

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

Ulster University Business School

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

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

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



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

**Antonio Guterres**

Secretary-General (2017 - Present)

United Nations

”

## Principles of PRME



### Purpose

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



### Values

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



### Teach

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



### Research

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



### Partner

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



### Practice

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



### Share

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



## The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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





# Getting Started

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

## Mission

*Empowering students to have an entrepreneurial mindset, driving opportunity and growing a talented, skilled pipeline.*

Through this mission we are committed to preparing students to become engaged, collaborative, and future ready leaders enabled by people-centric partnering.

Our mission helps us all to focus our thinking on the strategic direction aligned with the University's People, Place and Partnership: Delivering Sustainable Futures for All and its commitments.

We empower students to have an entrepreneurial mindset. This refers to a particular way of thinking and approaching opportunities, challenges, and decision-making. We encourage this by recognising that applied, research-informed and work-based learning represents opportunities for all. Our strength is underpinned by people-centric partnering inclusive of students, staff and industry. We make people the priority, supporting them to achieve their full potential, enabling current and future leaders as they develop more sustainable organisations.

UUBS creates development opportunities across the campuses in collaboration with key partners. Ulster University Business School is making a difference every day, ensuring a transformative impact for individuals, communities and business.

Moving forward, we are committed to actively collaborating with internal and external stakeholders to drive our mission forward. This approach will support UUBS's role as a leading business school as we progress to AACSB accreditation.

## Vision

Our **vision** underscores our commitment to meaningful connections and impactful change. This vision embodies the strength of partnerships and the ambition to create an engaged, entrepreneurial space.

### **UUBS Vision:**

*Through People-Centric Partnering, we will be a leading Engaged and Entrepreneurial Business School, achieving transformational outcomes for our students, staff, and the business community.*

## Strategy

### How Strategy Translates into Sustainable Impact at Ulster University

#### A Unified Vision: How Strategy Translates into Sustainable Impact at Ulster University

At Ulster University, the journey towards a sustainable future is an integrated endeavour, not a series of isolated initiatives. The University's master strategy, *People, Place and Partnership: Delivering Sustainable Futures for All*, serves as the foundational blueprint. This vision is not merely a high-level statement; it is actively translated and brought to life through the focused ambitions of its faculties, most notably the Ulster University Business School (UUBS), and evidenced by the tangible achievements in the *Annual Sustainability Report*. Together, these documents present a powerful, unified narrative of a strategy in action, where the principles of **People, Place, and Partnership** are intrinsically woven through every aspect of university life.

The core principle of **People** is central to the University's identity, aiming to unlock the potential of its students, staff, and the wider community. The UUBS Strategic Plan directly mirrors this commitment, with a mission to empower students and a vision built on "people-centric partnering". This focus on people is not just rhetoric; it translates into award-winning results. The *Annual Sustainability Report* celebrates the tangible outcomes of this people-first approach, noting the '**Best Student Wellbeing**' award for the Residential Life team and the '**Team of the Year**' award for the Student Money Team. Furthermore, the Business School's dedication to creating an inclusive environment is demonstrated by its departments achieving the Athena Swan Bronze Award for their commitment to gender equality, a clear reflection of the university's wider institutional values.

The University's deep connection to **Place** is a defining feature, celebrating its unique multi-campus presence across Northern Ireland and its role in driving regional development. The UUBS strategy operationalises this by committing to a balanced multi-campus model and enhancing its research and educational portfolio in Derry-Londonderry and Coleraine. The Sustainability Report provides concrete evidence of this **place-based** commitment in action. A prime example is the comprehensive Natural Capital Assessment undertaken for the Coleraine campus, a project that not only values the biodiversity of the area but also outlines a clear plan for its future enhancement. This initiative illustrates how the high-level strategic commitment to place is being implemented on the ground, creating a positive and sustainable impact on the local environment.

The final pillar, **Partnership**, is the catalyst that amplifies the University's impact, fostering collaborations that drive innovation and societal change. UUBS embodies this principle, positioning itself as a key partner for industry and the community, co-creating knowledge and embedding responsible business practices. This collaborative spirit is vividly illustrated in the Sustainability Report. The '**Future Island-Island**' project, a major partnership that secured significant funding, brings

together universities and local communities to tackle plastic pollution. Similarly, the Business School's launch of the Centre for Sustainable Family Enterprise and its leadership in the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative demonstrate a proactive approach to building impactful partnerships that address real-world challenges.

The overarching commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) serves as a universal framework connecting all three documents. From the Business School's focus on Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), supported by SDG 3, Good Health and Wellbeing, to the University's ranking as joint 5th globally for its outreach activities (Times Higher Education Impact Ranking), the commitment to a better world is clear and measurable.

Ultimately, the story of Ulster University is one integration. The *People, Place and Partnership* strategy provides the ambitious vision, the *UUBS Strategic Plan* demonstrates how this vision is tailored and applied within a vibrant connected faculty community, and the *Annual Sustainability Report* delivers the compelling evidence of its success. It is a cohesive narrative of a forward-thinking institution where strategy is not just a document, but the driving force behind a collective effort to build a truly sustainable future.

UU-Sustainable-Futures

[View document](#) [Download document](#)

Final 4500\_Annual-Sustainability-  
Report-23-24\_v6opt\_DIGITAL-AC\_compressed

[View document](#) [Download document](#)

44692 UU UUBS Strategy Document\_DIGITAL

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## Strategy Alignment

### Strategy Alignment

Ulster University's strategic priorities are aligned with advancing sustainable development, the common good, and providing quality education. This is encapsulated in our strategic plan, **'People, Place and Partnership: Delivering Sustainable Futures for All'**. This plan guides our commitment to addressing significant societal challenges, including climate change and social inclusion, while fostering a culture of sustainability across all our activities. This vision is actively translated through the specific goals of our faculties, such as the **Ulster University Business School (UUBS)**, ensuring a common approach across the institution.

Our commitment is demonstrated through several key areas. We prioritise the wellbeing and development of our students, staff, and the wider community. In 2023/24, we conducted a double materiality assessment to ensure our sustainability goals are aligned with the issues that matter most to our stakeholders. This assessment identified high-priority topics such as 'Skills and Human Capital', 'Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion', and 'Health and Wellbeing', which now inform our sustainability plans. Our focus on wellbeing is demonstrated by the Residential Life team winning the Best Student Wellbeing in Accommodation Award (Global Student Living Awards) and the Student Money Team being named 'Team of the Year' (National Association of Student Money Advisers Conference) for their excellent support.

UUBS are dedicated to embedding Education for Sustainable Development within our curriculum. A significant milestone in this area is the UUBS's official commitment to integrating sustainability into its curriculum and research by joining the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) global network. A tangible outcome of this is the UUBS Academy Restaurant becoming the first in the UK and Ireland to receive the Green Key sustainability certificate, providing students with practical knowledge of sustainable hospitality. Our success in the Students Organising for Sustainability SOS SDG Teach-In campaign, where we placed 2nd in the UK for educator participation and 8th for student reach, further highlights this commitment.

Our University Research Strategy 2023-2028 aims to inform solutions to major societal challenges like climate change, energy security, and social deprivation. We are focused on producing research that contributes to a sustainable world, aligning with both local and global needs. We recognise the need for our operations to be low-carbon and high-nature. The University has made significant progress in reducing our operational carbon emissions from 19,889 tCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2005/06 to 7,754 tCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2023/24 and are implementing a Campus Net Zero Buildings Project to guide our decarbonisation masterplan. UUBS have over 259 skill development interventions through the work of our Sustainability Committee. Furthermore, the University conducted a Natural Capital Assessment for our Coleraine campus was completed to better manage and enhance our natural assets.

The University actively works with local, national, and global communities to deliver real-world sustainability outcomes. Our extensive outreach activities have been recognised globally, with a joint 5th place ranking in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2024. Additionally, in the category related to Sustainable Development Goal 17: Partnership for the Goals, Ulster was ranked joint 20th, with a relative position in the Top 1%. These partnerships have a real impact, such as Ulster's role in co-designing Northern Ireland's first "Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Framework".

Through its integrated strategic priorities, Ulster University is dedicated to enriching lives and contributing to a fairer, more sustainable world for everyone.

## Institutional History

### Ulster University Sustainability Journey

#### A Legacy of Action: Ulster University's Journey to the Principles for Responsible Management Education

##### Introduction

Ulster University's formal commitment to the United Nations-backed Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) is not a singular event, but the logical outcome of a journey spanning decades. This path is marked by an early and sustained focus on environmental action, a strategic shift to embed sustainability within our curriculum, and a passionate, faculty-led drive for excellence. This narrative outlines the key milestones of this evolution, demonstrating how a deep-rooted institutional commitment to sustainability provided the foundation for the Ulster University Business School (UUBS) to become a PRME signatory.

##### Foundational Pillars: A History of University-Wide Sustainability

Our journey began not with policy, but with practical, engineering-led environmental initiatives. This 'hardware-first' approach built a credible foundation of tangible action long before responsible management was a formal part of our strategy.

- **Pioneering Energy Efficiency (Pre-2010):** More than twenty years ago, we demonstrated a forward-thinking approach to resources. Foundational projects included the installation of a Combined Heat and Power (CHP) electricity supply at our Jordanstown campus before the year 2000. In 2007, we installed the first of eight solar power schemes across our campuses. This culminated in a landmark achievement in 2008, when we commissioned the first wind turbine generator on a UK university campus at Coleraine, a powerful and visible symbol of our commitment. This turbine was engineered to supply an estimated 24% of the campus's total electricity requirement.
- **Formalising Commitment (2010-2017):** Building on this success, we adopted a more strategic approach to environmental management. In 2010, we launched our first Carbon Management Plan and a university-wide energy monitoring system. A critical milestone occurred in 2013 with the establishment of the Environmental Sustainability Steering Group (ESSG), chaired by Professor Ian Montgomery. This elevated sustainability to an institution-wide strategic priority, moving it beyond a purely operational function. Our progress was validated externally in 2016 when we achieved the internationally recognised ISO14001 Environmental Management

Certification. In 2017, we doubled our on-site wind generation by commissioning a second turbine at the Coleraine campus, increasing the share of campus electricity from renewables to an impressive 40%.

## **The Pedagogical Shift: Embedding Sustainability in Education**

With a robust operational foundation in place, we expanded our focus from our physical footprint to the 'mindprint' of our students and community.

In 2018, we established the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Working Group, formalising our intent to embed sustainability into the heart of our teaching and learning activities. The group, which included academic experts such as Dr. Amanda Platt, was given a clear mandate to link our curriculum directly to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Our commitment has been consistently recognised. The People & Planet University League has awarded Ulster exceptionally high scores for 'Education for Sustainable Development'. Furthermore, in 2020, we were ranked as a top university in the National Union of Students' (NUS) SDG Teach-In campaign. This success was driven by grassroots engagement from academics like Robert Cameron, who emphasised that sustainability should be core to all teaching.

## **The Epicentre of Change: Ulster University Business School**

While the university-wide strategy created a fertile environment, the focused drive to adopt PRME was centred within the Ulster University Business School (UUBS). This was powered by three key factors: internal champions, proactive initiatives, and strategic alignment with international accreditation.

- **Internal Leadership:** The UUBS Sustainability Committee has been a primary engine for change. It is expertly led by its Chair, Dr. Susann Power, a Senior Lecturer with over 15 years of deep expertise in sustainability research, teaching, and policy. Dr. Power's background, which includes roles at the World Travel & Tourism Council and as a board member for the charity Sustainable NI, provided the credible and passionate leadership needed to drive the faculty's agenda.
- **Action Before Declaration:** UUBS pursued a strategy of building a portfolio of RME-aligned initiatives before formally signing the principles. This authentic, inside-out approach allowed the school to join PRME as a recognition of work already underway. Flagship projects included the UUBS SDG Dashboard, an interactive tool developed to measure the impact of staff activities against the 17 UN SDGs. Another example was the Green Academy Eco-certifications programme, through which our Academy training restaurant became the first in Ireland to be awarded the prestigious Green Key eco-label in October 2023.



- **Strategic Alignment:** A powerful catalyst for adopting PRME was the school's pursuit of accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). PRME membership "supports our AACSB Accreditation ambitions". This alignment framed RME not as a separate activity, but as an effective strategy to demonstrate the commitment to societal impact required for this elite international accreditation.

### Formalising Our Commitment: Joining PRME

UUBS officially became a signatory of the Principles for Responsible Management Education circa May 2024. To accelerate our progress, the school made the strategic decision to bring in Dr. Marc Duffy, a lecturer who had previously led another institution's commitments to PRME. This imported expertise enabled us to launch a sophisticated suite of activities immediately, demonstrating that our commitment was active and transformative from day one.

Our inaugural year of membership (2024-2025) was marked by a range of initiatives to embed the PRME principles:

- **Student Development:** We launched the PRME Sustainable Leadership Programme for an initial cohort of 43 students, providing experiential learning to empower future ethical leaders.
- **Student Engagement:** The Inaugural PRME Sustainability Student Writing Competition was created to encourage critical thinking and amplify the student voice on key sustainability topics.
- **Regional Partnership:** The UUBS Sustainability Breakfast, led by Dr Judith Wylie, brought together 100 regional participants for meaningful dialogue on sustainable business practices.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** We hosted an expert session on green claims and regulation to promote transparency in sustainability communications and continued to grow our dedicated PRME blog.
- **PRME UK & Ireland** Our PRME Lead, Dr Marc Duffy was appointed to the UK & Ireland PRME Steering Committee in 2024, serving as communications co-lead for the UK & Ireland

### A Forward Outlook

Ulster University's journey to PRME is a story of long-term, authentic evolution. Our success is built on a powerful combination of top-down strategic vision, bottom-up faculty passion, alignment with core objectives, and a credible foundation of operational action.


While we celebrate our significant progress, we also recognise the opportunity for future growth. The comprehensive PRME framework provides a valuable structure to continue building on our strengths and to address all dimensions of social and ethical responsibility, ensuring our institution continues to lead with purpose.

## Graduates & Enrollment

2024 Statistics	Number
Graduates	5495
Faculty & Staff at the Institution	245
Student Enrollment at the University	26135


## Degrees Offered

### Bachelor Programs

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

### Masters Programs


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

 Master of Education (M.Ed.)


### Doctoral Programs

 Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

## Postgraduate Degree Programmes

 Post Doctoral Programmes

## Certificates, Professional Development, or Associate Programmes

 Post Doctoral Programmes



# Purpose

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

## Letter of Commitment



**Ulster University**  
Business School

**Ulster University**  
**Business School**

**PRME SHARING INFORMATION ON  
PROGRESS REPORT 2025**

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**PEOPLE,  
PLACE AND  
PARTNERSHIP**

**DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE  
FUTURES FOR ALL**



## **Celebrating a Landmark Year of Achievement and Sustainable Development at Ulster University Business School**



**Professor Gillian Armstrong MBE  
Pro Vice Chancellor & Executive Dean of Ulster  
University Business School**

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## On behalf of Ulster University Business School

It is with immense pleasure that I reflect on a truly landmark year for Ulster University and the Business School (UUBS). As we celebrate our **50th anniversary of UUBS** in 2025, we do so with pride in our deep-rooted history around impact and a renewed focus on sustainable development, inclusive education, and responsible management. Ulster University being named **Times Higher Education University of the Year 2025** further reflects our institution-wide commitment to embedding the **Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME)** and the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** into our operations. This has been a year of purposeful action and meaningful progress, driven by our dedicated staff, students, and partners.



**JOINT TOP 20  
GLOBALLY  
FOR SDG 17: PARTNERSHIP  
FOR THE GOALS**  
THE IMPACT RATINGS (2024)



**JOINT 5TH  
GLOBALLY  
FOR OUTREACH  
ACTIVITIES**  
THE IMPACT RATINGS (2024)

Founded in 1975, UUBS has long been a catalyst for societal and economic transformation in Northern Ireland. From supporting economic recovery as a post-conflict society to equipping future-ready graduates for an evolving global market, our School has continually adapted to meet the region's needs. Today, we operate in a landscape where between 75 - 84% of private sector enterprises are family owned or managed, and where 89% are micro-businesses. In response, our academic programmes, partnerships, and outreach have been strategically aligned to promote entrepreneurship, innovation, and inclusion; all indicators of responsible business leadership.

Our mission is clear **'to empower students with an entrepreneurial mindset, driving opportunity and growing a talented, skilled pipeline.'** This is guided by our vision to be a leading engaged and entrepreneurial Business School through people-centric partnering, achieving transformational outcomes for our students, staff, and the business community. These principles are intrinsically linked to the University's strategic plan, **'People, Place and Partnership:**

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*Delivering Sustainable Futures for All*, which commits us to tackling societal challenges such as climate change and social inclusion.

To steer our commitment, we have established a robust governance structure. The appointment of a dedicated **PRME Lead** in our Accreditation Hub, alongside a proactive **Sustainability Committee** with representatives from all academic departments, ensures that our sustainability ambitions are translated into action. The leadership of a central Sustainability Office and the appointment of a **Dean of Sustainability** further underscore the University's commitment to these vital goals.

One of our proudest achievements this year has been the continued development of our Discovery Academy, a sustainable digital learning initiative offering 27 UUBS courses, the most of any faculty in the University. **In 2023/24 alone, over 1,977 pupils from 110 schools across Northern Ireland** and internationally enrolled in UUBS Discovery Academy content. Over 56% of these pupils were in Years 13 and 14, and 14 targeted Widening Access Schools received bespoke support, embedding equality and access into our outreach model. Importantly, programmes such as *A Lesson in Fintech*, *A Career in Business* and *Is It for Me?* explicitly promote sustainability literacy, responsible finance, and inclusive educational pathways, all aligned with the PRME principles.



Photo 1 – School Outreach activity – Options Plus



We also continued to strengthen our physical outreach through 28 in-person initiatives across Widening Access Schools, including flagship events such as Options Plus, which saw nearly 90% of participants more likely to consider studying at university after completing the programme.

Complementing our outreach and teaching, we have grown our sustainability-focused curriculum. This year, we have championed innovative teaching and learning to equip our students with the skills needed for a sustainable future. We launched new sustainability-focused short courses, including the Sustainable Leadership Programme, which has already trained 38 leaders from 31 small and medium-sized enterprises. Further, we are proud to have introduced a new MSc in Sustainable Management to empower the next generation of purposeful business leaders.



The dedication of our staff and students has been rightly recognised through numerous accolades. Our institution was ranked **2nd in the UK** for educator participation in the **Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS-UK) SDG Teach-In campaign** (see Figure 1 below).





Figure 1 - Sustainable Development Goals Teach In - 2025 Campaign

Our Special Interest Group on Inclusive Teaching (SIGIT) received the Ulster University **Distinguished Collaborative Excellence Award 2025** for its work in creating inclusive learning environments, and the UUSU Learning and Teaching Awards celebrated the outstanding contributions of our academic community.

A landmark achievement this year was the launch of our **inaugural PRME Conference**, which brought together experts and leaders to discuss responsible management education. We also introduced the **PRME Student Writing Competition**, providing a platform for students to voice their perspectives on critical sustainability issues.



Photo 2 - 2nd Annual UUBS Sustainable Futures, PRME Conference

Our research continues to make a significant impact, with **356 research outputs and 43 publications** that directly support responsible management education. The UUBS SDG Dashboard (see Figure 2 below) has been updated with over 500 new outputs this year, providing a transparent and interactive tool to measure our impact against the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Collaboration is at the heart of our success. We have strengthened our partnerships with organisations such as EAUC, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, SOS-UK and PODIEM. Further to this, Ulster University's Dean Of Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility, **Professor Ian Montgomery** has been appointed as Chair of Belfast Healthy Cities, Derry & Strabane Sustainability & Climate Commission, the Belfast Climate Commission. Our PRME Lead **Dr Marc Duffy**, has also been appointed to the PRME UK & Ireland Chapter Steering Committee. These collaborations are vital in our collective effort to drive systemic change.

Our commitment is underpinned by a comprehensive suite of policies, including our Environmental Sustainability Action Plan, Carbon Reduction plans, and policies on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, and ethical data sourcing that are available as part of this report. These frameworks ensure that our progress is both strategic and accountable.

We believe in the power of communication to inspire and engage. Through our [PRME blogs](#) and The Business of Possibility Podcasts, the Student Union's Impact Report, internal Insight Blogs, and continuous student feedback

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mechanisms, we maintain an open and transparent dialogue with our community.

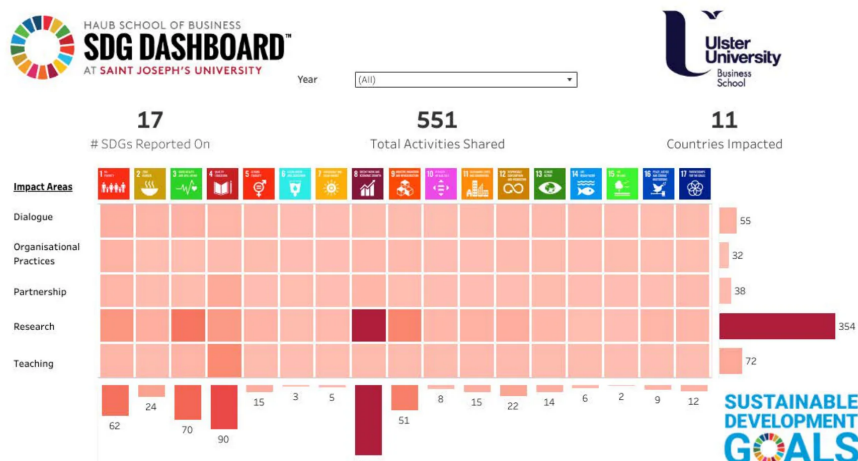


Figure 2 - Ulster University Business School - SDG Dashboard

The achievements of this milestone year are a testament to our collective dedication. As we look ahead, we will continue to build on this strong foundation, inspired by the passion and commitment of our staff, students, and partners to create a fairer and more sustainable world for all, through people-centred partnering. By fostering sustainable mindsets and enabling opportunities, UUBS continues to be a vital force for good in business and society both locally and globally, advancing our collective vision of sustainable futures for all.

Yours sincerely,

**Professor Gillian Armstrong**

**Pro Vice Chancellor & Executive Dean of Ulster Business School**

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## Definition of Purpose

Our mission is to empower students to have an entrepreneurial mindset, driving opportunity and growing a talented, skilled pipeline. UUBS creates development opportunities across its campuses in collaboration with key partners. We are making a difference every day, ensuring a transformative impact for individuals, communities and business.

## Institutional Engagement

**26% - 50%**

of faculty at Ulster University 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

Ulster University's values are Integrity, Collaboration, Enhancing Potential and Inclusion. The co-created nature of our Values provides an indication of the culture within our University. They are our touchstone, guiding us to achieve excellence together enhancing our employee and student experience, now and in the future. Work is continuing to help facilitate and embed Valuesdriven activities and further colleague engagement at Ulster University.

## 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
- ❖ Student contributor
- ❖ Senior leadership office

## Student Awareness

**0% - 25%** of students at Ulster University Business School are aware that we are a PRME Signatory Member.

## Student Engagement

**26% - 50%** of students at Ulster University Business School actively contribute to our work with PRME, advancing RME, or addressing sustainable development challenges through their work.

## Values Voices

### Special Interest Group on Inclusive Teaching (SIGIT)

### Empowering Learners: Student Voice and Partnership in Practice

At Ulster University Business School, we believe that learning is a partnership. Our educational ethos is founded on the principle that learners should be actively involved in shaping their own learning journey through co-design and the amplification of the student voice. This commitment is central to our mission to support all learners in becoming thriving individuals, collaborative professionals, engaged learners, and active citizens.

We empower our students to take responsibility for their learning in collaboration with their peers, positioning them as genuine partners in the educational experience. Our teaching methods are designed to support the development of executive functioning, self-regulation, and problem-solving skills. These skills not only minimise barriers to learning but also build confidence and enhance wellbeing. We foster an inclusive culture by getting to know our learners, considering their cultural awareness and identities, and embedding student partnership as a core part of curriculum planning, design, and delivery.

A leading example of this commitment in action is our **Special Interest Group on Inclusive Teaching (SIGIT)**. This ground-breaking, learner-centred initiative positions students as 'experts-by-experience', creating more inclusive and effective learning environments for everyone. **The key innovation of SIGIT lies in elevating students to the role of educators, recognising them as experts in their lived experiences of inclusion.**

SIGIT hosts structured monthly events with two distinct segments: 'Learning from students', where students share their stories and perspectives on inclusivity, and 'Learning from colleagues', where staff share effective strategies and tools. Insights from events held between March 2023 and November 2024, covering the experiences of students with learning differences, sensory impairments, international students, mature students, and queer students, have provided a rich foundation for developing our inclusive teaching practices.

The impact of this approach has been profound. Students report that SIGIT amplifies their voices and fosters a sense of agency and ownership in their learning. As one student panel member shared, "The most valuable aspect was the opportunity to share my experiences as an international student. Being able to express how the university fosters inclusion and engagement for students like me was truly meaningful."

This transformative experience extends to our staff. One lecturer noted, "Every session gives me a number of takeaways that I then use in my teaching and to create resources. The storytelling is most impactful as it allows you time to see it from the other person's perspective. I am a kinder, more inclusive lecturer because of this experience."



The success of SIGIT has earned institutional recognition, including the 'Distinguished Collaborative Excellence Award 2025' and the creation of a new 'Community of Practice' for inclusion-focused staff. Our learnings have been shared widely at events such as the CABS Learning, Teaching and Student Experience (LTSE) Conference 2024 and the Advance HE Teaching and Learning Conference 2025.

This work directly supports the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. By creating effective and inclusive learning environments for all (SDG 4: Quality Education) and by empowering students from diverse backgrounds to shape our practices (SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities), we are actively working to build a more equitable and supportive educational community. Through initiatives like SIGIT, Ulster University Business School is not just listening to the student voice; we are amplifying it to drive meaningful and lasting change.

## **A Commitment to Listening: How Stakeholder Voices Shape our Sustainability Agenda**

### **A Commitment to Listening: How Stakeholder Voices Shape our Sustainability Agenda**

At Ulster University Business School (UUBS), our commitment to the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) is deeply embedded in a proactive approach of listening and responding to the needs of our stakeholders. We believe that truly impactful education is not delivered in isolation but is co-created with the students, business leaders, and communities we serve. This dedication to incorporating stakeholder voices, particularly those of our students, is fundamental to how we design and deliver our programmes, ensuring they are relevant, timely, and transformative.

Our approach is exemplified by two key initiatives that demonstrate how we translate feedback into action.

### **Responding to Industry Needs: The Leading Sustainable Impact Programme**

Our journey to create the Leading Sustainable Impact Programme began not in a lecture hall, but in a dialogue with the business community. In Autumn 2024, the UUBS Sustainability Breakfast Initiative provided a forum for local business leaders to articulate their challenges. A clear message emerged: Northern Ireland's businesses needed practical, high-level sustainable leadership skills to navigate the green transition.

In direct response, UUBS collaborated with PODIEM and the Department for the Economy (DfE) to launch the programme. It was specifically designed to bridge the gap between knowledge and action, equipping leaders with the tools to embed sustainability into their core strategies. The success of the



first two cohorts, who engaged with global pioneers like John Elkington, illustrates our commitment to responding to the expressed needs of the regional economy. As one participant noted, “This programme gave me the skills and ideas to really be able to make a change.”

### **Elevating Student Voices: Researching the Expectations of a New Generation**

Just as we listen to our business partners, we actively seek to understand the perspectives of our students. Recognising that the modern higher education landscape is evolving, we undertook a formal study to understand the perceptions of our Higher-Level Degree Apprenticeship (HLA) students. These learners, who are in full-time employment while studying, represent a growing and vital part of our student body and the future of business leadership in Northern Ireland.

The study, which surveyed 47 apprentices, provided invaluable insights into the expectations of Generation Z learners in a work-based context. The findings were unequivocal:

- **A Demand for Sustainable Education:** Students see sustainable education and the responsibility of business as significantly important issues.
- **A Focus on Leadership:** They identified their future leadership roles, and the current role of leaders in driving sustainability, as crucial.
- **A Call for Embedded Curricula:** Students highlighted the need for sustainability to be woven into their courses, providing tangible solutions to societal problems.

This research confirms that for our students, sustainability is not an optional extra; it is an essential component of their education and their future careers.

By actively listening to both industry leaders and our diverse student body, Ulster University Business School ensures its educational offerings remain at the forefront of responsible management. This dual focus on industry needs and student expectations allows us to create a powerful, symbiotic learning environment where academic expertise meets real-world application, empowering a new generation of leaders to build a more sustainable future for all.

## **Celebrating Values**

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

### **Professor Kristel Miller**

**Professor Kristel Miller, Co-Director of the project and Professor of Entrepreneurship & Small Business Development, Ulster University Business School** commented: #

"We are proud to have welcomed the Executive Chair of the ESRC Stian Westlake, Communities Minister Gordon Lyons, Economy Minister Conor Murphy and our extended group of partners to celebrate the launch of EPIC Futures NI. With the highest economic inactivity rate in the UK at just under 26%, we wanted our partnership to support hidden unemployed groups in Northern Ireland, essentially the individuals who would like to work but face barriers in doing so, the largest of which are women, the over 50's, and individuals with disabilities.

"In recognition that this is a cross-departmental, Northern Ireland wide challenge, EPIC Futures NI will work collaboratively right across government, industry, education and community to enrich our understanding of the groups facing barriers to employment and provide a data-driven evidence base for meaningful policy change that supports the hidden unemployed into work. The input and endorsement of so many stakeholders indicates the strength of our project's potential, and I look forward to guiding the team as we deliver on our mission throughout the next three years."

<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/news/2024/march/epic-futures-ni-launch-la-mon-hotel>



# Teach

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



## How We Define Teach

Ulster University defines teaching as a dynamic, student-centered process aimed at fostering learning through active engagement, critical thinking, and the development of relevant skills.

## Courses that support RME

Ulster University Business School reports 1 course in 2024 that support responsible management education and sustainable development goals.

### **Sustainable Leadership Programme**

| BUS702

Understanding how to lead, manage and communicate sustainable transformation is often an important role in senior leadership. This module provides an opportunity for students to apply the principles and practices of sustainable transformation management and leadership through a live consulting project. This module aims to help students to develop knowledge of transformation and leadership through a Project Based Learning approach on a 'live' consulting project. This module will help learners to develop and apply strategy, transformation management and how to effectively lead transformation. In addition to taught lecturers by academics from Ulster University you will also hear from experts and leading practitioners. This course is aimed at those who are in positions to impact the sustainability agenda within their organisations. This module will apply the principles and practices of sustainable transformation and leadership to a live transformation project

Student Feedback "The beauty of this [programme] is the diversity of participants... I learnt more than just academic theory but also practical real-life application." – Thomas Potter "I highly recommend this course to anyone who is interested in contributing to positive sustainable change in their workplace... Everyone in the cohort was very supportive, and the relaxed atmosphere meant conversations flowed naturally. – Grainne Loughrey "This programme gave me the skills and ideas to really be able to make a change." – Anna-Marie McAlinden "I am definitely going away from this course with a different mindset towards sustainability. It has allowed me to see that if we all do our small part, the world will start to change in a big way." – Edith McGaughey "Hands down the best PG course I've taken – fun, insightful, and you leave feeling you've not only learned but actually made a positive difference." – T Buckley "Informative and challenging." – Michael Hermin "Very engaging and valuable course." – Peter McHugh "As a catering business owner, this course helped me shape my thinking around inclusive food practices and sustainable leadership, giving me the confidence to communicate what we're already doing well – and the motivation to keep building on it." – Krystal Mohn "This programme was a great opportunity to learn and explore new ways to be a force for good within my business. More importantly, it brought together people from very different industries, showing that a commitment to our environment spans all sectors and all levels." – Neil Allen "The green transition is threatened by business leaders' failure to develop and source green skills" "Really great opportunity to get the ball rolling with sustainability practices in organisations and start

visualising to get things done.” – Emily Keenan “So much benefit in such a short space of time.” – Jamie Hamilton “Making change for the future of the next generation.” – Margaret Allen “This course is for everyone.” – Gordon Cross “Learning is a practical journey, and I want to continue.” – Kevin Wilson “It was a very thought-provoking and emotional journey – not what I expected, but very positive in terms of personal development, sustainable awareness and education – a new triple bottom line.” – Alister Bell



## Teaching Awards

In 2024, 2 awards were given to faculty and educators at Ulster University Business School.

### LTA Awards

**Granter:** Ulster University Student's Union

**Grantee:** Teaching Staff and Students

#### **Award Description:**

The Learning & Teaching awards are completely student-led. They are nominated by you and the shortlisted nominees and the winners are chosen by a panel of student representatives from across all Faculties. This panel makes decisions based solely on your written nomination, so when you are making your nomination check out the criteria and give as much information and examples as possible! There are 9 categories for you to choose from, all reflective of the different aspects of your learning experience - You can nominate as many people in as many categories as you'd like!



### **PRME Chapter UK and Ireland Responsible Business and Management Student Writing Competition 2023/24 8th Annual Competition**

**Granter:** PRME Chapter UK and Ireland

**Grantee:** Tess Hazelhurst

#### **Award Description:**

The PRME Chapter UK and Ireland and Oxford Brookes University are honoured to announce the winners of the 8th Responsible Business and Management Student Writing Competition. <https://www.unprme.org.uk/2024-student-writing-competition-winners>

## Educator Recognition

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

- ❖ Annual teaching excellence awards
- ❖ Faculty promotion and tenure consideration
- ❖ Institutional recognition events
- ❖ Pedagogical innovation grants
- ❖ Student-nominated teaching awards
- ❖ Publication or research support

## Teaching Voices

The following statements demonstrate ways in which educators at Ulster University Business School support sustainability and responsible management in their classrooms.

### Ulster University Students Union Impact Report

Full UUSU Impact Report [https://www.uusu.org/asset/News/6013/V6\\_Impact-Report-2024\\_2-1.pdf](https://www.uusu.org/asset/News/6013/V6_Impact-Report-2024_2-1.pdf)

Throughout the past year, Ulster University Students' Union (UUSU) has dedicated its efforts to fostering positive change for all students, focusing on building a vibrant campus community and addressing the significant impact of the cost of living crisis. This commitment is underpinned by the launch of an ambitious new five-year strategy for 2024-2029, which was developed in direct consultation with students to ensure their priorities are at the forefront of the Union's work.

### Championing the Student Voice

A core mission for UUSU is to represent and amplify the student voice across the University. This year saw a remarkable level of engagement in academic representation, with over 800 students dedicating more than 24,000 hours in their roles as course, school, and faculty representatives. The Union's leadership elections also achieved their highest ever online turnout, with 19,021 votes cast to elect the new Student Executive Team.

The Student Council was instrumental in driving policy, passing new measures focused on providing inclusive protection, enhancing sexual health education, and lobbying for childcare facilities. This advocacy extended to the national stage, where UUSU successfully ensured childcare for student parents became a key issue for NUS-UI.

To celebrate the partnership between staff and students, the student-led Learning & Teaching Awards recognised outstanding contributions to the student journey. The awards received over 500 nominations from students, highlighting the profound impact of university staff and academic representatives. Notably, staff and students from the Department of Management, Leadership & Marketing were recognised with awards for Inclusion & Belonging Champion, the Inspirational Award, and Student Academic Representative of the Year.

## **A Network of Support**

In response to the cost of living crisis, UUSU implemented several key initiatives to provide practical support. A free breakfast service was introduced across all campuses, providing thousands of cups of tea and coffee, bowls of porridge, and cereal bars to students. Additionally, a food bank initiative was established to redistribute short-shelf-life sandwiches from campus catering, a programme which simultaneously supports students in need and improves sustainability.

Recognising the importance of mental health, the Union organised events designed to combat loneliness and reduce stress, including "Brew Monday" sessions and bringing puppies and a mobile farm to campus during exam periods. The UUSU Advice Bureau provided essential guidance, handling over 600 student cases on issues ranging from academic appeals and housing to student finance.

UUSU is committed to creating an inclusive and sustainable campus for all. This year, the Union worked with the University to ensure free sanitary products are available in all bathrooms and to improve the accessibility of the preferred name change system. Sustainability has been advanced through Green Week events and a partnership with Hazaar, a pre-loved student marketplace, which has seen over 800 students register to participate in the circular economy.

## **Connecting the Community**

UUSU provides vibrant opportunities for students to connect, make friends, and build communities. The Union supports 97 active societies, with membership growing to over 3,800 students who participated in 400 events throughout the year.

A major highlight was the inaugural Beltane Festival, a summer music event at the Magee campus delivered in partnership with Stendhal, which celebrated local artists and the end of the academic year. UUSU Sport also had an exceptional year, with a 12% increase in club membership and teams winning 35 trophies. A historic achievement was the men's Gaelic Football team winning the Sigerson Cup for the first time in 16 years.

The spirit of community extends to charitable work. Students and staff volunteered for Mission Christmas to support children affected by poverty and selected the British Red Cross as the charity of the year, with all funds raised supporting the Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territory Appeal. Through these diverse initiatives, UUSU continues to successfully represent, support, and connect the student body, significantly enhancing the student experience at Ulster University.

## **Sustainable Leadership Programme Impact Case Study**

Sustainable Leadership Programme – Driving Change and Delivering SKILLS for Northern Ireland  
From Insight to Action: The Origins of the Programme

In Autumn 2024, Ulster University launched its Sustainability Breakfast Initiative to better understand what Northern Irish businesses and stakeholders needed from the Business School regarding sustainability. A clear theme emerged: sustainable leadership.

In response, Ulster University Business School, in partnership with PODIEM and funded by the Department for the Economy (DfE), developed and delivered the Sustainable Leadership Programme, for 42 Sustainability Leaders in Northern Ireland, a pioneering initiative equipping business leaders with the knowledge and skills to drive meaningful environmental and economic change.

“The beauty of this [programme] is the diversity of participants...

I learnt more than just academic theory but also practical real-life application.” – Thomas Potter

“I highly recommend this course to anyone who is interested in contributing to positive sustainable change in their workplace... Everyone in the cohort was very supportive, and the relaxed atmosphere meant conversations flowed naturally. – Grainne Loughrey

Launching a Movement: Sustain Exchange Summit and MLM Summit

The programme debuted in October 2024 at the Sustain Exchange Summit in Belfast, where participants engaged with global sustainability pioneers. Attendees took part in an exclusive session with John Elkington, the “father of sustainability,” who emphasised: “take your carbon reporting as seriously as you take your accounting.”

The second cohort attended the MLM Summit, a flagship leadership event in Northern Ireland. The 2025 summit, held at Titanic Belfast, featured insights from transformative leaders such as Jim Gavin (GAA Coach & COO, Irish Aviation Authority), Mark Pollock (Resilience Advocate), and former Taoiseach Leo Varadkar. These experiences provided direct access to world-class expertise and inspiration, reinforcing the programme’s commitment to bridging theory with practice.

“This programme gave me the skills and ideas to really be able to make a change.” – Anna-Marie McAlinden



"I am definitely going away from this course with a different mindset towards sustainability. It has allowed me to see that if we all do our small part, the world will start to change in a big way." – Edith McGaughey

#### The Programme in Action: Learning Through Real-World Challenges

Spanning five full-day sessions, the Sustainable Leadership Programme combined academic expertise, industry insight, and live consulting projects to tackle real-world sustainability challenges.

"Hands down the best PG course I've taken – fun, insightful, and you leave feeling you've not only learned but actually made a positive difference." – T Buckley

#### The Curriculum

- Strategy and Transformation – Embedding sustainability into business operations.
- Leadership Development – Building resilience and ethical decision-making.
- Project-Based Learning – Solving sustainability challenges in local organisations.

This hands-on approach helped participants not only learn but apply sustainability principles within their organisations, fostering long-term impact.

"Informative and challenging." – Michael Hermin

"Very engaging and valuable course." – Peter McHugh

"As a catering business owner, this course helped me shape my thinking around inclusive food practices and sustainable leadership, giving me the confidence to communicate what we're already doing well – and the motivation to keep building on it." – Krystal Mohn

#### Impact on Northern Ireland's Economy and Workforce

With two successful cohorts completed, the programme is already contributing to Northern Ireland's green transition, aligning with commitments under the NI Climate Change Act (2022). Business leaders now leave with practical strategies to lead sustainability within their sectors.

"This programme was a great opportunity to learn and explore new ways to be a force for good within my business. More importantly, it brought together people from very different industries, showing that a commitment to our environment spans all sectors and all levels." – Neil Allen

The importance of green skills development was echoed by Chris Martin at the Sustain Exchange Summit:

"The green transition is threatened by business leaders' failure to develop and source green skills"

Figure 2 – Cohort Two, March 2025

#### Learner Experience: Transformative and Practical

The impact is perhaps best captured by the participants themselves:

"Really great opportunity to get the ball rolling with sustainability practices in organisations and start visualising to get things done." – Emily Keenan

“So much benefit in such a short space of time.” – Jamie Hamilton

“Making change for the future of the next generation.” – Margaret Allen

#### A Model for Future Partnerships

The Sustainable Leadership Programme showcases the power of strategic collaboration between academia, government, and industry. Ulster University, PODIEM, and DfE have created a model for impactful, practice-driven learning that’s already helping reshape the future of business in Northern Ireland.

As sustainability continues to rise on the global agenda, this programme equips leaders with the insight and experience to drive lasting, positive change.

“This course is for everyone.” – Gordon Cross

“Learning is a practical journey, and I want to continue.” – Kevin Wilson

“It was a very thought-provoking and emotional journey – not what I expected, but very positive in terms of personal development, sustainable awareness and education – a new triple bottom line.” – Alister Bell

### **PRME UK & Ireland Case Presentation - PRME Impact for Real: Student Views on Sustainable and Responsible Education – three business schools; Past, Present and Future**

The Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) agenda from the United Nations (UN) and related sustainability initiatives, require universities to integrate sustainable and responsible management into their programmes and institutions. Consequently, PRME informs the curriculum (Morsing 2021; Eustachio et al., 2024), organisational structures (Russo, Wheeldon, Shrestha, and Saratchandra, 2023), and reporting mechanisms (Abdelgaffar, 2021; Hauser, 2019). Although these initiatives are important, the direct perspectives of students – their ideas that construct meaning for students as potential leaders and managers - tend to be overlooked (Høgda, et al., 2021). Indeed, we have a limited understanding of how the agenda is valued by past, present and future students. This submission elevates the focus on students as critical stakeholders, integral to the PRME agenda and future custodians of organisations. A detailed focus on student’s experiences and ideas will aid further understanding of the ideas that transpire from responsible management education.

Universities are under significant pressure to act meaningfully and lead the change they wish to see in society. PRME serves as a framework to help universities achieve sustainability goals. However, PRME has faced criticism for being overly challenging and complicated to implement (Boodhoo &

Parumasur, 2017; Duffy, 2024). Further, like most accreditations, PRME is aimed at institutions as opposed to students, and even university reporting of student experience is filtered through their institutions (Eustachio, et al, 2024).

Marcon and Sehnem (2024) advocate for students being taught sustainability and responsibility in education, however, student voice has not always been sought (Abdelgaffar, 2021). Consequently, we know little about their nuanced perceptions of sustainable education; their need for sustainable education and critically how they construct ideas of themselves as future leaders and managers (Høgda, et al., 2021). Granular understanding of student's ideas has the capacity to help universities collaborate with students to refine curriculums, structures and reporting to bolster responsible management education.

Where universities profess to be applied with a focus on the future impact of alumni as leaders and managers, a lack of focus on students as critical stakeholders is problematic. In essence, PRME is only a process without the meaningful support of stakeholders that diffuse ideas into the fabric of organisations.

Cripps and Smith (2024) advocate for the benefits of a sustainability mindset and the role that business schools have in achieving this outcome. The [PRME initiative](#) (2021) calls for greater impetuosity in instilling the values of ethics and social responsibility and contributing to the development of future ethical leaders. However, DuPuis & Ball (2013) argue that the term 'sustainability' entered public discourse, it continues to escape meaning and definition. This can be a source of frustration for students and learners who are used to being taught facts and absolute truths (Alexander, Winters, Loughlin, & Grossnickle, 2012). Understanding sustainability as a construct is complex. Subject to ongoing debate; it can "*be approached from different levels of reference, in time, space and from environmental, social and economic perspectives*" (Zaman and Goschin, 2010, p6).

In this vein, ideas matter reflecting the values, morals and principles that shape thinking and meaning (Weir 1992). The importance of ideas is explained by Mertha (2011, p.24):

*Asserting that ideas do not matter would mean that shifting ideals about science, religion, democracy, slavery, colonization, gender, race, and homosexuality to pick just a few salient examples [...] have not appreciably affected how people act.*

Schmidt (2008, 2010) argues that ideas take centre stage in shaping institutional contexts and practice. By tracing the evolution of ideas across time, ideas which may not be perceptible or captured can be illuminated (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013).

Zaman and Gosschin's (2010) argument is therefore central to the focus of this research to reveal the perspective of present and future students, accounting for the importance of meaning in time, as well as from environmental, social and economic dimensions.

By exploring students' values relative to social, economic and environmental sustainability at a granular level, our work aims to facilitate understanding of personal ideas simultaneously helping students construct and notice their personal orientation as well as providing nuanced insight to institutions about the efficacy of the PRME agenda.

We propose listening to student voices for real, capturing detailed accounts of student's experience(s) of responsible management education in business schools as well as their ideas about the perceived and real impact on their careers.

### **Proposed methodological approach**

Choosing appropriate research approaches is challenging, there is no one perfect way. In light of illuminating the sustainability mindsets of students as highlighted by Cripps and Smith (2024) we turn to methods founded on the construction of ideas that framing attitudes and values towards sustainability that ultimately orient students' organisational and professional practice (Avelar, Michell, & Sandes-Guimarães, 2025). They are a formal feature of annual reviews, supporting action learning, shaping or refining personal and organisational practice in solving problems responding to opportunities and aligning with organisational goals. By articulating ideas through reflection, individuals can understand the way they seek to contribute to practice. In sharing reflections, institutional actors can surface the values to explore and understand how agendas land, collaborating to energise, develop and refine creative thinking and emancipatory practice.

Developed by Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) as a vehicle for organisational change, Appreciative Inquiry (API) explicitly adopts a strengths-based approach. Drawing on the theoretical foundations of social constructionism it seeks to catalyse action and change through reflective practice that challenge self-limiting beliefs (Duncan and Ridly-Duff 2014). API draws on participants experiences but also their capacity to consider the '*best of what if*' essentially creating affirmation and purpose around change (Arnold et al., 2022). For responsible management education, this is congruent with learner centred pedagogies (Sotiriou, 2021) and agency and translates agendas into meaningful experiences for student's past, present and future.

From this understanding of ideas, we propose to undertake an exploration to reveal students and alumni articulation of their ideas of environmental, social and economic sustainability. The study takes participants from three HE institutions across the UK, express a commitment to support the applied and practical significance of learning. Of the three, two are PRME Signatories, the third is working towards this and runs several programmes focusing on sustainable, ethical and responsible business

management. This difference in institutional status was seen as a useful way to gain insight into the significance of PRME as well as other responsible management agendas that orient students' ideas. Though each of the business schools from which participants are drawn share a similar organisational ethos that foregrounds practical learning, the communities they service differ significantly. The first is located in a post-industrial city where employment now coalesces around the private sector and particularly in financial services, the second is configured around industry, the service sector and SMEs. Finally, the third has a strong maritime heritage with a thriving innovation ecosystem. The span of institutions furthers how differing locations or using Zaman and Goschin (2010) focus on space to explore the impacts of wider institutional ideas.

We argue that PRME alone cannot shape student attitudes but that social construction orients students towards economic, social, and environmental sustainability. In this research, the process of reflective discussion guided by API can elevate this orientation. An affirmative topic is key in framing the responses to reflective questions. Another part of the rationale to base research questions on affirmative methodologies is the impact of dealing with challenging topics. Some scholars argue that it is critical in helping people review approaches and priorities in work life.

Questions focus attention on specific directions enabling actors to see things from alternative perspectives (Smith, 2022). By reflecting and articulating events that inspire or overcoming challenges, deeply held values can be surfaced. API helps to build resilience, trust, new ideas, and creativity (Boyzatis & Jack, 2018). Such traits and values are seen to be critical in responding to wicked problems associated with ethical and responsible management and leadership.

Through self-directed reflection, we plan to capture and thematically analyse ideas that past, present and students articulate. Reflective guides (Kadi-Hanifi, et al, 2014) will be issued to assist students in following what is described in API as the 4D cycle. First, this involves 'Discovery' recording the problems, issues and opportunities related to sustainability. Second reflection around 'Discovery' generates insight into the best of their practice, personally or via organisations that are positive exemplars of sustainability. Thirdly, participants are encouraged to 'Dream', articulating ideal futures for themselves and where relevant to students, the organisations they are part of. The fourth D, 'Design', considers what and how individuals can deliver sustainability; ideal futures and how they can be delivered. The Fifth D, 'Destiny' engages thinking about state strong ideas can be enhanced and their wider benefit and capacity for change.

In sum, the method designed on the principles of API create impact from the premise that 'words create worlds' (Boyzatis and Jack, 2018). In essence, learning about learning vis-a-vis environmental, social and economic sustainability can promote collaboration across institutions and helps students realise how their knowledge of the area can enable them to respond to complex problems (Arnold et al., 2022).

## **Fostering Innovation**



### **To a great extent**

Teaching and learning at our institution strongly foster innovation.

## **Experiential Learning**



### **To a great extent**

Teaching and learning at our institution strongly encourage experiential learning.

## **Learning Mindset**



### **To a great extent**

Teaching and learning at our institution strongly promote a lifelong learning mindset.

## **Method of Teaching and Learning**



### **In person**

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

## **Barriers to Innovative Curriculum**

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

- ❖ Time constraints
- ❖ Change fatigue
- ❖ Learning curve for faculty

## **Barriers to Innovative Pedagogy**

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

- ❖ Administrative hurdles

❖ Time constraints



# Research

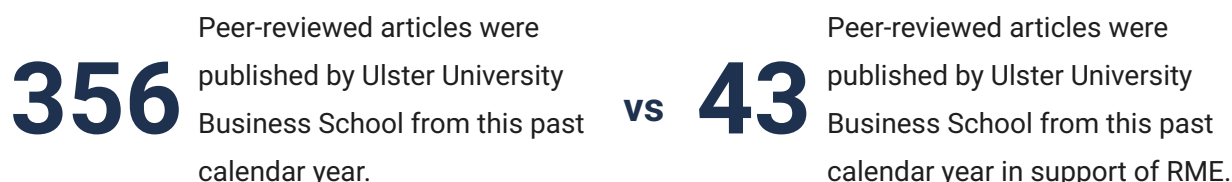
We study people, organizations, institutions, and the state of the world to inspire responsible management and education practice.



## How We Define Research

Ulster University defines research as the creation of new knowledge or the innovative application of existing knowledge to generate new concepts, methodologies, and understandings.

## Research vs Research for RME/Sustainable Development



## Research Funding

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



Regional



National



Local



International

## Socializing Research

In 2024, Ulster University Business School contributed research findings to:

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

## Research Projects

In 2024, Ulster University Business School reported 4 research projects that implemented responsible or sustainable activities.

## Future Island-Island

**Period Covering:** May, 2024 - June, 2028

**Department:** Business Administration

Future Island-Island is an AHRC funded project that brings together community members, academics, and practitioners to co-create design-led research for a greener, more sustainable Northern Ireland economy.

<https://www.futureisland-island.org/>

<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/research/topic/computer-science/intelligent-systems-research-centre/projects/future-island-island>

Through the lens of Rathlin, Northern Ireland's only populated offshore island, we're exploring innovative design and digital technologies to valorise waste as a commodity, develop sustainable tourism practices, and envision new possibilities for education and policy-making that will benefit everyone

The green transition is a global movement away from a carbon-based economy towards a more sustainable and environmentally friendly future. Future Island-Island is a collaborative design ecosystem dedicated to accelerating this transition locally, with the ambition to scale its impact globally.

Delivered through five work packages, our research brings together citizens and subject experts to explore ways island communities can improve waste practices, apply new technologies, and develop innovative approaches to tourism and heritage in the face of environmental challenges.

Future Island-Island is one of four UK Green Transition Ecosystems, each funded up to £4.625m and part of the flagship funding strand of the £25M AHRC

Future Observatory: Design the Green Transition programme (AH/Y003780/1).



## Atlantic Futures

**Period Covering:** January, 2023 - January, 2027

**Department:** Business Administration

### Overview

The Atlantic Futures Project is a partnership between Atlantic Technological University, Ulster University, University of Galway and University of Limerick.

#### The Partnership:

- **CREATES** a research team organised in three co-located hubs Derry/Londonderry, Galway, Limerick.
- **DEVELOPS** a national resource on the scale and with similar ambition to the Edinburgh Futures Institute.
- **UNITES** both strategic and basic research strategies and deploys a variety of methodologies, including GEM, science studies, behavioural science, action research, critical feminist studies, citizen research, patient participant enquiry, and a variety of methodologies from economics and management.

Focussing on the North West Atlantic Innovation Corridor region, the project launched on January 13th 2023 and, over the upcoming 4 years, the aim of the collaboration is to become self-sustaining and established as an internationally recognised centre of excellence for impactful research.



## EPIC Futures

**Period Covering:** March, 2024 - April, 2027

**Department:** Business Administration

Northern Ireland Executive Ministers, departmental policy leads, academics, industry leaders and community groups came together yesterday in Belfast to mark the launch of EPIC Futures NI, a £4.8 million policy action group led by Ulster University, that will address economic inactivity by identifying hidden unemployed groups and supporting them into fair and meaningful work.

The three-year project was endorsed and welcomed by Communities Minister Gordon Lyons, Economy Minister Conor Murphy and Executive Chair of the Economic and Social Research Council Stian Westlake during the event on Wednesday 6 March at the La Mon Hotel & Country Club.

**Minister for Communities, Gordon Lyons** said:

*"Economic inactivity is a long-standing issue in Northern Ireland and a priority for my Department, which has played a leading role in securing funding for the EPIC project. The funding will enable research grants which will focus on economic activity as well as independent and in-depth evaluations of existing DfC initiatives. I am pleased to launch this Project, and I look forward to working collaboratively across central government, academia and with local stakeholders, and to availing of the Project's valuable insights in shaping policy and provision in supporting people into work."*

**Economy Minister Conor Murphy** said:

*"I am pleased to welcome the launch of Epic Futures. The aims of Epic Futures align well with my Economic Vision to promote good jobs, boost productivity and address regional imbalances. The research will provide us with a better understanding of our skills and labour market, with the overall aim of bringing people back to the workforce. I look forward to hearing more about the work of Epic Futures and the positive effects it can have on my Economic Vision."*

**Finance Minister Dr Caoimhe Archibald MLA** said:

*"Collaboration is vital if we are to identify solutions to the barriers faced by those who are part of hidden unemployment groups. I am pleased my Department has been able to support the EPIC Futures programme which will help to fill current research gaps and develop an understanding of skills and employability which ultimately will help people back into work."*

**Professor Kristel Miller, Co-Director of the project and Professor of Entrepreneurship & Small Business Development, Ulster University Business School** commented:

*"We are proud to have welcomed the Executive Chair of the ESRC Stian Westlake, Communities Minister Gordon Lyons, Economy Minister Conor Murphy and our extended group of partners to celebrate the launch of EPIC Futures NI. With the highest economic inactivity rate in the UK at just under 26%, we wanted our partnership to support hidden unemployed groups in Northern Ireland, essentially the individuals who would like to work but face barriers in doing so, the largest of which are women, the over 50's, and individuals with disabilities."*

"In recognition that this is a cross-departmental, Northern Ireland wide challenge, EPIC Futures NI will work collaboratively right across government, industry, education and community to enrich our understanding of the groups facing barriers to employment and provide a data-driven evidence base for meaningful policy change that supports the hidden unemployed into work. The input and endorsement of so many stakeholders indicates the strength of our project's potential, and I look forward to guiding the team as we deliver on our mission throughout the next three years."

**Professor Liam Maguire, Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) Research at Ulster University** added:

"At Ulster we aspire to make the impacts of our research visible, and to ensure our partnerships have impact on the challenges of our modern-day world. Tackling Northern Ireland's challenges in skills and employability requires a collaborative approach, and we heard this week how that will unfold throughout the next three-years of EPIC Futures NI."

Reflecting the collaborative nature of the project, attendees also heard from a panel of experts, entitled 'People and places: a holistic approach to aid NI's skills and labour challenges,' which included:

- Deirdre Ward, Department for Communities, EPIC Futures Co-director
- Rachael Singleton, Department of Finance, Innovation Lab, EPIC Futures Co-director
- Graeme Wilkinson, Department for the Economy, EPIC Futures Co-director
- Anne Green, The Local Policy Innovation Partnership Hub
- Karen Smith, Disability Action
- Mark Magill Ulster, University Economic Policy Centre, EPIC Futures NI Co-director
- Panel Chair: Heather Moorhead, Director of the Northern Ireland Confederation for Health and Social Care

### **About EPIC Futures**

Titled EPIC Futures NI (Economic and Social Partnering for Inclusive Innovation and Collaboration) - the Local Policy Innovation Partnership is the first of its kind in the UK and is supported by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funding as part of its work to create opportunities and improve outcomes locally.

Bringing three government departments together (Communities, Economy and Finance) to work in an open forum with stakeholders in research, education, industry and community organisations, EPIC Futures NI will fill data and knowledge gaps on the hidden unemployed; mainly women, the over 50's, and individuals with disabilities; to develop an evidence base and inform policies and programmes that support these groups to secure fair and meaningful work.

Taking a holistic approach to addressing Northern Ireland's skills and labour market challenges, EPIC Futures NI is supported by 11 business and community organisations as co-investigators: Queen's University Belfast, Open University, Disability Action, Women's Resource and Development Agency,

Women'sTec, Involve, Business in the Community Northern Ireland, Social Enterprise Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Confederation of Health and Social Care, Chief Executives' Forum and Centre for Cross Border Studies.

The three-year EPIC Futures NI project will:

- Deliver a programme of activities which identify and fill research gaps and develop an understanding of skills and employability in NI, both overall and at a local level.
- Analyse trends and behaviours in the current and future labour market in NI.
- Collaboratively identify, and co-create, evidence-based interventions and develop policy recommendations which aid NI's skills and employability challenges.
- Facilitate partnership building across government departments, councils, community representatives, industry and education, focused on skills and employability.
- Enhance understanding of how NI's unique cultural and political nuances influence our skills and labour market challenges.
- Develop a Labour Market Observatory for NI - an online, freely available resource filling labour market data gaps in Northern Ireland and improving knowledge and intelligence about Northern Ireland's current and future skills needs.
- Administer a £1 million flexible commissioning fund to advance knowledge and practice related to NI's labour market.

The largest groups of the hidden unemployed in Northern Ireland are women, individuals with disabilities and those over 50, which will be the main target groups for EPIC Futures NI. However, the flexible commissioning fund will administer research calls which will invite proposals for topics which enrich our understanding of other groups facing barriers to employment.



## **PRME Impact for Real: Student Views on Sustainable and Responsible Education – three business schools; Past, Present and Future**

**Period Covering:** July, 2024 - August, 2025

**Department:** Management

Despite the importance of the UN's Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) agenda, student perspectives are often overlooked. This creates a significant gap in understanding how students value sustainability initiatives and see themselves as future responsible leaders.

To address this, a proposed research project elevates students to their rightful place as critical stakeholders. The project will directly engage with past and present students from three UK higher education institutions to capture their unique experiences and ideas about responsible management education.

Utilising a strengths-based method known as Appreciative Inquiry (API), the study will guide students through a process of self-reflection. Participants will be encouraged to discover what they value, dream of ideal sustainable futures, and design practical steps to achieve them.

This approach not only empowers students to construct and understand their own orientation towards sustainability but also provides invaluable, nuanced feedback to their institutions. By directly listening to student voices, the research aims to help universities collaborate more effectively with students to refine curriculums and bolster the impact of responsible management education for the future custodians of organisations.



## Research Presentations Related to RME and/or Sustainability

In 2024, Ulster University Business School gave 2 research presentations related to RME and/or sustainability.

### PRME Launch Event

**Authors:** Professor Una McMahon-Beattie Dr Marc Duffy Dr Bronagh Magee Dr Susann Power ΓÇô  
Chair Dr Stuart Henderson Dr Shirley Davey Dr Fodhla McGrane Dr Mary Boyd

**Date of publication:** April, 2025

**Presented at:** UUBS PRME Launch

**Department:** Business Administration | Management

**From the Classroom to the Community: Students at the Forefront of our PRME Launch**

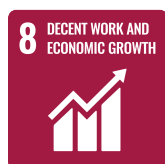
On 18th June 2024, Ulster University Business School (UUBS) marked a significant milestone with its official PRME Launch Event. While the occasion served as our formal commitment to joining the global PRME network, it was equally a platform to celebrate how these principles are already alive within our curriculum and championed by our students. The event demonstrated that our pledge to sustainability is not merely a top-down strategy but a dynamic, student-centred practice.

A central feature of the launch was the "PRME Sustainability Awards," which directly showcased the powerful role our students play in bringing responsible management principles to life. Rather than being a purely academic exercise, the awards were integrated directly into our teaching, empowering students to act as researchers and advocates for sustainability within their own communities.

A prime example was the award for 'The Most Ethical and Sustainable Business in my Hometown, 2024'. This initiative was embedded within the BSc Human Resource Management's new module on Business Ethics and Sustainability. As part of their coursework, each student was tasked with researching and nominating a local small business that exemplified ethical and sustainable practices. This project transformed students from passive learners into active participants, applying classroom theory to real-world analysis.

The winning nomination, submitted by HRM student Donnald Joseph, honoured Chef Liam McEvoy of 'Lean Supper Club' for his commitment to quality, health, and local sourcing. As Dr Fódhla McGrane, Course Director, explained at the event, this initiative powerfully demonstrates how the application of sustainability learning happens out in industry, guided and identified by our students.

By placing a student-led project at the heart of our official PRME launch, we send a clear message: student voices and perspectives are integral to our sustainability journey. This approach ensures that our commitment to responsible management education is authentic, deeply embedded in our community, and actively shaped by the very business leaders we aim to inspire.



## 2nd Annual Sustainable Futures PRME Conference

**Authors:** Marc Duffy | Stuart Henderson | Rachael Singleton

**Date of publication:** July, 2025

**Presented at:** Regional or local academy of management



**Department:** Management

## **Ulster University Business School Celebrates Successful Second Sustainable Futures Conference**

On Thursday 8 May 2025, Ulster University Business School (UUBS) successfully hosted its Second Sustainable Futures Conference at the Belfast campus. The event, centred on the theme of 'Good Health and Wellbeing' in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, provided a vibrant platform for thought-provoking discussions, innovative research, and practical solutions.

Hosted collaboratively by the UUBS Sustainability Committee and the PRME Team, the conference brought together staff, students, and researchers for a full day of engagement in the Orpheus Lecture Theatre.

The event featured two exceptional keynote speakers who shared powerful insights with the attendees.

- **Dr Shqiperim Reka**, Senior Lecturer in Tourism and Hospitality Management at Sheffield Hallam University, delivered an inspiring keynote address titled 'From Refugee to PhD'. His presentation gave a moving account of resilience and explored the crucial role of strategic tourism development in a post-conflict context, using Kosovo as a case study.
- **Dr Jenny Mack**, a Public Health Medicine Consultant in the Institute for Public Health, delivered a compelling presentation on 'A Wellbeing Economy for better public health'. She focused on a recent Wellbeing Economy report and highlighted the critical links between climate change and public health.

The conference showcased a diverse range of contributions from across the Ulster University community, including academic staff, professional services colleagues, students, and PhD researchers. Presentations, posters, and creative projects explored a wide spectrum of topics, including the wellbeing economy, systems thinking for societal flourishing, wellbeing in the workplace, and innovative research methodologies. The event also served as an excellent opportunity for contributors to present their work ahead of the national UK PRME Conference.

Reflecting on the day, Dr Marc Duffy, PRME Lead for Ulster University Business School, praised the event as a celebration of both good practice and research. He noted, "In Dr Reka and Dr Mack we had two excellent speakers with a great story to tell, and the conference successfully highlighted the fantastic work being done across the university."

The Second Sustainable Futures Conference proved to be a significant success, fostering valuable networking, collaboration, and inspiring tangible action towards a more sustainable future. The high level of engagement demonstrated a shared commitment to addressing global challenges. The success of the day was a credit to the organising committee: Dr Marc Duffy, Dr Stuart Henderson, and Dr Rachael Singleton.



## Research Voices

The following statement demonstrates a way in which researchers at Ulster University Business School bring sustainability and responsible management into their research.

### Ulster University Excellence Awards

Ulster University Business School is delighted to celebrate the success of its staff at the recent University Research Excellence Awards. These awards recognise individual staff and teams for their outstanding contributions to research, scholarly activity, and a thriving research culture and community.

We are immensely proud of our research colleagues who have been acknowledged for their dedication and impactful work.

The winners from the **Ulster University Business School**:

- **Dr Judith Wylie**, Senior Lecturer in Accounting, Member of the UUBS Sustainability Committee, was named a Faculty Winner for the Future Research Award.
- **Professor Trevor Cadden**, Professor of Operations Management in the Department of Management, Leadership and Marketing, received the accolade of Faculty Winner for the Senior Distinguished Research Award.
- **Lynsey Hollywood**, Professor in Consumer Studies, Member of the UUBS Sustainability Committee, was also honoured as a Faculty Winner for the Senior Distinguished Research Award.

The achievements of our winners exemplify the vibrant and high-quality research environment within the Ulster University Business School. Their success is a testament to the school's commitment to fostering innovative research with societal impact that makes a significant contribution to both academia and the wider community.

## Research Barriers

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

- ❖ Administrative barriers
- ❖ Time constraints



# Partner

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

## How We Define Partner

A spirit of partnership is the hallmark of Ulster University Business School. We believe progress is only achieved by working together, engaging partners from business, government, civil society, and academia. Through these collaborations, we advance responsible management education and embed sustainable practices within our community and beyond.

## Institutional Partnerships

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

## Student Organization Partnerships

- ❖ PRME Global Students

## Partnerships

The following provides more details on 2 key partnerships at Ulster University Business School.

### **EAUC - Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges**

### **EAUC is the leading body for sustainability in the post-16 education sector in the UK and Republic of Ireland.**

We've been promoting sustainability in post-16 education for over 20 years. Primarily a membership body, we serve 300 organisations whilst also working to change systems that enable sustainability action.

We're both a charity and a company limited by guarantee and are always not-for-profit.

### **Our vision**

A post-16 education system that creates a world with sustainability at its heart.

## Our purpose

We exist to lead and empower the post-16 education sector to embed sustainability in everything it does. We promote holistic whole organisation approaches where leadership and governance, estates and operations, teaching and learning and collaborations are all actively driving sustainability so that we're equipping learners for their lives, being responsible organisations and shaping society for the better.

We do this by:

- Supporting our members to create meaningful sustainability change
- Convening our network to generate solutions to shared challenges
- Creating systems change to establish a more enabling environment for sustainability action.

## Belfast Healthy Cities

### Professor Ian Montgomery Appointed as Chairperson of Belfast Healthy Cities

Belfast Healthy Cities is pleased to announce the appointment of Professor Ian Montgomery as its new Chairperson. Ian, who previously served as Treasurer and Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, brings a wealth of expertise and leadership experience to the role. As Dean of Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility at Ulster University, he has a deep understanding of the intersection between environmental sustainability, public health, and social equity – key priorities for Belfast Healthy Cities.

#### Welcoming his appointment, Charlene Brooks, Chief Executive Officer of Belfast Healthy Cities, said:

"We are delighted to welcome Professor Ian Montgomery as our new Chairperson. Ian's vast experience in sustainability, governance, and strategic leadership will be invaluable as we continue to drive forward our mission of creating a healthier, fairer, and more sustainable Belfast. His knowledge and commitment to addressing health inequalities will help shape the next phase of our work. I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to Michael Boyd, our outgoing Chair, for his dedication."

#### Commenting on his new role, Professor Ian Montgomery said:

"It is a great honour to take on the role of Chairperson at Belfast Healthy Cities. The organisation plays a crucial role in advocating for policies and initiatives that improve health and well-being across Belfast, and I am committed to supporting its continued growth and influence."

“As part of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network, Belfast Healthy Cities is at the forefront of driving innovative, evidence-based approaches to tackling health inequalities. I look forward to working closely with Charlene, the team and Board, and our many partners to advance our shared vision of a healthier, more equitable, and sustainable city.”

Belfast Healthy Cities is part of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network, working to integrate health into all local policies, strengthen community engagement, and promote sustainable urban development. Ian’s leadership will support the organisation’s ongoing work in Greening the City, Healthy Places Healthy Children, Active Travel, and tackling health inequalities.



# Practice

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



## How We Define Practice

**Sustainability in Operations** The University's strategic approach to managing its environmental impact and the key initiatives both planned and in place to improve environmental performance. **Governance:** The SSG will be responsible for governing and oversight of the university's sustainability, climate change, and social responsibility agendas and developing and implementing a Strategic Sustainability Action Plan.

## Institutional Policies and Practices

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

## Practice Awards

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



## **PRME Chapter UK and Ireland Responsible Business and Management Student Writing Competition 2023/24 8th Annual Competition**

**Granter:** PRME Chapter UK and Ireland

**Grantee:** Tess Hazelhurst

### **Award Description:**

The PRME Chapter UK and Ireland and Oxford Brookes University are honoured to announce the winners of the 8th Responsible Business and Management Student Writing Competition. <https://www.unprme.org.uk/2024-student-writing-competition-winners>



## **Academy Restaurant Award**

**Granter:** Ulster Regional Final of Irish Restaurant Awards

**Grantee:** Ulster University

### **Award Description:**

Academy: the Centre for Food, Drink and Culture, has been awarded the Best Sustainable Practices Award (County Antrim) at the prestigious Ulster Regional Final of Irish Restaurant Awards 2023. Now its 14th year, the Irish Restaurant Awards celebrate the best of the hospitality sector, showcasing the incredible food and talent in local cafes, hotels, pubs and restaurants across the region. This year's awards saw a record breaking number of public nominations and was attended by almost 800 well-known restaurant and hospitality business owners and staff. Academy is located on Ulster University's new Belfast city centre campus and incorporates a state-of-the-art restaurant, culinary school, beverage school and conference and meeting facilities. As well as giving students hands-on experience, it provides comprehensive practical support to entrepreneurs, is an open-access learning centre for the public and contributes to the ongoing development of Northern Ireland as a food and drink destination. A champion of Northern Irish culinary culture, Academy is committed to using ingredients that are sourced locally on the basis of quality, flavour, freshness and seasonality, from suppliers who are dedicated to environmental practices and to the highest standards of animal welfare. Speaking about the achievement, Lisa Kennedy, Academy Business Manager, Ulster University, said; At Academy, we embrace our responsibility to environmental leadership and are committed to integrating sustainability practices into our core business strategy which includes commitments to ethical food sourcing, zero-waste and minimising our environmental footprint. To be recognised for exemplary practices in environmental sustainability, among many other progressive restaurants in the area, is just incredible and something the entire team should be very proud of. The Academy team will now compete for the Regional and All Ireland titles at the Irish Restaurant Awards All Ireland Final on Monday 15th May 2023 in Dublin. Academy is open during term time, serving lunch on weekdays from 12.30pm and dinner on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7pm.

## Times HE University of the Year - UK and Ireland

**Granter:** Times HE

**Grantee:** Times HE

### **Award Description:**

Ulster University has been awarded 'University of the Year 2024', the most prestigious title of all by Times Higher Education. For the first time in the University's history, Ulster University is recognised as the top higher education institution in the UK and Ireland. Known as the Oscars of the UK university sector, the Times Higher Education annual awards celebrate the best of higher education in the UK and Ireland. The University of the Year accolade honours exceptional university performance, with this year's award reflecting achievements during the 2022-23 academic year. In September, Ulster University was shortlisted alongside five other top-ranking institutions: London Metropolitan University, University of Stirling, University of Leicester, University of Sunderland, and University of Surrey. The awards attract hundreds of entries each year from universities across all corners of the UK and Ireland, that exemplify the talent, innovation, and commitment of individuals and teams across all aspects of university life. What the judges said Ulster University was hailed as a "force for good in fostering peace, prosperity and cohesion" and took the top spot in recognition of its role as an anchor institution in a region that has undergone rapid change in the quarter-century since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. The award honoured the completion of Ulster's £364 million Belfast campus, creating a vital connection to a historically underserved community, backed up with a schools programme designed to boost higher education participation among the city's young males. The judges were also impressed by the securing of a €44.5 million (£37 million) investment from the Irish government for the development of Ulster's Derry/Londonderry campus, making it a groundbreaking cross-jurisdictional project. The significance of such efforts to ongoing peace and collaboration were underscored by Ulster's role as host to the US president, Joe Biden, on his visit to mark the Good Friday Agreement's 25th anniversary. Alongside this, they said Ulster has delivered impressive progress in research, particularly in medical technology and quantum computing, in teaching, student experience and graduate outcomes. The judges said these achievements "demonstrated the university's growing influence and status in the island of Ireland, and as a force for good in fostering peace, prosperity and cohesion".

2023: A momentous year for Ulster University The top accolade recognises Ulster University for its 'People, Place and Partnership' strategy, which recommitted to maintaining a dual focus on research and teaching while driving social mobility and economic growth. The university's commitment to putting the student experience at the heart, led to achieving its highest rank in the history of UK domestic tables. In what was a momentous year, the university secured a multi-million-pound Shared Island investment in a new teaching and student services building in Derry~Londonderry, which is set to expand an already thriving hub for health sciences, interdisciplinary training and practice in the North West. The campus is preparing to graduate the first cohort of doctors from the Graduate Entry School of Medicine next year and offers the first Paramedic Science course in Northern Ireland meaning that Ulster University's Derry~Londonderry campus

provides the most comprehensive higher education healthcare offering in the UK and Ireland. Additionally, the University marked the completion of its new state-of-the-art Belfast city centre campus, one of the largest higher education capital projects in Europe, recently named Building of the Year by the Royal Society of Ulster Architects. A beacon of aspiration and an engine of innovation, the campus is transforming learning and teaching experiences while making a significant economic impact in the immediate area, across the city, and the wider region. With a unique multi-campus model, Ulster University is also delivering on its ambition for an innovative drug discovery centre in Coleraine to complement the existing Biomedical Science and Pharmacology offering. An expansive, semi-rural facility based on the north coast, the Coleraine campus is home to new programmes such as Adventure Sports and Golf Management alongside Arts, Humanities and Education. Marking the 25th Anniversary of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement In the year of the 25th anniversary of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement the institution launched a one-of-its kind leadership programme, 25@25 which helped 25 graduates develop their full leadership potential. Ulster University's vital role in Northern Ireland's journey from peace to prosperity over the last 25 years was acknowledged by the President of the United States of America when he selected the University as his only visit to the UK in April 2023 to mark the milestone. Alongside the achievements of 2022/23, the institution continued to operate with the student experience at its heart, achieving its highest rank in the history of UK domestic tables. Ulster University Vice-Chancellor Professor Paul Bartholomew said: "We are incredibly proud and delighted to be announced as University of the Year by Times Higher Education. These prestigious awards attract hundreds of entries from top institutions across the UK and Ireland, and this recognition reflects the hard work of our staff and the support of our student community across our campuses. "I truly believe that Ulster University is an extraordinary organisation in every sense of the word, and in recent years we really began to realise our full potential. Ulster University is a research-led, people centric, community-focused and values driven institution that believes in equality, celebrates diversity and fosters inclusion. "Today, we are a University of and for the world, attracting the attention of presidents, politicians and changemakers. "As a multi-campus University uniquely positioned in Northern Ireland, we play a pivotal role in driving forward economic prosperity and growth that creates opportunities and improves the quality of lives across the whole of our shared region. "Our People, Place and Partnership strategy capitalises on that and emphasises our dual focus on research and teaching while driving social mobility. We demonstrate the belief that though we inherit our past, we chose our future, and it is our mission to ensure that all of our students have all the skills they need to make a difference in the world." Ulster University was previously shortlisted for University of the Year in 2021 by The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide. In June 2024, the University was recognised as the highest-ranking UK university for outreach activities, and fifth in the world overall, in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2024. This year marked the 20th anniversary of THE Awards celebrated at a glittering gala ball held at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham on Thursday, 28 November. Ulster University's recognition as University of the Year was one of 19 categories celebrated on the night.



# 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

UUBS is committed to a culture of transparency, rooted in our core values. Our value of collaboration builds an inclusive environment where we can act with integrity. By learning together from all outcomes, we continually strive to enhance the potential of our students, staff, and partners.

## Engagement Opportunities

Ulster University 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:

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

## Communication Audiences

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

- ❖ Accreditation bodies
- ❖ Boards and advisory committees
- ❖ Business and industry partners
- ❖ Faculty and staff
- ❖ Government and policy makers
- ❖ Chamber of commerce and local communities
- ❖ Media and public relations channels
- ❖ Prospective and current students
- ❖ Research and academic networks

## Sharing Voices

The following statements from stakeholders at Ulster University Business School demonstrate our commitment to sharing and learning from sustainability and responsible management practices.

### Special Interest Group on Inclusive Teaching (SIGIT)

#### Empowering Learners: Student Voice and Partnership in Practice

At Ulster University Business School, we believe that learning is a partnership. Our educational ethos is founded on the principle that learners should be actively involved in shaping their own learning journey through co-design and the amplification of the student voice. This commitment is central to our mission to support all learners in becoming thriving individuals, collaborative professionals, engaged learners, and active citizens.

We empower our students to take responsibility for their learning in collaboration with their peers, positioning them as genuine partners in the educational experience. Our teaching methods are designed to support the development of executive functioning, self-regulation, and problem-solving skills. These skills not only minimise barriers to learning but also build confidence and enhance wellbeing. We foster an inclusive culture by getting to know our learners, considering their cultural awareness and identities, and embedding student partnership as a core part of curriculum planning, design, and delivery.

A leading example of this commitment in action is our **Special Interest Group on Inclusive Teaching (SIGIT)**. This ground-breaking, learner-centred initiative positions students as 'experts-by-experience', creating more inclusive and effective learning environments for everyone. **The key innovation of SIGIT lies in elevating students to the role of educators, recognising them as experts in their lived experiences of inclusion.**

SIGIT hosts structured monthly events with two distinct segments: 'Learning from students', where students share their stories and perspectives on inclusivity, and 'Learning from colleagues', where staff share effective strategies and tools. Insights from events held between March 2023 and November 2024, covering the experiences of students with learning differences, sensory impairments, international students, mature students, and queer students, have provided a rich foundation for developing our inclusive teaching practices.

The impact of this approach has been profound. Students report that SIGIT amplifies their voices and fosters a sense of agency and ownership in their learning. As one student panel member shared, "The most valuable aspect was the opportunity to share my experiences as an international student. Being able to express how the university fosters inclusion and engagement for students like me was truly meaningful."

This transformative experience extends to our staff. One lecturer noted, “Every session gives me a number of takeaways that I then use in my teaching and to create resources. The storytelling is most impactful as it allows you time to see it from the other person's perspective. I am a kinder, more inclusive lecturer because of this experience.”

The success of SIGIT has earned institutional recognition, including the 'Distinguished Collaborative Excellence Award 2025' and the creation of a new 'Community of Practice' for inclusion-focused staff. Our learnings have been shared widely at events such as the CABS Learning, Teaching and Student Experience (LTSE) Conference 2024 and the Advance HE Teaching and Learning Conference 2025.

This work directly supports the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. By creating effective and inclusive learning environments for all (SDG 4: Quality Education) and by empowering students from diverse backgrounds to shape our practices (SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities), we are actively working to build a more equitable and supportive educational community. Through initiatives like SIGIT, Ulster University Business School is not just listening to the student voice; we are amplifying it to drive meaningful and lasting change.

## **Ulster University Sustainability Committee**

Our vision is to embolden staff, students and all our stakeholders to become sustainable business futures leaders.

We aim to support and showcase sustainability research and education across Ulster University Business School.

We do so by embedding the sustainable futures agenda into five remits: sustainability performance, research and knowledge exchange, learning and teaching, student experience and communications and engagement.

<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/faculties/ulster-university-business-school/uubs-sustainability-committee>

## **The Business of Possibility Podcast**

Hosted by Veteran BBC broadcaster and journalist, Wendy Austin, The Business of Possibility podcast series takes a deep dive into the world of business in Northern Ireland. Wendy explores key themes and the latest research in business today with a host of dynamic business leaders, industry experts and leading academics.



Through thought leadership, stories and conversations, this podcast offers valuable insights and guidance on topics such as leadership, future of work, skills, resilience, innovation and entrepreneurship.

[The Business of Possibility Podcast](#)

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The success of the day was a credit to the organising committee: Dr Marc Duffy, Dr Stuart Henderson, and Dr Rachael Singleton.



## Ulster University Students Union Impact Report

Full UUSU Impact Report [https://www.uusu.org/asset/News/6013/V6\\_Impact-Report-2024\\_2-1.pdf](https://www.uusu.org/asset/News/6013/V6_Impact-Report-2024_2-1.pdf)

Throughout the past year, Ulster University Students' Union (UUSU) has dedicated its efforts to fostering positive change for all students, focusing on building a vibrant campus community and addressing the significant impact of the cost of living crisis. This commitment is underpinned by the launch of an ambitious new five-year strategy for 2024-2029, which was developed in direct consultation with students to ensure their priorities are at the forefront of the Union's work.

### Championing the Student Voice

A core mission for UUSU is to represent and amplify the student voice across the University. This year saw a remarkable level of engagement in academic representation, with over 800 students dedicating more than 24,000 hours in their roles as course, school, and faculty representatives. The Union's leadership elections also achieved their highest ever online turnout, with 19,021 votes cast to elect the new Student Executive Team.

The Student Council was instrumental in driving policy, passing new measures focused on providing inclusive protection, enhancing sexual health education, and lobbying for childcare facilities. This advocacy extended to the national stage, where UUSU successfully ensured childcare for student parents became a key issue for NUS-USI.

To celebrate the partnership between staff and students, the student-led Learning & Teaching Awards recognised outstanding contributions to the student journey. The awards received over 500 nominations from students, highlighting the profound impact of university staff and academic representatives. Notably, staff and students from the Department of Management, Leadership & Marketing were recognised with awards for Inclusion & Belonging Champion, the Inspirational Award, and Student Academic Representative of the Year.

## **A Network of Support**

In response to the cost of living crisis, UUSU implemented several key initiatives to provide practical support. A free breakfast service was introduced across all campuses, providing thousands of cups of tea and coffee, bowls of porridge, and cereal bars to students. Additionally, a food bank initiative was established to redistribute short-shelf-life sandwiches from campus catering, a programme which simultaneously supports students in need and improves sustainability.

Recognising the importance of mental health, the Union organised events designed to combat loneliness and reduce stress, including "Brew Monday" sessions and bringing puppies and a mobile farm to campus during exam periods. The UUSU Advice Bureau provided essential guidance, handling over 600 student cases on issues ranging from academic appeals and housing to student finance.

UUSU is committed to creating an inclusive and sustainable campus for all. This year, the Union worked with the University to ensure free sanitary products are available in all bathrooms and to improve the accessibility of the preferred name change system. Sustainability has been advanced through Green Week events and a partnership with Hazaar, a pre-loved student marketplace, which has seen over 800 students register to participate in the circular economy.

## **Connecting the Community**

UUSU provides vibrant opportunities for students to connect, make friends, and build communities. The Union supports 97 active societies, with membership growing to over 3,800 students who participated in 400 events throughout the year.

A major highlight was the inaugural Beltane Festival, a summer music event at the Magee campus delivered in partnership with Stendhal, which celebrated local artists and the end of the academic year. UUSU Sport also had an exceptional year, with a 12% increase in club membership and teams winning 35 trophies. A historic achievement was the men's Gaelic Football team winning the Sigerson Cup for the first time in 16 years.

The spirit of community extends to charitable work. Students and staff volunteered for Mission Christmas to support children affected by poverty and selected the British Red Cross as the charity of the year, with all funds raised supporting the Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territory Appeal. Through these diverse initiatives, UUSU continues to successfully represent, support, and connect the student body, significantly enhancing the student experience at Ulster University.

## Communication Barriers

Ulster University Business School faces the following barriers in transparent communications:



**Data privacy  
regulations**



**Transparency  
hesitation**

SIGNATORY

# Ulster University Business School

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## Address

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