of our Small Business Charter accreditation for a five-year period. Further details of our partnerships and engagement with business, government, civil society, and academia are provided under Principle 5 – Partner.

We are cognisant of our impact on, and responsibilities towards, people and the planet. In 2017, we appointed a Director of Ethics, Responsibility, and Sustainability, who is responsible for leading our engagement with PRME. In 2023, we appointed a Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB). With the support of the DEIB Committee, the Director of DEIB works to ensure that these issues are embedded across all our activities. In September 2025, this work was recognised through an Athena Swan Silver award, reflecting demonstrable progress in advancing gender equality and embedding structural and cultural change.

We are committed to reducing our environmental impact and contributing to the University's efforts to become a 'Net Zero University' by 2040. In September 2023, we formally opened a new Student Hub located on the QBS campus at Riddel Hall. Sustainability was at the forefront throughout the design process and the building integrates several green features, including a geothermal energy system. The Student Hub was named Northern Ireland Building of the Year 2025 by the Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA), which noted both its holistic, context-sensitive design and sustainability credentials. Further details of how responsible and accountable management principles are embedded within our governance and operations are provided under Principle 6 – Practice.

Finally, we wish to extend our gratitude to the individuals and organisations who have directly and indirectly contributed to our PRME SIP report, including staff within Queen's Business School, the wider University, and the many external partners who share our commitment to responsible and sustainable management. We look forward to continuing to work together to advance the 17 Global Goals.

Professor M. N. Ravishankar
Dean of Queen's Business School

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Professor M. N. Ravishankar, Dean of Queen's Business School

Definition of Purpose

Queen's Business School's purpose is to "educate and explore for the benefit of business and society". Guided by our values, we advance ethical, responsible, and sustainable management education through teaching, research, partnerships, and engagement, contributing to the advancement of PRME and the UN SDGs locally, nationally, and globally.

Institutional Engagement

76% - 100% of faculty at Queen's 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

Queen's Business School is guided by five core values, expressed through the acronym ICARE: Integrity, Connectivity, Ambition, Respect, and Excellence. These underpin the conduct of our staff and students, inform strategic and operational decision-making, and shape our approach to teaching, research, scholarship, partnerships, and engagement. In doing so, they reflect our commitment to PRME and our contribution to advancing the UN SDGs.

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 contributor

Student Voices

The following narratives demonstrate how Queen's Business School has influenced students' academic journey and personal growth.

Queen's Business School Student Voices: Supporting Mothers in the Workplace – Blessing Chukwuka



Image: Dr Blessing Chukwuka pictured with her family (L-R) daughter Amanda, husband Steven, brother Austin, and son Jason.

Dr Blessing Chukwuka's doctoral research at Queen's Business School explored the maternal body and the experiences of working mothers. Drawing on her own experiences of discrimination during pregnancy and breastfeeding, her research highlights the challenges mothers face and the potential for more inclusive workplace policies and practices. Originally from Nigeria, Blessing moved to Belfast to undertake her PhD with a diversity and inclusion scholarship from the School. She graduated with a PhD in Business and Management in June 2025. Reflecting on the significance of her research, she explained:

"*My work is important because it brings the real, lived experiences of working mothers into the spotlight. For too long, the way women's bodies are seen at work has been either invisible or told through abstract frameworks that do not reflect the emotional, physical, and logistical complexities women navigate every day. To have someone genuinely researching this means acknowledging those challenges and validating them. More than that, it opens up pathways for practical solutions and has the potential to influence policy, which is something I hope can lead to meaningful change in how workplaces support mothers*."

Pursuing her doctorate initially meant living apart from her two young children, who remained in Nigeria. This experience strengthened her determination to bring mothers' perspectives into academic research:

"*The early months were very hard. I spent many nights in tears, missing my children, battling loneliness, and questioning if I had made the right choice. But that pain became my motivation. There were moments during my research when I felt overwhelmed, but I kept going because I knew I was not just doing the PhD for academic recognition, I was doing it for myself, my children and all the women whose stories have gone unheard. Every struggle I faced as a mother in academia became fuel for this work. It reminded me why it matters and who it's for*."

Her aspirations for her children reflect the wider social change she hopes her research can support:

"*I want them to feel free to pursue their passions without being limited by outdated structures or expectations that constrain them. I hope they live in a society where the work of caregiving is valued, not just in words but in real, systemic ways. Ultimately, I want them to know they can thrive both personally and professionally without having to compromise who they are. My hope is for them to have blissful and successful careers in whatever path they choose*."

At graduation, Blessing expressed her intention to pursue an academic career in the UK, focusing on research that challenges dominant narratives and contributes to social change. Reflecting on the scholarship that supported her doctoral studies, she said:

"*I am more than grateful to Queen's for being instrumental in my career. Getting a scholarship from Queen's and being a first-generation doctoral graduate positions me as a trailblazer, breaking new ground for my family and hopefully paving the way for others*."

Queen's Business School Student Voices



Image: Students sitting outside a building on University Square, Belfast, between classes.

Student voices are vital in responsible and sustainable management education because they offer fresh perspectives, diverse lived experiences, and evolving values that help shape curricula to be more inclusive, relevant, and forward-looking. By actively engaging students, institutions can ensure that future leaders are not only equipped with technical skills but also with the ethical, social, and environmental awareness needed to drive meaningful change. The voices of some of our students are presented below:

"*Queen's Business School plays a critical role in the shaping of future leaders. Their contribution to postgraduate research surrounding sustainability enables students to become key decision makers that have the capabilities to tackle global environmental pressures. Their encouragement for research collaborations and involvement within industry allows for potential policymakers to attain the goal of driving evidence-based solutions. The fostering of this commitment allows for graduates that are prepared to manage firms that support the objective of tackling urgent climate risks*."

Grace McCormick, Postgraduate Student (MSc Management), Queen's Business School

"*Business schools must provide future leaders with the requisite knowledge and skills for effective leadership; this objective necessitates the integration of ethics, responsibility, and sustainability as fundamental modern imperatives. This initiative involves incorporating them into the curriculum and research while fostering a sustainable learning environment that enables students to actively address community concerns. Such exercises could enhance students' competencies and confidence in their potential as future-ready leaders. Engaging with the PRME-supportive global community would enhance business schools' capacity to fulfil this ethical obligation*."

Alaa Ali O Zahran, Doctoral Candidate, Queen's Business School

"*As a PhD student, I've been able to research how advanced digital technologies like AI can support global sustainability in multinational firms thanks to QBS funding and support. I've also had the chance to guest lecture on several undergraduate and MSc courses in international business and strategy, sharing insights on digital sustainability with the next generation of business students. It's encouraging to see QBS not only backing research on cutting-edge sustainability opportunities and challenges, but also creating opportunities to bring that knowledge directly into the classroom*."

Claire Kilpatrick, Doctoral Candidate, Queen's Business School

Student Awareness

51% - 75% of students at Queen's Business School are aware that we are a PRME Signatory Member.

Student Engagement

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

Values Voices

Queen's Business School Values Voices



Image: Pictured (L-R), Dr Janine Swail, Alethea Bleyberg, Professor Gareth Campbell, and Dr Supun Chandrasena.

The PRME Principle of "Values" calls upon Signatories to "place organizational responsibility and accountability to society and the planet at the core of what we do". The voices of some of our stakeholders in relation to "Values" are presented below:

"*At Queen's Business School, we view Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging not as separate ambitions, but as interdependent values that create the conditions for responsible education and leadership. Diversity ensures that a wide range of perspectives inform our work; equality guarantees fair access to opportunities; inclusion fosters respect for all voices; and belonging gives every individual the confidence to contribute meaningfully. These values guide how we design our curricula, shape our research priorities, build partnerships with business and society, and govern our own practices. In doing so, we embed DEIB considerations across every aspect of School life, ensuring that the PRME principles are lived as well as taught. We recognise that this is a challenging moment for DEI globally, yet it is precisely now that our commitment matters most: preparing leaders who will champion sustainable, just, and inclusive futures.*"

Dr Janine Swail, Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB), Queen's Business School

"*Queen's Business School is committed to creating an inclusive, welcoming, supportive environment for international students. We provide tailored academic skills programmes, clear and timely information, and approachable and personalised specialist guidance for international students to remove barriers to learning. QBS Connect, a student-led platform for community, career exploration and intercultural*

engagement, organises a diverse programme of cultural events, collaborations and campaigns that recognise international students' contributions. The result is a supportive environment where international students feel seen, connected, and able to thrive."

Alethea Bleyberg, Undergraduate International Student Adviser, Queen's Business School

"*Within the Finance department we aim to promote a culture of excellence, with a commitment to professional ethical standards and responsible behaviour, which promotes a positive environment for both staff and students."*

Professor Gareth Campbell, Head of the Department of Finance, Queen's Business School

"*At Queen's Business School, we are committed to creating an inclusive and accessible learning environment where every student can thrive. We work to remove barriers and promote equity, ensuring all students can participate fully in their studies and wider university life. This commitment to accessibility, equity, and belonging fosters a culture where differences are celebrated and prepares our graduates to become responsible leaders who value inclusion in all that they do."*

Dr Supun Chandrasena, Disability Adviser, Queen's Business School

Queen's Business School Values Voices: Designing for Belonging – Putting Inclusion into Practice



Image: Students gathered in the Queen's Business School Student Hub.

At Queen's Business School, our commitment to equity, inclusion and belonging shapes how we design learning experiences and prepare students for responsible management. In the following reflection, Dr Gráinne Kelly discusses how her *Designing for Belonging: A Neuroinclusive HR Lab* puts these values into practice by valuing lived experience, challenging exclusionary assumptions and encouraging students to design more inclusive workplaces.

Gráinne, what prompted you to develop "Designing for Belonging: A Neuroinclusive HR Lab"? What learning needs or barriers were you seeking to address?

The starting point for Designing for Belonging: A Neuroinclusive HR Lab was a curriculum gap within my Resourcing and Talent Management module on the MSc Human Resource Management programme. Although students explored recruitment, selection and talent management, neurodiversity was not sufficiently visible within these discussions. This mattered because practices such as job descriptions, application processes, interviews, assessment methods and notions of organisational fit can privilege particular ways of communicating, interacting and demonstrating competence. I therefore began to question whether students were being given sufficient opportunity not only to understand neurodiversity, but also to critically examine how HR systems themselves can create or reinforce barriers.

The literature helped me understand this as both a conceptual and pedagogical gap. Miller and Doyle (2025) highlight the importance of understanding neurodivergent candidates' experiences and perceptions of diversity climate during selection. This prompted me to look beyond the organisation's perspective and consider what recruitment practices communicate about who is valued and what behaviours are expected. Spoor et al. (2026) extended this critical lens into education, prompting reflection on how educational systems can themselves reproduce assumptions about what is considered "normal". This was particularly relevant to my role as an educator: I was not simply asking students to identify barriers within organisations but also asking whether my own curriculum and pedagogical practices created sufficient opportunities to question those barriers. This led me to see the Lab as contributing to a broader understanding of inclusive and equitable education. In this sense, SDG 4 provides a useful framework for articulating what I was trying to achieve pedagogically: not simply increasing students' knowledge of neurodiversity, but creating opportunities for different ways of participating, questioning established assumptions and developing the critical capabilities needed to contribute to more inclusive systems.

The literature also encouraged me to move beyond viewing recruitment as a discrete or transactional HR activity. Fung et al. (2026) connect neurodivergence with workplace culture, belonging and organisational commitment, while Scholz et al. (2026) develop the idea of moving from inclusion towards (neuro)divergent safe spaces within organisations. Ozbilgin et al. (2026) provided a further dimension through their focus on HR-led co-design for neuroinclusion. Together, these perspectives strengthened my decision to position students not simply as future HR practitioners who apply

established processes, but as potential designers of HR systems who need to consider whose perspectives shape those systems and how neuroinclusive practices might be developed with, rather than simply for, those affected.

These perspectives revealed three interconnected learning needs: a curriculum gap in the visibility of neurodiversity within mainstream HR teaching; a critical-thinking gap around assumptions of objectivity, standardisation and organisational fit; and an application gap between understanding inclusion conceptually and being able to redesign HR processes in practice.
The Lab was therefore designed to move students from awareness towards critical, applied and participatory practice. Rather than asking simply, "How does the candidate fit the organisation?", I wanted students to ask, "What assumptions are embedded in this process, whose behaviours does it privilege, and how might the organisation redesign it to recognise different forms of talent?"

The Lab consequently positions neuroinclusion as a question of system design rather than individual deficit. Through applied learning, students examine how organisational systems, cultures and practices can create barriers and use this insight to explore how recruitment and talent practices might be redesigned to support accessibility, inclusion and belonging.

What does the HR Lab involve, and what makes its approach authentic and co-designed? Who contributes to its design, and how does their input shape the learning experience?
The Lab is an evidence-based, problem-centred learning experience in which students are positioned as emerging HR professionals addressing a real organisational question: how might recruitment and selection practices become more neuroinclusive? Ozbilgin and colleagues (2026) argue for approaches that move beyond fragmented or compliance-driven responses and instead engage with the lived realities of neurodivergent people and the wider organisational system. I translate this principle into the learning design by treating lived and practice-based expertise as knowledge that should shape the learning experience itself. Co-design with Neurodiversity Spark, led by Gary Gates, is therefore central to my approach. Rather than bringing in neurodivergent expertise simply as a guest perspective, the co-design process brings together my expertise in teaching and academic work on neuroinclusion, recruitment and selection with Gary Gates' practice-based expertise in neurodiversity and employment. This creates a learning experience informed by both pedagogical and practice-based knowledge.

This partnership also provides a useful connection with SDG 17 and its emphasis on partnership and collaboration in addressing wider societal challenges. For me, the important point is not that an external partner contributes to the Lab, but that knowledge is co-produced across academic, professional and lived-experience perspectives. This challenges a traditional model in which expertise flows from university to learner and instead creates a more reciprocal holistic learning relationship.

This approach is reflected in two activities: empathy mapping and barrier mapping. Students follow the journey of a neurodivergent candidate across the recruitment process, from searching for a vacancy and completing an application through to interviewing, communication with recruiters and onboarding. The empathy map encourages students to consider, based on the scenario and available evidence, what the candidate might be thinking, feeling, saying and doing, while recognising that neurodivergent experiences are diverse. The barrier map then asks students to identify where difficulties may arise and, importantly, to consider whether these difficulties are located within the individual or produced through the design and operation of the recruitment process. In doing so, the activities encourage students to move beyond an individual-deficit understanding of neurodiversity and towards consideration of the interaction between people and organisational systems.

This distinction is important in relation to Milton's (2012, p. 884) concept of the "double empathy problem", defined as "a disjuncture in reciprocity between two differently disposed social actors which becomes more marked the wider the disjuncture in dispositional perceptions of the lifeworld". The concept challenges the assumption that communication difficulties between neurotypical and neurodivergent people arise primarily from neurodivergent people's inability to understand neurotypical norms. Instead, it highlights how differences in ways of experiencing and communicating within the social world can contribute to reciprocal misunderstandings.

How does the Lab put neuroinclusion into practice? Could you give an example of a teaching activity, resource or assessment choice designed to accommodate different ways of learning and participating?

The mapping activities give students multiple ways to engage with and contribute to the learning: visually through mapping, verbally through discussion, individually through reflection, and collaboratively through problem-solving. This creates different routes for students to participate and communicate their thinking, rather than relying on a single mode of engagement, such as verbal discussion or written responses. In this sense, neuroinclusion is not only about the topic being taught; it is also about how learning is designed and the opportunities students have to participate in ways that work for them.

This is an important part of how I see the Lab connecting with SDG 4. Inclusive education is not simply about providing access to a curriculum; it also requires us to consider whether students have meaningful and equitable opportunities to participate in learning and demonstrate what they know. The Lab therefore attempts to model, within the classroom, some of the principles that students are being asked to apply to organisational systems: rather than expecting everyone to engage or demonstrate competence in the same way, we can design environments that recognise different ways of participating and contributing.

How does the experience help students connect their own learning with their responsibilities as future managers or HR professionals? What assumptions about work, fairness or inclusion do you encourage them to question?
Students are encouraged to question assumptions that can otherwise remain invisible within recruitment and selection processes:

- What is a "good candidate"?
- What does organisational "fit" mean?
- What counts as evidence of competence?
- Is treating everyone identically necessarily fair?
- Are we assessing capability or conformity?

Students are also encouraged to identify ways of diluting a reliance on social performance in recruitment and selection through practices such as sharing interview questions in advance, using structured interviews, and assessing competence through work samples.

This also provides a bridge between the Lab's contribution to inclusive education and the wider social purpose of HR. Through SDG 10, the Lab can be understood as developing students' capacity to recognise and challenge practices that may reproduce inequality, while SDG 8 provides a framework for considering how these capabilities might contribute to more inclusive access to decent work. In this sense, the Lab asks students to see inclusion not as an additional HR initiative, but as part of the design of the systems through which people gain access to work, demonstrate capability and experience belonging.

What have you learned from students' responses to the Lab? What evidence, if any, suggests changes in their understanding, participation or sense of belonging?
The emerging responses suggest that students engage particularly strongly when neuroinclusion is framed as a real HR challenge rather than simply as a diversity topic. The activities create opportunities for students to analyse evidence, question established practices and propose responses to an authentic organisational problem.

One of the most interesting aspects for me has been the connection between this approach and students' motivation to learn. Rather than simply receiving information about neurodiversity, students are positioned as emerging HR professionals who have something meaningful to contribute. This appeared to support active participation, and notably, I had full attendance for the Lab.

I would, however, describe these as emerging indications rather than definitive evidence of impact. Observations of student engagement and participation have informed my understanding of the learning experience, but I have not yet undertaken a systematic evaluation of changes in students' understanding, sense of belonging or learning outcomes. Developing a more structured approach to

evaluating these dimensions is therefore an important next step. This would allow me to examine not only whether students are engaging with the Lab, but whether the inclusive learning design is developing the critical and applied capabilities that sit at the heart of its educational purpose and its contribution to the wider SDG agenda.

Has student feedback led you to revise any aspect of the Lab? Could you share an example, including anything that worked differently from what you expected?
The Lab has been undertaken by one student cohort, so I would distinguish between formal student feedback and the informal verbal feedback and observations that have emerged through delivery. These early responses have encouraged me to refine the Lab rather than make major changes to its core design.

One aspect that worked particularly well was the use of empathy mapping and barrier mapping. I had anticipated that students would engage with the activities primarily as a way of understanding neurodivergent candidates' experiences. What I found more interesting was the extent to which the activities encouraged students to question the recruitment system itself. Rather than focusing only on what an individual candidate might need to overcome, students began to identify how job descriptions, application processes, interviews and assumptions about organisational fit could themselves create barriers. This has reinforced my decision to retain the problem-centred and participatory structure of the Lab with future student groups.

What challenges have you encountered in developing and delivering this approach? What advice would you offer colleagues seeking to make their own teaching more neuroinclusive?
One of the key challenges is ensuring that authenticity does not become tokenism. Bringing someone with lived experience into a classroom can be valuable, but genuine co-design requires their expertise to influence the design of the learning rather than simply providing a guest perspective. That distinction has been important in developing the partnership with Neurodiversity Spark.

My advice to colleagues would therefore be to start with a genuine curriculum or learning problem. Use the literature to challenge assumptions rather than simply to provide background information. Where possible, co-design with people who have relevant lived and practice-based expertise and establish a partnership in which their contribution has genuine influence.

What are your next steps for the Lab? What would you like to develop further, and how will you assess whether those changes improve students' learning experiences?
The next step is to extend the co-design model beyond the current partnership with Neurodiversity Spark. I am exploring a relationship with Invest NI for the next stage of the teaching initiative in Spring 2027. The intention would be to explore how issues of neuroinclusive recruitment relate to broader conversations around skills, talent, workforce development and employer capability in Northern Ireland.

I also want to strengthen the evaluation of the Lab. Rather than assuming that an inclusive learning design automatically produces belonging or learning outcomes, I would like to use qualitative reflection and student feedback more systematically to explore students' experiences of agency, participation, learning and belonging.

This next stage is important because I see the Lab's contribution as extending beyond a single teaching intervention. At its core, it connects inclusive educational practice with the development of responsible future HR professionals, equipping students to think critically about how resourcing systems can be designed in ways that enable more people to participate, contribute and belong.

Celebrating Values

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

A Culture of Care: Living Our Values at Queen's Business School



Image: Students socialising in the Junction Cafe at Queen's University Belfast.

Celebrating our values at Queen's Business School means recognising how they come to life through everyday interactions and shared responsibility. The following reflection from Dr Janine Swail, our Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB), explores care as the foundation of DEIB, inviting us all to consider our role in creating a community where staff and students feel seen, respected and valued.

"*Who cares!*"

We've all heard it, maybe even said it ourselves. It's that quick, dismissive phrase we use when something feels distant from our priorities. Yet, what happens if we shift the tone, and ask instead: "*Who cares?*"

That small change turns a shrug into a question. *Who cares about how people experience this place? Who notices when someone feels they don't belong? Who takes responsibility for making sure every voice is heard?*

For me, that question lies at the heart of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB). These four words can sometimes sound like policy language, but really, they're about something much simpler: care. How we care for one another as colleagues, as learners, and as people.

When we talk about diversity, we're recognising that each of us brings something unique in our stories, our identities, our perspectives. Equity ensures that everyone has fair access to opportunities, not just in principle but in practice. Inclusion is about creating space for all those voices to be heard. And belonging, perhaps the most personal of all, is about that deep sense that "*this is a place for me.*"

Care, in this context, is not soft. It's strategic, intentional, and essential. The evidence is clear: teams that value inclusion and diversity perform better (Roberson, 2025; Breuillot, 2021). They are more innovative, resilient, and better at solving complex problems. Beyond the data, there's a moral truth too that people do their best work when they feel seen, respected, and valued.

This matters just as much for staff as it does for students. Our students come to us with diverse identities, abilities, and life experiences. The way we respond to that diversity shapes not just their learning, but their sense of who they can become. They also look to us to model the kind of inclusive leadership they'll need in the world beyond. They notice when our actions align with our values. Every decision we make – from how we design our curriculum to how we run our lectures – sends a message about what, and who, we care about.

For staff – academic and professional – the same principle applies. Inclusion is not only about representation; it's about culture. It's about the small daily signals: who gets listened to in meetings; whose ideas are credited; who feels empowered to speak up. True belonging isn't achieved through strategy documents alone; it's built in moments of care, empathy, and accountability.

And that's the thing about DEIB: it isn't the responsibility of one committee or one department. It belongs to all of us. It's in the way we listen to each other, how we challenge bias (our own and others'), and how we show up, especially when it would be easier not to.

So, *who cares?*

Well, we all should. Because our culture is shaped not by grand gestures, but by everyday actions. When care becomes collective, belonging becomes real.

And maybe that's the transformation we're working towards — from "*Who cares!*" said with indifference, to "*Who cares?*" asked with curiosity, compassion, and courage that ultimately calls us to action.

Continue telling your story

Queen's Business School: Supporting Young Women's Professional Networks and Leadership Development



Image: Representatives from Women in Business NI and Queen's Business School gather for the Young Women's Network event.

In April 2025, Queen's Business School hosted a Young Women's Network event in partnership with Women in Business NI. As a sponsor of the network, QBS welcomed students, staff, and professionals to the Student Hub for an evening focused on building connections, sharing experiences and developing networking skills.

Ciara Hughes, Lead of the Young Women's Network, opened the event by highlighting opportunities to participate in future initiatives and the value of professional support networks for women. Eve Turkington, Careers and Work Placement Consultant at QBS, discussed the School's partnership with Women in Business NI and the career development opportunities available to aspiring businesswomen.

A structured networking session provided opportunities for participants to meet women from different industries and backgrounds. With practical guidance from Ciara and Eve, attendees were encouraged to initiate conversations with new contacts and exchange experiences. The format offered a supportive setting in which to practise networking skills and broaden professional connections.

The event demonstrates how QBS works with external partners to support women's career development and encourage inclusive leadership. By bringing students and professionals together, the School creates opportunities for learning across career stages and access to networks that can support future progression.

Queen's Business School Community Impact: Experiential Learning through Community Partnership



Image: Sólás na nÓg volunteers and users, QBS postgraduate students, QBS staff, and Splash Projects colleagues after completing the final day.

QBS Community Impact is Queen's Business School's flagship experiential learning initiative, embedded in the postgraduate student journey. Delivered in partnership with local charities, it gives students opportunities to contribute to community projects while developing their teamwork, project management and leadership capabilities. The initiative connects management education with social responsibility, encouraging students to consider how their skills and actions can create value for others.

In 2025, more than 300 postgraduate students participated in a five-day project with Sólás na nÓg, a Belfast-based youth project supporting young people with additional learning, physical, social, emotional and behavioural needs. Sólás na nÓg delivers its programmes through the Irish language as part of the youth and community charity Glór na Móna.

Working alongside the project team and local volunteers, students helped revitalise and repurpose a vacant area of land. Activities included constructing recreational and play areas, creating sensory spaces, and upgrading a community garden for food growing and social enterprise activities. These practical tasks provided opportunities to collaborate around a shared purpose and engage directly with the needs of a local community organisation.

Professor M. N. Ravishankar, Dean and Head of Queen's Business School, reflected:

"*This project exemplifies the power of collaboration between education and community. Our students didn't just build structures – they built connections, confidence, and a deeper understanding of the role business can play in shaping society for the better. Sólás na nÓg's vision and ambition inspired us all*."

Professor of Practice Julie McCandless, Director of Business Engagement at QBS, highlighted the learning opportunities:

"*Our students gain so much from these experiences – from developing practical skills in project management and teamwork to building meaningful relationships with local volunteers. It was fantastic to see them working side-by-side with the Sólás na nÓg team, creating something truly special*."

The project also connected social inclusion with environmental learning. Supported by Gáirdín an Phobail, the local community garden, the work contributed to outdoor facilities intended to support young people's enjoyment, sustainable food growing and engagement with the natural environment.

Sólás na nÓg co-ordinator Padraigín Nic Mhathúna explained:

"*This project, which was supported by colleagues from our local community garden, Gáirdín an Phobail, will provide a massive relief and enjoyment for our young people. We want to thank Queen's Business School for their support and their students for their diligence over the course of the busy week*."

By linking practical learning with community priorities, QBS Community Impact provides a setting in which students can explore leadership through service, cooperation and responsibility. The project illustrates how experiential management education can support both student development and tangible improvements to local community facilities.

You can discover more about QBS Community Impact Projects here.

Queen's Business School Annual Mary McAleese Diversity Lecture: Advancing Gender Equality through Inclusive Scholarship



Images: (L) Dr Janine Swail, Professor Fang Lee Cooke, Professor Shuang Ren, and Dr Grace Carson, and (R) Professor Simon Teasdale introducing guest speaker Fang Lee Cooke.

The Annual Mary McAleese Diversity Lecture Series provides a forum for exploring equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and wider society. Launched in June 2019 by former President of Ireland Mary McAleese, and delivered in association with the Chief Executives' Club at Queen's, the series supports QBS's commitment to equality of opportunity and respect for diversity. Previous speakers have included Lady Brenda Hale, Professor Deirdre McCloskey, Dame Kate Barker, and Professor Jill Rubery.

On 17 October 2025, QBS welcomed Professor Fang Lee Cooke of Monash Business School, Monash University, Australia, to Riddel Hall to deliver "*Towards a more inclusive approach to advancing gender equality: Extending feminist scholarship in the global context*". Professor Cooke's research spans human resource management, gender equality, diversity and inclusion, migration and employment, social justice and sustainable development.

The lecture critically examined the shift within human resource management research from gender equality towards gender diversity, particularly the growing emphasis on the business case for diversity. Professor Cooke called for renewed attention to social justice, encouraging reflection on how gender equality is understood and pursued beyond its contribution to organisational performance.

She also challenged the predominantly Western perspectives shaping feminist scholarship, examining their limitations in addressing gender inequalities in non-Western settings. The lecture explored how research could better incorporate diverse voices, ways of knowing and theoretical perspectives grounded in local conditions, experiences and struggles.

These questions have direct implications for responsible management education. Professor Cooke considered how more inclusive approaches could inform management teaching, postgraduate research training, and journal editorship. By providing space for critical engagement with whose knowledge and experiences shape scholarship, the lecture connected QBS's commitment to diversity with reflection on research and educational practice.

You can read more about the Annual Mary McAleese Diversity Lecture Series here.

Queen's Business School: Recognising Sustainable Business Leadership

In 2025, Queen's Business School sponsored the Sustainability Business Leader of the Year category at the Business Eye Sustainability & ESG Awards. Through this sponsorship, the School supported recognition of leaders working to embed sustainability within business operations and strategy.

The award was presented to Alan Lowry, Chief Executive Officer of Environmental Street Furniture, in recognition of his leadership in integrating sustainability into the business. His work includes developing sustainable urban infrastructure, alongside wider engagement with the business community through his role as Chair of the Federation of Small Businesses Northern Ireland Policy Board. Fiona Doherty, Founder of Honeycomb Cabin, and Mark McEvoy, Sales Director at Camden Group, received high commendations in the same category, recognising further examples of sustainability leadership within Northern Ireland's business community.

The sponsorship complements QBS's wider engagement with organisations on responsible management and sustainable development. This includes the Business Breakfast Insights series, which provides opportunities for academics and practitioners to exchange knowledge and discuss business challenges. On 13 February 2025, its *Sustainability 2030 and Beyond* event explored practical approaches to achieving long-term sustainability goals, with contributions from Ambassador David Donoghue, Faye Thomas, Dr Laura Steele, and Professor Michael Alcorn.

Together, these activities demonstrate how QBS combines recognition of business practice with opportunities for dialogue and learning, encouraging leaders to consider their organisations' responsibilities to society and the environment.

Teach

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

How We Define Teach

At Queen's Business School, we are committed to embedding ethics, responsibility, and sustainability throughout our modules and programmes. Guided by our mission and the PRME Principles, we foster a transformative learning environment that inspires openness, curiosity, and critical thinking, enabling our graduates to become the responsible, globally orientated leaders of tomorrow.

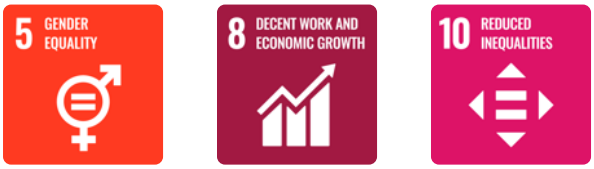
Courses that support RME

Queen's Business School reports 14 courses in 2025 that support responsible management education and sustainable development goals.

Making Ethical Business Decisions (Queen's Business School) | OWL7210

Integrating ethical considerations into business decision-making is vital for ensuring long-term organisational sustainability, social legitimacy, and trust. Beyond legal compliance, ethical frameworks help leaders evaluate the wider consequences of their choices, balancing profitability with responsibility to stakeholders. In the context of global trends – including the rise of artificial intelligence and automation, growing concerns regarding sustainability and climate change, rising geopolitical instability, the changing nature of work, and debates regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) – ethical reflection can safeguard against risks, while promoting fairness, accountability, and transparency. Embedding ethics into strategy not only mitigates reputational and regulatory hazards but also fosters innovation grounded in values, enabling businesses to contribute positively to society while maintaining competitive advantage. Introduced in 2024-2025, OWL7210 Making Ethical Business Decisions discusses and evaluates the ethical responsibilities of managers and organisations. Forming part of the MSc Management programme at Queen's Business School, it explores themes/issues from international, multi-disciplinary and managerial perspectives, and analyses tensions, conflicts, contradictions and dilemmas via case studies and class discussion. Topics addressed include the role of ethical theories, the internal ethical environment (why and how do ethical dilemmas arise and how can they be resolved?); ethical issues regarding employees (including whistleblowing, Codes of Ethics, corporate governance), ethics and consumers, ethics and social responsibility, and ethical issues arising from using artificial intelligence and machine learning. The assessment for the module requires students to develop a presentation outlining a decision-making plan for a fictional organisation addressing a contemporary challenge, for example, enhancing diversity and inclusion or attracting and retaining a neurodiverse workforce. The assignment is underpinned by academic rigour and creativity, requiring students to integrate scholarly literature with current debates and practices. Assessment is based on theoretical engagement, depth of research and literature use, ethical integration, originality, and presentation quality. The exercise directly supports the Principles of PRME by fostering critical thinking, ethical awareness, and the ability to apply business and management theory to practical, socially relevant issues.

OWL7210 Making Ethical Business Decisions aims to develop responsible, reflective, and future-oriented leaders and managers who are equipped to address ethical and social challenges in a globalised business environment. In particular, it seeks to promote: (1) Enhanced ethical awareness – students learn to integrate ethical reasoning into managerial decision-making, moving beyond profit-maximisation to consider broader social responsibilities. In addition, exposure to DEI/EDI challenges develops sensitivity to fairness, equity, and justice in organisational contexts; (2) Critical and analytical skills – by applying and critiquing decision-making models, students strengthen their ability to evaluate complex scenarios from multiple perspectives. The emphasis on academic literature encourages evidence-based reasoning, rather than relying on assumptions; (3) Global and inclusive mindset – requiring students to consider international best practices fosters cultural awareness and adaptability. In addition, the intersectional lens adopted helps students appreciate complexity and avoid simplistic, one-dimensional thinking; (4) Stakeholder engagement and systems thinking – students gain experience in identifying and prioritising stakeholders, recognising the interdependence between business and society. This supports a more holistic – and realistic – understanding of corporate decision-making; (5) Practical application of theory – developing a decision-making plan allows students to bridge theory and practice, preparing them for real-world managerial challenges. Creativity and originality are encouraged, supporting innovation in problem-solving; (6) Personal and professional development – presenting their work enhances communication and presentation skills, critical for leadership roles. Engaging with DEI/EDI issues can foster empathy and self-reflection, making students more inclusive leaders. Dr Anastasia Kulichyova, the Module Coordinator, says of the course, “This is a challenging but ambitious module which underscores complexities of decision-making by modern organisations. Student-led debates are the most rewarding and interesting to follow.”



Artificial Intelligence in Business and Society (Queen's Business School)

OWL7209

Artificial intelligence (AI) has already had a substantial impact on business and society, such as data-driven business strategies, changes to the nature of work, the development of innovations which shape the behaviour of individuals and society, privacy and surveillance concerns, and recent ethical crises in the use of data. With the fast pace of AI development these trends seem likely to continue, making it essential to consider the wider implications of AI for business and society. This postgraduate module, which forms part of the MSc Business Analytics and MSc AI in Business programmes at Queen’s Business School, encourages students to engage with these issues, building a deeper understanding of the wider implications of AI, and how they can contribute to responsible development and use of AI in their future careers. The pedagogic approach adopted within this

module is structured around an active, student-centred model that combines lectures, tutorials, and independent study. In addition, there is extensive integration of interactive activities and guest speakers from the private, public, and third/voluntary sectors. The UN SDGs are woven throughout the module and regularly used as a framework to analyse specific issues (for example, the impact of AI on work or the environmental concerns arising from the development and deployment of Large Language Models (LLMs)). The core text, "AI and Work: Transforming Work, Organizations, and Society in an Age of Insecurity" (2025, Sage Publishing), was co-edited by the Module Coordinator, Dr Laura Steele, and features contributions from several faculty within Queen's Business School. The book examines how AI reshapes work, organisations, and society – addressing power, ethics, inequality, sustainability, and intersectional issues. It situates AI within neoliberal, global, and environmental contexts, emphasising both its promises and the social risks it poses. The assessment for this module adopts a developmental and reflective pedagogical approach, requiring students to produce two blog posts and accompanying reflective statements with optional input from generative AI (Gen AI). Each blog demands critical engagement with academic literature and module concepts, while translating complex ideas into accessible, practice-oriented formats. The reflective statements encourage students to experiment with and critique Gen AI tools, fostering digital literacy and ethical awareness. By structuring the assignment in two stages, with feedback from the first informing the second, the design supports iterative learning and continuous improvement in line with PRME i5 characteristics ("Design for Iteration"). Overall, the assessment blends academic rigour with applied communication, encouraging independent inquiry, critical evaluation, and reflective professional development.

This module aims to have a broad and lasting impact on students in a variety of ways, including: (1) Developing critical awareness – students gain the ability to critically evaluate the implications of AI for both business and society, considering not only technological opportunities but also ethical, legal, social, and environmental risks; (2) Practical skill development – through reflective assignments, students strengthen their academic research, writing, and digital literacy skills, including the responsible use of generative AI; (3) Professional readiness – the focus on applying theory to practice, such as writing for wider audiences and assessing the strategic and ethical use of AI, prepares students for roles in organisations navigating technological change; (4) Reflective practice – the structured use of feedback and reflective statements promotes continuous improvement, self-assessment, and awareness of personal learning processes; (5) Transferable skills – the module explicitly cultivates problem-solving, critical analysis, independent inquiry, teamwork, communication, and time management skills, all of which are highly valued in professional contexts. In summary, the module equips students not just with knowledge about AI, but with the analytical, ethical, and reflective capacities needed to engage responsibly and effectively with emerging technologies in their careers and wider society.



Business, Government, and Society (Queen's Business School) | OWL1012

OWL1012 Business, Government, and Society explores the role of business in its wider environmental context and specifically examines the relationships between business, government, and society within and across countries. It is offered across several programmes within Queen's Business School, including BSc Business Management. Businesses do not exist and act in a vacuum but rather have to interact with and oftentimes accommodate the views of a wide range of stakeholders in order to be successful. For example, Multinational Enterprises may decide to shift production into low-cost countries; however, they have to consider the societal and legal challenges that this decision generates, both at home and abroad. Organisational structures and corporate governance frameworks are thus developed to ensure that businesses can engage with these wider social and public policy contexts. As a result, businesses are becoming more deeply rooted in and intertwined with local, national and international communities. Indeed, beyond a narrow profit-making focus, there is a growing acceptance that corporate interests can and should converge with societal interests to generate better, sustainable outcomes for the business in the long term. However, balancing the drive to make profits and to satisfy short-term shareholder interests with the long-term needs of society and its environment is tough. Consideration must be given to developing sustainable and responsible businesses. Students learn about the challenges that businesses but also students themselves face in day-to-day (business) life and discuss and develop different solutions to these challenges. Regarding the assessment, students are given a case study of a multinational company and asked to reflect on the social and technological changes identified in the case, the factors that facilitated and created threats to the company's success, and the expected level of success of the company in the next 5–10 years in the context of the UK.

OWL1012 Business, Government, and Society seeks to have a significant impact on students by broadening their understanding of how organisations operate within a wider context. It encourages them to see beyond the narrow pursuit of profit and recognise the influence of laws, policies, and societal expectations on business decisions. Through real-world examples, such as multinational enterprises managing global operations, students gain insight into the complexities of balancing economic growth, ethical responsibilities, and social sustainability. This fosters critical thinking about the trade-offs between short-term shareholder demands and long-term societal needs, preparing students to navigate challenges in their own professional and personal lives. Ultimately, the module equips students with the knowledge and skills to become responsible leaders and decision-makers who can contribute to building sustainable, ethical, and socially conscious organisations in line with the mission and vision of PRME. Dr Sara Melo, the Module Coordinator, says of the course, "This module encourages students to think about real strategic and operational issues faced by organisations from the perspective of multiple stakeholders. During the module, students realise that decisions are often not straightforward but involve the consideration of the dynamic relationships between businesses, government, and society. As an introductory module, it helps prepare students for the key business management concepts, which are then further explored throughout their degree."



Contemporary Technologies in Accounting (Queen's Business School) | ACC3043

Accounting faces unprecedented levels and extent of change, driven by technological developments which are expected to continue and gather pace. The aim of ACC3043 Contemporary Technologies in Accounting is to advance students' understanding of contemporary technologies and the accountant's evolving role as technologies change. It builds on students' foundational studies of Accounting Information Systems, Data Analytics and contemporary technologies to develop a critical mindset around technological change. It is offered as part of Queen's Business School's innovative MAcc Advanced Accounting with Placement programme. The nature of this module allows for some fluidity in content as technologies develop. Topics and technologies are expected to change over time but will relate to three core sections of the module: (1) At the outset, the role of technology in contemporary organisations is discussed, alongside the evolving role of accountants and the nature of the technology skillset required by accountants in contemporary organisations; (2) Practical application of contemporary technologies, with an initial employer-led focus on productivity (Excel) and analysis (Power BI/Tableau) technologies. Existing skills are refreshed and enhanced, before the focus shifts to application of these skills in relation to a case study, developing students' ability to evaluate data, interpret it and communicate meaningful insights from it; (3) Conceptual understanding of contemporary and emerging technologies including, for example, Blockchain and cryptocurrencies, Artificial Intelligence, Robotic Process Automation, Virtual/Augmented Reality, Drone Technology and Quantum Computing. Across all elements, there is a focus on developing critical skills in relation to these and future technologies. Specifically, the module develops: (a) Critical evaluation of the impact of new technologies on Accounting Information Systems; (b) Understanding of legal/regulatory, ethical, sustainability and security implications of new technologies; (c) Professional scepticism around data quality and outputs; and (d) Interpretation and communication of data analysis and outputs. These skills are developed through use of practical applications (presently Microsoft's Excel, Power BI and Copilot), engagement with current literature and professional publications, along with real-world case examples and guest lectures to help tackle complex issues.

ACC3043 Contemporary Technologies in Accounting aims to have a significant impact on students, both academically and professionally, for example by: (1) Promoting critical thinking and adaptability: the module emphasises critical evaluation of technological change, rather than just technical proficiency. This equips students to question, assess, and adapt to future technologies, not just those taught in class; (2) Enhancing professional competence beyond technical skills: students develop professional scepticism, especially around data quality and outputs – an essential skill in auditing, financial reporting, and risk management. The focus on legal, regulatory, ethical, and sustainability issues prepares students to make responsible decisions in an era of automation and big data. The

inclusion of communication skills ensures students can explain insights effectively to both technical and non-technical stakeholders, a vital attribute for accountants moving into advisory roles; (3) Broadening understanding of the accountant's role: the module helps students see accountants not just as "number-crunchers" but as strategic partners in business decision-making, capable of leveraging technology for efficiency, insight, and innovation. In addition, by situating accounting in the wider context of digital transformation, students gain a realistic view of their profession's trajectory and their place in it; (4) Increasing employability: by learning practical tools such as Excel, Power BI, and Copilot, students develop technical competencies that are in high demand among employers. Exposure to emerging technologies (AI, Blockchain, RPA, etc.) can give students an edge in interviews and professional roles, as they can demonstrate awareness of current and future industry trends. Finally, employer-led elements and case studies ensure that students gain experience directly aligned with workplace needs, improving placement and graduate job prospects. Professor Danielle McConville, the Module Coordinator, says of the course, "We developed the course to be responsive to the changing needs of our profession. The pace of technological change is relentless, and we wanted to equip our students not just with the skills to use current technologies, but also to learn to learn new technologies, apply critical thinking and professional scepticism in their use of these technologies as they engage with data and present findings. We wanted to develop their skills in managing changing technologies and to foster critical thinking and professional scepticism around new technologies and their impacts on our profession and their future careers. Having been a very popular optional module in 2023/24 and 2024/25 it has become a compulsory module for 2025/26, reflecting the importance of the module. Feedback from employers has indicated their support for developing these skills with our students. Moreover, multiple aspects of the module have been presented at education conferences and dissemination events, plus a case study on the QUB AI Hub, potentially influencing practices and having impact on students in QUB and nationally".



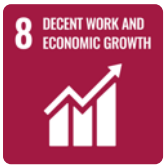
Supply Chain Management (Queen's Business School) | ITAO3013

Global supply chains are increasingly complex, influenced by factors including technological innovation, heightened sustainability and climate-related expectations, and increasing geopolitical tensions. The rise of digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and the Internet of Things, has transformed supply chain visibility and decision-making, enabling real-time tracking and predictive analytics. However, these advances also create challenges around data integration, cybersecurity, and the uneven adoption of technology across countries and regions. At the same time, sustainability pressures have intensified, with stakeholders demanding reductions in carbon emissions, ethical sourcing, and circular economy practices. Supply chains must now balance cost efficiency with resilience and environmental responsibility, as recent disruptions from the COVID-19

pandemic and geopolitical instability have highlighted vulnerabilities in global networks. Consequently, modern supply chain management requires navigating a dynamic interplay of efficiency, risk, technology, and sustainability. ITAO3013 Supply Chain Management, which is offered across several programmes at Queen's Business School, including BSc Business Management, provides students with a comprehensive introduction to supply chain management, framed within the wider context of responsible and sustainable business practice. It contributes directly to the development of competencies required to advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those relating to Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), and Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9). The curriculum introduces students to the structure and dynamics of supply chain networks, establishing a foundation for understanding flows of materials, services, and information across organisational boundaries. Students critically examine different approaches for managing supply chains, enabling them to assess the trade-offs between efficiency, flexibility, and resilience. Operational decision-making is further explored through dedicated study of demand management, supply management, and inventory management, providing insight into the tools and processes that underpin effective coordination. Strategic aspects of supply chain practice form a central component of the module. Students engage with issues of supplier selection and assessment, supplier relationship management, and supplier development and involvement, highlighting the importance of collaboration, trust, and ethical engagement in building sustainable supply partnerships. The curriculum also addresses contemporary challenges such as supply chain risk management and sustainable supply chain management, ensuring learners are equipped to evaluate not only financial and operational outcomes but also environmental and social impacts.

By engaging with contemporary issues in supply chain management, students develop a strong foundation of knowledge about the structures, strategies, and operational practices that underpin global business. The integration of sustainability and responsibility ensures that students are not only aware of efficiency and performance metrics, but also of the ethical, social, and environmental implications of managerial decisions. This broad perspective equips them to approach complex business problems with critical insight and to appreciate the trade-offs between cost, resilience, and sustainability. In terms of employability, the module strengthens key transferable skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, and analytical thinking. Exposure to real-world case studies and debates around emerging technologies fosters adaptability and innovation. Ultimately, the module seeks to prepare students to contribute to organisations as reflective, responsible practitioners capable of managing supply chains in ways that create long-term value for business and society. Dr Stephanie Graham, the Module Coordinator, says of the course, "From the outset of the module, students are presented with real-life company examples to demonstrate the importance of effective supply chain management for all organisations. Interactive small group discussion activities are peppered throughout the module to encourage students to critically evaluate some of the complex supply chain challenges faced by organisations operating in the current climate. The first assessment requires students to evaluate an example where an area of effective supply chain management has contributed

to success in a real organisation. The second assessment requires them to analyse a real problem related to ineffective supply chain management and develop recommendations on how to avoid future problems based on what they have learned in the module. Therefore, by the end of the module all students will have developed their understanding of the potential for supply chain management to 'make or break' potential organisational success."







Business Ethics (Queen's Business School) | OWL3012

Business ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability have become essential in today's global economy. Organisations are no longer judged solely by their financial success but also by how they impact society and the environment. Ethical practices build trust with stakeholders, including customers, employees, and investors, which strengthens reputation and long-term sustainability. Social responsibility encourages businesses to go beyond profit-making by contributing positively to communities, addressing issues such as climate change, labour practices, and diversity. Companies that integrate ethical decision-making and responsible management often gain competitive advantages, such as customer loyalty and employee commitment. In an era where consumers and regulators demand transparency, ignoring ethics can lead to reputational damage and legal consequences. OWL3012 Business Ethics discusses and evaluates the ethical responsibilities of managers and organisations. It explores themes/issues from multi-disciplinary and managerial perspectives and analyses tensions, conflicts, contradictions and dilemmas via case studies and class discussion. Topics addressed include the role of ethical theories, the internal ethical environment (why and how do ethical dilemmas arise and how can they be resolved?), ethical issues with regard to employees (including whistleblowing, Codes of Ethics, corporate governance), ethics and consumers, and ethics and social responsibility.

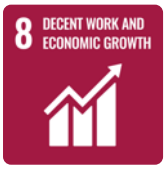
OWL3012 Business Ethics provides students with a comprehensive understanding of business ethics and social responsibility, enabling them to critically evaluate the ethical responsibilities of organisations and the role of ethics in business at local, national, and international levels. Students develop the ability to critique ethical theories and management practices, while assessing the rights, duties, and relationships between organisations and their stakeholders. Alongside theoretical knowledge, the module offers opportunities to strengthen key skills such as synthesising and analysing information from diverse sources, applying critical thinking to complex scenarios, and solving problems through case studies and policy analysis. Students also gain valuable experience in planning, conducting, and presenting original research, as well as enhancing their communication through essays, reports, and presentations. Finally, the module supports the development of teamwork and independent working skills, preparing students for both academic and professional success.



Equity Research (Queen's Business School) | FIN3013

Equity research plays a vital role in finance by providing investors with detailed analysis of companies, industries, and markets. It helps in evaluating a firm's financial health, growth potential, and risk factors, enabling informed investment decisions. By producing forecasts, valuations, and recommendations, equity research bridges the gap between raw financial data and actionable insights. It also enhances market efficiency by ensuring transparency and reducing information asymmetry. FIN3013 Equity Research addresses topics including valuation techniques, mergers and acquisitions, capital structure, corporate growth, and value drivers, while addressing common pitfalls and risks. In doing so, the module draws attention to ethics, responsibility, and sustainability concerns in equity research, encouraging critical reflection on both research and practice. Dr Philip Fliers, the Module Coordinator, said of the course, "Equity research is not only about building financial models and valuations; it is about understanding the broader context in which companies operate. In FIN3013 we encourage students to question assumptions, reflect on ethical and sustainability challenges, and recognise that responsible analysis can shape better decisions for investors, businesses, and society."

FIN3013 Equity Research equips students with the knowledge and skills required to succeed as equity analysts by focusing on company valuation and investment decision-making. Students learn to assess firm value using a range of valuation techniques, critically evaluate the practices of equity analysts, and make independent buy, hold, or sell recommendations. They also develop the ability to engage with debates in financial journalism and academic research, enhancing their analytical and critical thinking. In doing so, students gain practical insights into equity investment processes, strengthen their understanding of capital markets, and build a strong foundation for pursuing professional qualifications such as the CFA.







Corporate Finance (Queen's Business School) | FIN8001

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) considerations play an increasingly important role in corporate finance as they shape trust, reputation, and long-term value creation. Ethical practices help prevent fraud, ensure transparency, and build stakeholder confidence. Social responsibility strengthens relationships with communities, employees, and customers, reducing risks and improving corporate image. ESG factors guide sustainable investment decisions by highlighting risks and opportunities beyond traditional financial metrics. FIN8001 Corporate Finance equips students with a

strong understanding of fundamental concepts and analytical tools in finance, corporate finance, and financial management, while highlighting their application to real-world business challenges. It encourages students to critically engage with contemporary issues such as financing structures, dividend policy, investment decisions, and the growing importance of corporate social responsibility. Topics addressed include principles of finance, industry and investment analysis, capital structure and dividend decisions, mergers and acquisitions, and – not least – the role of CSR and ESG in modern corporate strategy. Dr Philip Fliers, the Module Coordinator, said of the course, "In FIN8001 we aim not only to equip students with the technical foundations of corporate finance, but also to challenge them to consider how financial decisions intersect with broader societal responsibilities. By engaging with ESG and CSR issues alongside traditional finance topics, students learn to see value creation as a long-term, sustainable process built on trust, accountability, and ethical practice".

On completing FIN8001 Corporate Finance students have the ability to critically evaluate concepts of risk, assess investment projects, and identify suitable funding sources for companies, while also recognising key risk factors and value drivers in corporate finance. They can apply their knowledge to make independent, well-justified investment recommendations. Alongside technical knowledge, the module develops valuable transferable skills, including critical analysis of financial strategies and outcomes, independent research using diverse data sources, and the ability to interpret financial information to draw logical conclusions. Students also enhance their professional communication skills by learning to present financial recommendations effectively through multiple formats.



Sustainable Operations Management (Queen's Business School) | ITAO2005

Managing operations well requires strategic, tactical and operational skills and is critical to every type of organisation. However, it is widely recognised that the optimal use of resources available is not enough anymore. Air, water and soil in our environment are becoming more and more polluted, climate change is speeding up, institutions of our society are facing outdated regulations and, in some instances, the need for new ones, and the fabric of the global society is going through change due to geopolitical factors, environmental changes, and developments in digital technology. Thus, businesses in both the manufacturing and service sectors need to design and manage operations sustainably, i.e. to run operations that are economically viable, environmentally friendly, socially responsible, and robust and resilient in the face of unexpected events. The primary objective of this module, developed and taught by Dr Jelena Vlajić, is to familiarise students with the basic concepts, techniques, methods and applications of operations management, as well as new approaches that can complement traditional operations management tools and help assess the environmental and social impact of operations. Topics addressed include sustainability and operations (strategy, performance, network, product and process design), planning and scheduling, circular economy and

reverse logistics, as well as the use of new technologies. In addition, contemporary manufacturing philosophies such as sustainable manufacturing, 3D printing/additive manufacturing, lean management, Industry 4.0, and relevant trends are also covered.

ITAO2005 Sustainable Operations Management equips students with both practical and theoretical knowledge of operations management, with a strong focus on sustainability and its role in organisational competitiveness. By the end of the module, learners understand the key principles and theories of operations management and how these can be applied or adapted to support sustainable practices. They are able to distinguish between service and manufacturing operations, recognising the different sustainability challenges and opportunities each presents. Students also develop the ability to conduct operational analysis using a range of traditional and contemporary tools and models, and to evaluate sustainability implications through relevant performance indicators. In addition, the module introduces learners to contemporary issues and emerging trends in operations, including innovative tools, technologies, and practices that influence the planning and management of sustainable operations.



Contemporary and Emerging Issues in Business and Management (Queen's Business School)

IBEM3034

Contemporary and Emerging Issues in Business and Management addresses the rapidly changing global environment in which organisations operate. Digital transformation, driven by artificial intelligence, automation, and big data, is reshaping business models and workforce dynamics, requiring leaders to adapt to new technologies and skills demands. Globalization and supply chain interdependence create both opportunities and vulnerabilities, particularly in light of rising geopolitical tensions and economic uncertainties. Climate change and environmental degradation have intensified the need for sustainable and responsible practices, pushing companies to integrate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations into strategy. Additionally, shifting workforce expectations, including the demand for equality, diversity, and inclusion, as well as more flexible working arrangements, are influencing organisational culture and leadership approaches. IBEM3034 Contemporary and Emerging Issues in Business and Management allows final year undergraduate students to explore a range of contemporary and emerging issues under the broad umbrella of grand challenges and wicked problems. Macro-level and emerging global “issues” such as those relating to, for example, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), modern slavery, and (de)industrialisation are discussed. Changing trends in consumer behaviour and the role and impact of working with diverse stakeholders are also addressed. Given the uncertainty of operating in Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous (VUCA) environments, topics such as organisational resilience and diversity are also explored. Attention is given to local and national issues and their impact (both

positive and negative) on the internal business environment. Dr Thomas Hastings, the Module Coordinator, said of the course, “This module critically examines contemporary challenges in business, management and society through engagement with a range of critical theories and empirical examples. An important objective of the course is to encourage critical and holistic thinking about contemporary challenges mediated at different scales, whilst also encouraging students to mobilise their own thoughts on how best to interpret and address wicked problems. The course engages a range of cross-cutting themes, yet students are also able to focus on specific contemporary challenge topics in line with their interests and enthusiasms developed over the course of their degree”.

IBEM3034 Contemporary and Emerging Issues in Business and Management provides students with the opportunity to develop a deep understanding of grand challenges and wicked problems, and their significance within business and management contexts. Learners critically examine contemporary and emerging issues, both nationally and internationally, and assess their impact across diverse business environments. By engaging with theories from disciplines such as geography, sociology, and management, students enhance their ability to apply interdisciplinary perspectives to real-world challenges. Alongside theoretical knowledge, the module fosters essential skills in critical evaluation of information, logical reasoning, and problem-solving through scenario-based learning. Students also strengthen their capacity to communicate effectively in written and oral forms, critique theoretical frameworks, and collaborate productively in group settings. Furthermore, the module encourages independent enquiry, effective time management, and workload organisation, equipping students with both academic and professional skills vital for navigating complex and evolving business landscapes.



Accounting for Sustainability (Queen's Business School) | ACC7012

Sustainability and climate change-related issues have both shaped and been shaped by the accounting profession in important ways. Increasing pressure from regulators, investors, and society has pushed organisations to go beyond traditional financial reporting and disclose their environmental and social impacts. This has led to the development of sustainability accounting frameworks, such as GRI, SASB, and integrated reporting, which broaden the role of accountants to include non-financial performance. At the same time, accountants have influenced how sustainability is represented, measured, and assured, playing a critical role in determining what information is prioritised and how it

is communicated. While this has advanced transparency, it has also raised concerns over consistency, comparability, and greenwashing. Overall, sustainability and climate change have transformed accounting from a purely financial discipline into a key mechanism for accountability in addressing global challenges. ACC7012 Accounting for Sustainability, which forms part of the MSc Accounting, Finance, and Analytics programme at Queen's Business School, introduces students to current accounting guidelines that entities (both public and private sector) should use to pursue more sustainable development. This includes, but is not limited to, the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) S1 and S2, the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), guidance on Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). The module details what accounting, reporting, and accountability mean in the context of sustainable development within contemporary society. In addition, the module discusses various theoretical and practical approaches to understanding accounting and sustainability. Finally, it explores accounting for sustainability from practical applications (i.e., tools and techniques) to cutting-edge research across various areas. These areas include (but are not limited to) the following: Accounting, sustainability, and UN Sustainable Development Goals; Climate change and nature-related disclosures; The development and application of sustainability reporting; Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) disclosures; and Sustainability reporting, assurance, and accountability. There is an individual (80%) and a group-based (20%) element to the assessment. The individual assignment is divided into two parts. Students are required to select one organisation from a bank of organisations provided by the module lecturers and critically explore the issues that surround accounting / reporting on matters surrounding sustainability and more specifically climate change. Taking their chosen organisation, the first aspect of the assessment (40%/80%) was to create an A3 academic poster that (1) explains what the entity is focusing on with respect to climate change; (2) identifies the regulations and professional guidance that the entity is using to report on matters around the impact of climate change; and (3) critically analyses the gaps in the organisation's climate change reporting, outlining the possible challenges along with providing some recommendations for future climate reporting for that organisation. Students were required to present their academic poster at a showcase event and summarise their key findings in a 2-minute pitch. The second part of the individual assignment is a case report broader in scope to capture wider sustainability issues, where students take the same organisation and critically discuss (1) the organisation's external (sustainability) environment; (2) the organisation's material sustainable development issues, and (3) how the organisation manages the material issues identified and contributes to the UN SDGs. Also, the report should identify (4) the challenges along with recommendations for the organisation's future sustainability reporting.

ACC7012 Accounting for Sustainability seeks to shape students' academic and professional development. It enables them to understand and critically evaluate sustainability accounting, reporting, and accountability in diverse contexts, highlighting how ESG issues are embedded in organisational practices and stakeholder expectations. Students also learn to appraise and critique sustainability accounting and assurance techniques, assessing frameworks such as GRI, IR, and SASB, while identifying their strengths, limitations, and potential for greenwashing. Through

engagement with academic and professional perspectives, students gain insight into how sustainability reporting has evolved historically and in contemporary contexts, exploring debates around voluntary versus mandatory disclosures and the broader societal implications of reporting practices. This critical awareness enhances their ability to connect theory with practice in a rapidly changing field. In addition, the module supports the development of professional skills and applied knowledge. By analysing sustainability disclosures, evaluating assurance processes, and applying critical thinking, students build competencies that enhance employability and position them to drive greater transparency and accountability in practice. Ultimately, the module equips students not only with technical expertise but also with the capacity to see accounting as a powerful mechanism for advancing sustainability and creating positive societal impact. Dr Xinwu He, the Module Coordinator, says of the course: “Accounting for Sustainability challenges students to think beyond traditional financial reporting and see accounting as a driver of transparency, accountability, and change. By critically engaging with frameworks such as GRI, IFRS S1 and S2, and SDG reporting, students learn not only to identify gaps in practice but also to propose solutions that support organisations in addressing climate change and advancing sustainable development. I want our students to leave the module with the skills and confidence to use accounting as a force for positive societal impact.” Dr Elaine Stewart, who led on the poster element, added: “Sustainability and climate change issues are a very topical area at present and in the accounting community, there are still many unknowns in how best to identify, to measure and to report the impacts, financial and beyond, on these issues. Accounting is more than a technical practice, it’s a communicative art. I have a passion to help students develop their softer skills, to have that ability to look beyond the numbers and to truly understand what that information is telling you and communicate that in a way that makes sense to the non-accountant is critical. For more tricky areas like climate change reporting, there needs to be more problem solving and more professional scepticism and so assessing this part of the module through an academic poster was to me, a great way to force students to focus on what really matters in their argument. There’s no room for waffle. A poster combines the written, the visual and the oral so it’s a good, well-rounded way to test a student’s understanding of this area and helps them to synthesise their critical thinking ability.”



Environmental Economics (Queen's Business School) | ECO3037

The field of environmental economics informs policymakers of the policy levers required to efficiently guide society towards sustainable patterns of consumption. This module will touch on issues such as behavioural economics when dealing with consumer behaviour. As many well-meaning environmental policies have had counter-intuitive negative consequences, this module will empower students to fully engage with the costs and benefits of climate change interventions. The module will also delve into

the role of various environmental policy instruments touching on some of the recent works at the frontiers of environmental economics. The course is meant to equip students with the necessary knowledge to analyse theoretical and empirical discussions in environmental economics.

ECO3037 Environmental Economics offers students a comprehensive understanding of environmental and energy economics. By engaging with case studies from the UK, Ireland, and Europe, students critically evaluate real-world environmental policies while considering efficiency, equity, and political economy trade-offs. Emphasis is placed on recognising the potential for unintended consequences of well-meaning policies, encouraging students to think carefully and critically about their economic implications. Alongside this, students build knowledge of related fields such as game theory, behavioural economics, and industrial organisation, strengthening their analytical foundations. Intellectual skills are developed through the interrogation of policies and the construction of arguments based on solid economic reasoning, while practical skills are enhanced through assignments that require evaluation and presentation of economic arguments. The module also fosters key study skills, including the ability to critique economic policies and work collaboratively in groups, providing students with a foundation in energy and environmental economics that is valuable for careers in industry, policy, and research.



Public Sector Management (Queen's Business School) | OWL3018

OWL3018 Public Sector Management is an undergraduate module coordinated by Dr Laura Steele at Queen's Business School. It examines how public organisations are managed and how they respond to complex societal challenges. Focusing primarily on the UK, with international comparisons, the module explores politics and public policy; public spending and financial management; quality and performance; leadership; futures, foresight and risk; relationships with the private and third sectors; and accountability, transparency and ethics. Sustainability and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are integrated throughout, encouraging students to consider public sector managers' responsibilities for societal well-being, social inclusion and planetary health.

The module combines lectures, workshops, interactive exercises and guest speakers with an experiential learning journey developed around climate-related challenges facing Belfast City Council. Across the semester, students examine how political priorities, financial constraints, cross-sector

relationships and ethical considerations shape climate policy. This provides a practical context for connecting public management theories with the challenges of achieving a just, inclusive and climate-resilient city.

The learning journey culminates in the Belfast Climate Action Policy Leadership Lab. Working in small groups, students select a local climate-related challenge and develop an evidence-informed policy proposal. Guided activities ask them to identify who is affected, define the intended outcome, propose an intervention, map relevant stakeholders and assess feasibility and barriers to implementation. Teams then present their proposals through three-minute policy pitches. Potential challenges include sustainable economic development, active travel, biodiversity, waste, community engagement and the relationship between societal segregation and climate resilience.

Assessment comprises a 1,500-word individual blog post on a public sector management issue (40%) and a 2,250-word Belfast Climate Action Policy Leadership Report (60%). The report requires students to analyse a local policy problem, critically evaluate existing responses and make recommendations, including considering lessons from other jurisdictions. A reflective statement asks students to explain how their experiential learning informed their analysis and shaped their understanding of public sector management and climate change. The Lab supports this assessment without itself being formally assessed. The climate action learning journey particularly addresses SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Public Sector Management aims to develop students' capacity to make informed, ethical and evidence-based decisions about public services and societal challenges. Its integration of public management theory with local climate policy provides opportunities for students to develop in several connected areas: (1) Critical policy analysis – students investigate a substantive public problem, evaluate existing interventions and assess whether approaches used elsewhere could be appropriate for Belfast; (2) Sustainability and social responsibility – students consider climate action alongside inclusion, health, well-being and economic development, examining who benefits from policy choices and who may face additional burdens; (3) Systems thinking and stakeholder awareness – activities encourage students to recognise the relationships between political priorities, public resources, communities and organisations across the public, private and third sectors; (4) Practical policy leadership – the Lab challenges students to move from identifying problems to proposing feasible interventions, considering implementation barriers and the support needed to achieve change; (5) Communication and collaboration – group deliberation, policy pitches, blog writing and report preparation provide complementary opportunities to explain complex issues, negotiate ideas and justify recommendations; and (6) Reflective practice – the assessed reflective statement encourages students to examine how engagement with practitioners and experiential activities has influenced their thinking.

By connecting global sustainability challenges with decisions affecting their local context, the module aims to make responsible management tangible. It encourages students to understand public leadership as a responsibility to balance competing priorities, account for diverse needs and pursue long-term public value.



Leading for Change (Queen's Business School) | OWL7212

OWL7212 Leading for Change develops students' capacity to analyse organisational challenges and propose evidence-informed change initiatives. Its individual project element requires students to integrate leadership and change management concepts with learning from at least two other modules, connecting areas such as ethical decision-making, people management, marketing, finance, and operations and supply chain management. Sustainability provides a substantive context for this integration, with case studies exploring environmental responsibility, social inclusion, workplace well-being and organisational resilience.

In 2024–2025, students selected one of three organisational cases, each presenting a different responsible management challenge. The Queen's University Belfast Campus Food and Drink case focused on demonstrating leadership in sustainability and Fairtrade. Students examined how environmental and social commitments could be embedded more deeply within food and hospitality operations through sustainable procurement, ethical sourcing, waste reduction and stakeholder engagement. They were asked to distinguish minimum standards from exemplary practice and consider implementation challenges, including costs, supply chain constraints, contractual obligations and resistance to change.

The Arts Care case explored how an arts, health and well-being charity could develop and promote its workplace well-being services. Students investigated demand, evaluated existing provision and recommended opportunities to expand services and reach public and private sector clients. This connected social sustainability with the leadership challenges of developing a social enterprise, requiring attention to organisational mission, financial viability and the potential benefits of creative participation for health and well-being.

The Norbrook case examined leadership responses to a changing diversity, equity and inclusion landscape. Students considered how an international business could navigate competing political, commercial and stakeholder expectations, bringing questions of fairness, inclusion and organisational values into their analysis of change.

Arts Care and Campus Food and Drink contributed live client presentations, while the Norbrook case was based on secondary research. Students produced a 10,000-word individual report analysing their chosen organisation and its environment, proposing a change initiative, and explaining how it should be led and communicated to key stakeholders. Across the cases, the assessment encouraged students to connect sustainability ambitions with practical decisions about resources, organisational culture, communication and implementation.

Leading for Change aims to strengthen students' ability to translate responsible management principles into feasible organisational action. The case studies make sustainability concrete by asking students to investigate challenges in real organisations and justify how change could be achieved.

The individual project supports development in several connected areas: (1) Integrated thinking – students combine learning across management disciplines to understand how sustainability challenges interact with organisational strategy, people, operations and resources; (2) Ethical and sustainability awareness – the cases encourage consideration of environmental impacts, fair trading relationships, inclusion and well-being alongside commercial and financial pressures; (3) Critical analysis – students assess academic literature and organisational evidence, evaluate competing perspectives and develop recommendations appropriate to the organisation's circumstances; (4) Responsible change leadership – students consider how leadership approaches, stakeholder engagement and communication can support implementation and address resistance; and (5) Independent inquiry and professional communication – the extended report requires students to synthesise complex information and present a coherent, evidence-informed case for change.

The Campus Food and Drink case connects learning directly with sustainability within the University's own operations, while Arts Care and Norbrook extend consideration to social purpose, employee well-being and inclusion. Together, the cases encourage students to understand sustainability as an ongoing leadership responsibility that requires choices about priorities, resources and relationships. The intended outcome is greater capacity to propose changes that are operationally realistic, responsive to stakeholders and attentive to their wider social and environmental consequences.



Teaching Awards

In 2025, 3 awards were given to faculty and educators at Queen's Business School.

Queen’s University Teaching Award 2025

Granter: Queen's University Belfast

Grantee: Alan Hanna, Queen's Business School

Award Description:

Alan Hanna received a Queen’s University Teaching Award in the Individual Category in 2025. The award recognises excellence in learning, teaching, and support practices that enhance students’ learning experiences.

Queen’s University Teaching Award 2025

Granter: Queen's University Belfast

Grantee: Brenda Clerkin, Queen's Business School

Award Description:

Brenda Clerkin received a Queen’s University Teaching Award in the Individual Category in 2025. The award recognises excellence in learning, teaching, and support practices that enhance students’ learning experiences.

Queen’s University Teaching Award 2025

Granter: Queen’s University Belfast

Grantee: Sajia Ferdous, Queen’s Business School

Award Description:

Sajia Ferdous received a Queen’s University Teaching Award in the Individual Category in 2025. The award recognises excellence in learning, teaching, and support practices that enhance students’ learning experiences.

Educator Recognition

At Queen's 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
- Institutional recognition events

- Pedagogical innovation grants
- Professional development opportunities
- Publication or research support

Teaching Voices

The following statements demonstrate ways in which educators at Queen's Business School support sustainability and responsible management in their classrooms.

Queen's Business School Teaching Voices: Learning Across Cultures – Supporting Participation and Belonging



Image: Students strolling through the Lanyon Building, Queen's University Belfast.

Inclusive education involves recognising students' diverse experiences and addressing the barriers that can limit their participation in learning. In the following reflection, Alethea Bleyberg, Undergraduate International Student Adviser at Queen's Business School, discusses how academic support, collaboration with teaching colleagues and student-led intercultural learning help international students navigate unfamiliar expectations, contribute their perspectives and develop a sense of belonging.

Alethea, what does your role as Undergraduate International Student Adviser involve, and how does it help students participate fully in learning at Queen's Business School?
My role is to support international undergraduate students throughout their time at Queen's Business School, from pre-arrival and induction through to graduation. It is a broad role encompassing transition and academic support, workshops and one-to-one guidance, as well as helping students navigate University processes and connecting them with specialist academic, well-being, careers and other support when needed.

A large part of my work is about making the unfamiliar more navigable. Students can be highly capable academically but still be learning how a new university and educational system works: what is expected of them, where to go with a particular question, or when and how to ask for support. By making those expectations and routes to support more explicit, I try to ensure that unfamiliarity with the system does not become a barrier to students participating fully in their education and making the most of their time at Queen's.

What adjustments can students encounter when moving between educational systems? How do you help them understand expectations around independent learning, classroom participation and assessment, while recognising the knowledge and experience they bring?
Students can encounter significant differences when moving between educational systems. Expectations around independent learning, relationships with academic staff, classroom participation and assessment may all be unfamiliar. Practices that can seem self-evident within UK higher education – contributing to a seminar, approaching a lecturer, interpreting an assessment question, or understanding the particular forms of critical analysis expected in UK assessment – may work very differently in another educational context.

It is important not to approach this from a deficit perspective. International students bring their own educational experiences, ways of learning, languages and perspectives to Queen's. Part of my role is to make the "hidden curriculum" more visible: the unwritten expectations and conventions of university study that institutions can assume students already understand. Making these expectations explicit helps students navigate a new academic environment without suggesting that their previous ways of learning are less valid. It also means listening when students find our practices unclear, because sometimes the issue is not that a student needs to adapt, but that we need to communicate our expectations more explicitly.

How do you support students from different backgrounds to learn with and from one another? Could you share an example that encouraged intercultural understanding or challenged assumptions?
Students consistently tell us that they would like more opportunities to meet people outside their existing friendship or nationality groups. QBS Connect, our student-led initiative focused on building community and belonging within the School, creates informal opportunities for those connections to develop.

One strand of its work is creating opportunities for students to share aspects of their cultures with one another, rather than simply bringing students from different backgrounds together and assuming that intercultural interaction will happen naturally.

Our student-led cultural celebrations are a good example. For events such as Christmas, Lunar New Year, and Ramadan, students themselves decide what they would like to share about the celebration and how they would like other students to participate. This gives students an opportunity to encounter traditions and perspectives that may be unfamiliar to them, ask questions and learn directly from their peers.

What I particularly value about this approach is that students are not being represented by the School; they have agency in representing themselves. Intercultural learning becomes something students do with one another, rather than something we deliver to them.

How do you work with teaching colleagues to identify and address barriers to learning? Has feedback from international students led to changes in teaching, learning resources or academic support?

One part of my role is working with teaching colleagues to embed academic support within their modules. I have developed subject-specific academic writing guides and helped to produce resources to support other forms of assessment, such as podcasts. For a final-year Python for Finance module, for example, I developed a guide to reflective writing after this had been identified as a recurring difficulty. The module coordinator subsequently reported a clear shift from descriptive to more reflective accounts and described them as the strongest set he had received.

Feedback from international students also helps us identify where changes may be needed. Some departments now send me draft examination papers to review for inclusivity and accessibility for international students. I also feed recurring issues from my work with students back to academic colleagues – for example, difficulties students have experienced in identifying and accessing high-quality sources for assignments – so that we can consider how these might be addressed through teaching, learning resources or academic support.

For me, the value of this approach is that academic support becomes part of the learning environment rather than something students have to seek out separately when they are struggling.

Which challenges remain in creating an inclusive learning experience for international undergraduate students? What have you learned from approaches that have been less effective than anticipated?

One continuing challenge is the enormous diversity within the international student population itself. Students arrive with very different educational experiences, levels of familiarity with UK higher education, language backgrounds and expectations, so there is a risk in designing support around a single idea of what an “international student” needs.

Experience over previous years has also taught me that providing support is not enough if it comes too late or relies on students recognising for themselves that they need it. I have become increasingly conscious that the transition begins before students arrive at Queen's, and that some of the uncertainty they experience in their first weeks can be reduced by giving them a clearer sense of what to expect in advance. This has led me to introduce online pre-arrival welcome and orientation sessions and to strengthen the place of international student support within induction, including making the QBS international student induction mandatory and contributing to the wider School induction.

I am applying the same thinking beyond the initial transition this year through a planned series of online early-evening workshops scheduled around key points in the semester. Rather than trying to give students everything at induction, the sessions will address topics such as assessment, the exceptional circumstances process and responsible use of AI at the point when that information is most likely to be meaningful and useful. The lesson for me has been that effective support is not only about what information we provide, but when students encounter it.

Looking ahead to 2026-2027, what would you most like to improve?
I am very pleased to see Student Experience being given greater prominence within the School, including through the appointment of a new Director of Student Experience. I see this as an opportunity to think more systematically about how the different elements of student support fit together and how we can create a more coherent experience for students.

One area with considerable potential is our new personal tutoring system. I would like to contribute my professional experience of working closely with international students to its future development, as well as to the wider student support structure within the School. In particular, I hope we can make better use of what we learn from students to identify recurring barriers, strengthen connections between different forms of support and intervene earlier where possible.

Ultimately, I would like students to experience support not as a collection of separate services that they have to navigate, but as a coherent structure around their education.

Queen's Business School Teaching Voices: Teaching Critical Perspectives for Responsible Management

Professor John Bratton, Honorary Professor at Queen's Business School, reflects on how his experiences as an educator and author have shaped his approach to responsible management education. He explores how critical perspectives and participatory teaching can help students consider their responsibilities to workers, society and the environment.

How have your teaching and book, *Work and Organizational Behaviour*, shaped your understanding of responsible management education? What should students understand about the responsibilities that come with managing others?

We all carry values and life experiences into our workplaces, including university academics. One's values are formulated through family, lived experiences, and, in a secular society, increasingly through primary and secondary education. Growing up I was influenced by the values associated with the Labour Party and trade unions – social equality, democracy, solidarity, and human agency. When undertaking a postgraduate FE teaching course I read David Rubinstein and Colin Stoneman's book, *Education for Democracy* (1970). The book had a major influence on my approach to teaching in HE. It provides a manifesto on progressive education and argues for learning through experience rather than through formalized teaching methods. It also argued that Britain's education system is "class based, elitist, and anti-democratic". As a school student who had never been entered for the 11-plus examination, leaving school without formal qualifications and entering an engineering apprenticeship, the Manifesto resonated with me.

My values and lived experiences shaped my approach to teaching, which, in turn, shaped my approach to writing *Work and OB*. My proposal to the publisher argued for an OB textbook that covered sociological theories to challenge the overwhelming dominance of organizational psychology. My aim was to provide a critical approach to OB. The first edition was published in 2007, but I started working on the text in 2005, a decade before the UN adopted SDGs in 2015. And a few years before the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that PRME had the capacity to take the case for universal values into classrooms.

While researching the OB text I read Sumner's book, *Sustainability and the Civil Commons* (2005) and Stern's report on the *Economics of Climate Change* (2006). These two publications shaped my understanding about sustainability and I included material on sustainability in the text's chapter on change. Subsequent editions of *Work and OB* have incorporated issues on climate change and sustainable organizations, reflecting the national conversation on climate change.

Subsequent editions of *Work and OB* have also given increasing prominence to two other aspects of organizational life: culture and diversity. In every edition I have endeavoured to challenge the unitarist perspective on organizational life – harmony, happiness, conflict free – and as an alternative to mainstream textbooks highlighted toxic cultures – bullying, harassment, manipulation. Toxic cultures have often featured in the "Stop and reflect" questions and in pedagogical features, "*The Reality of Work*". Support for such an approach can be found in studies that show toxic culture proved 10 times more powerful than pay in predicting who resigns. The growing recognition of the impact of toxic culture is a reason why in my latest edition, organizational culture is placed early in the book. The second development is incorporating into *Work and OB* the concept of intersectionality as an analytical tool for demonstrating the existence of social injustice.

The concept of intersectionality is also a way of understanding the complexities in people and the responsibilities that come with managing others. Chapter case studies, the *Reality of Work* feature, and evidence-based research can help students understand the responsibilities that come with managing others. For instance, evidence shows that the way managers manage staff is a major cause of work-related stress. As Jeffrey Pfeffer has argued, toxic management practices are "literally killing people".

How can teaching help students critically examine assumptions about what makes an organization successful? How do you encourage them to consider employee well-being, social justice, and environmental sustainability alongside organizational performance?
First, and foremost, teaching is a political activity in the sense that we orient students to the defining areas of theory, research, and practice. In doing so, the choices we make over curriculum, course syllabi, readings etc reflect our own world view. As I have explained in *Work and OB*, knowledge is not neutral, shaping our understanding of it in particular ways. The "map" of central and marginal issues in the study of work and OB laid out in the textbook will, I hope, enable students to navigate through competing narratives and counter narratives on work, OB, and management.

Teaching can help students critically examine assumptions about what makes an organization successful, providing management educators move beyond unitary perspectives, to make the field less partisan and more critical by extending the analysis and practice of management to largely excluded voices and cause-and-effect chains.

Long before the publication of Martin Parker's book, *Shut Down the Business School* (2018), I believed management education did not give adequate attention to teaching key concepts from sociology and politics; the focus was on teaching technical (employability) skills, rather than critical skills. Parker argues that business schools tend to produce unreflective students and therefore generally unreflective managers, by focusing on financial rewards and "control" instead of social justice. Moreover, critical workplace scholars argue that business schools are echo-chambers for neoliberal capitalism. From the 1990s, business schools pushed market-driven solutions without exploring social and environmental problems. In 2007, the adoption of PRME was probably the first major challenge to management education orthodoxy.

Teaching to help students critically examine assumptions about what makes an organization successful means that management educators should go beyond workplace-level analysis of performance metrics and maximising shareholder value (MSV). Teaching involves the application of Mills' (1959/2000) "sociological imagination" to matters of management decisions and outcomes, to include investigating the well-being of workers, of the community, and the state of the planet impacted by human activity. Anything less than these ambitious goals is "to falsify and impoverish the notion of critical social science in the academic field of HRM and management generally" (Bratton and Gold, 2021).

What teaching activities help students work through tensions between commercial pressures and responsibilities to people and society?

Prior to teaching OB, leadership, and HRM, I taught Labour Studies to mature students – shop stewards and health and safety reps. The learning material, which was written by the TUC, was based on adult learning principles – self-directing, the life experience of the learner, problem solving, and "what they need to know". The 6-hour workshop involved little lecturing but centred around small-group learning, role playing, and case studies. As the facilitator, a key role was to link real-life experiences or workplace problems to social and political context.

When I started teaching OB/HRM to undergraduate students in Canada, I adopted a teaching approach based on the four principles of "andragogy" or adult learning. Although I gave lectures to present new material/theories, I encouraged student engagement by organizing small group discussions – even with 200 plus students in the lecture hall, and my tutorial classes addressed real-life problems (often taken from Employment Tribunal hearings) through case studies. When I taught Labour Studies in Britain, I pioneered the use of management v union role-playing in the TV studio. Playback helped us to critique the "negotiation" and individual self-reflection. I conducted role-playing contract negotiations, the handling of grievances, and disciplinary cases with Canadian undergraduates using CCTV and the same technique I had developed teaching shop stewards. Case studies and role-playing help students to appreciate both sides of the argument – economic pressures and individual foibles and wider responsibilities.

Queen's Business School Teaching Voices: "Thirty Seconds That Are Not Economics" – Making Large Classes More Inclusive



Image: Dr Anh Pam, who reflects on her approach to making large classes feel more inclusive below.

In this section, Dr Anh Pham, Lecturer in Economics at Queen's Business School, reflects on "Thirty Seconds That Are Not Economics", a collection of small teaching habits designed to make a large first-year class feel more personal and inclusive. Drawing on student feedback, she explores how recognising students' everyday experiences, making space for quieter voices and showing care can help students feel that they belong.

Anh, could you introduce "Thirty Seconds That Are Not Economics" and explain what prompted you to develop it? What were you hoping to change about students' experience of your classes?
The name describes a few small habits I've developed in my lectures. Once or twice during a class, I spend about half a minute on something outside economics. It might be an offer I've noticed in a shop near campus, a festival someone in the room is celebrating, or an acknowledgement that three other modules have deadlines that week.

The idea grew out of reading the anonymous end-of-module feedback for ECO1015, a first-year module where most students are not economists. Some of the comments were surprisingly personal. One began "Hey, Anh" and told me not to take the negativity to heart. Another said "thank you for teaching me", with a smiley face after it. Those comments stayed with me, especially because the students had nothing to gain from writing them.

With so many students in the room, it is easy for a lecture to feel impersonal. I wanted students to feel that I noticed them and took an interest in how they were getting on. These brief conversations seemed a manageable way to make a large class feel a little more welcoming.

What does the approach involve in practice? Could you share examples of the small, regular actions you use to help students feel noticed and included?
At the start of a lecture, I might mention something useful I've spotted that week. I also acknowledge occasions such as Eid, Lunar New Year or Diwali with a brief mention on the day. In week five, I warn students that week six can feel overwhelming. These are quick comments that fit into the time I already spend talking to the class.

I make myself available at the front for five minutes before and after each lecture, rather than spending that time setting up with my back to the room. I learn names in the four tutorial groups I teach myself. I also keep a short file on Canvas with practical information about registering with a GP, what 999 and 111 are each for, the hardship fund, counselling, the student travel card and cheap-food apps. I open it in the first lecture and again in the last. The information is already available elsewhere, but students may not know what to search for or where to start.

How do you recognise students' different backgrounds, cultures and circumstances within your teaching? How does this shape the connections you build with them?

I try to share information with the whole class so that students can use it without having to explain their circumstances to me. A brief mention of Eid or Lunar New Year acknowledges an occasion that may matter to someone in the room, including students who would never bring it up themselves. I mention the hardship fund to everyone for the same reason: nobody has to tell me they are struggling financially to hear about it.

There are practical differences between students' courses too. Accounting students need fifty per cent in this module for their accreditation, while actuarial students need sixty-five. I explain that and encourage them to check the requirements for their other modules. Most of the cohort are not economics specialists, and some arrive worried about what they are expected to know, so I make clear in the first lecture that I assume no previous study of economics. When bad weather makes it difficult to get to an early tutorial, I tell students they can come to a later one.

Much of what I learn about students comes from those few minutes before and after lectures. Over the semester, conversations give me a sense of who is here on exchange or studying abroad, and who lives at home. I don't get to know everyone, and these are informal conversations. But I remember what students tell me and try to follow up. If someone has mentioned needing to work, I ask nearer the test whether they are keeping up. If someone is a long way from home, I might ask whether they are flying back for Christmas and remind them to return in time for the exam.

One exchange student, who was here for a semester and left in January, wrote on the anonymous form that it was “always really appreciated” and that she could tell I liked getting to know students. I don't know which conversation she had in mind, but I was glad that she felt that way during her time here.

How do you create an environment where students feel comfortable asking questions, contributing ideas and making mistakes? What particular challenges arise in large classes?
Putting your hand up in a class of 326 can be daunting, so I give students several ways to take part. They can write down a prediction privately before I reveal the answer, vote anonymously on their phones, talk to the person beside them, or give a hand signal together on a count of three. I count all of these as participation. Asking for the hand signals at the same time helps students give their own answer before seeing what everyone else thinks.

Anonymous voting helps me see what students across the room are thinking, including those who would not volunteer an answer aloud. When someone does want to speak, I bring the microphone to them and repeat their point before answering.
I started doing this after students in the upper tiers told me they could not hear their classmates' contributions. The split-level room makes discussion difficult, and it was clear that some students were missing parts of the conversation. Taking the microphone to the person speaking is one practical thing I can do to help everyone follow it.

How does acknowledging students' everyday experiences connect with their learning in economics? Could you give an example of how you bring the two together?
Often, something from students' everyday lives gives me a way into that week's topic. A student discount is an example of price discrimination. A reference from a landlord or a first employer can help explain repeated games and why an interaction that seems to be a one-off can still have consequences later. Library seats during exam season give us a familiar example of a shared resource, with bags left on chairs illustrating the problem.

My favourite example comes in the week on housing and contracts. I tell students to photograph every corner of a flat when they move in and email the photographs to themselves, so they have a record if there is a dispute over the deposit. It is practical advice that connects with information asymmetry and the hold-up problem, which we are studying that week. Real-world examples are what students praise most often in my feedback. One wrote: "Giving real world examples in almost every topic really helps."

How have students responded to the initiative, and how has their feedback shaped your approach?
The comments that stay with me are not about content. One student wrote, "Found it very sweet that names of students and conversations from seminars were remembered. It shows a genuine care for the students." Another wrote, "I appreciated the kindness, enthusiasm and support given at all times during this module, making my first semester at university easier to adjust to." After the very first lecture last year, before anybody had learned any economics, a student said it was "nice and relaxed and put my worries at ease, having not studied economics before."

Student feedback has led me to change some practical things. When students said there was too much discussion in lectures, I moved it into tutorials, where there is more room for it. More recently, a few pointed out that answering a question in a large room means both finding the courage to speak and making yourself heard. I hadn't fully appreciated that. There are now two microphones, one upstairs and one downstairs, and I go to whoever is speaking. I've also brought the key dates, marking scale and routes to support together in the opening resource, so students see them at the start of the module, before a problem arises. I also try to be comfortable with my own mistakes in front of the class. If I mispronounce something or get it wrong, I acknowledge it. I hope that makes it a little easier for students to risk an answer they are unsure about.

What have you learned from developing this initiative, and what are your next steps? What advice would you offer colleagues interested in adopting a similar approach?
I've become more aware of the limits of what I can offer through these everyday interactions. Being approachable matters, but a student in difficulty may need help beyond what I can provide. I need to recognise that and know where to direct them for appropriate support.

My next step is to understand more clearly which activities help. I have seed funding to investigate what works in a class this size, and I want to hear more from students themselves rather than rely on my own impressions.

I would encourage colleagues to find an approach that feels natural to them. Small talk won't suit everyone, and enthusiasm for the subject can itself make a real difference. A student on an earlier module of mine wrote that “My lecturer's enthusiasm about the subject alone meant it was more engaging than most as they truly wanted what was best for the student”. I don't think that response came from any particular habit. For me, it is about taking an interest in students and letting them get to know me a little too. When I asked colleagues to share their own habits, they had ideas I thought were better than mine.

Queen's Business School Teaching Voices: Data for Good – Learning for Responsible Decision-Making



Image: Pictured (L) Dr Adheesh Budree, Programme Director, Queen's Business School, (R) the Queen's University Belfast campus in GIFT City, Gujarat, India.

The inaugural Queen’s University Belfast GIFT City Datathon brought postgraduate students together under the theme “Data for Good” to explore sustainable tourism development through multidisciplinary teamwork and industry mentoring. In the following reflection, Dr Adheesh Budree discusses how the initiative connects applied analytical learning with responsible decision-making, social and environmental considerations, and a sense of belonging across the GIFT City and Belfast campuses.

Adheesh, could you introduce the GIFT City datathon and explain what prompted its development? Who was it designed for, and what were its main aims?

The inaugural QUB GIFT City Datathon was adapted from the original QBS Datathon that has been a regular annual event in Belfast for a few years. It was then further developed in GIFT City into a campus-wide experiential learning initiative that brought all registered students together around a meaningful, real-world problem rather than keeping learning within individual modules or programmes. A key goal for us was to create an early opportunity for students at a new international campus to work across disciplinary boundaries, engage directly with industry professionals and develop a stronger sense of belonging to both the QUB GIFT City campus and the wider QUB community.

The event was designed for postgraduate students of all QUB GIFT City programmes that were running at the time, namely Business Analytics, Finance and Financial Analytics. The first event brought together 105 students in 21 multidisciplinary teams. Under the theme “Data for Good”, the main aims were to enable students to apply analytical, financial and strategic thinking to a socially relevant challenge, develop teamwork, communication and professional judgement, engage meaningfully with industry mentors and judges, and build community and identity across the campus. A particularly important dimension was that Belfast held its Datathon on the same day, allowing us to connect the two campuses and make the QUB global identity tangible for our students.

What does participation involve? Could you walk us through the challenge participants tackle and how they work towards a solution?
Participation is designed to be deliberately intensive, immersive and collaborative. Students work in multidisciplinary teams and are given a challenge, supporting datasets and a limited period in which to move from understanding the problem to analysis, recommendations and a final pitch. They are supported throughout by industry mentors and ultimately present their recommendations to a judging panel.

For the 2026 event students were asked to advise on the allocation of a hypothetical ₹6,500 crore (approx. £512 million) tourism investment budget to support sustainable tourism development across Gujarat. They worked with tourism, accommodation and district-level socio-economic data and had to balance economic growth and employment creation with regional inclusion and environmental sustainability. The task therefore required more than simply producing technically sophisticated analysis. Teams had to decide what evidence mattered, make and justify assumptions, consider trade-offs, and translate their findings into recommendations that could be communicated to decision-makers. All 21 teams completed the process and presented their solutions.

How was community building incorporated into the design? What opportunities does the datathon create for participants to connect and learn from one another?

Community building was embedded in the design rather than being treated as a separate social activity. Students were deliberately placed into multidisciplinary teams so that Business Analytics, Finance and Financial Analytics students had to work with peers outside their normal programme groups. The physical environment, shared challenge, branded Datathon identity, catering, music, mentoring and awards also helped create a common experience across the campus.

Industry engagement was equally important. Twenty-one mentors worked directly with teams throughout the day, giving students opportunities to test ideas, challenge assumptions and learn from professionals with different backgrounds. Academic and professional services staff were also present throughout, so the event created interaction across groups that would not necessarily work together normally in a classroom.

The most visible expression of belonging was the live connection with the Belfast Datathon, which was taking place on the same day. Students at both main venues could see and greet one another, and Professor M. N. Ravishankar, Dean of Queen's Business School, addressed both gatherings simultaneously. For students at a new international campus, this made the idea of belonging to one Queen's Business School community much more tangible and demonstrated the global reach of the University. This is something we would like to build upon to create a truly integrated experience across both campuses.

How do you support participants with different levels of technical knowledge and experience? What helps everyone contribute meaningfully?
We tried to ensure that contribution was not defined narrowly by technical expertise. The multidisciplinary team structure meant that students could contribute through different strengths such as data analysis and visualisation, financial reasoning, contextual research, strategic thinking, problem framing, communication and presentation. This was particularly important because the cohort was predominantly first-semester students and their prior technical experience varied considerably.

A preparatory session was held before the competition to familiarise students with the analytical environment and available tools. During the Datathon, teams could use appropriate analytical and AI tools, while mentors helped them move forward when they were uncertain about the problem, method or practical implications of their ideas. Mentors themselves were briefed a few days before the event on the challenge, student profile, their role and the expectations for mentoring. The emphasis was therefore on enabling every team member to contribute to the reasoning and solution, rather than rewarding only the person with the strongest technical skillset.

How, if at all, does the datathon encourage participants to consider the ethical and social implications of using data? How are these considerations reflected in the task or the evaluation of solutions?

Responsible use of data was built into the substance of the challenge. The task was framed as “Data for Good”. Students were not simply asked to maximise tourism growth or produce the most technically impressive model. They had to consider how a very large public-facing investment could support employment and economic development while also addressing regional inclusion and environmental sustainability.

This required teams to confront value judgements and trade-offs in the data. For example, prioritising areas with the highest existing tourism activity can produce very different outcomes from prioritising underserved districts or places where investment could generate broader social benefit. Students therefore had to justify why particular indicators and priorities should drive their recommendations and consider who might benefit or be excluded by their decisions. The judging criteria considered the quality and feasibility of the overall recommendation and its impact, not technical analysis in isolation. This is an area we can make even more explicit in future datathons by asking teams to state their assumptions, data limitations and ethical trade-offs directly in their final presentations.

What have you learned from participants’ experiences and feedback? What evidence is available of learning, collaboration or a stronger sense of community?

The strongest lesson is that a shared, demanding experience can build community very quickly when students have a genuine reason to depend on one another. Attendance was exceptionally high: 105 of 106 registered students that were able to attend participated, all 21 teams presented, and students remained engaged throughout a long and intensive day. The event also brought together 21 mentors, seven judges, 13 academic staff and professional services colleagues, creating interaction well beyond students’ normal classroom networks.

Feedback from students, mentors and staff highlighted the value of working on a real-world problem, multidisciplinary teamwork, direct industry interaction and the opportunity to present and defend ideas. Student-generated LinkedIn posts after the event provided further evidence of pride, engagement and reflection on the experience. Mentors were particularly positive about exposing first-semester students to real-world problem solving so early in their studies.

The Belfast–GIFT City connection was also significant. Seeing students participating simultaneously on two campuses, and being addressed together by the Dean, created a visible sense that GIFT City students were part of something larger than their local cohort. That moment reinforced both campus identity and belonging to the wider Queen’s community. This needs to be built upon so that it does not feel merely like a superficial exercise but rather gives the students a true sense of belonging.

What challenges have you encountered, and what would you change in a future datathon?

The main challenge was the breadth of the problem relative to a one-day competition and the experience level of predominantly first-semester students. Several teams spent substantial time understanding the challenge and deciding which direction to pursue, which reduced the time available for deeper analysis and presentation preparation. We ultimately extended the programme by approximately an hour so teams could complete their presentations.

For the next Datathon, I would provide the challenge context around 24 hours in advance, while potentially retaining the detailed datasets for release on the day. I would also refine the scope of the challenge, build more presentation preparation time into the timetable, and add a short structured Q&A after each pitch. The Q&A is particularly important in an AI-enabled environment because it allows judges to assess students' reasoning, assumptions and ability to defend their choices rather than focusing only on the polished final output. We also plan to use more structured post-event feedback so that future changes are based on evidence from students, mentors and judges. Greater links into the Belfast Datathon running simultaneously will also be built in future.

What are your next steps for the initiative? How would you like to build on the learning and relationships it generates?
The intention is to build on the inaugural event rather than treat it as a one-off activity. The Datathon has the potential to become an annual flagship element of the QUB GIFT City student experience, retaining the core combination of real-world problem solving, multidisciplinary teamwork, industry mentoring and a strong social-impact orientation.

A priority for future editions is to deepen the Belfast–GIFT City dimension. In 2026 the live connection was powerful but relatively brief. Future events could include more substantive cross-campus interaction, shared opening or closing activities, comparative showcases, joint speakers, or other opportunities for students to engage across locations. We also want to sustain the relationships developed with mentors and judges and involve them in other forms of student engagement throughout the year.

Finally, the learning from the event is informing a more systematic examination of what students actually develop through this type of experiential learning, not only technical skills but problem-solving, teamwork, communication, professional judgement, responsible decision-making and a sense of belonging. The aim is to use that evidence to continually refine the Datathon and to inform other high-impact learning experiences at the GIFT City campus.

Barriers to Innovative Curriculum

In 2025, Queen's Business School identified the following barriers to innovating, updating, or taking risks in existing curriculum:

- Assessment challenges
- Scalability issues
- Time constraints

Barriers to Innovative Pedagogy

In 2025, Queen's Business School identified the following barriers to innovating, updating, or taking risks in existing pedagogy:

- Administrative hurdles
- Classroom infrastructure limitations
- Scalability issues
- Time constraints

Continue telling your story

Ethical, Responsible, and Sustainable Use of Artificial Intelligence in Education at Queen's Business School



Image: A student using a chatbot. At Queen's University Belfast, various initiatives have been put in place to promote the ethical, responsible, and sustainable use of AI in education and research.

Queen's University Belfast promotes the responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI) in education through institutional guidance, staff development, student support, and equitable access to digital tools. The University's approach is informed by the Russell Group's principles for the ethical and responsible use of generative AI and articulated through Queen's RAISE principles: Responsible use, AI best practice, Integrity, Support, and Equitable Access. These principles connect the development of AI capabilities with academic standards, inclusion, and responsible educational practice.

Ethical considerations extend beyond academic misconduct. The University's responsible AI guidance explicitly addresses bias, fairness, transparency, privacy, security, and AI's wider societal implications. It encourages staff and students to consider how biased training data can perpetuate inequalities, how limited transparency can affect understanding of AI-generated decisions, and how the use of personal or third-party material raises questions of permission and intellectual property. The guidance also emphasises critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity as important capabilities in an evolving workplace. This positions AI literacy as a matter of ethical judgement as well as technical competence.

The University's Artificial Intelligence Hub brings together resources and development opportunities for staff and students. These include an *AI for Educators* course, practical learning activities, and student guidance covering acceptable use, citation, accessibility, creativity, and environmental sustainability. Students can also use Jisc's AI skills question set to assess their confidence and identify further learning needs. Together, these resources support informed engagement with AI and encourage users to evaluate its suitability for particular tasks.

Academic integrity and fairness are central to Queen's approach to assessment. Module teams are expected to explain when and how AI may be used, including restrictions and requirements to acknowledge or document its use. Students are encouraged to seek clarification where expectations are unclear. The guidance advises against text-based AI detection tools because they cannot reliably establish authorship and may produce false positives. It also identifies equitable access as a consideration when adapting teaching and assessment to incorporate AI.

Queen's provides staff and students with Microsoft Copilot Chat through their University accounts. Signing in with University credentials provides enterprise data protection, with conversations excluded from the training of public models. Accompanying guidance highlights risks associated with inaccurate outputs, bias, privacy, and overreliance. Students are encouraged to use AI to support activities such as understanding concepts, organising ideas, and preparing revision materials while retaining responsibility for checking information and exercising their own academic judgement.

Environmental sustainability is also explicitly addressed in the University's resources. The student AI Hub includes *Sustainable AI Use: Top Tips for Students*, while the Library's Position Paper on AI identifies environmental, financial, and operational impacts as considerations when piloting and

procuring AI-enabled resources. Its proposed AI Risk and Impact Assessment checklist includes environmental footprint alongside accuracy, bias, accessibility, data protection, and licensing. The paper sets out a pilot-first approach, with evaluation and periodic review intended to inform decisions about continued use and investment.

The Library also identifies critical AI literacy as a priority: helping users consider whether, when, and why to use AI, verify sources, recognise misinformation, and disclose AI assistance appropriately. Its programme combines these educational aims with expertise in copyright, information ethics, and scholarly communication. For Queen's Business School, this institutional framework supports an approach to responsible management education in which AI use is considered alongside its implications for people, knowledge, organisational accountability, and environmental sustainability.

The School also contributes to international dialogue on responsible AI through its leadership of the PRME Working Group on Responsible Management Education and Emerging Technologies. In 2026, QBS co-founded the group with representatives from the University of Exeter Business School and Woxsen University, with Dr Laura Steele serving as Co-Chair. The group brings together academics, industry representatives, and policymakers to advance research, pedagogical practice, and knowledge sharing on the ethical, responsible, and sustainable use of emerging technologies. Its remit includes trustworthy AI, digital ethics, technology-enhanced learning, and the implications of technological change for inclusion, equity, and sustainability. Through this collaboration, QBS connects its institutional approach to AI with a wider international effort to align technological innovation in management education with the Principles of PRME and the UN SDGs.

Our Approach to Mapping PRME and the UN SDGs in the Curriculum at Queen's Business School



Image: Students gathering in the Student Hub at Queen's Business School.

At Queen's Business School, we use curriculum mapping to identify how sustainability and responsible management are represented in our teaching and to inform further curriculum development. We embed this work within existing teaching documentation and quality assurance processes, creating an evidence base for programme review, our PRME SIP report, and business school accreditation submissions.

Our principal source is the annual Module Review Form, which is completed by Module Coordinators. Within this document, they are asked to identify the UN SDGs addressed within their module and provide a short explanation of the connections. Combining SDG selections with descriptive evidence helps us understand how sustainability relates to disciplinary content, while incorporating the exercise into an established process limits additional administration.

For the 2025–2026 mapping, our Director of Ethics, Responsibility, and Sustainability reviewed the forms in June and July 2026. The analysis drew on the 17 SDGs and their 169 targets, recognising environmental, social, economic, and governance connections where supported by the evidence. To distinguish the nature and depth of integration, modules were classified using four University categories:

- **Sustainability Focused**: sustainability is central to the module's purpose, substantive content, learning outcomes, and assessment.
- **Sustainability Inclusive**: sustainability is a meaningful and identifiable element within a broader disciplinary module.
- **Sustainability Supportive**: the module develops knowledge, skills, or values applied in identifiable sustainability contexts.
- **No clear sustainability or SDG content**: the available documentation does not provide sufficiently specific evidence of a connection.

A parallel review identified explicitly documented Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) content and sustainability-related live projects, challenge-based activities, research projects, and dissertation opportunities.

We interpret the findings conservatively. The mapping records documented content rather than measuring teaching quality, student attainment, or individual students' exposure to sustainability. Modules are not weighted by credit value, enrolment, or compulsory or elective status. Relevant learning may also be underrepresented where it is not clearly described in the review forms. The findings therefore provide a baseline for programme-level discussion and further verification.

Alongside SDG mapping, our Assurance of Learning (AoL) framework includes "professionally responsible" as a competency informing programme and module learning outcomes. A traffic-light system indicates its degree of coverage within the curriculum. This complementary process connects the review of sustainability content with the capabilities we seek to develop in our graduates.

Clear guidance, technical support, and honest staff reflection underpin this work. Our Director of Education and Accreditation, Professor Alan Hanna, shared the School's approach at a PRME Chapter UK & Ireland webinar on SDG mapping in May 2026. The accompanying blog explains how integrating mapping into routine institutional processes can support curriculum development and reporting.

The results of the most recent mapping exercise are presented in the accompanying narrative.

An Overview of the Integration of Sustainability across the Queen's Business School Curriculum

At Queen's Business School, we integrate sustainability and responsible management across our curriculum through dedicated modules and their inclusion within disciplinary teaching. Our approach encompasses the environmental, social, economic, and governance dimensions of sustainability, recognising the different ways in which accounting, economics, finance, and management contribute to addressing societal challenges.

In June and July 2026, our Director of Ethics, Responsibility, and Sustainability undertook a curriculum mapping exercise covering 213 modules for the 2025–2026 academic year across our six academic departments. Drawing primarily on annual Module Review Forms completed by Module Coordinators, the exercise examined documented connections to the UN SDGs, the depth of sustainability integration, and coverage of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB).

The mapping found that 168 modules (78.9%) had at least one evidenced SDG connection. Using the University's classification system, eight modules were classified as Sustainability Focused, with sustainability central to their purpose, content, learning outcomes, and assessment. A further 117 were classified as Sustainability Inclusive, incorporating sustainability as a meaningful element within a broader disciplinary subject, while 43 were classified as Sustainability Supportive, developing knowledge, skills, or values applied in identifiable sustainability contexts. Forty-five modules had no clear sustainability connection within the documentation reviewed.

Our dedicated provision includes *Accounting for Sustainability*, *Environmental Economics*, *Business Ethics*, *Sustainability and Social Innovation*, *Sustainable Operations Management*, *Technology for Good*, *Business, Government, and Society*, and the *Capstone Responsible People Management* module. These provide focused learning opportunities across five departments, complemented by sustainability content within the wider curriculum.

The most frequently mapped goals concern innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9), institutions and governance (SDG 16), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), and reduced inequalities (SDG 10). Departmental strengths reflect their disciplinary contexts. Accounting emphasises accountability and governance; Economics addresses inequality, poverty, development, and public policy; and Finance includes connections to institutions, professional standards, and economic activity. International Business, Entrepreneurship, and Marketing (IBEM) connects sustainability with strategy, markets, and social innovation. Information Technology, Analytics, and Operations (ITAO) addresses responsible technology and operational sustainability, while Organisation, Work, and Leadership (OWL) provides substantial coverage of decent work, inclusion, and responsible people management.

The mapping also identified concrete DEIB-related content in 49 modules and explicit sustainability-related live projects, challenge-based activities, research projects, or dissertation opportunities in 24 modules. These opportunities support students in applying their learning to practical organisational and societal questions.

As a School, we recognise that module coverage alone does not demonstrate student attainment or the learning experience of every programme. The findings provide a baseline for further review, with opportunities to strengthen sustainability within underrepresented disciplines, increase the visibility of relevant DEIB content, and develop environmental themes where they are material to disciplinary practice. Building on existing provision, further programme-level analysis can help us clarify how responsible management knowledge and judgement are progressively introduced, developed, and assessed. Our emphasis is on coherent, relevant learning pathways that enable students to engage critically with sustainability challenges in their future professional practice.

We look forward to providing an update on our progress in our 2027 SIP report.

Queen's Business School Data for Good Datathon 2025: Applying Analytics to Healthcare Challenges



Image: Students, faculty, and industry mentors at the 2025 Queen's Business School Data for Good Datathon.

Queen's Business School's Data for Good events provide opportunities for students to apply analytical skills to societal challenges. Building on events held in 2023 and 2024, the 2025 Datathon focused on Northern Ireland's healthcare system, connecting practical learning with the potential public value of data-informed decision-making.

Held at the QBS Student Hub on 12–13 June 2025, the programme combined preparatory training with a team-based challenge for postgraduate students. Participants explored open health data and developed proposals addressing issues such as hospital waiting times and the closure of GP practices and social care facilities.

Training introduced students to the healthcare system, the available data and relevant analytical methods, alongside hands-on experience using Alteryx. This preparation encouraged participants to consider the organisational and societal context of their analysis when developing recommendations.

Industry mentors from EY, FinTrU, Kainos and PwC supported the teams, helping students translate their analysis into practical proposals. Four winning teams were recognised for the creativity, feasibility and potential impact of their solutions.

The Datathon illustrates how QBS connects technical education with social responsibility. Through collaborative problem-solving and engagement with practitioners, students explored how data analytics can inform responses to public service challenges and support better outcomes for patients and communities.

QBS Guest Contributions to Teaching on Ethics, Responsibility, and Sustainability 2025-2026 View document Download document

From Seed Funding to Shared Resources: Advancing Innovative Responsible Management Education

Queen's Business School co-leads the PRME Chapter UK & Ireland Innovative Pedagogy Competition with Lincoln International Business School, through Dr Laura Steele and Dr Claire May. Launched in January 2020, the competition enables educators to develop and test creative approaches to embedding ethics, sustainability, and responsible management within business and management education.

Supported by Chapter funding, the initiative has funded 21 projects across the UK and Ireland, with awards of up to £1,500 per project. The co-leads oversee the competition's development and delivery, including applicant guidance, support webinars, judging, and the sharing of project outcomes. This combines financial support for experimentation with opportunities for educators to develop their practice and contribute to a wider community of learning.

A defining feature is the requirement for funded projects to generate learning and resources that benefit educators beyond the recipient's institution. The resulting open-access teaching resource collection provides practical materials that colleagues can adapt for their own teaching. Available resources include:

- **Printable card games and teaching guidance** exploring responsible leadership and the SDGs.
- **A sustainability toolkit** using creative and arts-based activities to embed sustainable development in business education.
- **A sustainable enterprise education toolkit** supporting the integration of sustainability mindsets into teaching.
- **A sustainability careers masterclass** connecting the SDGs with students' professional aspirations.
- **A framework for cartoon-based case studies** exploring ethical and sustainability challenges.

The collection also includes an overview of winning projects and "A Short Guide to Innovating in Responsible Management Education", bringing together lessons from the competition and academic literature to support educators developing new approaches.

Sharing extends beyond the repository. Winners present their work at the Chapter's annual conference, and previous recipients are invited to join subsequent judging panels, contributing their experience to the development of future projects. Through its sustained co-leadership, QBS helps turn individual teaching innovations into shared educational resources, strengthening educators' capacity to integrate responsible management and the SDGs across disciplines and institutions.



Research

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

How We Define Research

At Queen's Business School, our research interprets patterns of economic, business and social life to foster new theories and ideas and develop recommendations for public policy and business innovation. Guided by the Principles of PRME and in support of the UN SDGs, we are committed to generating knowledge that promotes ethical leadership, inclusive prosperity, and sustainable futures.

Research vs Research for RME/Sustainable Development

181 Peer-reviewed articles were published by Queen's Business School from this past calendar year.

vs

98 Peer-reviewed articles were published by Queen's Business School from this past calendar year in support of RME.

Research Funding

In 2025, Queen's Business School was awarded funding for research that is:

- **Institution Specific**
- **Local**
- **Regional**
- **National**
- **International**

Socializing Research

In 2025, Queen's 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
- Public events and lectures
- Research collaborations
- Social media and digital outreach

Research Projects

In 2025, Queen's Business School reported 7 research projects that implemented responsible or sustainable activities.

Reimagining Supply Chains: Research for Resilience and Responsible Decision-Making

Period Covering: March, 2024 - N/A

Department: Information Technology, Analytics, and Operations (ITAO)

Queen's Business School is leading the *ReImagining Supply Chains Network Plus (RiSC+)*, a multidisciplinary research initiative examining how supply chains can better withstand disruption. Led by Dr Hangfei Guo at Queen's University Belfast, the project has approximately £5.31 million in UKRI funding for the period March 2024 to March 2029.

RiSC+ focuses on three sectors: food, fashion and critical minerals. It responds to the challenges exposed by economic crises, the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and armed conflict, examining how disruptions spread through interconnected supply chains and affect businesses and communities.

The project combines supply chain management expertise with systems thinking, artificial intelligence, simulation and machine learning. It aims to develop secure digital tools that allow users to model supply chains, explore disruption scenarios and test potential interventions. This approach considers the environmental, economic, security and social implications of decisions, helping organisations understand the trade-offs involved in strengthening resilience.

Collaboration is central to the research. The network brings together academics, industry representatives and public bodies, connecting expertise across management, engineering, biological sciences, law and digital technologies. Its activities include modelling studies, stakeholder engagement and opportunities for secondments and internships, alongside support for early-career researchers and professional staff.

For responsible management, the project offers a means of examining supply chains as interconnected systems whose effects extend beyond individual organisations. By developing approaches that account for uncertainty and wider societal consequences, RiSC+ aims to strengthen the evidence and analytical capabilities available to businesses and policymakers when planning more resilient supply chains.

Find out more about RiSC+.



Closing the Gender Employment Gap

Period Covering: December, 2023 - N/A

Department: Economics

Why do women continue to face unequal employment opportunities, and what can governments and employers do to address them? Led by Dr Heather Dickey (Principal Investigator), with Dr Ana Corina Miller (Co-Investigator) at Queen's Business School and Alfie Bingham as a co-author of the research reports, *Closing the Gender Employment Gap* investigates how motherhood, informal caregiving, and gender norms shape women's working lives in Northern Ireland and the wider UK.

Commissioned by the Northern Ireland Department for the Economy, the project combines a review of existing research with descriptive statistics and econometric analysis. Its findings highlight persistent employment disadvantages for women following childbirth, while men's employment trajectories typically remain comparatively unchanged. Caring for parents is also associated with reduced full-time employment and working hours among women, while traditional gender-role attitudes are linked to lower participation in full-time work.

The research identifies practical responses for policymakers and employers, including flexible working, training and support for those returning after maternity leave or caregiving, greater availability of formal care, and promotion processes that recognise maternity-related career interruptions.

Published through four reports in January 2025, the project provides an evidence base for addressing barriers to women's participation and progression in employment. It illustrates the School's contribution to research on responsible organisational practices and inclusive economic development, connecting analysis of gender inequality with options for policy and workplace change. You can explore the outputs from the project here.



The Northern Ireland Productivity Dashboard 2025: Informing Policy for Long-Term Prosperity

Period Covering: January, 2020 - N/A

Department: Finance



Image: Pictured (L-R), Ruth Donaldson, Dr David Jordan and Seán McDonald from the Northern Ireland Productivity Forum at Queen's Business School.

Research at Queen's Business School is helping businesses and policymakers understand Northern Ireland's productivity challenges and identify priorities for long-term economic development. The *Northern Ireland Productivity Dashboard 2025* was developed by Ruth Donaldson, Dr David Jordan, Seán McDonald, and Professor John Turner on behalf of the Northern Ireland Productivity Forum, based at QBS. The Forum forms part of The Productivity Institute, an Economic and Social Research Council-funded initiative connecting academia, business and policy across the UK.

First published in 2022, the Dashboard compares Northern Ireland's performance with other UK regions across 20 drivers of long-term productivity growth. Its fourth edition found that, although Northern Ireland had risen to eighth place among the UK's 12 regions, productivity remained unchanged at £40 per hour worked between 2022 and 2023. The improved ranking therefore reflected weaker performance elsewhere, rather than an increase in Northern Ireland's productivity.

The research identified persistent barriers to progress. Thirteen of the 20 productivity drivers remained below the UK average, with eight consistently lagging since the Dashboard's first publication. Challenges included skills and qualifications, economic inactivity, political uncertainty, electric vehicle charging infrastructure and management practices. Northern Ireland's management practices score was the lowest in the UK, highlighting an area of particular relevance to management education and organisational development.

The findings also identified strengths on which to build. Northern Ireland had the UK's highest gigabit broadband coverage, at 94%, while participation in lifelong learning reached 55%, above the UK average of 52%. Eleven productivity drivers showed improvements over the short term and eleven over the long term, although these gains had yet to translate into sustained productivity growth.

Explaining the wider significance of the research, Dr David Jordan said:

"*Improving Northern Ireland's productivity is a key objective for both the Department for the Economy and the Northern Ireland Executive. Raising productivity means more competitive businesses, higher wages, and more money available to invest in public services. Our Dashboard shows the key areas that policy needs to focus on to support Northern Ireland's productivity growth over the long run.*"

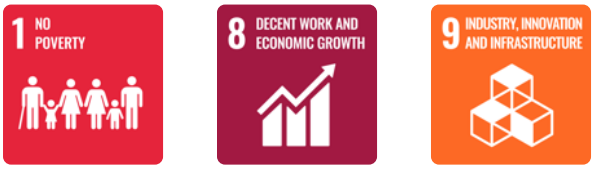
The Dashboard provides an evidence base for understanding interconnected economic and social challenges, monitoring progress and informing policy priorities. Alongside the Forum's *NI Productivity 2040: Addressing Northern Ireland's productivity gap for greater prosperity* report, it highlights the importance of coordinated policy across government.

Seán McDonald commented:

"*The Dashboard aims to show the multidimensional nature of Northern Ireland's productivity challenge. By highlighting to the public, businesses, and policymakers where our strengths and weaknesses lie, it helps identify whether steps are being taken in the right direction for sustainable productivity growth.*"

Through this research, QBS contributes to public understanding and policy debate on the conditions needed to improve organisational performance, living standards and long-term prosperity.

Read the Northern Ireland Productivity Dashboard 2025.



Understanding the Economic and Social Contribution of Northern Ireland's Social Enterprises

Period Covering: January, 2025 - N/A

Department: International Business, Entrepreneurship, and Marketing (IBEM)



Image: Dr Chris Baird of Queen's Business School presenting on the 2025 Northern Ireland Social Enterprise Sector Report.

Research involving Queen's Business School is informing understanding of Northern Ireland's social enterprise sector and contributing to the development of government support. Commissioned by the Department for the Economy (DfE), the project was delivered in partnership with Middlesex University and Social Enterprise UK. It examined the sector's characteristics, financial performance, leadership diversity, environmental impact and access to support.

The *2025 Northern Ireland Social Enterprise Sector Report* found that the number of social enterprises had more than doubled since 2013. The sector supported approximately 17,300 paid jobs and generated nearly £1 billion in turnover. Almost half of social enterprises operated in Northern Ireland's most deprived areas, demonstrating their contribution to communities facing significant socioeconomic challenges.

The findings also highlighted diversity within social enterprise leadership: 44% of organisations were led by women, while 17% were led by people with disabilities or who are neurodiverse. In addition, 72% reported making a profit or breaking even in the preceding year. Together, these findings provide evidence of the sector's economic contribution, inclusive leadership and role in addressing social needs.

Dr Chris Baird, Lecturer in International Business, Entrepreneurship and Marketing at QBS, presented the findings at an event hosted by DfE and Invest NI, attended by policymakers, sector stakeholders and the Minister for the Economy, Dr Caoimhe Archibald. The report set out six recommendations for government and support organisations to strengthen the sector's development and impact.

Following the research, Chris was invited to join the Social Enterprise Action Plan co-design group, contributing to the development of a three-year action plan for the sector. This provides a route for the research findings to inform policy and support provision.

Reflecting on the collaboration, Chris commented:

"*The report shows that social enterprises are already delivering huge economic and social value for Northern Ireland, often in the communities that need them most. It was only possible through close collaboration between QUB, Middlesex, and SEUK, working with government and sector leaders. Being invited to join the Social Enterprise Action Plan co-design group is a chance to ensure the research has real impact in shaping policy and support.*"

The project demonstrates how QBS research can connect analysis of responsible and inclusive business models with policy development. Its collaborative approach brings academic expertise, government priorities and sector experience together to inform support for organisations pursuing economic and social objectives.

Read the 2025 Northern Ireland Social Enterprise Sector Report.



Understanding the Long-Term Human Consequences of the Great Irish Famine

Period Covering: August, 2012 - N/A

Department: Economics

Research involving Queen's Business School has examined how the Great Irish Famine (1845–1852) shaped survivors' long-term health, revealing how evidence drawn from surviving populations can conceal the disproportionate loss of vulnerable people.

The study, *Scarring and selection in the Great Irish Famine*, was conducted by Dr Matthias Blum, Honorary Professor of Practice at QBS, Dr Chris Colvin of QBS, and Professor Eoin McLaughlin of Edinburgh Business School at Heriot-Watt University. First published online in *The Economic History Review* in March 2025, it analysed historical prison records containing information on more than 14,500 individuals born before, during and after the Famine.

Using adult height as an indicator of early-life health and nutrition, the researchers distinguished between two processes. “Scarring” describes lasting harm associated with deprivation and disease, while “selection” reflects differences in who survived. In areas experiencing lower famine mortality, such as Dublin, the evidence showed reduced height among those born during the crisis. In severely affected areas, such as Tipperary, survivors did not display the same evidence of stunting.

The findings indicate that the absence of reduced average height should not be interpreted as an absence of harm. Where mortality was highest, the disproportionate deaths of more vulnerable individuals changed the composition of the surviving population, potentially masking the crisis’s damaging effects.

The project contributes to understanding the unequal human consequences of catastrophic events and strengthens methods for interpreting historical evidence on health and well-being. Its relevance to responsible research lies in demonstrating why population averages require careful interpretation, particularly when the experiences of those who did not survive are absent from the data.

The findings were also shared with wider audiences through media coverage and commentary, including RTÉ, *The Irish News* and the *Irish Independent*, extending public engagement with the research and the Famine’s enduring legacy. You can watch a video overview of the research here.



Northern Ireland Air Pollution Dashboard: Making Environmental Research Accessible

Period Covering: January, 2021 - N/A

Department: Economics



Image: A student walks past "The Salmon of Knowledge" – known locally as "The Big Fish" – a sculpture in Belfast city centre.

Research led by Queen's Business School is helping to improve public understanding of air pollution and inform debate on environmental health. In 2025, the Northern Ireland Air Pollution Dashboard was updated to include air quality data for 2023, extending access to evidence on pollution levels across the region.

Originally launched in 2021, the free online dashboard enables users to explore air pollution by geographical area and compare concentrations with World Health Organization (WHO) air quality guidelines. By presenting complex environmental data in an accessible format, it supports public engagement and provides a resource for policymakers considering air quality challenges.

The underpinning research is led by Professor Duncan McVicar at QBS, with contributions from Dr Neil Rowland, Senior Research Fellow and UKRI Regional Clean Air Champion for Northern Ireland. Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council through ADR UK, the research uses Northern Ireland Longitudinal Study data to examine the relationship between air pollution and health.

The 2025 update coincided with the publication of the Royal College of Physicians' report, *A Breath of Fresh Air: Responding to the Health Challenges of Modern Air Pollution*, which cited the Queen's research within its evidence base. This provides an example of how research conducted in Northern Ireland contributes to wider assessment of air pollution and its consequences for public health.

Dr Rowland commented:

"*Our updated dashboard provides the most current data available and supports the public and policymakers in understanding and addressing the health risks of air pollution. We're proud that our research is contributing to national conversations and strategies on clean air.*"

The project combines research with an accessible public resource, supporting understanding of local environmental conditions and their implications for well-being. Its inclusion in the Royal College of Physicians' report demonstrates the contribution of QBS research to national evidence on clean air, while the dashboard enables communities and decision-makers to explore the regional picture.

Explore the Northern Ireland Air Pollution Dashboard.





NI Productivity 2040: Informing Policy for Long-Term Prosperity

Period Covering: January, 2020 - N/A

Department: Finance

Research from Queen's Business School has examined how Northern Ireland can address its persistent productivity gap through a more coordinated and sustained approach to policymaking. The report, *NI Productivity 2040: Addressing Northern Ireland's productivity gap for greater prosperity*, was co-authored by Ruth Donaldson, Dr David Jordan and Professor John Turner on behalf of the Northern Ireland Productivity Forum, based at QBS.

Launched during National Productivity Week in January 2025, the report builds on the Forum's earlier research into the causes of low productivity. It sets out a roadmap for improving Northern Ireland's prosperity by 2040, examining the relationships between policy challenges, the responsibilities of Executive departments and delivery partners, and the barriers to effective action.

The research identifies fragmented policymaking as a significant obstacle to progress. It argues that productivity challenges are interconnected and require coordination across government, alongside sustained engagement with stakeholders. Policy interventions also need consistent funding across successive political mandates and careful sequencing to maximise their effectiveness. Ruth Donaldson explained:

"*Low productivity is not a new problem for Northern Ireland, as it has persistently lagged behind the rest of the UK. Despite awareness of this issue, policy has so far failed to close the productivity gap. Our report identifies the core policy challenges and sets out a roadmap for what must be done differently to raise Northern Ireland's productivity.*"

A central recommendation is the creation of an independent institution, such as a Productivity and Growth Board, to work closely with the Northern Ireland Executive on the development and implementation of productivity-enhancing policies. The report emphasises that such a body would require political commitment and collaboration across stakeholders. Dr David Jordan commented:

"*Previous attempts to close Northern Ireland's productivity gap have been hampered by siloed policymaking. Our analysis demonstrates that raising productivity requires a joined-up approach across multiple areas of policy, that brings together NI Executive departments and delivery partners to remove barriers to productivity growth. While policy has had success in some areas, the interactions we have identified between policies mean that a new long-term strategic approach is needed in order to see tangible change by 2040*."

The Northern Ireland Productivity Forum forms part of The Productivity Institute, an ESRC-funded initiative connecting academia, business and policy across the UK. Through this project, QBS contributes research-based recommendations on the institutional arrangements and long-term policy commitments needed to support economic development and prosperity.

Read NI Productivity 2040.



Research Awards

In 2025, Queen's Business School was awarded 6 research awards for responsibility- and/or sustainability-related research.

2025 ONE Best Paper in Entrepreneurship and Natural Environment

Granter: Academy of Management

Grantee: Christian Rupietta (Queen's Business School), Björn Mitzinneck, Jana Coenen, and Florian Noseleit

Award Description:

Christian Rupietta and his co-authors received the 2025 ONE Best Paper in Entrepreneurship and Natural Environment award at the Academy of Management Annual Meeting in Copenhagen in July 2025. Their article, "Impact creation approaches of community-based enterprises: A configurational analysis of enabling conditions", published in the Journal of Business Venturing, examines 77

community-based enterprises supporting local energy transitions. The research identifies conditions that enable these enterprises to generate impact and engage community members, contributing to understanding how entrepreneurship can support sustainability.

Queen's University Agility Fund Award – Silver Talents

Granter: Queen's University Belfast

Grantee: Gráinne Kelly and Sajia Ferdous, Queen's Business School

Award Description:

Gráinne Kelly and Sajia Ferdous received a Queen's University Agility Fund Award on 10 January 2025 for "Silver Talents: An Intersectional Investigation into Ageing Females as (Non)-Talents in Northern Irish SMEs". The research examines how age and gender intersect to shape talent identification, inclusion, and exclusion within small and medium-sized enterprises. The award recognises the project's originality, policy relevance, and potential impact, supporting research on inclusive talent management, ageing, and gender at work.

2025 IABS Outstanding Published Paper Award

Granter: International Association for Business and Society (IABS)

Grantee: John E. Katsos (QBS doctoral researcher), Jay Joseph, François Maon, Maria Teresa Uribe-Jaramillo and Adam Lindgreen

Award Description:

John E. Katsos and his co-authors received the 2025 IABS Outstanding Published Paper Award for "Business, conflict, and peace: A systematic literature review and conceptual framework", published in the Journal of Management Studies. Drawing on a systematic review of 215 publications, the article examines how business activities can contribute to peacebuilding or exacerbate conflict. It develops a framework to advance understanding of these relationships and highlights the responsibility of businesses to support peace through their decisions and activities.

Accounting Historians Journal Award of Excellence

Granter: American Accounting Association

Grantee: Professor Martin Quinn, Queen's Business School, and Julie Bertz, Dublin City University

Award Description:

Professor Martin Quinn and Julie Bertz received the Accounting Historians Journal Award of Excellence in April 2025 for their paper, "'If You Want to Get Rid of Filth Diseases, You Must First Get Rid of the Filth'—The 'Economic' Decision by a City Corporation to Collect Household Waste". The research examines the role of accounting and costs in a city corporation's decision to introduce

household waste collection, highlighting the relationship between financial decision-making and public health. It offers a historical perspective on socially responsible public service provision, with relevance to sustainable communities and responsible waste management.

2025 Irvine Lapsley Public Service Accounting and Accountability Group Lifetime Achievement Award

Granter: International Research Society for Public Management (IRSPM)

Grantee: Professor Noel Hyndman, Professor Emeritus, Queen's Business School

Award Description:

Professor Noel Hyndman received the 2025 Irvine Lapsley Public Service Accounting and Accountability Group Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Research Society for Public Management. The award honours his outstanding contributions and lifetime achievements in public service accounting and accountability. This recognition is relevant to responsible management through its focus on accountability in public services and the stewardship of public resources.

Omega 2025 Best Paper Award

Granter: Omega: The International Journal of Management Science

Grantee: Professor Vincent Charles (Queen's Business School), Maria D. Guillen and Juan Aparicio

Award Description:

Professor Vincent Charles and his co-authors received the Omega 2025 Best Paper Award for "Enhanced efficiency assessment in manufacturing: Leveraging machine learning for improved performance analysis". The research develops a machine-learning approach to assessing manufacturing efficiency that explicitly accounts for undesirable outputs, including defects in printed circuit board production. By helping managers identify inefficiencies and opportunities to reduce defects, rework and waste, the approach has the potential to support more resource-efficient and responsible production. It aligns with PRME's emphasis on research that informs responsible management practice and is linked to SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure and SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production.

Publications Related to RME and/or Sustainability

Sectoral challenges: exploring regulatory dialectics in charity performance reporting regulation

DOI

Authors: Professor Danielle McConville — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK. | Professor Carolyn Cordery — School of Accounting and Commercial Law, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

Date of publication: March, 2025

Department: Accounting

Charity reporting requirements take shape through the relationship between regulators and the organisations they oversee. Examining the United Kingdom and New Zealand, this study shows how representation, shared responsibility for regulation, and repeated formal and informal engagement can make that process more collaborative. The authors use regulatory dialectics to explain these interactions and develop a model for understanding how reporting regulation evolves. Their findings highlight the importance of involving charities in the development of requirements intended to strengthen performance reporting and public accountability.



Public good or public bad? Nation-building and Indigenous institutions | DOI

Authors: Dr Aldo Elizalde — Lecturer in Economics, Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK. | Dr Eduardo Hidalgo — University of Cologne, Cologne, Germany. | Dr Nayeli Salgado — School of Social Sciences and Government, Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico. | Dr Sotiris Kampanelis — Cardiff Business School, Cardiff University, UK.

Date of publication: October, 2025

Department: Economics

Infrastructure development can bring national integration into tension with communities' efforts to preserve their identity. This study examines that tension in post-Revolutionary Mexico, where transport infrastructure was intended to advance nation-building and weaken Indigenous identities. Using a difference-in-differences design and variation in pre-colonial political centralisation, the authors find less infrastructure expansion in municipalities with greater capacity for Indigenous mobilisation. Their analysis points to identity preservation and collective action as explanations, challenging the assumption that communities will uniformly welcome infrastructure expansion.





A pecking order of household finance | DOI

Authors: Professor Declan French — Professor of Finance, Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK.

Date of publication: April, 2025

Department: Finance

When household income falls, the available ways of coping are shaped by resources already in hand. Using the UK Understanding Society COVID-19 Study, this research identifies a common sequence: cut spending, draw on savings, then seek help from family or friends. Households that depart from this sequence often face constraints, including spending that is already limited or a lack of savings. The study also examines informal financial assistance and the social factors influencing its costs, offering insight into the pressures behind households' responses to economic crises.



Green Deal and financing sustainable transport in Europe: A target costing analysis | DOI

Authors: Dr Yassine Bakkar — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK. | Eunice Bark — University of Turku, Finland, and Wismar Business School, Wismar University, Germany. | Professor Gunnar Prause — Wismar Business School, Wismar University, Germany, and School of Business and Governance, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia. | Dr Shajara Ul-Durar — University of Sunderland Business School, UK.

Date of publication: January, 2025

Department: Finance

Cleaner transport depends in part on whether firms can access the finance needed to develop and adopt new technologies. Examining European transport and shipping between 2012 and 2021, this study assesses green financing mechanisms using target-costing theory and Clean Shipping Project Platform data. It identifies the European Investment Bank as an important source of support, while highlighting financing difficulties faced by smaller firms and innovative technologies. The findings draw attention to the allocation of funding as a practical challenge in pursuing transport decarbonisation.





Can sustainability-linked lending reconcile environmental and financial motives? | DOI

Authors: Dr Ammu George — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK. | Dr Jingong Huang — University of Nottingham, Ningbo, China. | He Nie — Department of Finance, Wuhan University, China. | Dr Taojun Xie — Asia Competitiveness Institute, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore.

Date of publication: August, 2025

Department: International Business, Entrepreneurship, and Marketing (IBEM)

Linking borrowing costs to carbon emissions could help align lending with environmental goals, but the design of those incentives matters. This paper models lending rates that offer more favourable terms for investment in clean capital. Its two-sector macroeconomic model suggests that such arrangements can support a regulator's welfare objectives and reduce transition-related economic risks more effectively than green capital requirements. It also identifies a tension: banks may respond too strongly to emissions, expanding lending and increasing financial uncertainty. The research could help banks and regulators assess how to design sustainability-linked lending that supports environmental goals while accounting for financial-system risks.



Empowering marginalized communities: a framework for social inclusion | DOI

Authors: Professor Israr Qureshi — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK. | Dr Babita Bhatt — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK. | Shena Shaikh — Department of Liberal Arts, Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad, India.

Date of publication: July, 2025

Department: International Business, Entrepreneurship, and Marketing (IBEM)

Digital access alone cannot resolve exclusion rooted in social hierarchies and unequal power. Through a qualitative study of a social intermediary in India, this article examines how a digitally enabled agricultural extension project supports inclusion. The authors develop a framework organised around recognition, reposition, representation and reciprocation to explain how digital-development initiatives can address marginalisation within communities. The research brings the social relationships surrounding technology into focus, showing why efforts to extend participation must engage with the structures that shape whose voices and interests are recognised.



Decolonizing entrepreneurship: navigating, resisting and transforming patriarchy through infrapolitics in Palestine and the Global South – a systematic literature review

DOI

Authors: Dr Wojdan Omran — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK. | Professor Shumaila Yousafzai — Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan.

Date of publication: October, 2025

Department: Organisation, Work, and Leadership (OWL)

Women entrepreneurs respond to patriarchal constraints through everyday actions that conventional accounts of entrepreneurship can overlook. Synthesising 75 peer-reviewed articles published between 2003 and 2023, this systematic review examines informal and culturally embedded resistance in the Global South through the lens of infrapolitics. It identifies five strategies: strategic disobedience; negotiation; social networks; bricolage and cultural entrepreneurship; and Islamic feminism. Palestine provides an illustrative context for exploring intersecting gendered and colonial oppression. The review foregrounds women's agency and challenges portrayals that cast them primarily as passive victims.



Employee digital transformation experience towards automation versus augmentation: implications for job attitudes

DOI

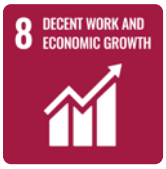
Authors: Professor Shuang Ren — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK. | Professor Soumyadeb Chowdhury — TBS Education, Toulouse, France.

Date of publication: May, 2025

Department: Organisation, Work, and Leadership (OWL)

Digital transformation changes employees' experience of work as well as the tasks they perform. This study examines technologies that automate work or augment employees' capabilities, exploring their implications for job satisfaction, perceived employment security and intentions to leave. Drawing on psychological reactance theory, an experiment and a field survey investigate these relationships and

the role of employee voice. The findings highlight employees' psychological responses and opportunities to have a say as important considerations when organisations introduce new technologies.



Web-based interactive training for managers (managing minds at work) to promote mental health at work: pilot feasibility cluster randomized controlled trial

DOI

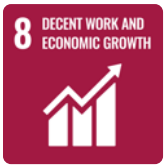
Authors: Dr Juliet Hassard — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK. | Dr Holly Blake — School of Health Sciences, University of Nottingham, and NIHR Nottingham Biomedical Research Centre, UK. | Teixiera Mishael Dulal-Arthur — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK; School of Medicine, University of Nottingham, UK. | Alexandra Frost — Institute of Mental Health, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, UK. | Dr Craig Bartle — School of Medicine, University of Nottingham, UK. | Dr Joanna Yarker — Birkbeck, University of London, and Affinity at Work, UK. | Dr Fehmidah Munir — School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Loughborough University, UK. | Ben Vaughan — School of Medicine, University of Nottingham, UK. | Dr Guy Daly — Office of the Provost, British University in Egypt; Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, Coventry University, UK. | Dr Caroline Meyer — Medical School, University of Warwick, UK. | Sean Russell — Medical School, University of Warwick, UK. | Dr Louise Thomson — School of Medicine, University of Nottingham, and Institute of Mental Health, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, UK.

Date of publication: September, 2025

Department: Organisation, Work, and Leadership (OWL)

Line managers are a focus of efforts to prevent poor mental health at work. This pilot cluster randomised controlled trial assessed *Managing Minds at Work*, a web-based programme designed to strengthen their capacity to do so. Twenty-four organisations were allocated to the training or a waitlist, with 224 managers and 112 direct reports participating at baseline. The training was considered acceptable and useful, and managers' outcomes improved over three months. The research could support accessible, prevention-focused management training and a larger evaluation of whether improved managerial practices lead to healthier workplaces.





Mortality prediction using data from wearable activity trackers and individual characteristics: an explainable artificial intelligence approach

DOI

Authors: Dr Byron Graham — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK. | Dr Mark Farrell — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK.

Date of publication: April, 2025

Department: Information Technology, Analytics, and Operations (ITAO)

Wearable activity data offer a way to examine mortality risk alongside information about people's health and lives. Using UK Biobank data, this study combines wrist-worn activity measurements with hospital records and demographic, lifestyle and health information. It applies explainable artificial intelligence to make the resulting predictions more understandable. Random forest models achieved the strongest reported predictive performance, with an area under the curve of 0.78. The analysis identifies contributions from age, physical activity and other factors, reveals non-linear relationships and explains individual predictions. While further validation would be needed before clinical use, the research could inform more interpretable health-risk assessment and improve understanding of the value of wearable data.



Disaggregating women's agency in digital spaces in the constrained pandemic context: a postfeminist sensemaking perspective

DOI

Authors: Dr Gráinne Kelly — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK. | Professor Maura McAdam — Dublin City University Business School, Ireland.

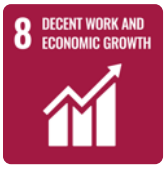
Date of publication: February, 2025

Department: Organisation, Work, and Leadership (OWL)

Digital entrepreneurship can create opportunities for women while leaving gendered expectations firmly in place. Examining the experiences of 28 women digital entrepreneurs during the pandemic, this study explores how participants made sense of running businesses from home, constructed their identities and negotiated or resisted existing expectations. A feminist poststructuralist analysis and

postfeminist sensemaking perspective reveal how opportunities for agency coexist with continuing constraints. The findings challenge assumptions that access to digital entrepreneurship will, by itself, produce gender equality.





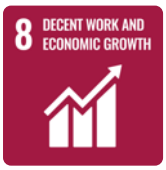
The influential factors of CSR reporting in China: A systematic literature review and future research agenda | DOI

Authors: Dr Xinwu He — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK. | Zhuo Si — Loughborough Business School, Loughborough University, UK. | Xiao Yu — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK.

Date of publication: April, 2025

Department: Accounting

Corporate responsibility reports are shaped by the political, regulatory and organisational environments in which companies operate. Bringing together 54 empirical studies published between 2004 and 2023, this review examines those influences in China. It organises the evidence around company characteristics, wider contextual pressures and internal organisational factors, revealing how these forces interact to shape reporting. The authors also expose gaps in the evidence, particularly the shortage of qualitative research into organisational processes and context. Their research agenda calls for closer examination of how reporting evolves, how effectively it works and what difference it makes.





Devolution and employment relations in Northern Ireland | DOI

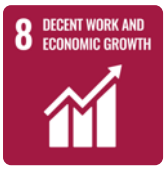
Authors: Professor Niall Cullinane — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK.

Date of publication: August, 2025

Department: Organisation, Work, and Leadership (OWL)

Devolution gives Northern Ireland scope to develop its own employment policy, but how far has that changed employment relations? This article examines policy development and trade-union influence within the region's power-sharing arrangements. It argues that innovation in employment law has been limited, while identifying both intended and unintended departures from Westminster policy. The

analysis also traces the changing position of trade unions: influential under Direct Rule during the Troubles, their role has weakened since devolution, although pockets of influence remain. The paper offers a locally grounded account of the institutions shaping worker representation and employment policy.



A telo-centric approach to rethink grand challenges: digital wellbeing as an example | DOI

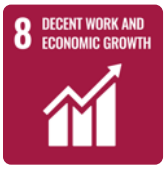
Authors: Professor Shuang Ren — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK. | Professor Soumyadeb Chowdhury — TBS Business School, Toulouse, France. | Professor Pawan Budhwar — Aston Business School, Aston University, Birmingham, UK.

Date of publication: January, 2025

Department: Organisation, Work, and Leadership (OWL)

Human well-being offers a common purpose for research into complex societal challenges. In this conceptual debate essay, the authors propose a "telo-centric" approach: starting with the ultimate human ends that research should serve. They use digital well-being to show how this perspective can connect fragmented debates about digitalisation and its consequences. The paper argues for renewing research on grand challenges around this shared purpose and sets out directions for theory, empirical investigation, practice and policy. Its contribution is a way of framing research and action; it does not report a tested intervention or measured improvements in well-being.







Three centuries of corporate governance in the United Kingdom | DOI

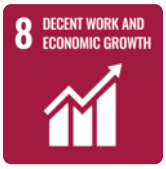
Authors: Professor John D. Turner — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK.

Date of publication: February, 2025

Department: Finance

How company owners hold managers to account has changed markedly over three centuries. This historical survey traces corporate governance in UK public companies, beginning with the enduring concern that managers may misuse resources or fail to act in owners' interests. It argues that widely dispersed ownership should be understood in light of the separation of ownership and control that

helped motivate the corporate form itself. It also identifies a long-term shift from shareholders directly monitoring managers and exercising their voice towards greater reliance on external pressures and selling their holdings. The study places contemporary governance debates in historical perspective.





Collective vision-making practice: a long-run dynamic process model for geothermal market transitioning

DOI

Authors: Dr Joseph Fitzpatrick Ireland — School of Natural and Built Environment, Queen's University Belfast, UK. | Professor Mark Palmer — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK. | Professor Ulrich Ofterdinger — School of Natural and Built Environment, Queen's University Belfast, UK. | Dr Jean-Christophe Comte — School of Geosciences, University of Aberdeen, UK.

Date of publication: January, 2025

Department: International Business, Entrepreneurship, and Marketing (IBEM)

Promising renewable-energy technologies can struggle to develop into functioning markets. This study examines how stakeholders in geothermal energy can build the shared understanding and commitment needed to overcome market stagnation. Using a longitudinal ethnographic approach, the authors develop a process model of collective vision-making, identifying six broad dimensions and twelve interacting practices. Their analysis shows how sustained engagement can help participants with different interests consider the future of the market together. It highlights the organisational and institutional work involved in maintaining a common direction as geothermal energy moves from research towards pilot projects and wider market development.







Exposure to ambient air pollution and onset of Parkinson's disease in a large cohort study

DOI

Authors: Dr Babak Jahanshahi — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK. | Professor Duncan McVicar — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK. | Dr Neil Rowland — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK.

Date of publication: October, 2025

Department: Economics

Understanding environmental risks to health requires evidence that reflects people's exposure over time. This study links residential histories, air-pollution estimates and prescription records within a representative sample covering 28% of Northern Ireland's population between 2009 and 2016. The researchers examine exposure to fine particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide, using the first receipt of Parkinson's medication as an indicator of disease onset. They find no association in the overall cohort, among people over 50, or in samples separated by sex. Among those under 50 in 2011, however, fine particulate exposure is positively associated with onset, with weaker evidence for nitrogen dioxide. The study explores possible explanations for this age-related difference and identifies questions for further investigation. The research could inform environmental-health research and public discussion of air quality by clarifying where associations are observed and where evidence remains uncertain.





Social enterprise as political work: perspectives from the Global South | DOI

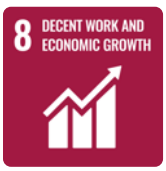
Authors: Professor Yanto Chandra — Department of Public and International Affairs, City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong. | Professor Simon Teasdale — Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, UK.

Date of publication: January, 2025

Department: International Business, Entrepreneurship, and Marketing (IBEM)

Social enterprises operate within political relationships that can shape their ability to pursue social goals. Through an inductive study of nine social enterprises in the Global South, this research examines how they engage with government. The organisations studied combine working outside government with collaboration and criticism of policy, often using subtle tactics that conventional accounts of social enterprise overlook. The findings challenge the assumption that social enterprises simply occupy spaces left by ineffective governments or markets. They show how pursuing a social mission can involve negotiating complex relationships with public authorities and responding to the political conditions in which organisations operate.









Research Voices

The following statements demonstrate ways in which researchers at Queen's Business School bring sustainability and responsible management into their research.

Queen's Business School Research Voices



Image: Pictured (L-R), Professor John Turner, Dr Michael Aldous, and Dr Heike Schröder-Altmann

The PRME Principle "Research" calls upon Signatories to "study people, organizations, institutions, and the state of the world to inspire responsible management and education practice". The voices of some of our stakeholders in relation to "Research" are presented below:

"*At QBS our research and scholarship are all about creating socioeconomic impact. We are strongly committed to engaged research and scholarship. Our research is mapped against relevant UN SDGs, and we are building from particular strengths in the areas of responsible and ethical governance, fair and inclusive workplaces, digital and financial inclusion, social value creation, and sustainable business models. Our research reflects the commitment to social and environmental responsibility embodied in our faculty and PhD students*."

Professor John Turner, Director of Research, Queen's Business School

"*Our faculty conduct wide-ranging research that is engaged with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. As part of the school's vision, we proactively support faculty to conduct research-led dialogue and engagement with business, civil society, and government. This allows our academics' research to have real-world impact, embedding principles of sustainability and ethics within our stakeholders*."

Dr Michael Aldous, Director of Research Impact and Engagement, Queen's Business School

"*Across the Organisation Work and Leadership Department at Queen's Business School, we engage ethics, responsibility and sustainability by examining how organisational and economic decisions distribute power, rewards and risks across workplaces and society. Our teaching encourages students to think critically about whose interests managerial practices serve, while engaging with questions of fair*

work, employee voice, equality and how to design workplaces that do not harm working people's interests. Through research in collaboration with employers, trade unions, policymakers and community organisations, the Department supports more democratic workplaces and seeks to improve working lives while contributing to socially and environmentally sustainable forms of economic development."

Professor Niall Cullinane, Head of the Department of Organisation, Work, and Leadership (OWL), Queen's Business School

"*In Business Schools, our research concerns real people, real organisations, real societal contexts, and the real connections and interactions between them. For our research to be relevant and useful, we therefore must consider the very real challenges that people, organisations and societies face today and in the future. Being out of sync with the challenges of our core constituents in business and society renders our work meaningless.*"

Dr Heike Schröder-Altmann, Reader in Human Resource Management, Queen's Business School

Queen's Business School Research Voices: Connecting Research with Practice – Engagement for Societal Impact



Image: The main entrance to the Lanyon Building, Queen's University Belfast.

Research at Queen's Business School contributes to responsible management and sustainable development by informing policy and organisational practice. In the following reflection, Dr Michael Aldous, Director of Research Engagement and Impact, discusses how the School supports collaboration with external stakeholders, helps translate research into practical benefits and gathers evidence of its impact on organisations and wider society.

Michael, what does your role as Director of Research Engagement and Impact involve, and how does it support the School's contribution to responsible management and sustainable development?
As Director of Research Engagement and Impact I support our faculty in their engagement with external stakeholders. Specifically, I work with academic colleagues to develop projects that apply their research to benefit wider society, looking at ways in which we can use our research to support policy and decision makers across diverse sectors to improve their outcomes.

Can you give us any examples that illustrate QBS research informing policy, organisational practice, or public understanding?
Currently we have two clusters of research that are strongly informing understanding, policy, and practice in relation to responsible management and sustainable development. The first relates to air quality and the economic impacts of pollution. Colleagues have undertaken research to demonstrate both why different forms of pollution matter for a range of health and economic outcomes, and have developed improvements in the ways air quality is measured and the mitigation of negative effects. This has led to policy changes in both the UK and India.

The second relates to the mental health and well-being of employees in both public and private sector organisations. Our faculty have undertaken research to show the prevalence of these issues and the costs they have on both the individuals and organizations. Subsequently, they have developed training and toolkits to support managers to improve recognition and strengthen organizational processes to address these challenges.

What support helps colleagues move from communicating research findings to enabling their use? Where do you see opportunities to strengthen the School's approach?
The University provides training and resources to help academic colleagues to develop their research into formats that can be communicated outside of academia such as preparing formats suitable for the media. There is also extensive support to develop projects that connect research with external stakeholders, providing resources to prepare materials, build networks and track the use of the research.

How do you assess and document research impact, particularly when change takes time and involves many contributors? How does stakeholder feedback inform this process?
As part of the UK REF exercise, we have to submit a number of Impact Case studies that detail how our research is used by non-academic stakeholders. This requires careful engagement to track and evidence how our colleagues' research is used by external partners, the changes that are made, and the impact these changes have on organizations and wider society. We collect a wide range of data and testimonials from stakeholders to evidence these outcomes.

What are the main challenges in ensuring that research reaches – and benefits – the people and organisations who could use it?

There are two significant challenges. The first is translation; the need to take what can be highly technical and specialised research and make it accessible for non-academic audiences, helping them to understand the underpinning benefits. The second is engagement; finding ways to bring academic researchers and practitioners together to share the research and explore ways to make it relevant. There is often a perceived lack of incentive on both sides which needs to be overcome – convincing academics and practitioners that there is significant benefit to spending the time to learn how to work together.

Looking ahead to 2026-2027, what are your priorities for strengthening research engagement and impact at QBS?
I have three main priorities. The first is to identify and support the development of quality research with high relevance for external stakeholders. The second is to focus on building the capabilities of our academic colleagues in relation to improving access to research and engagement through training and resources. Third, to build networks with external stakeholders and practitioners, and support the development of channels through which they can access the research.

Research Barriers

In 2025, Queen's Business School identified the following barriers to conducting research related to sustainability and/or responsibility:

- Publishing barriers
- Time constraints

Continue telling your story

PRME Chapter UK & Ireland Conference 2025 hosted by Queen's Business School



Image: Delegates at the 2025 PRME Chapter UK & Ireland Conference hosted by Queen's Business School.

Queen's Business School was delighted to host the **PRME Chapter UK & Ireland Annual Conference and Doctoral Colloquium from 17 to 19 June 2025**. In addition to being a highlight within the PRME calendar, it represented an important milestone as it was the first time the event had been held on the island of Ireland. The conference attracted over 130 delegates from across the UK, Ireland, and beyond.

In line with PRME's fifth Principle, Partner, and the United Nations' 17th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), "Partnerships for the Goals," the conference theme, "**Partnering for Progress: Enhancing Collaboration, Building Communities, and Navigating Conflict to Accelerate Agenda 2030**", acknowledged the transformative power of partnerships in achieving environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

The conference featured over 50 papers and workshops, four keynote addresses, and three panel discussions with highly regarded speakers from academia, as well as the private, public, and voluntary/third sectors. In addition, the conference dinner, which was sponsored by the Business School, included a fireside chat with leading figures within the global PRME community, namely Professor Carole Parkes (University of Winchester) and Professor Sheila Killian (University of Limerick).

To learn more, you can download the **2025 PRME Chapter UK & Ireland Conference Report** here. In addition, you may wish to view the **Book of Extended Abstracts** from the conference here.

QBS ERS-PRME Related Research Seminars 2025 View document Download document

Queen's Business School Research Advancing Ethics, Responsibility, and Sustainability

A review of Queen's Business School's research outputs conducted in September 2026 identified 98 distinct journal articles published by colleagues during the 2025 calendar year with substantive relevance to ethics, responsibility, sustainability, and/or the UN SDGs. In line with the SIP question's focus on peer-reviewed articles, other research and scholarly outputs, including books and book chapters, were excluded from these figures. The findings therefore capture just one component of the School's wider contribution to responsible management scholarship.

Articles were manually assessed using the titles and abstracts uploaded by colleagues to the University's research management platform, PURE. Where an abstract was missing, this was located online. Inclusion required substantive engagement with relevant issues, rather than superficial references to ethics, responsibility, sustainability, or the SDGs that were incidental to the article's central focus. Where supported by the available evidence, articles were mapped to individual Goals and associated targets. This approach recognises research that addresses sustainable development and responsible management without necessarily adopting the terminology of these frameworks. (For example, studies examining workplace mental health, food waste reduction, or public-sector accountability may contribute to SDGs 3, 12, and 16, respectively, without explicitly referring to these Goals.)

Breadth of SDG Alignment

Of the 98 articles, 91 (92.9%) were mapped to at least one SDG, collectively spanning 14 of the 17 Goals. No articles were mapped to SDG 14: Life Below Water, SDG 15: Life on Land, or SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals in this analysis, although previous mapping exercises have identified research relevant to all three. Forty-four articles (44.9%) were mapped to two or more Goals, reflecting connections between social, economic, and environmental challenges.

The most frequently represented Goal was SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being, with 25 articles, followed by SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth and SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, each with 22 articles. Further concentrations included SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (15 articles), SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure and SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities (11 articles each), and SDG 13: Climate Action (10 articles). Individual articles may be mapped to several Goals, so these counts overlap.

Health, Well-being, and Decent Work

Health-related research extends across workplace well-being, public health, environmental determinants of disease, nutrition, and the use of data to understand health risks. This breadth demonstrates how the School's expertise contributes to questions concerning both organisational practice and population health.

Workplace research examines mental health, stress-prevention competencies, technostress, job insecurity, and the relationship between working conditions and well-being. For example, Hassard et al. (2025), in *"Web-based interactive training for managers (managing minds at work) to promote mental health at work: pilot feasibility cluster randomized controlled trial"*, examine training designed to help managers support employee mental health and create healthier working environments. This work connects management practice with the prevention of work-related harm and the promotion of decent work.

The portfolio also addresses health risks beyond the workplace. Jahanshahi, McVicar, and Rowland (2025), in *"Exposure to ambient air pollution and onset of Parkinson's disease in a large cohort study"*, investigate the relationship between environmental exposure and disease onset. Their research illustrates the connections between environmental conditions and population health, extending the School's sustainability research into the consequences of pollution for human well-being.

Data-driven approaches offer another contribution. Graham and Farrell (2025), in *"Mortality prediction using data from wearable activity trackers and individual characteristics: an explainable artificial intelligence approach"*, explore how activity and personal characteristics can inform interpretable health-risk prediction. Together, these examples show how research in management, economics, and analytics can contribute to understanding health risks and improving the evidence available for organisational and public-health decisions.

Environmental Sustainability and Responsible Production

Environmental sustainability research examines practical decisions facing businesses, policymakers, and consumers. Articles address circular business models, food redistribution, remanufacturing, green materials, sustainability reporting, and the financing of more sustainable transport and energy systems.

For example, Tian, Wu, and Pawar (2025), in *"Achieving food supply chain sustainability through digital sharing platforms: prospects in China"*, examine the adoption of platforms supporting surplus-food redistribution and waste reduction. Complementing this study, Tian et al. (2025), in *"A systematic literature review on the digital platform and its role in the circular economy: State-of-the-art and future research directions"*, review how digital platforms support waste reduction, redistribution, and reuse. These publications connect responsible consumption and production with the technologies and organisational relationships needed to support circular practices.

Research also explores the financial conditions affecting lower-carbon transitions. Bakkar et al. (2025), in *"Green deal and financing sustainable transport in Europe: a target costing analysis"*, examine financing for environmentally sustainable transport and clean shipping. George et al. (2025), in *"Can sustainability-linked lending reconcile environmental and financial motives?"*, investigate the relationship between emissions-linked lending, environmental objectives, and financial risk. These studies address how financing arrangements can support environmental change while examining the tensions and risks involved.

Across the wider portfolio, research on renewable energy, cleantech investment, sustainable supply chains, and food choices further connects environmental objectives with business strategy, public policy, and consumer behaviour.

Accountability, Governance, and Inclusion

Accountability, governance, and inclusion form another substantial strand of the portfolio. Studies examine charity performance reporting, the accessibility of local-government financial statements, and public accountability during periods of uncertainty. This research addresses how organisations communicate their activities, respond to scrutiny, and fulfil their responsibilities to stakeholders.

Other articles explore gender inclusion in entrepreneurship, the position of marginalised communities, Indigenous institutions, and the responsibilities of businesses operating in conflict settings. Research on social enterprise and inclusive markets examines how organisational practices and institutional arrangements can support participation and address exclusion. Across these areas, responsible management is connected to questions of representation, transparency, fairness, and the distribution of power and resources.

Responsible Digital Transformation

Digital transformation increasingly cuts across our research portfolio. Articles examine responsible artificial intelligence, data-breach disclosure, digital exclusion, privacy, and misinformation, alongside applications of technology to healthcare, pharmaceutical traceability, and sustainable supply chains.

This research considers the opportunities offered by technological development and the responsibilities associated with its adoption. Studies address how digital systems affect employee well-being, consumer trust, access to services, and organisational accountability. They also explore how technology can support environmental objectives and help organisations respond to social needs.

Local Relevance and International Scope

Our research portfolio combines research relevant to Northern Ireland with studies addressing global challenges. Locally focused articles examine, for example, employment relations, social-work staffing, and the enduring relationship between the Troubles, ill-health, and reliance on social protection. International research addresses sustainable production, gender inequality, social inclusion, public institutions, and energy transitions across a range of settings.

These publications contribute evidence and insights to inform organisational practice, public policy and responsible management education. While this analysis establishes their thematic relevance, the School is also working to capture more granular evidence of how its research influences practice and policy and contributes to wider societal change. We look forward to providing an update on progress in our 2027 SIP report.



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 Queen's Business School, we actively cultivate partnerships across academia, industry, the public sector, and civil society to advance responsible management education and practice, and to contribute meaningfully to the achievement of the UN SDGs. These collaborations are grounded in our core values of integrity, connectivity, ambition, respect, and excellence.

Institutional Partnerships

- AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business)
- AASHE (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education)
- AMBA (Association of MBAs)
- EFMD (European Foundation for Management Development)
- AIRMIC
- Athena Swan
- Global Business School Network (GBSN)
- Queen's Business School Advisory Board
- Small Business Charter (SBC)
- Women in Business Northern Ireland

Student Organization Partnerships

- Enactus
- Queen's Business School Student Managed Fund

Partnerships

The following provides more details on 12 key partnerships at Queen's Business School.

AASHE & Queen's University Belfast

The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) is an organisation that supports universities and colleges in promoting sustainability through education, research, operations, and community engagement. Its Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) is a self-reporting framework that enables institutions to measure, compare, and improve their sustainability performance across key areas. STARS awards ratings (bronze, silver, gold, and platinum), providing both recognition and a roadmap for progress. In 2025, Queen's University Belfast became the first and only institution in the UK to be awarded an AASHE STARS GOLD rating. For more information, please click here.

EFMD Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) & Queen's Business School

EQUIS is a leading international system of quality assessment, improvement, and accreditation of higher education institutions in management and business administration. Managed and run by EFMD Global, the fundamental objective of EQUIS is to raise the standard of management education worldwide. EQUIS accreditation benchmarks schools against international standards in governance, programmes, faculty, research, internationalisation, ethics, responsibility, sustainability, and corporate engagement. Queen's Business School was first awarded EQUIS accreditation in 2021 and, in May 2024, we were reaccredited for a period of five years.

Global Business School Network (GBSN) & Queen's Business School

In 2023, Queen's Business School joined the Global Business School Network (GBSN), a network of the world's leading business schools working on improving access to management education for the developing world. GBSN encompasses over 140 business schools spread globally, implementing impactful projects and programmes and developing thought leadership. It brings the world's leading business schools together with businesses, NGOs, and governments to improve access to quality, locally relevant management and entrepreneurship education.

A key element of the vision for Queen's Business School is to develop principled and effective leaders who transform business and society. Joining GBSN reinforces the School's commitment to providing transformative experiences for students and amplifying the emphasis on socioeconomic impact and inclusive societies. Professor Ravishankar, Dean of Queen's Business School, said at the time of joining, "*As a member of GBSN, we look forward to expanding opportunities for collaborative research and learning experiences for our students and staff. GBSN is an exciting platform for developing our international footprint and addressing some of the most complex global challenges in collaboration with like-minded partner organisations*." In recent years, QBS faculty and students have participated in a range of GBSN initiatives and programmes, including the Social Logistics Challenge and the Experiential Educator Fellowship.

Small Business Charter & Queen's Business School

Small businesses play a vital role in the global economy and represent over 99% of the UK's business population. In December 2021, Queen's Business School received the Small Business Charter (SBC). In October 2025, we achieved SBC reaccreditation for a five-year period, reflecting improvements made since our previous assessment. The SBC award recognises business schools that support small businesses, local economies, and student entrepreneurship.

We support businesses of all sizes through our Business Hub. The Hub brings together a range of activities led by our Directorate of Business Engagement:

- **Business Clinic**: Businesses of all sizes can work with a student consultancy team to address a specific issue.

- **Data Duo Mentoring**: Organisations develop a two-way mentoring relationship with a QBS Business Analytics student, learning how to use their business data while sharing valuable professional experience.

- **Meeting of Minds**: Business and academic experts discuss, debate, and collaborate on the skills required for the careers of the future.

In addition, the William J. Clinton Leadership Institute (WJCLI) at Queen's University Belfast offers executive education through a range of courses and custom programmes. Founded in 2011, the Institute has helped develop leaders with international impact. Its executive education programmes cover disciplines including management, digital transformation, data analytics, and advanced manufacturing.

Women in Business Northern Ireland & Queen's Business School



Image (L-R): Ciara Hughes, Women in Business Young Women's Network with Julie McCandless, Queen's Business School Director of Business Engagement and MBA Programme Director.

Women in Business is a network supporting women in the workplace across Northern Ireland. It helps women develop the skills, connections, and confidence to start and grow businesses or progress in their careers. Through networking and professional development opportunities, the organisation supports women's participation and advancement in the economy.

At Queen's Business School, we continue to collaborate with Women in Business through initiatives that support gender equality, inclusive workplaces, and professional development. Building on our sponsorship in previous years, we sponsored the "Diversity and Inclusion Champion" award at the 2026 Women in Business Awards, held on 12 March 2026. The award recognised HSC Business Services Organisation in the corporate category and Diane Davis, Minority Recognition Awards NI, in the individual category.

In 2025, we also sponsored the Young Women's Network, which provides opportunities for women aged 28 and under to develop professional connections, build their skills, and explore career and business opportunities. The network supports students, recent graduates, aspiring entrepreneurs, and women in the early stages of their careers.

As part of this collaboration, we hosted the "Creating Connections" Young Women's Network event. Eve Turkington, Careers and Work Placement Consultant at QBS, contributed to the event, highlighting our partnership with Women in Business and the career-focused opportunities available through the School. This activity demonstrates how the partnership connects our support for women's professional development with opportunities for engagement and networking.

Enactus and Queen's University Belfast

Enactus is a global non-profit organisation that brings together university students, academics, and business leaders to use entrepreneurial action to create social and environmental impact. It provides students with opportunities to develop leadership, innovation, and business skills through community-based projects. Enactus also hosts national and international competitions where teams showcase their projects and compete for recognition. Queen's Business School was delighted that the Enactus Committee at Queen's University was led by three of our BSc Business Management students—President Katherine Boyle, Vice-Chair Angela Li, and Secretary Jodi Williamson—alongside Treasurer Catherine McIlhone (BSc Biochemistry).

Queen's Business School Student Managed Fund

Queen's Student Managed Fund (QSMF) provides students with the opportunity to manage and operate a real-money investment portfolio. Established in 2012, the fund transitioned to a real money fund in April 2016. Students currently manage funds of around £50,000 through one of our Gold Sponsors, Davy Group, Ireland's leading provider of wealth management, asset management, capital markets, and financial advisory services. QSMF is also generously supported by Gold Sponsor, Citco, the world's largest hedge fund administrator. The primary aim of the fund is to develop skills, provide practical experience, and to enhance career opportunities. Since 2020-2021, students have formally integrated ESG metrics into their decision-making and consider this within their annual report.

The Queen's Student Managed Fund Annual Report for 2024-2025 can be viewed here.

Airmic & Queen's Business School

Airmic (the Association of Insurance and Risk Managers in Industry and Commerce) is a UK-based membership association that supports professionals in risk management, insurance, and related fields. It provides education, research, networking, and advocacy to help organisations improve resilience and manage emerging risks effectively. Airmic also represents members' interests to policymakers and promotes best practices across industries. Queen's Business School has been delighted to partner with Airmic and leading insurance broker Marsh since 2023 to host an annual "Special Interest Group" meeting at our Riddel Hall campus. Themes addressed have included the ethical and responsible adoption of AI, the growing cyberthreat, and the impact of climate change on industry.

Queen's Business School Advisory Board



Image: The Queen's Business School Advisory Board pictured outside our Student Hub.

The School Advisory Board (SAB) advises the Dean and Head of School on the strategic management of Queen's Business School. It is chaired by Dr Lyle Watters. The SAB also supports the School in increasing its societal and economic impact through education and research.

Through education, the SAB provides an employer perspective on future graduate skills, facilitates access to work-based learning opportunities for students, and provides direct input into degree programmes. Through research, the SAB identifies issues of concern to business, public and third sector organisations, and supports the conduct and dissemination of research, including engagement with communities of practice. Membership of the Board includes:

External members

- **Dr Lyle Watters (Chair)**, Board Director and Global Business Leader
- **The Honorable Deborah L. Wince-Smith**, President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness
- **Paul Henry**, Director, Osborne King

- **Laura Jackson**, Partner, BDO Northern Ireland
- **Karl Hanlon**, Managing Director and Chief Commercial Officer, FinTrU
- **Dr Stephen Kingon**, Chair, NI Centre for Competitiveness
- **Feargal McCormack**, Managing Partner, FPM
- **Paul Allen**, Executive Chairman and Entrepreneur
- **James Rutherford**, Non-Executive Director
- **Elaine Birchall**, Non-Executive Director
- **Ann Pickering**, Strategic Advisor, Director and Executive Coach
- **Professor David Oglethorpe**, Emeritus Professor at Cranfield School of Management

Internal members

- **Professor M. N. Ravishankar**, Dean and Head of Queen's Business School
- **Sonia O'Hare**, School Manager, Queen's Business School
- **Professor Simon Teasdale**, Deputy Head of Queen's Business School

Further information about the members and their work is available on the School Advisory Board webpage.

Association of MBAs (AMBA) & Queen's Business School

The Association of MBAs (AMBA) is a global organisation that accredits postgraduate business programmes, including MBAs and DBAs, to ensure they meet international standards of quality and impact. It also serves as a professional membership network, connecting students, graduates, and business schools worldwide to promote excellence in management education. Queen's Business School was initially accredited by AMBA in 2021, then reaccredited for a further three years in 2024. For more information about our MBA programme, please click here.

Athena Swan & Queen's Business School

Athena Swan is a charter established in the UK and now used globally to advance gender equality in higher education and research. It recognises institutional and departmental commitment and progress through Bronze, Silver, and Gold awards. In September 2025, Queen's Business School achieved an Athena Swan Silver Award, building on our Bronze Award received in May 2020. Silver recognises the structural changes, strategic actions, and positive outcomes achieved through our sustained work to address gender inequalities and create an inclusive environment for staff and students.

For more information about our work related to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB), please click here.

Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) & Queen's Business School

The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) is a leading global business school accrediting body established in 1916. It evaluates schools based on rigorous standards addressing strategic planning, resources, curriculum, assurance of learning, teaching effectiveness and impact, impact of scholarship, and engagement and societal impact to ensure continuous improvement and relevance to the business world. AACSB accreditation is widely regarded as a hallmark of excellence, achieved by less than 6% of the world's business schools. Queen's Business School was granted membership of AACSB in 2015, before being formally accredited in 2025.

Partner Voices

The following statements from our partners demonstrate ways in which our collaborations at Queen's Business School support sustainability and responsible management education.

Queen's Business School Partner Voices



Image: Pictured (L-R), Laura Jackson, Professor Alex Wilson, Professor Julie McCandless, and Professor Alan Hanna

The PRME Principle "Partner" calls upon Signatories to "engage people from business, government, civil society, and academia to advance responsible and accountable management education and practice". The voices of some of our stakeholders in relation to "Partner" are presented below:

"*Our collaboration with QBS provides students with opportunities for practical, hands-on learning that incorporates themes around business and sustainability. Programmes like the NI Business Challenge and the Business Insight Programme, involving outreach to schools across Northern Ireland, encourage students to develop business strategies, teamwork, and innovative thinking in real-time, addressing actual business challenges and ethical dilemmas faced by real and indigenous organisations. For example, case studies and business challenges often focus on pressing issues around sustainability, ethics, and social impact, requiring students to devise responsible solutions that benefit both business and society.*"

Laura Jackson, Partner, BDO Northern Ireland & Member of the Queen's Business School Advisory Board

"*QBS places ethical, responsible, and sustainable behaviours at the centre of all that we do. It is our obligation to support students to become professionals who can shape a better world. In concert with our research, our programmes provide continuous learning and development towards this aim. This is core to our international partnerships and how we develop education and research activities as a business school*."

Professor Alex Wilson, Director of Internationalisation, Queen's Business School

"*We are focused on creating and maintaining partnerships with businesses of all sizes to share learning on the issues of sustainability and climate change. Through activities such as consulting projects, our students engage directly with local businesses to both drive sustainability innovation and enhance business practices. This collaborative approach enables better understanding of the challenges organisations face and more informed research and business recommendations.*"

Professor Julie McCandless, Director of Business Engagement and MBA Programme Director, Queen's Business School

"*Business School accreditations are designed to promote continuous improvement but they also require schools to think carefully about their mission, impact on society, and connections to the global community. Committing to PRME, and adopting the seven principles, has helped to frame our approach to responsible management practices on our journey to achieving 'triple accreditation'. We are delighted to have been part of the PRME Champion network to demonstrate our commitment to 'serving business and society' and to strengthen and deepen ethics and sustainability across our teaching, research, and engagement activities*."

Professor Alan Hanna, Director of Education and Accreditation, Queen's Business School

Queen's Business School Partner Voices: Partnerships with Purpose – Connecting Students, Business, and Society



Image: Karl Webb, Business Engagement and Employability Manager at Queen's Business School.

Karl Webb, Business Engagement and Employability Manager at Queen's Business School, reflects on how partnerships with employers, alumni and community organisations bring responsible management education to life. He explores the importance of trust, mutual learning and shared purpose in creating opportunities that support students' development and deliver wider social value.

Karl, what does your role as Business Engagement and Employability Manager involve, and how does it support the School's approach to responsible management education?
As Business Engagement and Employability Manager, I lead a team dedicated to connecting students with employers, entrepreneurs, alumni and community partners through careers education, placements, enterprise activity and experiential learning. My role focuses on creating opportunities that help students develop professionally while also understanding the wider social, environmental and ethical responsibilities of business. Our work spans employability, work placements, enterprise, mentoring, community engagement and strategic partnerships, all of which support the School's ambition to develop principled and effective leaders.

Responsible management education is ultimately about helping students understand how business can create positive value for society. Through initiatives such as QBS Community Impact, QBS Enterprise and QBS Connect, we encourage students to engage with real-world challenges, work with diverse stakeholders and reflect on the broader impact of their decisions. My role helps bridge the gap between education, industry and society, ensuring that students graduate not only career-ready, but also equipped to lead with integrity, purpose and responsibility.

How do you identify and develop partnerships that align with the School's values? What makes a partnership worthwhile for students, the School and the partner organisation?

We look for partnerships that go beyond recruitment and provide genuine opportunities for learning, collaboration and impact. When engaging with organisations, we consider whether their values, culture and approach align with Queen's and the School's commitment to integrity, inclusion, sustainability and responsible leadership.

A worthwhile partnership should create value for all parties involved. For students, it should provide opportunities to learn, gain experience and build confidence. For the School, it should strengthen our educational offering and help us remain connected to emerging industry and societal challenges. For the partner organisation, it should offer access to talent, fresh perspectives and meaningful engagement with the University.

Long-term relationships, such as our work with Young Enterprise NI and community organisations such as R-CITY where there is a focus on widening participation, are particularly valuable because they enable us to contribute to the development of future talent while supporting wider social and economic outcomes.

How do partners help shape students' learning and preparation for work, particularly around ethical, social and environmental challenges? Could you share an example?
Our partners play an important role in helping students understand that successful organisations must create value not only for shareholders, but also for employees, communities and wider society. By working with employers, social enterprises, charities, community organisations and alumni, students gain first-hand insight into the ethical, social and environmental challenges that leaders face in practice. These interactions help students develop the critical thinking, empathy and stakeholder-awareness required to make responsible decisions throughout their careers.

A particularly strong example is QBS Community Impact where QBS partners with Splash Projects, which connects students with community organisations and social initiatives across Northern Ireland. Through these experiences, students engage directly with issues such as social inclusion, educational disadvantage, community development and social mobility.

Rather than learning about these challenges in theory, students work alongside community partners to understand lived experiences and explore how business knowledge and leadership skills can contribute to positive social change. Participation in QBS Community Impact has helped our students gain a deeper understanding of the barriers and challenges faced by some communities. In doing so, students develop not only professional skills but also a stronger appreciation of the role business can play in creating a more inclusive, sustainable and equitable society. This type of experiential learning helps students recognise that responsible management is not a separate discipline; it is a way of thinking about leadership, decision-making and impact that should inform every stage of their professional lives.

How do you work with partners to make employability opportunities accessible to students from different backgrounds and circumstances? What barriers remain, and how are you addressing them?
Accessibility and inclusion are central to our approach. We work closely with employers and partners to promote opportunities fairly and encourage recruitment practices that recognise different backgrounds, experiences and pathways into employment. We also provide tailored careers support, mentoring, skills development and confidence-building activities to help students engage successfully with these opportunities.

Barriers still exist. Some students face financial constraints, caring responsibilities, limited professional networks or a lack of confidence when engaging with employers.

International students can face additional challenges relating to visa requirements and understanding the local labour market. To address these barriers, we focus on creating a diverse range of opportunities, increasing employer awareness, providing targeted support and ensuring students have access to networks and experiences that may otherwise be unavailable to them. We have also invested in a range of external resources, including platforms like Student Circus, which are designed to provide specific support to international students navigating the UK labour market.

How do you ensure partnerships involve mutual learning and meaningful input from both sides? Can you give an example of partner or student feedback leading to a change in your approach?
The most successful partnerships are built on collaboration rather than transaction. We see employers, alumni, community organisations and students as active partners in the educational experience, each bringing valuable perspectives and expertise. Maintaining regular dialogue, seeking feedback and being willing to adapt our approach are essential to ensuring partnerships remain relevant, impactful and mutually beneficial.

We gather insight through employer consultations, placement reviews, student evaluations, advisory discussions and informal engagement throughout the year. This allows us to understand emerging industry needs, identify areas for improvement and ensure our activities continue to create value for all stakeholders. Our aim is not simply to provide opportunities for students, but to create an environment where students, partners and the School learn from one another and shape future activity together.

One example is the development of **QBS Connect**. Student feedback highlighted a desire for more opportunities to build connections across cultures, programmes and backgrounds. In response, we worked with student leaders and partners across the University to support a broader range of student-led activities, cultural celebrations and community-focused events. These activities have strengthened students' sense of belonging while creating opportunities for peer learning, cultural exchange and wider engagement with the University community.

We have also adapted our employer engagement approach in response to partner feedback. Employers consistently emphasised the importance of skills such as communication, resilience, teamwork and adaptability alongside academic and technical knowledge. This has influenced the design of employability workshops, mentoring initiatives, networking events and experiential learning opportunities, ensuring students are better prepared for the realities of the modern workplace.

For me, mutual learning means recognising that the most effective partnerships are those where everyone has a voice. When students, employers, community organisations and the School work together to shape activities and initiatives, the outcomes are stronger, more relevant and ultimately more impactful for all involved.

What challenges arise in building and sustaining partnerships that support responsible management and sustainable development? What have you learned from relationships that have been harder to develop?

One of the biggest challenges is moving partnerships beyond a transactional relationship to something that creates genuine long-term value. Most organisations are operating with limited time, resources and competing priorities, so even when there is enthusiasm for working with the Business School, it can be difficult to sustain momentum and translate good intentions into tangible outcomes.

I have also learned that organisations often engage with universities for very different reasons. Some are primarily interested in recruitment, others in raising their profile, while organisations in the third sector may be focused on community impact, service delivery or funding pressures. Building a successful partnership requires taking the time to understand those motivations and finding areas where our objectives genuinely align.

The relationship we developed with CO3 is a good example. While there was a strong shared interest in developing talent and supporting Northern Ireland's third sector, many charities and social enterprises have limited capacity and may not initially see internships as a realistic option. Building trust required ongoing conversations about the benefits, adapting our approach to their needs and helping organisations understand how students could add value. The result was not immediate, but over time several organisations have become involved in our postgraduate internship programme, creating opportunities that benefit both students and the wider community.

Some of the most valuable lessons have come from partnerships that have been slower to develop than expected. I have learned that shared values alone are not enough; partnerships also need clear objectives, committed champions on both sides and realistic expectations about what success looks like. I have also learned that listening is often more important than selling. The strongest relationships are built when organisations feel heard and when the partnership is designed around mutual benefit rather than institutional priorities.

Ultimately, responsible management and sustainable development are long-term commitments rather than quick wins. The same is true of partnerships. The relationships that have delivered the greatest impact for our students and communities are often those that have taken time to build, requiring patience, trust and a willingness to learn from each other along the way.

Looking ahead to 2026-2027, what are your priorities for strengthening the School's partnerships? What would meaningful progress look like for students and partner organisations?
Looking ahead, my priority is to deepen the quality, diversity and impact of our partnerships, ensuring they continue to support the School's commitment to responsible leadership, sustainable development and student success. While placements and graduate opportunities remain important, I am particularly interested in expanding partnerships that provide students with opportunities to engage with real societal challenges through enterprise, community engagement, mentoring, volunteering and experiential learning. Our aim is to create a connected ecosystem where students can learn from employers, alumni, entrepreneurs and community organisations throughout their university journey.

A key focus will be strengthening initiatives such as QBS Community Impact, QBS Enterprise and QBS Connect, while continuing to build relationships with organisations whose values align with those of the School. This includes expanding partnerships with community and third-sector organisations, supporting student volunteering, and creating more opportunities for students to develop leadership skills through meaningful engagement with social, economic and environmental issues. Partnerships with organisations such as Young Enterprise NI, R-CITY and CO3 demonstrate the value of connecting students with communities and causes beyond traditional graduate recruitment activities.

I also want to further develop opportunities for employers and industry professionals to contribute to the student experience through mentoring, guest speaking, project-based learning and initiatives such as our annual Datathon. These activities allow students to apply their knowledge to real-world challenges while gaining exposure to different perspectives and leadership approaches.

For students, meaningful progress would mean greater access to high-quality placements, mentoring relationships, enterprise opportunities, volunteering experiences and community-based projects. It would also mean developing a stronger sense of belonging, greater cultural awareness and a deeper understanding of how they can use their skills to create positive impact in their future careers.

For partner organisations, meaningful progress would mean building long-term relationships with the School that go beyond recruitment. I would like partners to see Queen's Business School as a trusted collaborator that can contribute talent, ideas, research, innovation and community impact. Success would be reflected in partnerships that create value for all involved, where students gain transformative learning experiences, organisations access fresh perspectives and future talent, and together we contribute to a more sustainable, inclusive and prosperous society.

Continue telling your story

The Northern Ireland Schools Business Challenge 2025



Image: Winners of the 2025 NI Schools Business Challenge, St Mary's Grammar School. Pictured back row (L-R) Jill Armer, Education Manager for Business Studies at CCEA, Professor Ciaran Connolly, Queen's Business School, Lorraine Nelson, Partner & Head of Tax at BDO Northern Ireland, Billy Moore, Group Finance Director at Henderson Group and Mr Conor McCauley, St Mary's Grammar Magherafelt. Front row: the winning team from St Mary's Grammar; Emma Loughran, Helen McNicholl, Eva McGeehan, Emma Bradley, Daniel Cuskeran, Aoibhe Sherman and Professor Danielle McConville, Queen's Business School.

In 2025, Queen's Business School hosted the eighth annual Northern Ireland Schools' Business Challenge in collaboration with Henderson Group and BDO Northern Ireland, supported by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). The competition brings together schools, higher education and business to support pupils in applying classroom learning to practical business challenges.

The event welcomed 150 AS-Level students from across Northern Ireland. Working in teams, participants drew on knowledge from subjects including mathematics, economics and business studies to address a challenge set by Henderson Group. They presented their proposals to a panel of industry professionals and academics, receiving feedback on their ideas and developing their teamwork, communication and presentation skills.

St Mary's Grammar School, Magherafelt, won the 2025 competition, receiving £500 for the school and VIP tickets to a Belfast Giants game.

Reflecting on the connection between education and business practice, Lorraine Nelson, Partner and Head of Tax at BDO Northern Ireland, said: "*Time and again, this competition has shown how students can connect their learning to real-world applications. It was inspiring to see their enthusiasm and talent and I am in no doubt that the future is bright for NI with these students*."

Billy Moore, Group Finance Director at Henderson Group, highlighted the opportunity to engage with pupils and see their skills in practice: "*We were incredibly impressed with the winning school's performance, and all pupils on the day showed they are future leaders in business. Being on the judging panel and engaging with the pupils is always an interesting day for us, especially seeing skills the students put into practice with our business challenge. Congratulations to St Mary's Grammar!*"

Professor Ciaran Connolly from Queen's Business School commented on the quality of the students' work and the competition's connection to further study: "*Each year I think that the standard cannot get any higher, and each year I am proved wrong. The quality of the presentations continues to improve year on year, with the pupils demonstrating an insight way beyond their years. They are a credit to their school, and I hope that many will return to Queen's Business School as students in the future*."

The competition supports CCEA's A-Level Business Studies curriculum, providing an opportunity for pupils to apply their knowledge beyond the classroom and explore their interest in business education and careers. Jill Armer, Education Manager for Business Studies at CCEA, noted: "*This year's event attracted more students and more teams than ever before. A testament to how the NI Schools' Business Challenge has become a valued addition to the school calendar. The students have as ever been outstanding, demonstrating knowledge, confidence and the skills required should they decide to continue their business studies and work towards a successful business career*."

Queen's Business School and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships: Connecting Academic Expertise with Organisational Practice

Queen's Business School contributes to the University's Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) programme, which connects academic expertise, graduate talent and partner organisations to address practical challenges and support innovation.

In 2025, the University highlighted QBS's partnership with Positive Futures NI. Through this collaboration, the charity is undertaking a digital transformation programme to develop and embed systems for reporting and analysing key data. The project aims to strengthen the evidence informing management decisions and support the charity's stakeholders, illustrating how knowledge exchange can help build organisational capacity within the voluntary sector.

KTP projects embed a graduate or postgraduate Associate within a partner organisation, supported by academic and industry supervisors. This approach combines the application of academic knowledge with professional development and organisational learning.

In April 2025, Queen's celebrated 30 years of participation in the programme. Across the University, KTP activity over this period had supported more than 450 businesses, generated £50 million for the Northern Ireland economy and created over 500 jobs. You can read more about our KTPs here.

Queen's University Belfast: Strengthening Business–University Collaboration through NI Chamber



Image: Pictured at Queen's (L-R), Dr Ryan Feeney, Vice President for Governance and External Affairs, and Registrar at Queen's; Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive of NI Chamber; Professor Sir Ian Greer, Queen's President and Vice-Chancellor; Joanne Mallon; and Julie McCandless announce a new strategic partnership.

In September 2025, Queen's University Belfast and the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NI Chamber) announced a strategic partnership to strengthen collaboration between business and academia in support of sustainable economic growth. Building on an established relationship, the partnership brings together the University, including Queen's Business School, and NI Chamber to connect academic research and teaching with industry needs.

A central commitment is the joint production of a Quarterly Business Survey, combining NI Chamber's business network with the University's academic expertise. The survey is intended to provide policymakers, investors and business leaders with evidence-based insights into the challenges and opportunities facing firms across Northern Ireland. The partnership also includes planned engagement with UK and US policymakers, creating opportunities to bring regional business perspectives and academic knowledge into economic policy discussions.

Welcoming the partnership, Professor Sir Ian Greer, President and Vice-Chancellor of Queen's, said:

"*Both Queen's and the Northern Ireland Chamber have a shared heritage of excellence on this island stretching back two centuries and this partnership builds on our long-standing relationship*.

"*Combining the global reputation of Queen's as a top-200 University, our triple-accredited Business School which ranks in the top 1% worldwide, and the Chamber's significant policy influence, will be a powerful step forward in maximising Northern Ireland's economic impact regionally, and globally. Formalising our partnership will enable us to deliver the evidence-based insights, graduate talent and innovation needed to shape economic policy and drive growth*."

Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive of NI Chamber, added:

"*This partnership underscores a shared vision: to position Northern Ireland as a dynamic, knowledge-driven economy with the capability and ambition to thrive on the global stage*.

"*NI Chamber and Queen's University have a successful track-record of working together – formalising our relationship in this way will see the reach and impact of our combined expertise flourish. We have committed to working closely together to strengthen the bridge between the university and the business community, creating opportunities for knowledge exchange, policy influence, and international collaboration, all in pursuit of a stronger, more globally competitive economy in Northern Ireland. It is a very exciting development for our Chamber and one we, and our member businesses, are excited to see grow*."

You can read more about the initiative here.

Queen's Business School: Developing Leadership in Accountancy through Partnership with Chartered Accountants Ireland



Image: Pictured (L-R), Joe Carroll, Head of Professional Development, Chartered Accountants Ireland (CAI), Sue Burns, Head of Sales and Marketing, Clinton Leadership Institute, Queen's Business School (QBS), Rosemary Keogh, Chief Executive, CAI, Louise O'Meara, Programme Director at Clinton Leadership Institute, QBS, Pamela McCreedy, President of CAI, Brian Murphy, Partner, Audit & Assurance & Lead, Deloitte Ireland, Ann-Marie Herbert, Professional Development Accountant, CAI, and Lindsay McCrudden, Marketing Officer, Clinton Leadership Institute, QBS

In November 2025, Queen's Business School and Chartered Accountants Ireland announced a new Executive Leadership Programme to support accounting professionals in developing the skills, confidence and insight needed to lead in an increasingly complex environment. The collaboration brings together professional expertise from Chartered Accountants Ireland and leadership development expertise from the Clinton Leadership Institute at QBS.

The programme combines in-person and online learning, covering self-awareness, resilience, communication, coaching and the leadership of high-performing teams. It is designed to help participants respond to global disruption and technological transformation, strengthen their interpersonal capabilities and lead organisational change.

Contributors announced for the programme include Dr Louise O'Meara, Richard Ramsey, Professor Vincent Charles, Enda Young and Peter Ivanov, bringing perspectives from leadership, economics, artificial intelligence, communication and team coaching. The first intake was scheduled to begin in February 2026, with sessions in Belfast and Dublin supported by an online learning platform.

Commenting on the launch, Professor M. N. Ravishankar, Dean and Head of Queen's Business School, said:

"*At Queen's Business School, we recognise that leadership in today's world demands more than experience—it requires vision, adaptability, and a deep understanding of the forces reshaping our society. This partnership with Chartered Accountants Ireland reflects our shared commitment to developing leaders who can navigate complexity with confidence and lead with purpose. The Executive Leadership Programme is designed to equip professionals with the insight, agility, and human-centred mindset needed to thrive in this new era of transformation*."

Pamela McCreedy, President of Chartered Accountants Ireland, added:

"*Trusted leadership is more important than ever. This programme has been designed to help leaders step forward with confidence, building the capabilities and networks they need to succeed in a volatile environment*."

The partnership provides a route for QBS to extend its educational contribution to practising accountants, supporting continuing professional development and encouraging reflection on the human dimensions of leadership and organisational change.

You can read more about the initiative here.

ETC4SME: Cross-Border Collaboration for Sustainable Business Development

In October 2025, Queen's Business School joined Atlantic Technological University, Ulster University and Catalyst in launching ETC4SME (Enabling Technology Cluster for Small and Medium Enterprises), a four-year, €9.45 million cross-border initiative. Led by Atlantic Technological University, the project is co-funded by the European Union and UK Government through PEACEPLUS, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body.

The initiative aims to support SMEs across Northern Ireland and Ireland's border counties in adopting technology-enabled innovation, with a particular focus on environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices and artificial intelligence. Tailored support will help businesses improve products and processes, strengthen competitiveness and pursue more sustainable operations.

QBS contributes through the William J. Clinton Leadership Institute, including the development of a "Leading Transition Series" comprising three leadership and management courses. These courses are designed to equip SME leaders to embrace innovation and business growth, complementing the project's wider technological and organisational support.

The collaboration responds to regional challenges including low productivity, limited investment in research and development, and uneven access to innovation support. By combining leadership education, academic expertise and industry engagement, the partners aim to strengthen SME capacity and cross-border cooperation, supporting sustainable economic development.

You can read more about the initiative here.

Queen's Business School Business Breakfast Insights: Exploring Global Trade Tariffs



Image: Pictured L-R are Karl Webb, Business Engagement and Employability Manager at Queen's Business School; Gareth Hagan, CEO at OCO Global; Richard Ramsey, Professor of Practice in Economics and Policy at Queen's Business School; Lorraine Nelson, Partner & Head of Tax, BDO Northern Ireland; Patrick Collins, CFO, Belfast Distillery Company; and Dr Michael Aldous, Senior Lecturer in International Business, Entrepreneurship, and Marketing at Queen's Business School.

As part of its Business Breakfast Insights series, Queen's Business School hosted an event examining the implications of US trade tariff announcements for economic growth, supply chains, and international business on 15 May 2025. The discussion explored the risks and potential opportunities arising from changes in trade policy, providing a forum for academics and practitioners to share perspectives on managing uncertainty.

The panel brought together Richard Ramsey, Professor of Practice in Economics and Policy at QBS; Lorraine Nelson, Partner and Head of Tax at BDO Northern Ireland; Patrick Collins, Chief Financial Officer at Belfast Distillery Company; Gareth Hagan, Chief Executive Officer of OCO Global; and Dr Michael Aldous, Senior Lecturer in International Business, Entrepreneurship and Marketing at QBS. Their contributions combined academic analysis with insights from taxation, international trade and business operations.

Highlighting the challenges facing business decision-makers, Richard Ramsey stated:

"*Uncertainty is a fact of life. But Donald Trump's first 100 days have seen uncertainty, particularly relating to trade policy, hit unprecedented levels. The hiking, lowering and pausing of tariffs, in quick order, makes it difficult for businesses to keep up, let alone react and plan for the future*."

Dr Michael Aldous emphasised the value of a longer-term perspective:

"*Whilst recent developments in tariffs are creating significant uncertainty in global markets, looking at the long run helps to reveal possible directions of travel in the economic environment that can provide a deeper context to help companies navigate these challenges and opportunities*."

The event illustrates QBS's approach to knowledge exchange, connecting research and practical experience to support discussion of complex business challenges. Julie McCandless, Professor of Practice and Director of Business Engagement at QBS, explained:

"*The QBS Business Breakfast Insights series is designed to create a dynamic space where business leaders and academic experts can come together to exchange knowledge, challenge assumptions, and explore practical solutions to real-world issues. By bridging the gap between theory and practice, we aim to drive meaningful impact for both industry and academia*."

Queen's Business School Business Breakfast Insights: The Leadership Pendulum – Connecting Employee Well-being and Organisational Performance



Image: Pictured (L-R), Connor O'Rourke, Root & Rise, Brendan Mooney, Kainos, Karl Webb, QBS, Dr Juliet Hassard, QBS, Caroline van der Feltz, Danske Bank, and Professor Dermot Breslin.

As part of its Business Breakfast Insights series, Queen's Business School hosted *The Leadership Pendulum*, an event exploring the relationship between employee well-being and organisational performance on 15 October 2025. Bringing together academic research and practitioner perspectives, the session examined how leaders can respond to hybrid working, intergenerational teams and changing employee expectations while supporting psychologically safe and inclusive workplaces.

Dr Juliet Hassard opened the event with findings from her ESRC-funded research into value-based leadership. Her presentation explored workplace challenges in the post-pandemic environment and introduced the SUPPORT framework, a practical resource designed to help leaders create psychologically safe working environments. Intended for use by small and medium-sized enterprises, the framework emphasises understanding, openness and recovery, positioning employee well-being as an integral consideration in leadership and organisational performance.

A panel discussion then examined how these issues are addressed in practice. Brendan Mooney of Kainos highlighted the importance of aligning performance expectations with organisational values and maintaining trust through consistent, transparent communication. Caroline van der Feltz of Danske Bank discussed the challenges of leading multigenerational teams in hybrid environments. She illustrated how listening to employees can inform more inclusive policies, including support for colleagues with caregiving responsibilities.

Connor O'Rourke, co-founder of Root & Rise, explored the importance of purpose, well-being and authenticity to younger employees. His contribution emphasised the need for leaders to demonstrate organisational values through everyday actions and create environments in which employees feel heard and supported.

The discussion also considered the employee value proposition, including the relationship between pay transparency, equitable reward and access to development opportunities. Participants highlighted that recognising different employee needs must be accompanied by practical opportunities for participation and progression.

Through this event, QBS provided a forum for knowledge exchange on responsible management, connecting research on leadership and well-being with organisational experience. The session encouraged reflection on how people-centred leadership can support employee welfare, inclusion, and sustained organisational performance.

Queen's Business School Recognising Inclusive Leadership: Women in Business NI Awards 2025

Queen's Business School continued its support for the Women in Business NI Awards in 2025 through sponsorship of the *Advancing Diversity in the Workplace* award. Building on sponsorship in 2023 and 2024, this engagement provides a means of recognising individuals and organisations working to create more inclusive workplaces across Northern Ireland.

The thirteenth annual awards took place on 13 March 2025 at Belfast's Crowne Plaza Hotel, celebrating the contributions of women professionals and entrepreneurs across a range of sectors. The QBS-sponsored category recognises efforts to advance workplace diversity and demonstrate the benefits of inclusive organisational practices.

The 2025 award was presented to Cara Marks of Hays plc in recognition of her leadership in advancing diversity within her organisation and beyond. Professor Danielle McConville, Head of the Department of Accounting at QBS, presented the award on behalf of the School.

Through this continuing relationship with Women in Business NI, QBS supports public recognition of inclusive leadership and reinforces the importance of embedding equality and diversity within business strategy and practice. The sponsorship extends the School's commitment to responsible management into its engagement with the wider business community.

Transparent AI for Mental Healthcare Services

How can AI support fairer and more effective mental healthcare services while ensuring that decisions remain transparent and understandable? This question guided a civic engagement and research project led by Dr Mohsen Jafari Songhori at Queen's Business School, in collaboration with MindWise, a Belfast-based mental health charity, and supported by the CiviContribution Fund.

Between October 2025 and April 2026, the project brought together researchers and MindWise colleagues to explore how responsible analytics could address operational challenges, particularly within the charity's NIAAS service. Discussions examined opportunities for better demand forecasting, capacity planning, financially sustainable staffing and fairer resource allocation. Engagement with MindWise's Data Governance Group helped place data-sharing, explainability and ethical AI at the centre of the collaboration.

The project culminated in a research and dissertation workshop at Queen's Business School, attended by approximately 30 MSc Business Analytics and MSc Financial Analytics students. Presentations from MindWise colleagues, the project research assistant and University colleagues introduced the charity's operational priorities and outlined applied research opportunities. Students considered how analytics could inform service improvement, alongside the need for AI outputs to be interpretable and meaningful to staff, service users and governance teams.

The collaboration generated a portfolio of proposed dissertation topics and established a foundation for further knowledge exchange on responsible AI and digital transformation. Its anticipated longer-term contribution lies in future student research and transparent approaches to planning and resource allocation; improvements in service delivery remain an objective for subsequent work.

The project connects responsible AI research, postgraduate education, and civic engagement, with relevance to SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being; SDG 4: Quality Education; SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities; and SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals.

You can view a video overview of the project here.



Practice

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

How We Define Practice

At Queen's Business School, we strive to "walk the talk" by embedding ethics, responsibility, and sustainability across all aspects of our activities. This commitment extends from our curricula, research, and organisational culture to our partnerships, governance, and resource management. We strive to set clear objectives, measure progress, and report transparently in line with the Principles of PRME.

Institutional Policies and Practices

- AASHE STARS report
- Accreditation body recommendation documents
- Buildings/real estate
- Campus operations guides
- Carbon reduction or offset commitments
- Climate action plan
- Environmental stewardship policies
- Faculty hiring, tenure, and promotion guidelines
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Local staff/student/faculty transportation
- Open-access guides
- Professional training opportunities
- Responsible procurement policies
- Student equity, diversity, inclusion
- Sustainability strategy or strategic plan (school or university level)
- Travel guides
- Water

Policy Documents Related to RME and/or Sustainability

Queen's University Belfast Adoptive Leave Policy	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Career Break Scheme	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Dependent Leave Policy	View document	Download document

Queen's University Belfast Disability Action Plan	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Environmental Policy Statement	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Equality Scheme (2024-2029)	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Equality Scheme Action Plan (2024-2029)	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Fertility Treatment Leave Policy	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Health and Safety Policy	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Net Zero Design Guide	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Net Zero Plan	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Parental Leave Policy	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Paternity-Partner Leave Policy	View document	Download document

Queen's University Belfast Responsible Investment Policy	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Shared Parental Leave Policy	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Single Use Plastic Reduction Action Plan	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Staff Charter	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Student Disability Policy	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Sustainability Engagement Strategy	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Sustainable Business Travel Policy	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Sustainable Food Policy Statement	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Trans Equality Policy	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Travel Plan (2023-2028)	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Water Standard Policy	View document	Download document

Queen's University Belfast Whistleblowing Policy	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Annual Sustainability Report (2024-2025)	View document	Download document
Queen's University Belfast Biodiversity Action Plan (2025-2030)	View document	Download document

Practice Awards

In 2025, Queen's Business School received 5 awards for responsible and/or sustainable practices.

Queen's Business School Student Hub Awarded Northern Ireland Building of the Year

Granter: Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA)

Grantee: Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast

Award Description:

The Student Hub at Queen's Business School was named Northern Ireland's Building of the Year 2025 by the Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA). Designed by TODD Architects, our Student Hub is situated beside the historic Riddel Hall within the Stranmillis Conservation Area. The building thoughtfully integrates with its mature woodland surroundings, featuring a two-storey façade facing Riddel Hall and stepping down to three floors at the rear to preserve views of the woodland canopy. Its design includes entrance colonnades, a triple-height atrium, and a variety of teaching and learning spaces that promote collaboration and reflection. The RSUA judges praised the Hub as "an outstanding achievement in holistic design, skilfully responding to a sensitive site, a complex brief and Queen's University's sustainability ambition". The building incorporates a geothermal heating system and uses sustainable materials, aligning with the University's environmental goals. Sonia O'Hare, School Manager at Queen's Business School, commented, "This recognition is a testament to the collaborative effort and dedication of everyone involved in bringing the Student Hub to life. The project reflects our commitment to providing an inspiring and sustainable environment for our students and staff." The Student Hub's success at the RSUA Awards underscores Queen's Business School's dedication to creating spaces that enhance learning and build community, setting a benchmark for future educational developments.

Queen's Business School Athena Swan Silver Award

Granter: Advance HE

Grantee: Queen's Business School

Award Description:

Queen's Business School achieved the Athena Swan Silver Award in September 2025, recognising its sustained work to advance gender equality and promote an inclusive environment for staff and students. Building on the School's Bronze Award in 2020, Silver recognises structural changes, strategic actions, and positive outcomes achieved over the intervening five years. The Athena Swan Charter provides a framework for identifying gender inequalities, examining their causes, and implementing actions to address them.

This recognition reflects changes in recruitment, promotion, workload allocation, and support for staff and students. These areas connect gender equality directly to the School's everyday management and organisational practices. The application was developed through a collaborative process led by the QBS Swan Self-Assessment Team, with support from the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Committee and Queen's Gender Initiative.

The award provides external recognition of the School's progress in embedding fairness and inclusion within its working and learning environment. QBS will continue to build on this work through its wider DEIB strategy, supporting diverse talent, and strengthening inclusive practices across the School.

Queen's University Belfast STARS Gold Rating

Granter: Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE)

Grantee: Queen's University Belfast

Award Description:

In 2025, Queen's University Belfast achieved a Gold rating under the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS), developed by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). Queen's became the first university in the UK to receive a STARS rating. The framework assesses sustainability across research, education, outreach, and operational activities, providing a comprehensive account of institutional performance.

The Gold rating applies to Queen's University Belfast as a whole and encompasses Queen's Business School within this wider institutional assessment. It reflects work across academic and professional services, including equality, diversity and inclusion, estates, campus catering, public engagement, and people and culture.
Queen's reported strong performance in sustainability research and curriculum provision, alongside full marks in the Innovation and Leadership category. For the Business School, the rating provides

institutional context for its own sustainability commitments and the University services and practices that support them. As a sustainability rating, STARS offers a framework for assessing progress and identifying opportunities for continued improvement across the University.

Queen's University Belfast Fairtrade University Award

Granter: Fairtrade Foundation and SOS-UK

Grantee: Queen's University Belfast

Award Description:

In 2025, Queen's University Belfast achieved the Fairtrade University Award, jointly delivered by the Fairtrade Foundation and Students Organising for Sustainability UK (SOS-UK). The award recognises institutions that embed ethical and sustainable practices across their curriculum, procurement, research, and campaigns. Queen's met 11 mandatory criteria through contributions from Procurement, Campus Food and Drink, the Students' Union, staff, and students. The accreditation is reviewed every two years and builds on Queen's first recognition as a Fairtrade University in 2006.

This is a University-wide award encompassing Queen's Business School. The School is represented on the University's Fairtrade Steering Group by Dr Laura Steele, alongside colleagues from operational services and the Students' Union. The group meets quarterly to review and update the University's Fairtrade Action Plan.

The School's representation provides a direct connection between its commitment to responsible management education and the University's approach to ethical purchasing and consumption. The award recognises a collective institutional effort, supported by an action plan that identifies responsibilities and records progress.

Queen's University Belfast Race Equality Charter Bronze Award

Granter: Advance HE

Grantee: Queen's University Belfast

Award Description:

In February 2026, Queen's University Belfast received Advance HE's Race Equality Charter (REC) Bronze Award, recognising its work to identify and address racial inequalities and its commitment to sustained cultural change. The award applies to the University as a whole, encompassing Queen's Business School. It followed several years of institutional self-assessment, including a University-wide racial equity survey, extensive engagement with staff and students, and collaborative work led by the REC Self-Assessment Team and Champions Network. Queen's Business School is represented in the Racial Equity Champions Network by Dr Bibek Bhatta.

The Charter supports institutions in examining barriers affecting the representation, experiences, progression, and success of minority ethnic staff and students. Queen's work has included mentoring support for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues, Active Bystander and inclusive leadership training, and increased student involvement through the Student REC Network.

The award provides a foundation for further action through the University's REC Action Plan 2026–2031. Its priorities include improving representation and progression, addressing the underlying causes of student awarding gaps, and embedding inclusive teaching and curriculum design. For Queen's Business School, this provides a University-wide framework supporting its commitment to an equitable and inclusive working and learning environment.

Practice Voices

The following statement from stakeholders at Queen's Business School demonstrates our commitment to sustainable and responsible practices.

Queen's Business School Practice Voices



Image: Pictured (L-R), Sara Lynch, Brian Horgan, Sonia O'Hare, and Kelly Tagg

The PRME Principle "Practice" calls upon Signatories to "adopt responsible and accountable management principles in our own governance and operations". The voices of some of our stakeholders in relation to "Practice" are presented below:

"*At Queen's sustainability is a strategic priority that informs our teaching, research, and operations across the institution. The Business School is leading the way through its active engagement with PRME, demonstrating a strong and sustained commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. By embedding the SDGs into curriculum design, research agendas, and student experiences, the School ensures that graduates are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and values to respond to global challenges. This leadership is helping to shape a generation of changemakers who will champion social responsibility and contribute to a fairer, greener, and more resilient society.*"

Sara Lynch, Head of Sustainability, Queen's University Belfast

"*Sustainability is central to everything we do at the University. We worked closely with the Business School to develop the café in the Student Hub, and both staff and students have embraced its sustainable approach—most notably, the decision not to use single-use paper cups. This small but meaningful change helps reduce waste going to landfill and reflects our commitment to responsible environmental practices. With agriculture playing a vital role in the local economy, we are proud to champion local produce and suppliers. Our chefs take great pride in showcasing dishes that celebrate the rich food heritage of Northern Ireland. Our Campus Food, Drink and Retail team also provides valuable opportunities for students, engaging around 200 in casual work each year. This not only offers an important source of income, but also helps students build confidence and develop employability skills. These student workers are also passionate advocates for sustainability and ethical procurement, helping to ensure we continue to meet high standards in these areas.*"

Brian Horgan, Head of Campus Food, Drink, and Retail, Queen's University Belfast

"*At Queen's Business School we are committed to integrating responsible and sustainable management within our own organisational practices. We believe it is essential to act as a role model for students, staff, and the businesses we engage with. This includes actively promoting diversity and inclusion, as well as investing resources to enhance the sustainability of our estate.*"

Sonia O'Hare, School Manager, Queen's Business School

"*The QBS Wellness and Sustainability Committee, comprising both academic and professional services staff, PhD students, and representatives from our shared space partners, QUB Campus Food and Drink, has been a driving force behind the building of a sense of community within the School and a champion of sustainability initiatives such as Veganuary and Carbon Literacy Training. It has played a pivotal role in ensuring that responsible and sustainable operational processes are implemented across the QBS Estate, allowing students to see that the School is committed to practising what we preach outside the classroom.*"

Kelly Tagg, Sustainability Champion, Queen's Business School

Continue telling your story

Climate and Environmental Policies and Practices at Queen's University Belfast – A Summary



Image: Queen's University Belfast students visiting the city's Botanical Gardens, which are situated next to the University campus.

At Queen's University Belfast, we have introduced a range of strategies, policies, and guidelines designed to reduce our environmental impact and help us achieve net zero by 2040. As a global institution, we recognise our responsibility to advance environmental sustainability. Queen's Strategy 2030 sets out how the University will embed the UN SDGs across all our activities, including through sustainable procurement, green construction, and divestment from fossil fuels. We are a signatory to the SDG Accord, which recognises the important role universities play in nurturing a culture of sustainability and achieving the SDGs through research and education. In addition, we co-host the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Ireland with University College Cork. SDSN Ireland mobilises its members on the island of Ireland and draws on their strengths to help realise the Global Goals.

Launched in October 2023, our Net Zero Plan sets out a roadmap for achieving net zero emissions by 2040. To inform the Plan, we conducted an engagement campaign with our staff, students, and local residents. This enabled our stakeholders to have their say on Queen's sustainability ambitions and contribute to the development of the Plan. The Plan brings together actions to reduce emissions across Scope 1, 2, and 3, supported by an allocation of over £6 million to help put these commitments into practice. In 2023, the University received the "Best Energy Achievement in Third Level Education" award at the Business Energy Achievement Awards held in Dublin.

Our Annual Sustainability Report 2024–25 reports an interim target to halve emissions from the University's direct operations and purchased energy by 2030, compared with 2018–19. These emissions, known as Scope 1 and 2, fell by 41% to 13,112 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2024–25. This calculation takes account of how the electricity we purchase is generated. However, emissions from our wider activities and supply chains, known as Scope 3, remained above their 2018–19 level, reaching 103,317 tonnes. These include emissions associated with the purchase of goods and services, as well as travel, highlighting areas where further progress is needed.

The report also updates the University's historical emissions figures to reflect improved data and calculation methods. The revised total for 2018–19 is 119,768 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, replacing the previous estimate of 105,430 tonnes. Carbon dioxide equivalent is a common measure that allows different greenhouse gases to be compared. Future progress will be measured against these updated figures.

Our Environmental Sustainability Plan 2025–2027 sets out operational actions and responsibilities that support these ambitions. Recent procurement developments include a Sustainable Procurement Implementation Plan developed in December 2024, an updated Supply Chain Code of Conduct published in June 2025, and mandatory sustainability clauses in procurement specification templates from May 2025. These measures incorporate carbon reduction, circular economy principles, and waste minimisation into purchasing requirements.

Our commitment to ethical purchasing is supported by the University's Fairtrade Steering Group, which brings together representatives from Campus Food and Drink, the Sustainability Team, Queen's Business School, and the Students' Union. The group meets quarterly to review progress and update the University's Fairtrade Action Plan. In June 2025, Queen's achieved the Fairtrade University Award, jointly delivered by the Fairtrade Foundation and Students Organising for Sustainability UK (SOS-UK). This award recognises the integration of ethical and sustainable practices across teaching, procurement, research, and campaigns, building on Queen's first recognition as a Fairtrade University in 2006.

At School and Directorate level, the Local Sustainability Action Plan (LSAP) programme helps teams understand their sustainability impacts and develop tailored action plans as part of the University's wider planning process. Introduced in 2024, the programme encourages collective engagement and shared responsibility for delivering Queen's sustainability ambitions. Teams can create and update their plans through an online tool, with support from the Sustainability Team. The Annual Sustainability Report 2024–25 reports engagement with 25 areas of the University through the programme.

Further information on policies, plans, and implementation is available through the University's sustainability webpages.

Social Sustainability and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) at Queen's University Belfast – A Summary



Image: Students in the Graduate School at Queen's University Belfast. The Graduate School is an important venue for postgraduate students from across the University to connect, collaborate, and build community – as well as avail of training opportunities.

At Queen's University Belfast, we have introduced a range of strategies, policies, and guidelines aimed at advancing social sustainability (for example, fair work, equality and social justice, human rights, health and well-being, and access to education) and promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB). A summary of the key initiatives is provided below.

Queen's Social Charter

Queen's Social Charter is a set of principles that guide and inspire our engagement with local partners. Aligned with the UN SDGs, the Social Charter represents our civic commitment to contribute to society and provide a place of sanctuary. It was endorsed by our Vice-Chancellor, staff members, and student representatives during its signing at our Civic Mission Launch event. Our Social Charter is based on three core principles: (1) providing leadership locally and globally; (2) promoting a positive impact on society through our research and education; and (3) equality and social justice.

Building on these commitments, Queen's was formally recognised as a University of Sanctuary in May 2025. This recognises the University's support for refugee, asylum-seeker, and migrant communities and its work to widen access to higher education. Activities include enhanced support for displaced academics and students, community outreach, and Sanctuary Coffee Mornings.

Queen's Equality Scheme and Equality Scheme Action Plan (2024–2029)

Our Equality Scheme and Action Plan 2024–2029 sets out how the University will maintain an environment that values and celebrates the diversity of our staff and students. Queen's promotes an inclusive culture where everyone is supported to do their best work through development opportunities, collegiality, and a sense of belonging. Progress is monitored and reported annually to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Queen's has also been developing its first University-wide Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2026–2029, *From Inclusion to Impact*, intended to provide an integrated framework across teaching, research, leadership, governance, and engagement. The strategy is intended to complement our existing Equality Scheme and Action Plan. We look forward to providing an update on this in 2027.

Queen's Gender Initiative and Athena Swan

Queen's Gender Initiative (QGI) is a female-focused initiative that works to enhance the participation and visibility of women in all aspects of University life. QGI was established in 2000 following the work of the Women's Forum, which was set up in 1999 with the support of the then Vice-Chancellor to advance gender equality at Queen's. A series of listening exercises, led by a group of senior women, engaged with women at all grades across the University and resulted in a portfolio of recommendations to address inequalities. These were adopted in full, and QGI continues to address gender imbalance through initiatives, projects, and its influence on structures and policy. QGI celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2025.

In January 2024, Queen's received an Athena Swan Gold Award from Advance HE. Queen's became the first university on the island of Ireland and the second in the UK to achieve an institutional Gold Award for its work improving gender equality. At the School level, we have appointed a Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB), Dr Janine Swail, who is supported by a DEIB Committee consisting of staff and students from across the School. The Business School achieved an Athena Swan Silver Award in September 2025, progressing from the Bronze Award received in 2020. The Silver Award recognises evidence of structural change, strategic action, and positive outcomes in advancing gender equality. The application was developed by the School's Swan Team, supported by the DEIB Committee and Queen's Gender Initiative.

Race Equality Charter (REC), Racial Equity Champions Network, and iRISE

Building on the experience, methodology, and framework of the Athena Swan Charter, the Race Equality Charter (REC) supports institutions in addressing racial inequalities and is administered by Advance HE. REC provides universities with a framework to identify and critically reflect on institutional and cultural barriers affecting Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff and students. Queen's University Belfast signed up to the REC in 2020.

In February 2026, Queen's received its first REC Bronze Award. The award followed detailed institutional self-assessment, a University-wide racial equity survey, and engagement with staff and students, supported by the REC Self-Assessment Team and Champions Network. It recognises work to identify and address racial inequalities and a commitment to continuing cultural change. The Charter covers academic staff, professional services staff, student progression and attainment, and diversity in the curriculum.

A Racial Equity Champions Network has been established at Queen's to support the University's work under the Charter and its wider efforts to address racial inequality. The network is made up of staff from all University Schools and Directorates who are passionate about advancing race equality and have knowledge and expertise in this area. Dr Bibek Bhatta represents Queen's Business School in the network.

iRISE is a peer network open to all academic and professional services staff who identify as, or are characterised as, Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic and/or international. It contributes to addressing misrepresentation, inequalities, and experiences of exclusion within academic life at Queen's. iRISE provides a safe and welcoming space for BAME and/or international staff to meet regularly during working hours to discuss workplace issues and plan social events both on and off campus.

Queen's Fertility Treatment Leave Policy

The University recognises the physical and emotional demands of fertility treatment. The Fertility Treatment Leave Policy outlines the University's commitment to supporting staff who are undergoing fertility treatment or supporting a partner undergoing treatment, including the provision of paid time off. The policy sets out leave and pay arrangements, as well as further sources of information and support available to all staff.

Queen's Menopause Policy

Queen's understands that colleagues may need additional consideration, support, and adjustments before, during, and after menopause and is committed to ensuring that those affected are supported in the workplace. The University endeavours to create an environment where staff experiencing menopause or menopause-type symptoms feel confident discussing their symptoms and requesting reasonable adjustments at work, where needed. The Menopause Policy and accompanying guidance set out the University's commitment to supporting these colleagues.

Queen's Trans Equality Policy

The University is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring that all individuals are treated fairly, with dignity and respect. It aims to provide an inclusive and welcoming community where staff and students can realise their full potential and are treated as individuals. This includes providing advice, support, and understanding to those who are trans, gender non-conforming, or questioning their gender identity.

Transitioning can be a positive experience in someone's life; however, as with other major life events, it may also present challenges. Recognising that experiences vary, the University seeks to respond sensitively and supportively through its Trans Equality Policy and associated practices.

Queen's Widening Participation Initiatives

At Queen's, we are committed to providing students with a high-quality educational experience. We are also committed to ensuring that students with the ability to succeed in higher education who face barriers to participation have an equal opportunity to do so. We have developed a range of widening participation initiatives to support primary and secondary school pupils, as well as care-experienced applicants and mature students.

Since 2018, Queen's Business School has participated in the Pathway Opportunity Programme ("Pathways"). Pathways provides a route for talented young people who live in Northern Ireland and have the ability to study at Queen's but might require additional support and encouragement to reach their full potential. This may, for example, be because they are care-experienced or currently under the care of a Health and Social Care Trust, have caring responsibilities themselves, and/or live in a disadvantaged neighbourhood.

Pathway students benefit from a structured series of events designed to support progression to Queen's, including admissions guidance and support. Students also participate in an assessed summer school, with current arrangements set out in the programme guidance. Participants who successfully complete the programme can benefit from a guaranteed conditional offer or interview for an eligible course within their Pathway subject, with reduced admissions offers available in accordance with programme requirements and summer-school performance.

QBS summer-school provision has introduced students to a range of topics, including leadership, accounting, and economics, and provided support to develop their study skills. Provision has also included the opportunity to visit a business and learn more about the careers that may be open to them on graduation.

In September 2025, students who had completed the Pathway Programme began their undergraduate studies at the School on programmes including Accounting, Business Economics, Business Management, and Finance.



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

At Queen’s Business School, we celebrate our achievements in advancing ethics, responsibility, and sustainability in line with the Principles of PRME. At the same time, we remain committed to demonstrating integrity and transparency by openly acknowledging areas where further progress is required, ensuring continuous improvement and meaningful impact.

Engagement Opportunities

Queen's 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:

- Boards and advisory committees
- Annual reports
- Community events and consultation forums
- Feedback mechanisms (e.g., surveys, suggestion boxes)
- Open faculty and student meetings and town halls
- Partnerships with local organizations
- Public events and panel discussions
- Publicly accessible sustainability data and dashboards
- Student and staff volunteer programs
- Sustainability-focused research and collaboration Opportunities

Communication Audiences

Queen's Business School communicates its policies and progress on sustainable development and responsibility with:

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

Sharing Voices

The following statement from stakeholders at Queen's Business School demonstrates our commitment to sharing and learning from sustainability and responsible management practices.

Sharing Voices: Reflecting, Sharing and Learning Through PRME

In this reflection, Dr Laura Steele, Director of Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability and PRME Lead at Queen's Business School, considers how PRME has shaped the School's approach to reporting, reflection and knowledge sharing. She also highlights the importance of openness, stakeholder voice and learning from the wider PRME community.

How does your role as Director of Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability and PRME Lead shape the way Queen's Business School shares its responsible management education work?
To provide some background, I was initially appointed as the School's "Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability Champion", before this was changed to "Director of Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability" in 2021. This reflected recognition on the part of the School of the importance of these issues. As outlined in our 2026 SIP report, we seek to address ethics, responsibility, and sustainability across our curricula, research and scholarship, partnerships, and practices. PRME has proved very valuable in providing a framework for approaching this work.

From the outset, our philosophy has been to try to share as much as possible. For example, in 2021 we were honoured to receive an award for our inaugural SIP report. That led us to develop and run an ongoing series of online webinars on SIP reporting, which have now become part of the PRME Chapter UK & Ireland annual calendar. At the time, I remember someone remarking, "Why would you help other institutions improve their SIPs?" Our attitude was that enhancing SIP reporting was good for the whole PRME community and beyond, and was in service of a much greater good!

How do you approach SIP reporting as an opportunity for reflection and improvement? What has preparing this report helped the School understand about its progress, challenges, and evidence gaps?
We have found the preparation of the SIP report to provide a very welcome opportunity to pause and reflect on what we are doing and identify things we could do better. In fact, one of the things I say at the SIP webinars described above is that it will be a much better experience if schools treat the SIP as an opportunity rather than a burden.

Since our first report in 2019, I can identify noticeable successes. For example, we now have much better and more regular data on the integration of the UN SDGs within our curricula, as well as across our research and scholarship portfolio. However, I think we still have work to do in terms of making use of this data – something we talk about in the "Set your Goals" section under Principle 1 – Purpose.

It is also important to acknowledge that it can be hard for schools – including us – to be open about areas where we have not achieved the progress we hoped for, or where progress has been slower than anticipated. For example, it is currently at the top of my mind that I am overdue in delivering a sustainability-focused SharePoint site for colleagues. Again, this is something I have set as a goal to report against in our 2027 report. Sometimes priorities also justifiably shift over time, which can create challenges for continuity in reporting.

How do you involve staff, students and external stakeholders in telling the School's story? How can their perspectives challenge or enrich the institutional account?
Enhancing this is a personal priority for me! What I have discovered – and I suspect it is an issue for other schools – is that we can become so focused on compiling the "harder" data for the SIP, such as numerical data, examples of courses, and research outputs, that we leave insufficient time for the "softer" elements, including ensuring that a plurality of voices is reflected in the SIP. Having run the SIP webinars for five years and reviewed many reports from around the world, I have found that it is often this "softer" aspect that is the most impactful. Next year, my aim is to seek out these contributions much earlier and from a wider range of people. I am very fortunate that we have wonderful colleagues and students who were very willing to contribute to the SIP this year, I just gave them less time to do so than I would have liked! I think their voices are absolutely vital – they *are* Queen's Business School. I also looked very closely at what they wrote when developing the goals that we set for 2027, and I will definitely do so again going forward.

Through the PRME Chapter, PRME Champions and other networks, what has QBS shared that colleagues elsewhere can use or adapt?
I actually think the most important thing we can share is our approach to PRME, which filters through to our attitude towards SIP reporting. From the outset, we have tried to adopt a mindset of asking, "What can we do for PRME?" rather than "What can PRME do for us?".

We have been proactive when we have seen opportunities or needs within the community – including developing the SIP reporting webinar series; the PRME Chapter UK & Ireland Innovative Pedagogy Competition with Lincoln International Business School; and the new PRME Working Group on Responsible Management Education and Emerging Technologies with the University of Exeter and Woxsen University.

We would really encourage schools to reflect on what they are particularly good at – whether that is engaging students, working with industry, driving sustainability-related research, or something else – and explore ways of bringing that knowledge and expertise to the PRME community.

What has the School learned from the experiences of other PRME institutions?

We have learned so much! Some of this has related to practical aspects of the work, such as streamlining the collection of data. However, probably the greatest lesson has been about authenticity and the importance of reports that offer a strong sense of the institution, its stakeholders, its location and – most importantly – the values that drive it. This came up in 2026 during a session that we co-hosted between PRME Chapter Africa and PRME Chapter UK & Ireland. Whether a school is based in Lagos or London, Luxor or Limerick, that should come through strongly in its report. You can read a blog featuring key insights from the speakers at the webinar here.

On a less positive note, one thing we have discovered through the PRME Champions group project "Reporting with Purpose", described later in the SIP, which we co-lead with Loughborough Business School and Sobey School of Business, is that a significant number of schools are choosing to keep all or part of their SIP as PRME Community Only or Private. This includes a lot of content that actually has a very positive story to tell about the school, which has been surprising. We would really encourage people to share more. Not only will this enhance transparency for their stakeholders, but it will also help us develop a much stronger picture of the development and integration of responsible management education across the globe.

Looking ahead to the next reporting cycle, what are your priorities for strengthening transparency, dialogue and knowledge sharing at QBS?
Again, this has been outlined in the "Set your Goals" section. I would really like to include more physical resources – module outlines, assessment examples, slides, etc. – alongside the examples in the "Courses" section under Principle 3 – Teach. I think people can be reluctant to share these because of the time and effort that goes into producing them, as well as concerns about intellectual property. However, I know there will be faculty within our School who are open to this, especially if, in turn, I can direct them towards inspiring examples from other institutions within the Commons. Another priority will be to increase the number and range of voices within the report even further. In both cases, readers will be able to judge our success based on the content of our 2027 report!

Communication Barriers

Queen's Business School faces the following barriers in transparent communications:



Continue telling your story

Reporting with Purpose: Strengthening Transparency and Accountability across PRME through the Champions Group

Queen's Business School co-leads "Reporting with Purpose", an international research initiative examining the quality and contribution of PRME SIP reporting. Led jointly by Dr Laura Steele of Queen's Business School, Dr Petros Vourvachis of Loughborough Business School, and Dr Margaret McKee of Sobey School of Business, the project brings together researchers from across the PRME community to explore how reporting can support transparency, accountability, institutional learning, and progress in responsible management education.

Initiated in 2024 as a PRME Champions collaboration, the project examines reports submitted following the introduction of "SIP 2.0" and the PRME Commons platform. The first phase analysed 162 SIP reports, involving 16 reviewers from 14 business schools across eight countries. The team developed and piloted a 70-item assessment index, aligned with the Seven PRME Principles, combining structured assessment of disclosures with qualitative analysis of evidence, SDG alignment, and the reports' potential contribution to responsible management education.

Preliminary findings highlight the value of clearer reporting requirements and a more consistent structure, alongside substantial variation in the depth and accessibility of disclosures. Common areas for improvement include supporting claims with evidence, demonstrating progress against targets, making explicit connections to the SDGs, and incorporating the perspectives of students, staff, and external partners. The analysis also identifies gaps in environmental reporting and shows how restricted access to content can limit transparency and opportunities for peer learning.

Outputs to date include the assessment index, research papers presenting the findings, and a presentation at the 2025 Responsible Management Education Research Conference in Belgrade, Serbia. These outputs identify practical priorities for stronger reporting, including clearer links between activities and outcomes, accessible supporting documentation, and greater visibility of the people involved in responsible management education.

A second phase is designed to compare the same institutions' SIP 1.0 and SIP 2.0 reports, enabling a more systematic assessment of changes following the revised framework. Through its co-leadership, QBS is contributing an evidence base to inform discussion of reporting quality and help strengthen the value of SIP reports as tools for reflection, shared learning, and institutional accountability.

We look forward to providing an update on the initiative in our 2027 SIP report.

SIGNATORY

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