

2025 Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) Report

Aston Business School

September 2025

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About Aston Business School

Aston Business School (ABS), founded in 1972, is the largest school of Aston University (Birmingham, UK) and reflects the University's wider mission to advance technology, business and society. ABS is among the one per cent of business schools worldwide to hold triple accreditation from AACSB, EQUIS and AMBA. Its programmes from undergraduate to MBA, doctoral and executive education combine rigorous academic study with opportunities for applied learning and close engagement with industry. Students benefit from real-world projects and collaboration with major companies and community partners, ensuring that graduates are prepared to address complex global challenges. Combined with guaranteed placement opportunities for our students and consistently high graduate employment outcomes, we ensure that talent from all backgrounds can thrive.

As a PRME signatory since 2008 and a founding member of the UKI PRME Chapter since 2013, Aston University has embedded sustainability into its practices across education, research, partnerships, and operations. Located in the centre of Birmingham, Aston University has deep connections to the West Midlands economy and innovation ecosystem. The University holds the highest Gold rating in the UK Teaching Excellence Framework and ranks second in England for graduate social mobility (HEPI Social Mobility Index 2024). Aston was awarded Athena Swan Gold in recognition of sustained impact in advancing gender equality in 2024. At that time the University was amongst the first of three to have achieved this milestone in the UK. Many of the contributions of ABS have helped shape this success, with a select example being the Cyber Kali programme aimed at advancing representation of women in cyber careers.

The Environment and Sustainability Team (EST) at Aston University leads the institution's efforts to embed sustainability across campus operations, guided by the Sustainability Strategy 2030 and aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The team oversees environmental initiatives including energy management, waste reduction, and biodiversity enhancement. Our flagship project is the development of a Green Energy Centre, supported by a £35.5 million grant from the UK Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, administered by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and delivered by Salix Finance. This transformative initiative is central to Aston's commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2028 and will revolutionise the University's energy infrastructure while serving as a hub for innovation, research, and community engagement in sustainability.

Aston Business School has a long-standing reputation for supporting small and medium-sized enterprises and regional growth through initiatives such as the Aston Centre for Growth and the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses programme. Faculty are active researchers and industry experts who translate advanced scholarship into practice and policy impact, ensuring that research informs teaching and delivers tangible benefits to business and society. This ambitious agenda prompts Aston Business School to exemplify how responsible management education, innovation and sustainability reinforce one another. Through triple-accredited teaching, research with real-world impact, a deep commitment to social mobility and gender equality and environmental leadership, we work to create lasting economic and social value for Birmingham, the West Midlands and the global community.



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Aston Business School

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 Aston Business School, including key details and basic institutional data.

Mission

Our mission is to enhance enterprise and enterprises. To equip and develop individuals to perform with a digital and entrepreneurial mindset within enterprises and the professions to create successful new ventures. We support business leaders in innovation, enhancing their organisations' performance and growth. We advise policy-makers on ways to improve society and the economy. Our innovative impactful research creates new knowledge and skills that further these aspirations. We increasingly leverage our regional and national excellence globally.

Vision

Our vision is to be a global leader for digital, practice-led teaching and impactful, innovative research aimed at benefiting and transforming students, professions, enterprises and communities. We are committed to achieving this in a socially and environmentally responsible way.

Strategy

Our strategy

Aston Business School follows Aston University's approach to strategy, which is measured by the positive transformational impact we achieve for our people, students, businesses and the communities we serve. We focus on four strategic areas of distinctiveness which inform our decision-making and drive our key activities:

- providing a life transforming student experience through innovative practice-led teaching and learning developing employability skills and knowledge,
- impactful research that is motivated by the opportunities and challenges of enterprises and policy-makers,
- direct engagement with enterprises, governments and regulators in support of policy initiatives in our areas of expertise,
- enhancing our national and international reputation in order to recruit the best students and staff.

Aston Business School Strategic Plan 2023 - 2030

View document  Download document 

Strategy Alignment

Our strategic priorities are closely aligned with advancing sustainable development, the common good and quality education.

As a triple-accredited institution with a strong focus on impact, we embed the principles of responsible management and the UN Sustainable Development Goals across our teaching, research, business engagement and operations. Our curriculum promotes ethical leadership, social responsibility and sustainability, equipping students to contribute meaningfully to global challenges. Our research centres address pressing issues such as inclusive entrepreneurship, sustainable innovation and social mobility. We are committed to widening participation and delivering high-quality, inclusive education that prepares graduates for a diverse and rapidly changing world. Through partnerships with industry, policy and community organisations, we foster knowledge exchange that drives both economic and social impact. These efforts reflect our broader commitment to serving the common good while enhancing graduate employability, supporting global citizenship and contributing to the long-term sustainability of business and society.

Institutional History

In 2025, we are celebrating the 130th anniversary of Aston University



1895 – where it all started

Our origins can be traced back to Aston University's beginnings in the Birmingham Municipal Technical School, established in 1895. In 1947, the Technical School created a Department of Industrial Administration – the second to be founded in the United Kingdom. When the Department was created, few would have anticipated that it would one day grow to be one of the largest and best business schools in the UK.

1961 – Research and 'Aston Studies'

Research at Aston Business School has its roots back in 1961, when the Industrial Administration Research Unit (IARU) was set up and, within it, the 'Aston Studies' on organisations. The research was groundbreaking, with the study of groups of workers being carried out in their workplace and organisation setting. In response to the growth in postgraduate education, a joint venture with the University of Birmingham formed the Graduate Centre of Management Studies in 1964. The same year, a BSc in Behavioural Science and an MSc in Industrial Administration was introduced.

1972 – Aston Business School

Aston Business School began in 1972 as the Aston University Management Centre. In 1987 the Management Centre was renamed Aston Business School. It is now the largest academic unit in Aston University.

1979 – The Aston MBA

In 1979, our first MBAs were awarded.

The 90s – MSc aplenty

The mid 1990s saw the development of a range of integrated one-year MSc programmes and the undergraduate programmes expanded. Between 1980–1997 we launched an MSc in Public Services Management, the Work Organisation Research Centre (WORC), the Innovation Design and Operations Management Centre (IDOM), a distance learning MBA, an MSc in International Business and opened a dedicated suite for postgraduate students.

1999 – EQUIS accreditation

We have always been committed to maintaining the quality of our courses. In 1999, we formed the Advisory Board and Undergraduate Advisory Panel to ensure that they were rated excellent. The first of our triple accreditations, EQUIS (EFMD Quality Improvement System), was also achieved in 1999.

2000 – AMBA accreditation awarded

Our AMBA (the Association of MBAs) accreditation was first awarded in 2000. The Aston MBA is one of the longest established MBA programmes in the UK, and one of the first to achieve AMBA accreditation. Our AMBA accreditation was reawarded in 2015. In 2018, the programme celebrated 40 successful years.

2003 – AACSB accreditation and Triple Accreditation

In 2003, we gained AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) accreditation. Aston Business School is part of a prestigious group of global business schools who hold the gold standard of 'triple-crown' accreditation.

2006 – Aston Business School Building

In 2006, we saw a £20m extension to the Nelson Building which is now called the Aston Business School Building.

2008 – 60 years at Aston

In 2008, we celebrated our 60th birthday and named two of our lecture theatres after Adrian Cadbury and Susan Cadbury, in recognition of their long association with the University. Sir Adrian Cadbury was the University's Chancellor for more than two decades, and he wrote the influential Cadbury Report which now guides all principles of corporate governance in the UK.

2008 – PRME

Aston University has been a PRME signatory since 2008. As one of the founding members of the UKI Chapter in 2013, Aston University continues to keep sustainability at the core of its mission and values within its educational and research practices, and its wider partnerships.

2010s - 2020s - Student Experience and Sustainability

In 2019, we opened our new Students' Union building, placing student wellbeing at the heart of campus. We also prepared for a bold transformation into a greener, more sustainable institution.

2023 – Aston 2030 Strategy

We launched our 2030 strategy, setting out the key priorities to guide us in achieving our ambitions.

2025 - Leading the Way in Sustainability

In 2025, we became a national leader in green innovation and data science. We secured £35.5M in funding to decarbonise our campus and advance environmental goals.


Information on graduates, staff and enrollment pertains to the 2024/25 academic year.

Graduates & Enrollment

| 2024 Statistics | Number |
|---|--------|
| Graduates | 2360 |
| Faculty & Staff at the University | 2034 |
| Faculty & Staff at the Institution | 358 |
| Student Enrollment at the University | 21778 |
| Student Enrollment at the Institution | 7322 |
| Undergraduate Attendance | 4607 |
| Masters-Level Postgraduate Attendance | 2368 |
| Doctoral Student Attendance | 291 |
| Certificate, Professional Development, or Continuing Education Attendance | 56 |

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 Research (MRes)













Doctoral Programs

 Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)



Undergraduate Degree Programmes

 BSc Accounting  BSc Business Analytics  BSc Business and International Relations
 BSc Business and Management  BSc Business and Politics  BSc Business and Sociology
 BSc Business and Supply Chain Management  BSc Business Computing and IT  BSc Economics
 BSc Business Enterprise Development  BSc Marketing  BSc Digital Marketing
 BSc Digital Media and Communication  BSc Economics and Management
 BSc Economics and Politics  BSc Finance  BSc Global Business and Management
 BSc Human Resources and Business Management  BSc International Business and Economics
 BSc International Business and Management  BSc Cybersecurity  BSc Psychology & Business
 BSc Psychology & Marketing


Masters Degree Programmes

-  MSc Business Analytics
-  MSc Business and Management
-  MRes Business and Management
-  MSc Cyber Security Management
-  MSc Cybersecurity
-  MSc Digital Marketing and Analytics
-  MSc Entrepreneurship and Innovation
-  Executive MBA
-  MSc Finance
-  MSc Financial Management
-  MSc Financial Technology
-  MSc Human Resource Development
-  MSc Human Resource Management
-  MSc Information Systems and Business Analysis
-  MSc International Accounting and Finance
-  MSc International Business
-  MSc Investment Analysis and Risk
-  MSc Management
-  Online MBA
-  MSc Project Management
-  MBA Full Time
-  MSc Strategic Business Analysis
-  MSc Strategic Financial Management
-  MSc Strategic Marketing Management

Postgraduate Degree Programmes

-  PhD Aston Business School
-  DBA Executive Doctor of Business Administration

Certificates, Professional Development, or Associate Programmes

-  PG Certificate – Business Administration
-  Executive Education Programme



Purpose

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

Letter of Commitment



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As Executive Dean of Aston Business School, I am pleased to reaffirm our School's ongoing commitment to the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME). We remain fully aligned with PRME's vision of transforming management education, research, and thought leadership in support of sustainable development and the advancement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This 2025 Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) Report demonstrates the actions we have taken since our last submission to integrate the PRME Principles into our strategy, curriculum, research, and partnerships. It reflects our progress in embedding responsible management and sustainability into the heart of our educational offering, our research agenda, and our engagement with business, policy, and society.

As we continue to build on these foundations, we commit to deepening our integration of PRME's six Principles in innovative and impactful ways. This includes further embedding sustainability and ethics across all programmes, enhancing experiential and practice-based learning, and strengthening collaborations with organisations that share our commitment to responsible and inclusive leadership.

We remain dedicated to transparency and accountability in reporting our progress and impact, and to contributing actively to the global PRME community of practice.

On behalf of Aston Business School, I thank the PRME Secretariat and our peers for their continued partnership and support. Together, we are shaping responsible leaders capable of addressing the complex challenges of our time and creating meaningful, sustainable change.

Professor Marian Garcia,
Executive Dean of Aston Business School





Values

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



How We Define Values

Our core values are Ambition, Collaboration, Inclusion, Innovation and Integrity. Our ambition drives us to advance and accomplish our goals, strive for excellence and impact, and create value for our beneficiaries and communities. We believe in the value of working together for a shared purpose, by engaging and collaborating across our teams and disciplines, as well as with our beneficiaries. We provide an inclusive, caring and empowering environment for all and respect and support the values that diversity and inclusion bring to our whole community. We nurture an innovative environment that values new ideas, seeks diverse perspectives and pursue game-changing innovations that make a positive impact. By valuing honesty, trust, fairness and ethical behaviour, we always act with integrity and hold ourselves and others accountable.

Who Champions Responsible Management Education at Our Institution

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

Celebrating Values

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

Aston's strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

Aston has a strong emphasis on EDI, which aligns with the University's roots in social justice and transforming communities. This commitment has been solidified, most recently, in the creation of the Inclusive Aston Strategy. This cements the Aston2030 ambition around inclusion and belonging. Relatedly, board level measures of success include specific priorities around gender and race equality, evidenced in staff and student outcomes. This drives the organisation of associated governance mechanisms for accountability, with recognition and reward for contributions also well defined in institutional promotion and appraisal processes.

The University has a central team that supports academic and professional service areas by providing access to data, helping to canvass views, and guiding the design and evaluation of inclusion interventions in areas of need, for example the inclusive recruitment of the workforce and students. A vibrant array of staff and student groups drive initiatives across UK protected attributes, responding to

the social and structural determinants of outcomes in educational and work environments. For example, Inspiring Women at Aston; LGBTQ+ network; Race, Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage Group; Working Parents Network.

The University engages in self-assessment of its culture and practices by joining formal accreditation schemes. These provide a structured review framework alongside independent review of progress and the suitability of future planned actions. Selected examples include Disability Confident, and Athena Swan (gender equality).

Importantly, in Aston Business School, our research centres are closely aligned with the inclusive Aston mission with activity that impacts equity in society, e.g. the Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (Creme) and the Centre for Cyber Security (CSI). Due to the sustained focus, there are a number of marked examples of success overtime, including, for example, year on year reduction in the gap between male and female promotions.





Teach

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



How We Define Teach

Our value proposition for our students involves an integrated portfolio of contemporary learning and development opportunities supported by unique experiences and professional practice, all designed to elevate their learning and prepare them well for both work and life within a changing world. We base our curriculum around Four Es: enterprise, employability, experiential learning and ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance).

Courses that support RME

Aston Business School reports 22 courses in 2024 that support responsible management education and sustainable development goals.

Principles of Operations Management

| BN1157

The core activity of any organisation is its operations, and the performance of the organisation is determined by how well these operations are managed. This module takes a detailed look at the decisions managers need to make about operations. The module provides conceptual, analytical and practical insights into the effective management of operations in manufacturing and service organisations, in both the private and the public sectors. The module develops skills essential for students' future careers, including strong communication through in-class discussions and activities that enhance coordination, sustainability awareness through exploration of links to the SDGs, and analytical ability through formulas to identify operational needs and critical case-study analysis. It also builds specific professional capabilities such as evaluating strategic alternatives, promoting continuous improvement, producing operations-design plans, and recognising the role and nature of quality in enhancing customer satisfaction.



Risk Management in a Digital Economy

| BNK 581

This module is an applied, forward-looking course that examines how organisations can identify, assess and manage a broad spectrum of risks driven by digital transformation. It engages students in critical areas such as cyber risk, digital governance, emerging technologies and ethical risk frameworks. Designed for postgraduate learners in business, management and IT domains, the module combines academic theory with practical case-based learning to develop real-world insights and decision-making capabilities. The content is organised into six progressive units: Risk and Technology, Technological Overview, The Nature of Cyber Risk, Managing Cyber Risk, Selected Topics

in Risk Management, and Emerging Technologies and Future Trends. It integrates theoretical knowledge, regulatory context and practical skills through interactive lessons, video content, webinars with guest speakers and continuous assessment activities. A major assessment component is a use-case analysis in which students choose real-world scenarios where digital technologies interact with organisational risk, allowing them to demonstrate understanding of contextual risks, apply risk management frameworks and propose solutions in either a consulting-style report or a research proposal. Students are encouraged to incorporate professional experiences or engage with employers to add relevance and authenticity to their work. By the end of the module, students will be able to evaluate cybersecurity threats, model risk in digital ecosystems and apply governance frameworks such as ISO/IEC 27001 and CIS Controls, with emphasis on understanding technological evolution, ethical considerations and digital resilience.



Current Issues in Global Audit and Assurance

| BFM256

This module aims to develop students' understanding of current and emerging issues in audit and assurance in the global context. It builds on the principles of audit and assurance and introduces students to research addressing the role of assurance in enhancing corporate governance and accountability. Students are expected to critically analyse the role of and contemporary issues in auditing and assurance, engage in research to evaluate contemporary issues in auditing and assurance and participate in discussions on the developments in auditing and their possible impact. Key topics covered in the module include Audit Risk and Global Emerging Risks: Fraud, Control risks Cyber threats, sustainability, Professional scepticism and judgment - A global perspective, Ethics & Audit Independence – Global Issues, Technology and Global audit.



Audit and Professional Ethics

| BF3303

This module is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the critical role that ethics and professionalism play in the field of auditing. External audits are a fundamental component of the financial reporting ecosystem, ensuring the integrity and reliability of the information that businesses provide to stakeholders. The ethical conduct and professional competence of auditors are paramount. The module aim to help students (i) understand the ethical principles and codes of conduct that guide

auditors. (ii) Enhance their employability skills. (iii) Recognise the auditor's role in detecting and responding to fraud, and evaluating internal controls. (iv) Explore how technology and sustainability reporting are transforming the external audit landscape.



Audit, Governance and Company Law

| BF2220

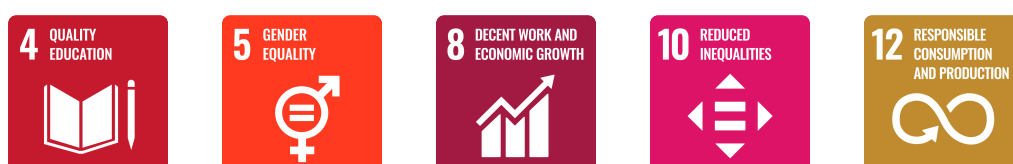
This module gives the accounting students an introduction to audit practice and how it is linked to accounting. The module consists of 3 sections - Audit, Governance and Company Law. Audit covers the stages of the auditing practice and why it is important, Governance covers the UK Corporate Governance Code and Risk management and Company law covers the inception, growth and death of a company. These 3 sections are aimed at providing a comprehensive foundation to external Audit and Ethical Practices.



Strategic Retail Management

| BMC309

This module enables students to examine how and why consumers behave in retail environments to inform retail strategy. Part of the module examines the ethical role of employers and managers, a theme that is consistent throughout the programme. Reference will be made to managers and organisations adopting appropriate professional ethics, codes of conduct, and principles of fairness and transparency in their processes. Students will be encouraged to draw connections between the module content and their professional experiences, and to use study sessions to network and learn from one another.



Product and Intellectual property

| BL3323

Intellectual property (IP) forms the basis of many of today's fastest-growing companies, and 80 percent of corporate assets are now intangible. However, IP alone is rarely sufficient to create businesses or significant economic value; it must be incorporated into a commercialisation plan. This module enables students to learn about the design and effective commercialisation of innovative products and services, encouraging the development of an enterprising mind-set. Students will become commercially aware, creating IP-intensive companies with potentially real products or services based on ideas they generate themselves. The module provides an excellent problem-based learning experience that develops the key skills and knowledge needed for management, thereby greatly enhancing students' employability.



Cyber Security Human and Regulatory Aspects

| BNM764

While technical skills and tools are crucial in protecting systems, understanding human behaviour and regulatory requirements is equally vital. Often overlooked, these topics address the root causes of many security breaches. Human factors focus on how people interact with technology, highlighting common errors and psychological traps that can compromise security. Meanwhile, regulatory aspects ensure we comply with laws and standards designed to protect data and privacy. By examining these areas, we gain insights into improving user behaviour and adhering to legal obligations, ultimately creating a more robust security posture. This module aims to bridge these often-neglected gaps, empowering you with a holistic understanding of cybersecurity. Ultimately, integrating human factors and regulatory considerations into your cybersecurity strategy ensures that people are at the heart of governance, creating a more comprehensive and resilient defence against cyber-threats.



Principles of Microeconomics

| BS1197

This module uses relevant microeconomic theory to analyse the outcome of decisions made by individual consumers and firms as well as groups of consumers and firms in a particular market. One underlying theme is the extent to which these choices are desirable for society as whole. Another key issue is whether it is sometimes socially beneficial for the government to influence these choices i.e.

through price controls, taxation, subsidies regulation and the presentation of policy. The module includes contemporary real-world examples to help illustrate, explain and apply the microeconomic models that are discussed.

It helps students to think like an economist, i.e. using an economics approach to problem solving. Students use relevant economic analysis to tackle real world issues, such as climate change, sustainability and market power of natural monopolies, e.g. UK water industry.

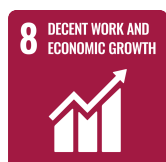


Principles and Practice of Marketing

| BMM128

The module outlines the development of the marketing concept and its importance within a real-world context. Students work in small groups to develop and present marketing plans within an experiential situation using appropriate marketing theories, frameworks and tools. They learn to conduct situational analyses, formulate suitable strategies and measure the results using appropriate metrics.

This module supports the development of students' key skills in teamwork, marketing planning and practice in presenting their findings to an audience of academic staff and the business on which their plans were based. The module uses a blend of asynchronous and in class experiential learning of key marketing concepts through case studies and a live, business-based, authentic assessment.



CSR public policy and sustainable development

| BHM944

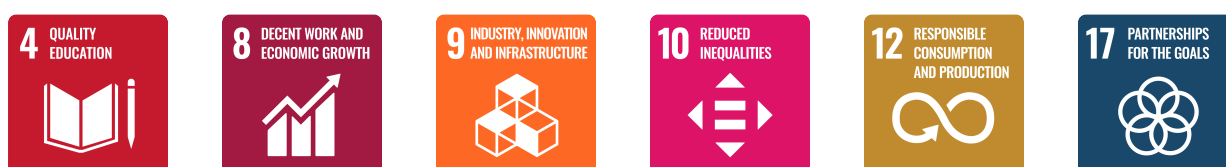
This module is designed for active learning; therefore, student involvement and interaction are central to the teaching and learning process. Students examine and analyse a range of international and transnational issues related to CSR, sustainable development, and associated public policies, drawing on their own perspectives and experiences to explore comparative issues across different cultures and institutional contexts. They become familiar with key theories and frameworks surrounding CSR, sustainable development, and public policy, and apply this knowledge to a case study while considering how to use their learning in real-world contexts—such as future employment or society more broadly. During weekly seminars, students present group responses to case-study or scenario questions and receive feedback on their presentations; key issues that emerge are discussed further in lectures, and individual feedback is provided on assignments at the end of the module.



Further Topics in Microeconomics

| BS3391

Students apply microeconomic theories and concepts to address real-world issues and evaluate government policies. Building on “Intermediate Microeconomics,” the module requires solid prior knowledge of the Rational Choice Model and the ability to work with formal economic models. It introduces extensions of previously taught models along with new advanced frameworks to enhance the real-world applicability of microeconomic theory. A key focus is the clear communication of economic analysis through written work supported by appropriate diagrams and numerical examples. The module also develops students’ awareness of the assumptions required for applying theories and concepts in practice, equipping them with the skills needed to work as professional economists in government or industry.

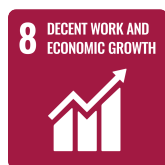


Responsible Management and Accounting

| BOHF321

This module provides an introduction to understanding and interpreting the main financial statements for a business, the Statement of Profit or Loss, the Statement of Financial Position and the Statement of Cash Flows. It introduces the financial information used by managers in decision making, including the calculation of product/service costs. The module emphasises the interpretation of financial information, rather than its construction, and introduces a variety of theoretical concepts. Having grasped these financial basics of decision-making, students are encouraged to go beyond them to other considerations. It highlights how business organisations are the key drivers of globalisation. This process includes new ways of understanding the impacts of business strategies on individuals, societies and nations. This module examines business strategy, accounting and operations from the perspective of socially responsible management. It considers how business organisations have been

tackling some of the global problems such climate change and environmental degradation, societal inequities, and corruption. Students are encouraged to consider their own values and how they wish to work, manage and lead.



Introduction to Information Systems and Database

| BN1162

This module focuses on equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed to be able to design and create a fully working database application to a professional standard for a client such as placement organisation or employer. The module also provides a discussion surrounding the application of database technology in various business contexts such as web enabled e-commerce applications, and social media.

Students learn how to collect, store, and analyse data. They can build databases for NGOs or community projects, helping track progress toward SDGs. This encourages data-driven decision-making in sustainable development initiatives. Students gain technical skills (SQL, data modelling, normalisation) that are essential in the modern workforce. In this module, students design, develop and implement databases to simulate real-world problems, such as urban planning or resource allocation.



Strategic Management Accounting

| BFM283

This module aims to elucidate the meaning and role of Strategic Management Accounting (SMA) as part of the modern accountant's capabilities. It gives students a solid grasp of the varied toolkit available under the SMA banner and places it within both a theoretical framework and a practical context. Students' critical faculties will be developed and exercised in assessing the usefulness and relevance of this ever-changing field, including reflection on ethical aspects. By completing this module, students will be able to appraise the concept of SMA and its development in theory and practice, critically evaluate the usefulness of selected SMA tools, examine the application of a selection of SMA tools in context, and communicate appropriate accounting information as part of the managerial decision-making process.



Ethical and Sustainable Marketing

| BM3340

This module examines ethics, sustainability, and CSR in marketing from a holistic, international perspective. Students develop conceptual understanding, compare key theories and frameworks, analyse organisational practices, and design ethical, sustainable marketing strategies. Teaching draws on academic, professional, and media sources, with video case studies integrated into class discussions. The module introduces social and economic sustainability (TBL) and invites students to reflect on their own beliefs and actions, critique and challenge organisational and customer behaviours, and consider political choices in terms of sustainability and their impact on communities and society at large. Through informal in-class feedback, many students noted that they had been largely unaware of the content and examples presented; for instance, one student did not know about the pollinating role of bees within the environment and related marketing campaigns. Some students discovered a new professional area of interest, and the coursework offered them first-hand experience in that field with the sense that they had contributed something valuable to a company, an empowering and meaningful achievement.



Sustainability Accounting and Accountability

| BFM223

This module explores the complex business environment with a focus on sustainability, accountability, transparency and ethical responsibility. It equips graduates to make responsible, informed decisions in a global context and to integrate environmental and social solutions into diverse careers. Students

learn how sustainability shapes financial decisions and business strategy, gain a solid grounding in Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors, and develop skills to embed sustainability and accountability into long-term value creation. They practise preparing and analysing sustainability reports using recognised standards and critically examine how financial systems and accounting can address challenges such as climate change, inequality and resource depletion. The curriculum also includes Accounting Bissim, a team-based simulation in which students act as the board of a robot manufacturing company and make strategic choices that incorporate environmental, social and ethical considerations while balancing short-term costs with long-term goals.



Business Research Methods

| BN2224

This module prepares students with the skills needed to plan their placement projects and provides knowledge of key business research tools. Students work with a fictional case involving an organisation that must conduct research related to one of the SDGs, giving them scope to define different projects. A core aim is to help students develop the skills required to plan their own placement project while also gaining an in-depth understanding of a specific SDG.



Agile Practices in IT and Management

| BN2220

The aim of the module is to develop students' ability to act as agile management practitioners. It equips them with a range of tools and techniques for analysing and designing information systems, along with an understanding of key concepts and experience in agile project management practices. Students build skills in teamwork, communication, and collaboration, gain knowledge of agile practices for future employment, and work on real-life challenges.

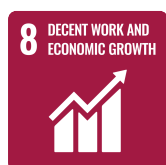


Managing IT in a Global Context

| BN3380

This module demonstrates the role of Information Technology (IT) in the contemporary business, focusing on challenges and opportunities firms face in the global environment. In particular, the module examines issues related to business strategy and the role of IT, IT-enabled business process, technology-enabled collaboration, and the human and social side of IT in organizations and society.

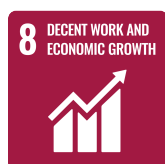
Students learn a number of different concepts related to information technology and information systems in a global management context. This helps to broaden their perspective of the subject for future employment.



Operations Management

| BNM810J

This module explores the role of operations management in driving business competitiveness, covering strategy, process and capacity design, supply chains, supplier relations, inventory, lean and digital operations, sustainability, quality management, and servitization. On successful completion, students will be able to critically discuss the strategic importance of operations management and its theoretical bases, identify key decision-making areas and apply them in different contexts, evaluate the role of operations management and operations managers in managing organisational resources, and critically examine the contribution that operations management makes to performance and organisational improvement.



Global Risk and Resilience Management

| BNM 895

This module supports students in developing their understanding of risk and resilience governance concepts and tools, while enhancing career-relevant skills. Students will learn to identify local and external risks, apply risk assessment techniques, and analyse potential impacts on a city, town, or

organisation. The module covers context analysis, risk communication, and multi-stakeholder engagement, with the goal of developing a comprehensive risk and resilience framework to support business continuity. Assessment takes the form of a risk and resilience report, requiring critical examination of a selected case and the formulation of well-informed plans and recommendations.

The module enhances students' understanding of the interconnected nature of contemporary global threats and risks and the need for systemic, forward-thinking responses. Through real-world case studies, scenario-based participatory exercises using 3D objects and Legos, students develop a deep appreciation of how different actors—governments, communities, NGOs, and private sectors—must collaborate to manage risk and build resilience.



Educator Recognition

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

- ❖ Student-nominated teaching awards
- ❖ Professional development opportunities
- ❖ Annual teaching excellence awards
- ❖ Course evaluation scores
- ❖ Faculty promotion and tenure consideration
- ❖ Institutional recognition events

Teaching Voices

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

Prof Victor Chang: Teaching Risk Management in a Digital Economy



My teaching approach is rooted in real-world relevance, critical thinking, and compassionate engagement. Over the years, I've come to believe that teaching is not about delivering information—it's about guiding discovery. I aim to cultivate an environment where students feel empowered to question, experiment, and connect theory to practice. At the core of my teaching is the principle that every student brings something valuable to the table: personal experience, cultural insight, or professional background. I encourage them to bring these perspectives into our discussions, assessments, and reflections. In my Risk Management in a Digital Economy module, students are invited to analyse challenges within their own organisations or sectors. This allows learning to be directly applied, not just understood in abstraction.

Technology plays a key role in how I teach, but I try not to let it replace the human element. I use digital platforms for interaction and collaboration, but I also make time for one-on-one support, small group discussions, and timely feedback. I host live webinars where students can challenge ideas, ask practical questions, or hear from guest speakers working on the front lines of cybersecurity, fintech, and health tech. These sessions are not scripted—they evolve based on the students' curiosity and engagement. Another important part of my teaching philosophy is integrating ethics and sustainability. Whether we're exploring AI risk, blockchain, or data governance, I urge students to think not only about efficiency and innovation but also about fairness, responsibility, and long-term impact. I see these values as critical to shaping future leaders who will contribute to society beyond their immediate roles. Finally, I value humility. I invite students to challenge views—including mine—and to back their arguments with reason, evidence, and integrity. In this way, we build a collaborative learning space where inquiry is respected, and growth is shared.

Dr Rasha Kassem: Teaching Current Issues in Global Audit and Assurance

My teaching approach is designed to foster a rich learning environment that combines traditional face-to-face instruction with independent online learning. This blended model allows students to engage deeply with the material while promoting flexibility and accommodating diverse learning styles. By integrating these two modalities, I aim to create a holistic educational experience that is both accessible and engaging.

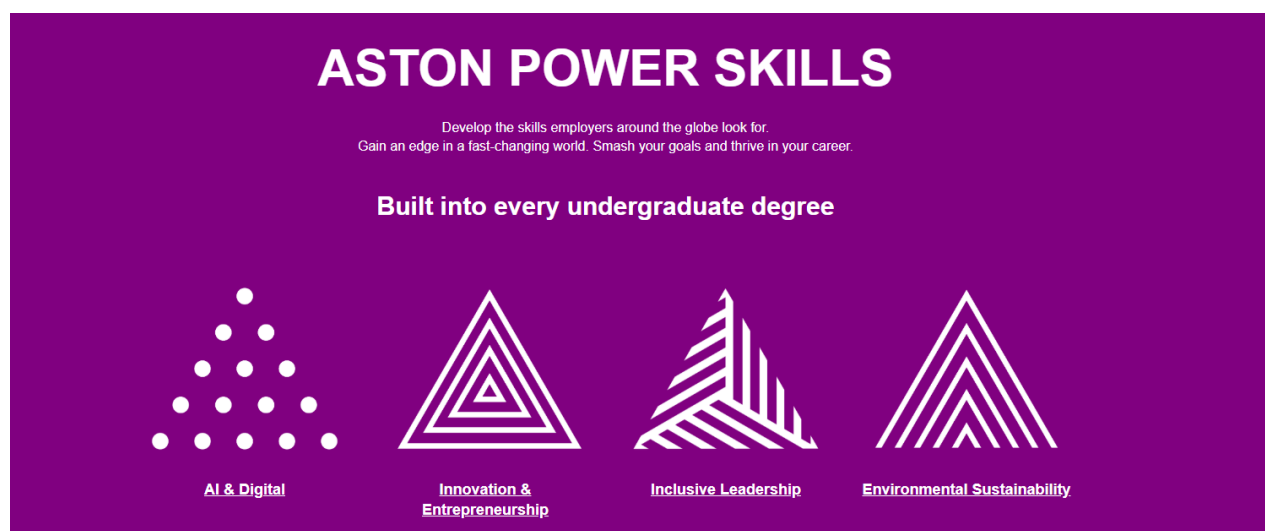
In my courses, face-to-face sessions are used for interactive discussions, collaborative group work, and hands-on activities that stimulate critical thinking. These in-person interactions are invaluable for building a sense of community, encouraging students to share ideas and perspectives in real time. Complementing this, independent online learning enables students to explore course materials at their own pace—a flexibility that is particularly beneficial for those balancing study with other commitments. I believe that education should be grounded in current research and practice. My teaching is informed by the latest findings in the field of audit and assurance, ensuring that students learn not only theoretical concepts but also their application in real-world contexts. By incorporating contemporary research, I encourage students to think critically about the evolving nature of auditing practices and the challenges they may encounter in their careers. This approach enhances knowledge while nurturing the ability to analyse and address complex issues.

To further enrich the learning experience, I regularly invite guest speakers from various sectors of the auditing profession. These professionals share their insights and experiences, offering students unique perspectives on the practical implications of what they are learning. I encourage students to engage in thoughtful dialogue about the materials they encounter, prompting them to articulate their ideas and challenge one another's perspectives. This collaborative learning environment not only deepens their understanding of the subject matter but also enhances communication skills—an essential asset in any professional setting.

Dr Hira Gulshan: Teaching Sustainability Accounting and Accountability

My teaching philosophy is very much student centred that prioritises active learning, critical thinking and individual growth. During the module I use various group activities where students are encouraged to take lead and work together in groups. Open classroom-discussions are part of my module where students are encouraged to share their relevant experiences with class members, diverse perspectives are valued, classroom culture is inclusive, and collaboration is central. I provide student necessary support and encourage them to decide their own strategy. My goal is not only to help students master course contents but also to empower them to become independent thinkers and lifelong learners.

Dr Siham Aboujanah: Introducing Aston Power Skills



Aston Power Skills are a transformative set of four core competencies embedded in every undergraduate degree at Aston University. They've been designed to empower students to thrive in a rapidly changing world and to meet the expectations of global employers.

Launched as part of Aston's 2030 strategic vision and guided by close industry partnerships, the four Power Skills include:

- 1. AI & Digital – This skill area encourages students to master AI and digital tools with confidence and purpose: leveraging new technologies to boost productivity and informed decision-making, instead of fearing them. It's integrated across all undergraduate programmes to give students a real head start.*
- 2. Innovation & Entrepreneurship – With a focus on bold thinking, this skill cultivates curiosity, creativity, and the ability to seize opportunities. It equips students not only to launch businesses but to thrive in any career by developing the entrepreneurial mindset widely valued in industry.*
- 3. Inclusive Leadership – Emphasising empathy, collaboration, and vision, Inclusive Leadership trains students to break down barriers and bring diverse voices together—preparing them to lead effectively in any context, from social enterprises to global corporations.*
- 4. Environmental Sustainability – This skill instils a strong sense of responsibility for our planet. It encourages students to think critically about ethical practices and to drive sustainability within any professional path they choose.*

All undergraduates will progress through a Power Skills stackable module, offering digital literacy, leadership and entrepreneurial know-how, and environmental awareness—contextualised within their discipline. This module forms part of Aston's broader array of graduate outcomes-focused strategies, including industry engagement, experiential learning, and lifelong career support. These Power Skills reflect today's most in-demand attributes—from adaptability and tech fluency to leadership that values diversity and sustainability. By embedding them into every programme, Aston ensures all students graduate with future-ready capabilities and a competitive edge in the job market.

Additional Evidence

Aston Green Advantage Programme



Our **Green Advantage Programme** was featured in the **UN PRME Signatory Spotlight** in April 2025 for equipping professionals with the skills and confidence to lead sustainability initiatives in their organisations and communities. The programme integrates practical training with real-world consultancy projects for local businesses.

Participants consistently emphasise how the programme has enabled them to embed sustainability in meaningful and practical ways:

Tunde Olubiye, founder of an energy management solutions company, explained that through Green Advantage he *“discovered sustainable practices that changed the way [his] business operates and learnt how to act on them.”* He also highlighted the importance of mentoring in building discipline and focus, describing Aston’s guidance as *“invaluable in helping set goals and track progress.”*

Similarly, Holly Bond, Director of Greener Options, valued the way Green Advantage encouraged her team to engage with ESG and circular economy thinking. She explained that the workshops *“made us think differently about our ambitions to become a B-Corp,”* and praised Aston’s delivery as providing *“huge value and connections”* that distinguished it from comparable programmes elsewhere.





Research

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

How We Define Research

At Aston Business School, our research is defined by purpose, collaboration, and real-world impact. We co-develop solutions with businesses, governments, and communities to address pressing economic, social, and environmental challenges. Centres such as the Advanced Services Group – the world’s leading hub for servitization – have worked with more than 450 firms to transform competitiveness and sustainability; the internationally recognised Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship has shaped inclusive enterprise policy and practice; the Cyber Security Innovation Centre strengthens resilience to digital threats through major EU and UK projects; and the Centre for Business Prosperity informs trade and economic policy worldwide. Alongside initiatives like the Time to Change Report, Green Advantage programme, and centres on disaster resilience, financial wellbeing, and sustainable development in India, our research extends well beyond academia, advancing theory while delivering practical, inclusive, and globally relevant outcomes. Our research approach reflects the evolving UK landscape, where disruption is met with opportunity. Economic uncertainty, the aftershocks of the pandemic, and global sustainability challenges require universities to be outward-facing, resilient, and responsive. Aston Business School is distinctively positioned to meet this challenge by leveraging its applied, impact-driven research strengths to contribute meaningfully to regional, national, and international transformation. Consistently performing strongly in the Knowledge Exchange Framework, particularly in 'working with business' and 'local growth and regeneration,' we are recognised for high engagement and influence. Our vision is to cultivate a collaborative, inclusive, and entrepreneurial research culture that empowers us to produce world-leading outputs, drive societal and economic impact, and secure prestigious research awards. By investing in our staff, strengthening interdisciplinary and international collaboration, and showcasing our transformative contributions, we ensure that Aston research remains globally relevant, ethically responsible, and aligned with the PRME principles of purpose, responsibility, and impact.

Research vs Research for RME/Sustainable Development

| | | | | |
|------------|--|----|-----------|--|
| 216 | Peer-reviewed articles were published by Aston Business School from this past calendar year. | vs | 38 | Peer-reviewed articles were published by Aston Business School from this past calendar year in support of RME. |
|------------|--|----|-----------|--|

Research Funding

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



National



Local



Institution
Specific



Regional



International

Socializing Research

In 2024, Aston Business School contributed research findings to:

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

Research Projects

In 2024, Aston Business School reported 12 research projects that implemented responsible or sustainable activities.

Gambling harms - Prof Andy Lymer & Centre for Personal Financial Wellbeing

Period Covering: January, 2022 - January, 2024

Department: Accounting & Finance | Centre for Personal Financial Wellbeing

Professor Andy Lymer leads a research project funded by the National Gambling Commission that examines how local authority social housing staff can recognise signs of harmful gambling among tenants and deliver effective interventions to reduce or prevent related impacts on tenancies. A key element of the project has been the design and delivery of staff training based on the study's findings. The major external partner is Birmingham City Council.

The project included analysis of Health Survey for England (HSE) data covering a six-year period, comparing the incidence of gambling and harmful gambling in the West Midlands with other UK regions. The analysis showed that respondents in the West Midlands were more likely to gamble and to gamble more frequently, while also highlighting both similarities and differences in gambling behaviour compared with other regions. As a direct outcome of this work, 160 frontline housing staff

employed by Birmingham City Council have been trained to identify signs of gambling harm and to respond with appropriate support. Birmingham City Council has adopted the approach and toolkit within its housing service for ongoing use by housing staff.

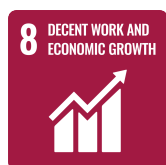


Advancing non-state actors' (business, NGOs and community organisations) Participation in Peacebuilding - Dr Bahar Kazmi

Period Covering: December, 2017 - December, 2024

Department: Leadership & Management | Centre for Migration and Forced Displacement

Dr Bahar Ali researches the role of businesses and NGOs in peacebuilding, recognising their ability to play economic, social and political roles in conflict-affected areas. His work has involved collaborations with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), the Federal Government of Somalia, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and International NGOs, and valued for his capacity to translate research into policy. He has founded a working group on Business and Peacebuilding in partnership with Strathmore University Business School, Creative Alternative Now, and Interpeace which has been developing policy papers and learning modules for businesses, NGOs and community organisations operating in East Africa. He has engaged with the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) Working Group on Business for Peace, the University of Oslo to build an international network for collaborative research and dissemination.



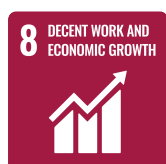
Applications of sustainability fitness model & institutional logic of sustainability - Dr Breno Nunes

Period Covering: January, 2023 - December, 2024

Department: Operations & Service Management | Sustainable Growth Hub

Dr Breno Nunes developed the Sustainability Fitness Model (SFM) to help organisations assess and improve their sustainability performance, with the mathematical modelling contributed by Dr Roberto Alamino. The SFM has been applied with the Birmingham Botanical Gardens and the West Midlands-based Brockhouse Group to design and implement sustainability policies and strategies, and it forms

the basis of the Green Advantage programme in which more than 100 companies have participated. The approach has also been extended through a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Metal Assemblies, a £225,000 project focused on sustainable innovation in automotive manufacturing. In 2024, he delivered the keynote “The Digital Supply Chain and Sustainability” at REIAD 2024 in Brazil, a conference that attracted over 1,400 participants, and has also given invited keynote talks on the circular economy and sustainable business models at the Richmond Events Finance Directors’ Forums in Switzerland and the UK, as well as an inaugural lecture at the Federal University of Rio Grande in Brazil. Current work includes further development of the SFM and investigation of the emerging Green Hydrogen Hub in Brazil.



Greener SME websites - Prof Cher Li

Period Covering: January, 2024 - August, 2025

Department: Economics & International Business

The project addresses the need for private-sector adoption of sustainable digital practices, particularly among SMEs, where uptake has remained uneven despite incentives. It is an interdisciplinary collaboration with the Innovation Growth Lab (IGL) at Nesta and the web-design agency Volute. GreenerWeb builds on insights from an earlier ESRC-funded Digital Benchmark project (2021–2023), which used web-scraping technologies to evaluate digital technology use across 7,000 UK firms and demonstrated significant impact through a benchmarking-based intervention. Building on this success, the GreenerWeb team created a bespoke online toolkit (available at GreenerWeb) that uses advanced data analytics to benchmark website carbon footprints and provide sector-specific, actionable insights. Businesses engaging with the toolkit or receiving the intervention recorded immediate reductions in their web carbon footprints, with the greatest gains among those already environmentally conscious. The project’s findings are informing broader policy debates on productivity and sustainability, contributing policy papers, blogs, and presentations and leveraging networks such as IGL, the ProPEL Hub, and the British Standards Institution (BSI) to disseminate insights and shape policy.

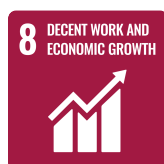


Advancing the work and career prospects of skilled refugees - Prof Dulini Fernando

Period Covering: January, 2023 - December, 2024

Department: Leadership & Management

Professor Dulini Fernando's British Academy-funded study explored the aspirations of skilled refugees, the constraints they face in the labour market and workplace, and the strategies they use to cope, navigate, and progress. Drawing on accounts from 41 participants who identified as racial and religious minorities, the study highlighted the central role of religion, ethnicity, and culture. Its contribution lies in promoting the skills and expertise of skilled refugees and engaging organisations that can support their integration.



Global crisis/disaster risk and resilience management - Dr Komal Aryal

Period Covering: January, 2023 - August, 2025

Department: Operations & Service Management

Dr Komal Aryal conducts research on overcoming barriers to communication and integration between disaster management organisations. He is involved in two major funded projects: an ESRC project led by Laura Southgate (Politics and International Relations), comparing case studies in Japan and Taiwan on inter-agency communication and collaboration (concluding in 2026); and a UKRI-NERC project led by the University of Cambridge, which predicts earthquakes in India and develops disaster management strategies. Komal leads the training component, designing and delivering preparatory earthquake management training. He also co-authors research in Zimbabwe assessing progress in reducing disaster impacts. This work has produced two articles and influenced the Zimbabwean government to review its outdated Civil Protection Act, inspiring a new Disaster Response Management Bill.



Decarbonisation of and increasing energy efficiency of small and medium sized enterprises - Prof Prasanta Dey

Period Covering: July, 2017 - August, 2025

Department: Operations & Service Management

Professor Prasanta Dey leads the Decarbonisation Programme, building on over 10 years of major project delivery. He has directed two flagship initiatives supporting SMEs in the West Midlands to decarbonise: Low Carbon SMEs (Oct 2017 – Feb 2023): £4.5m ERDF, supporting 160 SMEs, achieving average carbon footprint reductions of 40 tonnes per business, and Decarbonisation of SMEs (Oct 2023 – Mar 2025): £7m UKSPF and BEAS, helping over 1,000 SMEs increase energy efficiency by at least 10%. Together, these programmes have enabled more than 400 SMEs to take measurable sustainability action and significantly reduce emissions. Collaboration with partners such as the Black Country Industrial Cluster and Coventry City Council has expanded the programme's reach, securing further follow-on funding in April 2025. Workshops hosted at Aston Business School, such as "Navigating Grants and Net Zero Implementation for SMEs" (January 2024), have drawn strong participation and fostered dialogue between SMEs, industry leaders, and policymakers. Given that SMEs generate 70% of global pollution, including 64% of air pollution from manufacturing SMEs (with only 0.4% compliant with environmental management systems), these projects demonstrate a scalable model for impactful business engagement, knowledge exchange, and sustainable innovation.



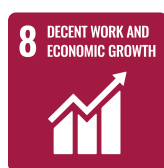
Building Inclusive Entrepreneurship Ecosystems - Prof Monder Ram & the Centre for Research on Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship

Period Covering: July, 2022 - August, 2025

Department: Marketing & Entrepreneurship | Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CREME)

Professor Monder Ram (OBE) and team in the Centre for Research on Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CREME) provide evidence-based support to ethnic minority entrepreneurs, and policy guidance to their associated stakeholders in banking, government and NGOs. Over two decades CREME has built an enviable reputation for pioneering research and business engagement activities promoting diversity and enterprise. They have transformed perceptions by working with business policy-makers and influential organisations to collaborate with overlooked business communities. This is done through CREME's commitment to co-produce and promote ethnic minority

entrepreneurship knowledge useful to academic and practitioner communities. CREME was central to Aston Business School's award for 'Outstanding Stakeholder Engagement' in the 2023 Small Business Charter Excellence Awards. A pillar of CREME's current stakeholder engagement is 'The Time to Change Report: A Blueprint for Advancing the UK's Ethnic Minority Businesses'. Commissioned by NatWest Group, it sets out ten evidence-based recommendations to realise the potential of UK ethnic minority businesses and multiply four-fold their annual Gross Value Added to £100 billion. A prior collaborative initiative, Productivity from Below, focussed on addressing the productivity challenges of migrant microbusinesses and developed the skills of their owners and workers. It was 'Highly Commended' in the 2023 Financial Times global 'Responsible Business Education Awards'.

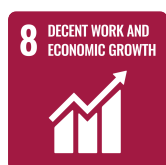


Technology as a Driver for Inclusive Trade - Prof Sangheeta Khorana

Period Covering: September, 2022 - August, 2025

Department: Economics & International Business

Professor Sangeeta Khorana researches ways to advance understanding of inclusive trade and how technology can encourage countries to participate in global markets. Her work explores how trade policies drive inclusivity, reduce inequalities, and create opportunities, particularly in developing and least developed nations, and examines trade agreements, digital trade inclusion, and the role of trade in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As a Trustee Director of the Chartered Institute of Export & International Trade (CIOET), Sangeeta was part of the core team for the UK government's project *The Ecosystem of Trust*, a theoretical border model for "frictionless" trade tested under the 2025 Border Strategy. The pilot successfully applied advanced technologies to boost Kenya's trade with the UK, enabling smoother, higher-volume exports of tea, coffee, and flowers post-Brexit. By adopting blockchain technology and real-time data analytics, the project improved supply chain visibility, transparency, trust, and efficiency. The initiative was evaluated by participating government departments and agencies, its more than 50 consortia members, and external experts engaged from the outset, and the findings were published in the Cabinet Office's *Ecosystem of Trust Evaluation Report*.



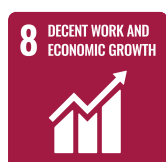
Pan-African Accountancy Organisations: Enforcing Professional Conduct and Ethics – Prof Teerooven Soobaroyen

Period Covering: July, 2022 - August, 2025

Department: Accounting & Finance

Professor Teerooven Soobaroyen researches codes of conduct and ethics established by professional accounting bodies and regulators, and how accountants and auditors in emerging economies adhere to these codes. This follows the aftermath of the late 1990s Asian Financial Crisis (AFC) when the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) noted inadequacies in the accounting and audit regulatory enforcement mechanisms, independence of professional accountants and auditors, and monitoring of ethical and professional conduct in many emerging economies. Taking Mauritius as an example of an emerging economy that adopted post-AFC counter measures, Teerooven and colleagues have investigated whether the promotion and enforcement of international ethical standards reforms operate effectively in Mauritius. They asked how, and why, such standards are interpreted amongst local accounting professionals and regulators (see link).

Thereafter, and together with the Pan-African Federation of Accountants (PAFA) – an umbrella body representing most national accountants' associations of Africa – Teerooven is extending this work to evaluate the investigation and disciplinary (I&D) systems in these organisations across Africa and how professional ethics is promoted. Focus is being drawn on understanding how and why disciplinary processes operate when accountants have allegedly breached the code of conduct and ethics. There are many variations in terms of processes and practices, and the level of enforcement is uneven, leading to questions of confidence in the ability of the profession to police its membership and take action against 'rogue accountants'. The evaluation seeks to help develop new and improved guidance to help remedy similar situations across Africa; thereby advancing the accounting and auditing profession towards more ethical practices, improving trust in accounting professionals, and building nations with more robust economic systems. Teerooven has also presented this research in related forums, including "Contextualizing and Co-producing Governance Codes: Experiences from the Global South" at the 4th International Conference of Global Research Foundation for Corporate Governance, London, 12 September 2024, and "Sustainability Reporting and Governance in Mauritius" at the Mauritius Institute of Directors Workshop, 22 October 2024.



Union Mobilisation and Social Dialogue on Modern Slavery in India - Dr Vidu Badigannavar

Period Covering: July, 2022 - August, 2025

Department: Leadership & Management

Dr Vidu Badigannavar's research and stakeholder engagement advance the welfare and rights of India's workers. He argues that Corporate India must move beyond superficial acts of corporate social responsibility (CSR) to confront human rights violations in its supply chains. To drive that change, Vidu is mobilising trade union representatives by training them on modern-slavery laws passed in the Global North. These expanding transnational laws expose Indian companies to litigation costs, reputational damage, and potential exclusion from export markets, creating significant economic risks for both employers and employees. Vidu began his work in Maharashtra, one of India's most industrialised states, where in 2022 he trained representatives from major trade unions including the Indian National Trade Union Congress, the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of India, Nirman Mazdoor Sanghatana, and the All India Trade Union Congress. Of an estimated 2,000 union activists across these unions, about 1,200 (60 percent) have already completed the training and shared the knowledge within their organisations. Recognising the need for businesses to maintain access to Western consumer markets, roughly 300 company managers spanning the steel, automotive, and food industries have also taken part in the programme.



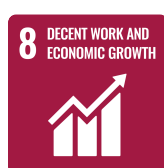
Shaping Europe's Cybersecurity Workforce: Gender-Sensitive Approaches in the European Cybersecurity Skills Framework - Prof Vladlena Benson

Period Covering: January, 2022 - August, 2025

Department: Business Analytics & Information Systems

Professor Vladlena Benson (MBE) has contributed to the development of cybersecurity skills across Europe through her membership of the Ad-Hoc Working Group that created, in collaboration with the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA), the European Cybersecurity Skills Framework (ECSF). The ECSF facilitates recognition of cybersecurity skills and supports the design of cybersecurity-related training programmes by summarising cybersecurity roles into twelve profiles of relevant competencies, skills and knowledge. By focusing on both technical and soft skills to promote a holistic approach to cybersecurity education, her work has helped build Europe's capacity to develop a resilient, skilled cybersecurity workforce. Through related research she highlighted how existing

skills frameworks did not adequately address the gender gap in cybersecurity workforces, particularly in terms of attracting and retaining women in the field. She contributed to a model exploring gender-gap intentions to pursue cybersecurity education and careers, and testing on a sample of European professionals produced actionable recommendations for improving female representation across cybersecurity roles. Vladlena also co-authored the ECSF User Manual, which provides guidance to policymakers, educational institutions, and businesses on how to implement the framework. Building on this expertise, Vladlena now leads the West Midlands Cyber Hub project, funded at £81,000 through Midlands Innovation. This initiative aims to help disadvantaged and marginalised people access the cybersecurity ecosystem in the West Midlands and to stimulate regional economic growth. The project provides entrepreneurship support for start-ups and SMEs, fostering inclusion, skills development, and innovation within the local economy.



Publications Related to RME and/or Sustainability

Logistics sourcing of e-commerce firms considering promised delivery time and environmental sustainability

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Joshua Ignatius

Date of publication: August, 2024

Department: Business Analytics & Information Systems

Online consumers prioritise swift and dependable deliveries but are also concerned about the environmental repercussions of e-commerce, such as carbon emissions and packaging waste. E-commerce firms, therefore, grapple with balancing short promised delivery times (PDT) and environmental sustainability in a competitive landscape. Through a game-theoretic lens, this study delves into the logistics choices of two rival e-commerce firms. These firms can either manage their own logistics or outsource to third-party logistics providers (TPLs) that have a green edge due to advanced eco-friendly technologies. Our findings reveal that if the e-commerce firms compete on demand, their logistics strategies depend on the TPLs' levels of green technology readiness. Conversely, intense PDT competition can diminish the TPLs' benefits, prompting e-commerce firms to handle logistics in-house. Regarding environmental sustainability, the outcomes depend on whether demand or PDT competition drives the firms' choices. Notably, if both firms compete on PDT, the most sustainable outcome remains elusive. Our conclusions remain consistent even when tested further by model extensions.



How sustainable luxury influences product value perceptions and behavioral intentions: A comparative study of emerging vs. developed markets

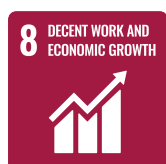
[DOI](#)

Authors: Vignesh Yoganathan

Date of publication: April, 2024

Department: Marketing & Entrepreneurship

Coinciding with the rising development of emerging markets, sustainable consumption practices in these markets are increasingly under scrutiny. In this context, we compare empirical results from consumers in four countries (three emerging markets and one developed market) in an experimental study to uncover patterns of preferences for sustainable luxury products (i.e., products that combine sustainability and luxury characteristics). Our findings illustrate that consumers' quality, emotional, price, and social value perceptions, as well as purchase and electronic word-of-mouth intentions, are consistently higher in all three emerging markets compared to the developed market. We find that sustainability (vs. conventional) product features increase consumers' product value perceptions and behavioral intentions, although this effect is partially stronger for the developed compared to the emerging market(s). We further show a positive sustainability effect for luxury products, this effect is stronger for mass-market products. Combining sustainability and luxury signals leads to similar effects in emerging and developed markets. Thus, emerging markets have promise in terms of scope for incorporating sustainability characteristics into luxury products. Sustainable luxury consumption can therefore be understood as a manifestation of global consumer culture.



In Defence of the Indefensible: Exploring Justification Narratives of Corporate Elites Accused of Corruption

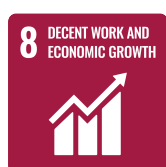
[DOI](#)

Authors: Derrick Boakye | David Sarpong

Date of publication: May, 2024

Department: Leadership & Management

Drawing on the pragmatic turn in contemporary social theory, we explore how corporate elites accused of corruption in the context of weak institutions engage in their justification works. Empirically, we focus on three high-profile corruption scandals that shook Ghana between 2010 and 2020 and inspired widespread public condemnation. Publicly accessible archival documents, such as court reporting, newspaper stories, press conferences, and the digital footprints of corporate elites implicated in the scandals provide data for our inquiry. Focussing on the juxtaposition of ‘sayings’ and ‘doings’, the findings show justification as performative, and rooted in contextual pragmatism that acknowledges the plurality of logics situated between self-interest and folk-logic. Within this framework, the domestic and civic orders of worth emerge as most prominent, with the justification processes manifesting through victimising, scapegoating, and crusading. Building on these insights, we develop a framework that highlights how the use of justifications serves as a critique of the inadequacies within climates of weak institutional frameworks consequently fostering an atmosphere conducive to framing unethical conducts as morally acceptable.



Investigating the varying relevance of CSR dimensions on firm leverage: The implications for internationalized firms

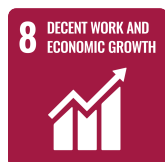
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Teerooven Soobaroyen

Date of publication: July, 2024

Department: Accounting & Finance

We empirically investigate the varying role of CSR dimensions such as community, diversity, employee relations, environment, human rights, and product on US firms' leverage. Overall CSR performance and dimensions relating to diversity, employee relations and environment are negatively associated to firm leverage, implying easier access to equity financing. Contrastingly, the human rights dimension is positively associated to firm leverage. For internationalized firms, particularly operating in non-environmentally sensitive industries, the relationship is however reversed for overall CSR performance and dimensions related to diversity, employee relations and environment, while community performance is negatively associated to firm leverage. Drawing on the stakeholder theory of capital structure and stakeholder salience, we highlight the heterogeneous consequences of CSR dimensions as channels that both enable and limit access to equity financing. Our results are robust to alternative explanations and proxies and highlight the need for managing specific CSR dimension performance, the more so when operating multi-nationally.



Irrational or Rational? Time to Rethink Our Understanding of Financially Responsible Behavior

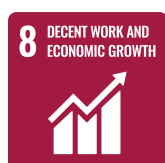
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Hayley James

Date of publication: February, 2024

Department: Accounting & Finance

Models of finance rationality expect individuals to actively prepare for retirement by consistently investing and building a diversified asset portfolio, with any behavior deviating from these expectations being identified as irresponsible. This framework of (ir)rationality and (ir)responsibility ignores the role of constraints in shaping financial behavior. Extending economic geographic insights on everyday financial practices as complex processes of meaning-making, we reveal how varied approaches to retirement savings are shaped by the experience of constraints inherent in a capitalist welfare state. Using the accounts of forty-two interviewed women and people with a minority ethnic background in the UK, we show how the interplay between everyday rationalities and structural constraints construct variegated financial subjectivities and practices that reflect the context that individuals face. Our findings contribute to the theorization of variegated financial subjects and disrupt the application of corrective policy measures, such as financial education, which put more pressure on individuals rather than tackling the inequalities inherent in the capitalist welfare state broadly and in the pension system specifically.



Empowering Nanostores for Competitiveness and Sustainable Communities in Emerging Countries: A Generative Artificial Intelligence Strategy Ideation Process

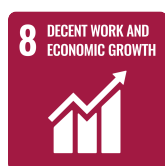
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Eliseo Vilalta-Perdomo

Date of publication: December, 2024

Department: Operations & Service Management

This exploratory study investigates Generative Artificial Intelligence's (GenAI) use in strategy ideation for nanostores—i.e., small independent grocery retailers—to enhance their competitiveness while contributing to community sustainability. Nanostores, particularly in emerging countries, face intense competition and rapidly changing trends. These stores adopt various strategies by leveraging their proximity to consumers in neighbourhoods, resulting in different business configurations. While the existing literature highlights the broader nanostores' functions, there is limited research on how they may develop comprehensive strategies to face their challenges. By employing a thing ethnography methodology, this work proposes GenAI thing interviewing—i.e., with ChatGPT 3.5 and Microsoft Copilot—through incremental prompting to explore potential strategy ideation and practices. Key findings suggest GenAI conversations can aid shopkeepers in strategy ideation through human-like written language, aligning with small business dynamics and structures. This proposition results in a GenAI ideation framework for strategy generation and definition. Moreover, this technology can enhance nanostore competitiveness and sustainability impact by enacting improved strategy practices in stakeholder engagements. Accordingly, this work's main contribution underscores a GenAI-enabled conversational approach to facilitate nanostores' strategy ideation and embedding in everyday business operations. Future work must address the limitations and further investigate GenAI's influence on human understanding and technological creation, strategy ideation, adoption, and usability in nanostores.



Enhancing Sustainability Attributes in New Product Design Insights from Automotive Industry

| [DOI](#)

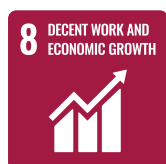
Authors: Seyed Mojtaba Sajadi

Date of publication: July, 2024

Department: Operations & Service Management

Product design is an innovative process that, through the stages of problem statement, concept, and initial and detailed design, meets the needs of customers, the requirements of companies, and their limitations. In the current process of product design and development, formulating design objectives plays a crucial role in objective setting, project implementation, product needs and requirements specification, and performing activities validation. Currently, the role of the design and development stages in the sustainability of products, identifying strategies for improving this stage is of particular significance, and paying attention to the product planning and definition process group and focusing on establishing sustainability principles in the target book and defining new attributes can be regarded as one of the sustainable product development strategies. Consequently, this research is a case study

in the field of applying the sustainability principles in the target book as one of the deliverables at the stage of product planning. The present study proposes strategies towards developing the attributes of the target book as a tool for exerting sustainability pillars in the process of design and development by means of surveying automotive industry experts, applying the DEMATEL and Fuzzy ANP combined method, and evaluating and determining new attributes.



Experiential Learning for Circular Operations Management in Higher Education

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Eliseo Vilalta-Perdomo

Date of publication: January, 2024

Department: Operations & Service Management

This research-to-practice article delves into novel learning experiences for operations management education, involving the circular economy and experiential learning. Higher Education academics are required to develop effective learning that actively and impactfully helps nurture in students the essential competency to face sustainable development demands. In operations management education, one possibility is to integrate real-world circular economy challenges into learning activities that address issues concerning solid waste generation in business processes and operations. This type of innovative learning experience involves both conceptual understanding and practical implementation. Accordingly, experiential learning is considered a suitable pedagogy for this purpose in this work because of its hands-on applications, critical thinking, and active engagement. To illustrate this proposition, this paper presents a case study concerning an operations management undergraduate course at a Mexican university. The case study indicates how to translate a situation of solid waste generation in a business into relevant disciplinary experiential learning. The results show that students regarded the learning experience as motivating, interesting, and relevant while widely accomplishing their learning objectives. However, limitations did exist regarding experiential learning, the methodological approach, data collection, and implementation challenges. Future work points to the need for further learning experiences and to improve research reliability, transferability, and validity.



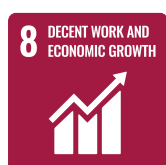
From Industry 4.0 Digital Manufacturing to Industry 5.0 Digital Society: a Roadmap Toward Human-Centric, Sustainable, and Resilient Production | [DOI](#)

Authors: Vahid Jafari-Sadeghi

Date of publication: February, 2024

Department: Economics & International Business

The present study addresses two critical controversies surrounding the emerging Industry 5.0 agenda. Firstly, it seeks to elucidate the driving forces behind the accelerated momentum of the Industry 5.0 agenda amidst the ongoing digital industrial transformation. Secondly, it explores how the agenda's sustainability values can be effectively realised. The study conducted a comprehensive content-centric literature synthesis and identified how Industry 4.0 shortcomings adversely impacted sustainability values. Furthermore, the study implements a novel approach that determines how and in what order the sustainability functions of Industry 4.0 should be leveraged to promote the sustainability objectives of Industry 5.0. Results reveal that Industry 4.0 has benefited economic and environmental sustainability values most at the organisational and supply chain levels. Nonetheless, most micro and meso-social sustainability values have been adversely impacted by Industry 4.0. Similarly, Industry 4.0 has been worryingly detrimental to macro sustainability values like social or economic growth equality. These contradictory implications of Industry 4.0 have pulled the Industry 5.0 agenda. However, the results identified nine sustainability functions of Industry 4.0 that, when leveraged appropriately and in the correct order, can offer important implications for realising the economic and socio-environmental goals of Industry 5.0. For example, under extreme unpredictability of business world uncertainties, the business should first leverage the automation and integration capabilities of Industry 4.0 to gain the necessary cost-saving, resource efficiency, risk management capability, and business antifragility that allow them to introduce sustainable innovation into their business model without jeopardising their survival. Various scenarios for empowering Industry 5.0 sustainability values identified in the present study offer important implications for knowledge and practice.



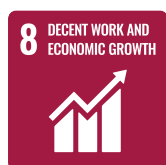
A comprehensive framework for the sustainability indicators in the textile industry of developing countries | [DOI](#)

Authors: Hossein Zarei

Date of publication: August, 2024

Department: Operations & Service Management

Textile production in developing countries is known to be associated with significant environmental, social, and economic challenges. Existing research has mostly focused on singular aspects of sustainability, while no consensus exists on the importance and applicability of sustainability indicators. To address these gaps, this study utilized an integrated approach involving the Delphi method and the fuzzy best-worst method (BWM) to develop a comprehensive framework by identifying and formulating sustainability indicators tailored for the textile industry in developing countries and assess their importance and applicability. Through three consecutive rounds of Delphi, a total of 64 sustainability indicators were identified (16 economic, 24 environmental, and 24 social indicators). Next, fuzzy BWM was employed to determine the importance and applicability of these indicators. The results show that (a) environmental indicators overall have higher applicability scores, (b) the top three critical indicators were raw material usage, operational costs, and fuel consumption, and (c) nearly half of the indicators (29/64) were deemed highly applicable, with 34.5% (10/29) of these falling under environmental, 34.5% (10/29) under economic, and 31% (9/29) under social dimensions. Finally, the utility of the framework is demonstrated through an empirical case study in a textile manufacturing company in Nigeria.



Rethinking alternative food networks: unpacking key attributes and overlapping concepts

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Eliseo Vilalta-Perdomo

Date of publication: October, 2024

Department: Operations & Service Management

Alternative Food Networks (AFN) have garnered significant attention recently, yet the concept remains fuzzy. This paper examines the evolving interpretations of AFN over the past two decades, aiming for conceptual clarity. Using a three-stage approach to systematic literature reviews, we conducted a rigorous synthesis of existing research. Through concept and thematic analyses, we identified key attributes and recurring themes associated with AFN. While a conceptual consensus remains elusive, diverse definitions often share essential attributes such as “alterity,” “proximity,” “connectedness,” and “sustainability.” Additionally, we find that AFN and short food supply chains generally describe the same phenomenon, with civic food networks viewed as a subset of AFN, emphasizing community engagement and civic participation. Notably, AFN are not always local food systems, nor do local food systems always involve AFN. To address these nuances, we present guiding questions to assist

researchers in studying and reporting on AFN. This work clarifies the core attributes of AFN and offers a roadmap for focused inquiries. Ultimately, our findings aim to guide decision-making processes, ensuring that efforts to support AFN are rooted in a nuanced understanding of their complexities and potential for driving change in food systems.



A hybrid metaheuristic and simulation approach towards green project scheduling

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Mojtaba Sajadi

Date of publication: November, 2024

Department: Operations & Service Management

This research tackles the environmental concern of greenhouse gas emissions in the execution of projects, with a focus on multi-site projects where the transportation of resources is a major source of emissions. Despite growing consciousness among consumers and stakeholders about sustainability, the domain of project scheduling has often overlooked the environmental impact. This paper seeks to bridge this oversight by exploring how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions during both project activities and resource transportation. A novel approach is proposed, combining a simulation model with an improved non-dominated sorted genetic algorithm. The simulation model incorporates the stochastic nature of emission rates and costs. This method is further refined with innovative techniques such as magnet-based crossover and mode reassignment. The former is a genetic algorithm operation inspired by magnetic attraction, which allows for a more diverse and effective exploration of solutions by aligning similar 'genes' from parent solutions. The latter is a strategy for reallocating resources during project execution to optimize efficiency and reduce emissions. The efficacy of the proposed method is validated through testing on 2810 scenarios from established benchmark libraries, 100 additional scenarios adhering to the conventional multi-site problems, and a case study. The Best-Worst Method (BWM) is applied for identifying the best solution. The findings indicate substantial enhancements compared to traditional methods with a 12.7% decrease in project duration, 11.4% in costs, and a remarkable 13.6% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.



A Hybrid Neural Network-Based Improved PSO Algorithm for Gas Turbine Emissions Prediction

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Ammar Al-Bazi

Date of publication: April, 2024

Department: Operations & Service Management

In gas-fired power plants, emissions may reduce turbine blade rotation, thus decreasing power output. This study proposes a hybrid model integrating the Feed forward Neural Network (FFNN) model and Particle Swarm Optimization (PSO) algorithm to predict gas emissions from natural gas power plants. The FFNN predicts gas turbine nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and carbon monoxide (CO) emissions, while the PSO optimizes FFNN weights, improving prediction accuracy. The PSO adopts a unique random number selection strategy, incorporating the K-Nearest Neighbor (KNN) algorithm to reduce prediction errors. Neighbor Component Analysis (NCA) selects parameters most correlated with CO and NO_x emissions. The hybrid model is constructed, trained, and tested using publicly available datasets, evaluating performance with statistical metrics like Mean Square Error (MSE), Mean Absolute Error (MAE), and Root Mean Square Error (RMSE). Results show significant improvement in FFNN training with the PSO algorithm, boosting CO and NO_x prediction accuracy by 99.18% and 82.11%, respectively. The model achieves the lowest MSE, MAE, and RMSE values for CO and NO_x emissions. Overall, the hybrid model achieves high prediction accuracy, particularly with optimized PSO parameter selection using seed random generators.



A meaning-making perspective on digital ridesharing platforms in underdeveloped markets

| [DOI](#)

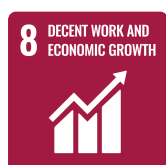
Authors: David Sarpong | Derrick Boakye | David Carrington

Date of publication: July, 2024

Department: Leadership & Management | Marketing & Entrepreneurship

Purpose: The digital platform-based sharing economy has become ubiquitous all over the world. In this paper, we explore how market actors' conflicting interpretations of digital platforms' business models give form and shape value co-creation and capture practices in contexts marked by weak institutions and underdeveloped markets. **Design/methodology/approach:** Integrating insights from the broader literature on digital platforms and the contemporary turn to "meaning-making" in social

theory, we adopt a problematization method to unpack the collective contest over the interpretation of value co-creation and capture from ridesharing platforms in contexts marked by weak institutions and underdeveloped markets. Findings: Collective contest over the interpretation of digital business models may give rise to competing meanings that may enable (or impede) digital platform providers' ability to co-create and capture value. We present an integrative framework that delineates how firms caught up in such collective contests in contexts marked by weak institutions and underdeveloped markets may utilise such conditions as marketing resources to reset their organising logic in ways that reconcile the conflicting perspectives. Practical implications: The paper presents propositions constituting a contribution to a meaning-making perspective on ridesharing digital platforms by offering insights into how digital business models could potentially be localised and adapted to address and align with the peculiarities of contexts. It goes further to present a theoretical model to extend our understanding of the different sources of contestation of meaning of digital platforms. Originality/value: The meaning-making perspective on digital platforms extends our understanding of how the collective contest over interpretations of value co-creation and capture may offer a set of contradictory frames that yield possibilities for ridesharing platform providers, and their users, to assimilate the organising logic of digital business models into new categories of understanding.



An advanced data analytic approach for reallocating green gas emissions in cap-and-trade context

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Majid Azadi

Date of publication: February, 2024

Department: Business Analytics & Information Systems

The swift economic growth experienced by nations has exacerbated the challenge of global warming over the years. Cap-and-trade stands out as the most effective approach for managing and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This study aims to construct a data envelopment analysis model to redistribute authorized emissions among decision-making units (DMUs). Notably, the model accounts for the intricate relationship between the production of desirable and undesirable outputs within the cap-and-trade framework. Furthermore, the model adapts the current mathematical modelling by addressing undesirable output as an inherent by-product of the desirable output. Emphasis is placed on maximizing the collective efficiency scores of all DMUs. Additionally, to confront the presence of multiple potential optimal solutions in the cap-and-trade context, the model computes the efficiency

interval of DMUs. Finally, the paper showcases the model's capabilities by presenting a comprehensive case study, demonstrating its practical application and effectiveness in addressing emissions reallocation within the cap-and-trade system.



An Introduction to Product Essentiality: Conceptualisation and Measurement

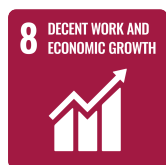
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Breno Nunes | Roberto Alamino | David Bennett

Date of publication: December, 2024

Department: Operations & Service Management

Moments of crisis such as pandemics, hyperinflation, or natural disasters cause societies, governments, companies, and individuals to reflect on their priorities and essential needs. However, there is no concept or theory that links human needs to the consumption of goods and services. With this in mind, we introduce the product essentiality concept and a method to measure the essentiality level of a group of products. We used a survey questionnaire and quantitative methodology to illustrate the concept and propose that it can be reasonably approximated by a measure of perceived essentiality. Our analysis examined the influence of location, gender, and family income on the perceived essentiality of general goods and services. For this, a sample of Business and Management students in Brazil and the UK classified 81 products as 'essential' or 'superfluous'. Our findings and analyses show that applying the essentiality concept and its measurement can be consistent and useful for reflecting on what is essential and what is not. This study provides preliminary insights on product portfolio essentiality measurements suggesting it is significantly affected by location rather than gender and income. The results can help organisations to rethink their product portfolios, designs, and assist sustainable development policies.



An IoT model for supporting global governmental lockdown scenarios: investigating comparative lockdown strategies and assessing generic perception of pandemic response

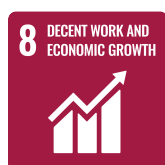
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Victor Chang

Date of publication: January, 2024

Department: Operations & Service Management

We propose an integrated IoT model to blend IoT technologies, neutrosophic theory and AHP to handle uncertain conditions of real-life situations and aid decision-makers with systematic and optimum decisions. In our case study, four ranked scenarios are assigned the appropriate IoT technology generated to support the government and competent authorities in the pandemic outbreak to prevent growing risks. Our study is based on the decision-makers' judgments that need to be expanded with more experts in the various aspects of government and competent authorities. The integrated IoT model provides a balance between the restart of economic life and COVID-19 outbreaks.



Assessing progress in reducing the number of disaster-affected people: insights from Zimbabwe

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Komal Aryal

Date of publication: November, 2024

Department: Operations & Service Management

In 2015, 187 countries including Zimbabwe appended their signatures to the Sendai Framework which has seven global targets. Target B calls on all nations to substantially reduce the number of people affected by disasters by 2030. To promote the measurement of progress in attaining Target B, the United Nations provided some technical guidance methodologies. Using the case of Zimbabwe, this study quantified the indicators of Target B to assess the country's progress in reducing the number of people affected by disasters. Quantitative data came from public sources published by the government of Zimbabwe spanning 1990 to 2022. Although the Sendai Framework came into effect in 2015, using the 1990–2022 data enabled the trend analyses to ascertain the extent to which the framework pushed the government of Zimbabwe to reduce the number of people affected by disasters. This data was analysed through 3-year and 5-year moving averages. The study also used qualitative interviews to explain the trends in disaster-affected people. Results showed a slight increase in the number of people affected by disasters where drought was affecting millions of people yearly while storms and epidemics were sporadic and characterized by big spikes. The study

concluded that Zimbabwe is not attaining Target B. To significantly reduce the number of people affected by disasters, the study offered three policy implications including the need to strengthen drought preparedness/mitigation, and disease surveillance and control systems.



The impact of employee satisfaction on company's labour investment efficiency

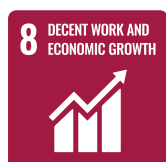
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Galina Goncharenko

Date of publication: September, 2024

Department: Accounting & Finance

This study examines the impact of employee satisfaction on company's labour investment efficiency (CLIE) using a sample of 2,333 company-year observations associated with 302 companies listed in the UK between 2008 and 2020. Arguments based on human relations theory suggest that satisfied employees are likely to be motivated to exert greater efforts and exhibit lower turnover, thereby reducing employer's exposure to labour market frictions. In contrast, agency theory argues that satisfied employees may become entrenched and thus harm organisational outcomes, including CLIE. We measure satisfaction with employers across our sample companies using 164,341 employees' ratings posted on Glassdoor UK. We observe a positive impact of employee satisfaction on CLIE, demonstrating the validity of underlying human relations theory for the present business context characterised by labour shortages. We also find the positive impact of employee satisfaction on CLIE to be stronger for companies with higher labour intensity, more reliance on skilled labour, and more competitive industry environments. Our study contributes to research investigating the determinants of efficient investment in workforce. We also demonstrate the informational value of employee' online reviews for understanding a company's performance, particularly in assessing the efficiency of its employment decisions.



Changing labour migration flows after Brexit: An analysis of UK survey and administrative data

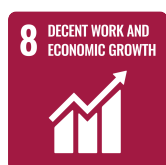
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Chiara Paola Donegani

Date of publication: August, 2024

Department: Economics & International Business

Following 'Brexit', the UK leaving the EU, we analyse the effects of changes in the legal framework on EU residents and compare them with UK citizens, employing a difference-in-differences framework. The research focuses on several dependent variables, including labour supply and wages, self-employment rates, and changes in industry, using the Annual Population Survey (APS) data 2012–2022 in the UK (itself based on the Labour Force Survey (LFS)), National Insurance Number registrations, and visas issued. The evidence from our analysis on EU post-Brexit migration towards the UK, together with the observed overall increase in rates of (non-EU) net migration, shows rebalancing between EU and non-EU groups. Effects are strongest at the lower-skilled end of the labour market. However, wages for UK natives and EU migrants did not change with respect to each other, controlling for occupation, industry, and other factors.



Circular Economy of Packaging in Brazil: Stakeholders' Perspectives on its Institutionalization

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Luciano Batista

Date of publication: December, 2024

Department: Operations & Service Management

According to Institutional Theory, it is possible to internalize values in society and make certain attitudes considered appropriate or correct. This paper aims to analyse the stages of institutionalization of the Circular Economy of packaging in Brazil. This is an applied, qualitative and descriptive study that used the triangulation between document analysis and in-depth interviews to collect data. The intention was to enable the confrontation of the perceptions of several stakeholders (cross analysis) in the packaging sector in Brazil. Fifty-three (53) stakeholders working in this chain participated in the interviews. Results point out the initial phase of institutionalization of the Circular Economy of packaging in Brazil. After all, even ten years after its sanction, the Brazilian Policy of Solid Waste (BPSW) presents a low level of implementation. First because the country still has problems related to disposal in dumps, low recycling rates, little socio-productive inclusion of the waste pickers and low level of integration in waste management. Additionally, several stakeholders reported conflicts (objectification) and setbacks in terms of social control, making the sedimentation phase

even more distant. The study contributes to knowledge in the area by improving understanding of the innovations that are necessary to implement the Circular Economy in the country. It also offers a classification of three phases of institutionalization of an innovation. The practical contribution is associated with identifying barriers and challenges that hinder the institutionalization of packaging circularity



Combating extreme weather through operations management: Evidence from a natural experiment in China

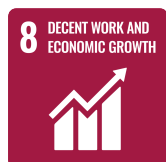
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Peter Lee

Date of publication: January, 2024

Department: Operations & Service Management

In recent years, frequent extreme weather events have had serious impacts on firms' operations and supply chain management. More and more firms are taking extreme weather into consideration in their formulation of strategies and are striving to employ a range of measures to mitigate the adversity caused by extreme weather. Many of prior extreme weather-related studies focus on its socioeconomic or financial impacts in developed countries. In the operations management field, while researchers have long investigated various climate change-related issues, limited efforts have been specifically devoted to extreme weather's operational performance implications, and it remains unclear whether operational resources or strategies employed in the firm-specific endogenous glitches or disruptions can be successfully scaled to such exogenous extreme conditions. Employing the staggered difference-in-differences approach and analyzing a large-scale panel dataset of Chinese listed firms, we find that there is a significant negative relationship between extreme weather and firms' operational performance in terms of labor productivity. Further analysis shows that firms with high levels of operational slack, digital technology deployment, and cash hedging are less significantly affected by extreme weather. Our findings remain consistent across various robustness checks including parallel trend analysis, alternative measures, Mahalanobis distance matching approach, placebo test, and adjustment of estimation window. These findings contribute to the extreme weather and disaster management literature in several ways and have significant practical implications for firms.



Unpacking the Triple Nexus: Environmental Performance, Economic Performance and Servitization – A Systematic Review and Theoretical Reflections

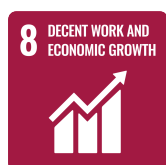
[DOI](#)

Authors: Raveen Ramachandran Menon | Ali Bigdeli | Tim Baines | Shereen Fouad | Mirjam Roeder

Date of publication: May, 2024

Department: Operations & Service Management

The manufacturing industry is facing a major challenge in balancing economic performance with environmental sustainability. To address this challenge, extant research has suggested that servitization could help align these objectives. However, the current evidence base is too scattered for policymakers to act on and support servitization in a targeted manner. Therefore, we conduct a systematic literature review to analyze over 120 research papers to establish the current understanding of the impact of servitization on the environmental and economic performance of a firm, and identify the contextual variables affecting this impact. The study identifies and critically appraises the body of literature that provides the current evidence base on the impact of servitization, the core areas of impact investigated and the methods that are used to establish this impact. Additionally, we conduct a thematic analysis of variables of impact to explore the theoretical perspectives that are used to explain the impact of servitization. Building on these theoretical perspectives we offer concrete propositions to further develop the research on the impact of servitization on environmental and economic performance.



Does conflict aggravate energy poverty?

[DOI](#)

Authors: Sajid Chaudhry

Date of publication: September, 2024

Department: Accounting & Finance

A country grappling with conflict faces a multitude of socioeconomic challenges. In addition to human costs, conflicts are observed to destroy a country's energy infrastructure, such as power plants, transmission lines, and fuel supply chains, inter alia. As such, conflicts reduce access to energy products as well as clean and appropriate technologies in the afflicted economy. This aggravates the competition for resources and the energy deprivation problem among the country's survivors. Against this backdrop, this study examines the relationship between energy poverty and internal conflict, as well as the impact of internally displaced persons on energy poverty. Our study uses data from the World Bank and the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) database for 94 countries from 1996 to 2021, and employs panel logistic regression and various other estimators. We find that internal conflict and internally displaced persons contribute to increased energy poverty within and between economies, which is attributed to reduced energy consumption and limited access to electricity and clean cooking. Our results are robust to endogeneity, specification, omitted variable bias, and alternative measures of conflict.



The Knowledge and Preferences of Parents/Carers of Autistic Children and Young People about Technology Devices

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Shivani Sharma

Date of publication: December, 2024

Department: Leadership & Management

This study explored parents'/carers' knowledge, interest, and preferences towards technology devices as support mediums for autistic children, the reasoning behind any choice and the factors associated with the most preferred technology device. Technology devices were conceptualised as smartphones, iPods, tablets, virtual reality, robots, and 'other' for participants to list their own further interpretations of technology devices. Survey data were collected from 267 parents/carers of autistic children aged 2–18 years internationally between May to October 2020. Parents/carers of autistic children and young people were aware of, interested in and mostly preferred the use of tablets because of their convenience and ease of use. They least preferred virtual reality followed by robots due to both being overwhelming, cold, inconvenient to transport and expensive. Robots, in particular, were unknown to respondents. The data suggested that some technology devices as a support medium are not widely known to families of autistic children and young people in support programmes. Technology devices need to be financially approachable and achieve a high standard of design to engage users. Future research should focus on gathering evidence from the autistic community about their preferences and views of technology devices as a medium in autism support programmes.



Enhancing Green Process Innovation Performance: The Role of Regenerative Unlearning and Knowledge Base Management

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Laura Di Chiacchio

Date of publication: May, 2024

Department: Business Analytics & Information Systems

Spanish manufacturing companies are urged to adopt greener practices to mitigate their environmental footprint. However, they often lack the knowledge to do so. Following a knowledge-based approach, this study analyzes the role of strategic knowledge management in enhancing organizational green performance. It introduces the concept of regenerative unlearning, defining it as the result of an organizational change that has consequences at the organizational level. Specifically, it tests the direct influence of regenerative unlearning on green process innovation performance and its indirect influence through knowledge breadth and depth. By analyzing 310 Spanish medium-sized manufacturing companies, results show that updating and managing the knowledge base positively impacts the company's green process innovation performance. This implies that leveraging regenerative unlearning as part of companies' knowledge management strategy is part of the solution to achieving ecological efficiency in the manufacturing industry. Finally, actionable recommendations for industry leaders to improve their green performance are provided.



Environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance of firms in the era of geopolitical conflicts

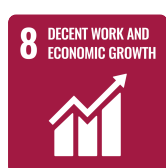
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Sajid Chaudhry | Viktor Pekar

Date of publication: February, 2024

Department: Accounting & Finance | Business Analytics & Information Systems

Do geopolitical conflicts matter for the environmental, social, governance (ESG) and overall ESG performance of firms? We answer this question by studying the impact of geopolitical conflict of a country on the ESG performance, separately and collectively, of firms of that country. We use data from Refinitiv and UCDP/PRIO (Uppsala Conflict Data Program/International Peace Research Institute, Oslo) databases for the period from 2002 to 2021 for 79 countries and we use fixed effects regression as our main methodology. We find that if a country is in a geopolitical conflict, their firms are impacted in the form of lower E, S and G performance and overall ESG performance, with stronger effects for developed countries. This comes on top of the direct costs of geopolitical conflicts. Our results are robust to country, year and firm fixed effects as well as robust to endogeneity as we use Lewbel (2012) estimator to eliminate any chances of endogeneity. We provide first evidence on this topic and it has geopolitical and socioeconomical implications.



The Combined (Non)Impact of Self-Declared Sustainability Claims and Business Performance Ratings on Customer Intentions

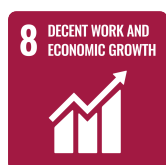
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Vignesh Yoganathan

Date of publication: October, 2024

Department: Marketing & Entrepreneurship

Businesses often make claims about their sustainability credentials that are not independently certified. Although these internal (i.e., originating from the business) signals are generally considered suboptimal, does their influence depend on how customers weigh them against external (i.e., originating from other sources) signals about the past performance of the business? Our research examines the separate and combined impact of self-declared sustainability claims (i.e., internal signal) and aggregated performance ratings (i.e., external signal) on customers. A scenario-based experiment showed that both, self-declared sustainability claims and performance ratings, independently increase customers' intention to visit a hotel or restaurant. However, we found no evidence for an interaction effect – i.e., the combination of the two signals appears to have no effect on customers. To gain a deeper understanding, we conducted a qualitative study, which revealed mixed and paradoxical perceptions among customers. While the two signals are perceived to be distinct (communicating different attributes) and even dissonant (communicating opposing attributes), they are also perceived to mutually influence one another in that a high (vs. low) performance rating reflects positively on a self-declared sustainability claim, and vice versa. Subsequently, we discuss managerial strategies for communicating sustainability credentials vis-à-vis the overall performance of the business.



The evolution of non-financial report quality and visual content: information asymmetry and strategic signalling: a cross-cultural perspective

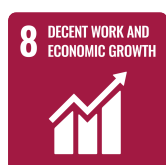
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Laura Di Chiacchio | Alexeis Garcia-Perez

Date of publication: April, 2024

Department: Business Analytics & Information Systems

The increasing stakeholders' scrutiny requires firms to communicate their non-financial performance to signal their commitment to sustainability. Building on the intention-based view and signalling, legitimacy and institutional theories, this study investigates whether corporate efforts to reduce information asymmetry and enhance their legitimacy led to higher quality and more transparent non-financial reporting practices. This study analyses reports from German, UK and Chinese companies over 14 years. It carries out quantitative and qualitative analysis of textual and visual content to evaluate disclosure density and accuracy of non-financial reports. The findings show limited progress in terms of the density and accuracy of the information disclosed by businesses since 2005. Also, they reveal cultural specificities in the reporting and approach to corporate social responsibility, along with a tendency to "create an appearance of legitimacy" by organisations. This study adds to the literature by studying the use of visual elements in non-financial reports. Moreover, it calls for strict policies and guidelines for the reporting of environmental and social issues by organisations. In particular, the inappropriate use of visual contents, the failure to provide quantitative information and managerial orientations show the need for completeness, transparency, and balance of information in reporting guidelines and regulations. The lack of authenticity and quality of the reports jeopardises the very purpose of non-financial reporting eroding trust in the system by all relevant social and economic stakeholders.



To Buy or Not to Buy? Exploring Ethical Consumerism in an Emerging Market—India

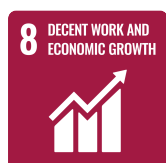
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Bahar Ali Kazmi | Pawan Budhwar

Date of publication: April, 2024

Department: Leadership & Management

This article reports the findings of a field study conducted on the purchasing intentions of ethical consumers in India. We explored how the involvement of ethical consumers with social networking sites (SNSs such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, and others) affects their intentions to buy ethical products. Applying an extended theoretical lens of theory of planned behavior and social capital, we present an analysis of a rich qualitative data. We identify and describe 7 dimensions, representing the 19 factors and manifesting the informational, relational, and valuation usage of SNSs that explain their impact on the purchase intention of ethical consumers in India. We conclude by highlighting the decision-making role played by the ethical knowledge and price sensitivity of ethical consumers, reflecting the peculiarities and dynamics of ethical consumption in India.



Monetary policy impact on sustainability: Analyzing interest rates and corporate carbon emissions

| [DOI](#)

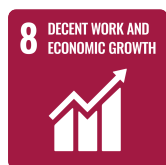
Authors: Antonis Ballis

Date of publication: August, 2024

Department: Accounting & Finance

This study aims to investigate the impact of monetary policy on firms' carbon emissions. The primary focus is on the effect of increasing interest rates on the carbon footprint of companies, both prior to and following the implementation of the Paris Agreement in 2015. The results show that there is a positive relationship between interest rates and carbon emissions indicating that in the face of increasing interest rates, companies are more likely to choose short-term financial stability above long-term sustainability objectives. This positive relationship is less prevalent following the Paris Agreement suggesting that policymakers should continue to strengthen global climate initiatives as a pressure for companies to invest in green activities. Additional evidence suggests that the impact of interest rates on carbon emissions is particularly noticeable in situations characterized by elevated

levels of economic and policy uncertainty, weak corporate governance quality, and poor investor protection. These results are robust to endogeneity concerns, alternative measures of interest rates, carbon emission, and alternative samples.



Reducing Food Loss and Waste in the Hospitality and Food Service Sector: A Design Thinking Approach

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Trung Hieu Tran

Date of publication: November, 2024

Department: Business Analytics & Information Systems

Food loss and waste is a global issue that occurs in all stages of the food supply chain and leads to negative environmental impacts. The Hospitality and Food Service (HaFS) industry is the second largest contributor to food waste. This research investigates the challenges that the HaFS businesses face in adopting sustainable waste reduction strategies using the double diamond design thinking methodology proposed by the UK Design Council. It was discovered that most HaFS businesses do not measure or report on Food Loss and Waste (FLW) due to a lack of clarity on how to do so, complex solutions, low cost-benefit ratios and consequently low motivation. Also, businesses that implement some level of FLW reduction strategies often prioritise post-plate waste and set arbitrary targets which are difficult to achieve sustainably. The research proposes a two-step innovative solution to this problem. The first step involves using a Systems Dynamic (SD) model to represent the complex internal operations in food preparation to reveal its waste hotspots, and to predict the optimal achievable FLW targets within that system. While the second step proposes a system-specific FLW reduction framework based on the SD model parameters that deliver the optimal waste reduction solution.



Reinforcing green business strategies with Industry 4.0 and governance towards sustainability: Natural-resource-based view and dynamic capability

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Mahmoud Elmarzouky

Date of publication: January, 2024

Department: Accounting & Finance

The study explores the influence of contextual factors surrounding production planning and green strategic investment decision-making practices (GSIDMP) in UK companies. We utilize a mixed-method approach as a research methodology to study the current trend of production planning and GSIDMP. This study's conceptual model is rooted conspicuously in the resource-based theory (RBT), natural-resource-based view, and dynamic capabilities. We empirically examine the nexus among GSIDMP, technological innovation, dynamic capability, and companies' performance. Our study was based on a sample selected from UK-listed companies, FTSE ALL-Share Index for the period (2012–2021). Also, the study utilizes data from the UK Innovation Survey (2018–2020) and corporate disclosure through companies' annual reports as a complementary approach for data collection. Findings of this study explore the interdependencies among company dynamic capability, advanced technological innovation and governance mechanisms, and their mediation influence on the nexus between GSIDMP and companies' performance. This study sheds lights on current business innovation strategies. Findings reveal how current practices of production planning and GSIDM in large UK companies shaped by boardrooms absorptive and adaptive capabilities, knowledge-generating and knowledge-collaboration capabilities, technological adoption, and corporate governance mechanisms. This study offers insight regarding boardrooms proactive engagement in exploration and exploitation activities to strengthen ambidexterity through various innovation trajectories associated with green production and GSIDMP towards sustainability. We provide managerial implications for decision-makers, regulators, investors, scholars, and other stakeholders.



Socially Responsible Purchasing (SRP) in the Supply Chain Industry: Meanings and Influences

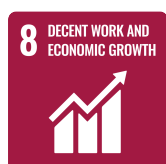
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Kemi Yekini

Date of publication: January, 2024

Department: Accounting & Finance

Organisations are increasingly expected to respond to societal and environmental issues within their supply chains. The nuances of this expectation necessitate the consideration of the disparities in corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices within supply chains. Drawing on the stakeholder theory, this paper examines the meanings and influences on socially responsible purchasing (SRP) in supply chains. It adopts an interpretivist qualitative methodology, relying on data from semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with practitioners from multi-national and indigenous organisations in Nigeria. Our findings present a useful understanding of SRP based on the specific endogenous-level and exogenous-level influences. In particular, we develop an encompassing scope for SRP's meaning, outlining its key components, clarifying its boundaries and highlighting inconsistencies in its description. Our study provides a fresh understanding of SRP, with attendant contributions to the broad literature on CSR, corporate governance and supply chain management. It also offers insights to managers, purchasers, suppliers, financial analysts and policy-makers in embedding SRP.



Green Governance: How ESG Initiatives Drive Financial Performance in UK Firms?

| [DOI](#)

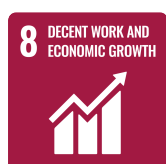
Authors: Doaa Shohaieb

Date of publication: December, 2024

Department: Marketing & Entrepreneurship

In this research endeavor, we investigate the potential influence exerted by ESG performance on the market capitalization of non-financial corporations included within the UK FTSE All-Share Index during the eleven-year period spanning 2010 to 2021. Integrating insights from Resource-Based View and Stakeholder Theory, this research extends the literature by considering the moderating effect of governance on the ESG–market capitalization association. This study analyzes a comprehensive dataset of UK firms, employing robust econometric techniques to substantiate its conclusions. The results demonstrate a robust positive association between the overall ESG pillars and market capitalization. Environmental, social, and governance performances independently contribute to an increased market value. The analysis reveals that firms with superior internal governance structures, characterized by the presence of independent board members, board size, an independent audit committee, and the implementation of a split CEO–chair structure, experience a magnified positive impact from ESG disclosures on market capitalization. Effective governance mechanisms enhance the credibility and effectiveness of ESG initiatives, aligning them with stakeholder expectations and

regulatory standards. This alignment fosters trust and cooperation, driving better financial performance and increasing market value. This research adds its voice to the increasingly compelling body of evidence that underscores the financial advantages associated with ESG integration and highlights the critical role of internal governance in amplifying these benefits. The findings have significant implications for policymakers, investors, and corporate managers. They advocate for the strategic incorporation of ESG criteria into corporate governance frameworks to achieve sustainable financial success.



Integrating Circular Supply Chains into Experiential Learning: Enhancing Learning Experiences in Higher Education

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Eliseo Vilalta-Perdomo

Date of publication: December, 2024

Department: Operations & Service Management

This work integrates the circular economy (CE) into experiential learning in higher education, focusing on industrial and systems engineering. It addresses the need for suitable learning experiences and pedagogical strategies to enhance CE and sustainability education in active learning research. Accordingly, this study proposes integrating Kolb's experiential learning cycle with the ADDIE model into an instructional design framework for reflective and active engagement in learning activities within realistic circular supply chain scenarios. The methodology demonstrates this framework through a case study of an undergraduate module for CE problem-solving, focusing on waste reduction within small and medium enterprises in Mexico City. Based on student surveys and achievement metrics, results show positive student feedback and evaluation results, meeting module targets. This work's main contribution offers a framework for creating novel experiential learning cases and cultivating sustainability-related and disciplinary learning outcomes. It also recognises valuable links for citizenship commitment, problem-solving, community engagement, and CE education. However, this work acknowledges limitations in complex problem-solving difficulties, a resource-demanding nature, restricted transferability, and the limited evaluation of learning effectiveness. Future research will explore this work's relevance across Kolb's learning styles and diverse industries, focusing on student interest and motivation, and evaluating its impact on student outcomes in various educational contexts.



Leveraging Greenhouse Gas Emissions Traceability in the Groundnut Supply Chain: Blockchain-Enabled Off-Chain Machine Learning as a Driver of Sustainability

[DOI](#)

Authors: Manimuthu Arunmozhi

Date of publication: July, 2024

Department: Business Analytics & Information System

As emphasized in multiple United Nations (UN) reports, sustainable agriculture, a key goal in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), calls for dedicated efforts and innovative solutions. In this study, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the groundnut supply chain from the region of Diourbel & Niakhar, Senegal, to the port of Dakar are investigated. The groundnut supply chain is divided into three steps: cultivation, harvesting, and processing/shipping. This work adheres to UN guidelines, addressing the imperative for sustainable agriculture by applying machine learning-based predictive modeling (MLPMs) utilizing the FAOSTAT and EDGAR databases. Additionally, it provides a novel approach using blockchain-enabled off-chain machine learning through smart contracts built on Hyperledger Fabric to secure GHG emissions storage and machine learning's predictive analytics from fraud and enhance transparency and data security. This study also develops a decision-making dashboard to provide actionable insights for GHG emissions reduction strategies across the groundnut supply chain.



Linking HRM with Sustainability Performance Through Sustainability Practices: Unlocking the Black Box

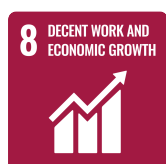
[DOI](#)

Authors: Pawan Budhwar | Prasanta Dey

Date of publication: August, 2024

Department: Operations & Service Management | Leadership & Management

In response to the triple-bottom-line sustainability challenges facing today's world, organizations are increasingly incorporating sustainability principles into their strategies; however, this is challenging for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with limited resources. While sustainable human resource management (HRM) has recently gained scholarly prominence, the impact of sustainable HRM practices on an organization's sustainability performance remains under-explored. Anchored on signalling theory, we address this gap by examining the impact of sustainable HRM on an organization's sustainability performance. Drawing upon survey data collected from 254 employees across SMEs in Vietnam, we found that sustainable HRM practices and managerial competency positively impact sustainability practices, which in turn predict sustainability performance, while sustainability practices mediate these relationships. Employee sustainability participation and long-term orientation strengthen the relationship between sustainability practices and sustainability performance. Further, co-worker sustainability support moderates the relationship between sustainable HRM practices and managerial competency and sustainability practices. We discuss the contributions to theory and practice and provide future research directions.





Partner

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

How We Define Partner

Our approach to partnering with organisations is guided by the core objectives of the Aston 2030 Strategy. Through purposeful, values-driven engagements, we work with partners to raise ambition in sustainable and responsible management and leadership, exemplified by programmes such as Sustainable Leadership Development and Unlocking Future-Proof Leaders for senior Malaysian industry and government leaders. We create real-world impact through initiatives like the Centre for Growth's Green Advantage programme and by focusing our external engagement on measurable outcomes. Drawing on our strong position within the local and regional ecosystem, we foster strategic innovation that places society's needs at the centre of collective action. We aim to transform businesses and communities through inclusive, sustainable growth, extending beyond business partnerships to influence policy and practice. Centres of excellence including the Centre for Growth, the Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship, and the Advanced Services Group lead and amplify this work.

Institutional Partnerships

- ❖ AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business)
- ❖ AMBA (Association of MBAs)
- ❖ EFMD (European Foundation for Management Development)
- ❖ Financial Times
- ❖ Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC)
- ❖ GRLI (Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative)
- ❖ International Federation of Scholarly Associations of Management (IFSAM)
- ❖ Positive Impact Rating (PIR)
- ❖ Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)
- ❖ Responsible Research in Business & Management (RRBM)
- ❖ Times Higher Education (THE)
- ❖ United Nations Global Compact non-business signatory
- ❖ University Councils
- ❖ United Nations organs other than the UN Global Compact

Student Organization Partnerships

- ❖ FOSIS – The Federation of Student Islamic Societies
- ❖ NHSF – The National Hindu Students' Forum
- ❖ NUS – National Union of Students (UK)
- ❖ TEDx
- ❖ Enactus

Partnerships

The following provides more details on 10 key partnerships at Aston Business School.

The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)

We work closely with AACSB to advance our PRME commitments through continuous benchmarking and periodic peer review. We use AACSB guidance, including the 2023 *AACSB and Societal Impact* white paper, to shape a comprehensive Societal Impact Strategy. Following the March 2023 accreditation visit, AACSB commended our strong value-based ethos of societal engagement, social mobility and regional collaboration. Recommendations for further progress include fully integrating sustainability perspectives across operations, the implementation of UN PRME principles, and further aligning our learning goals with the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

The EFMD Quality Improvement System (EQUIS)

We work with EQUIS to embed sustainability, ethics, and responsibility across our mission, strategy, programmes, research, faculty development, and stakeholder engagement. EQUIS accreditation provides external validation that we are integrating the UN Sustainable Development Goals into our strategy and operations. Following the March 2024 accreditation visit, the peer review team highlighted our strong commitment to ethics, responsibility, and sustainability, noting our extensive collaborations with local and regional corporations and organisations. They commended our regional and national connections with practice, recognising this as a key strength that benefits all stakeholders and enhances the student learning experience.

The Association of MBAs (AMBA)

We work with AMBA to ensure our programmes and graduate outcomes align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and PRME principles. AMBA's accreditation standards and graduate attributes closely reflect these goals, emphasising positive societal impact, ethical leadership, and sustainable business practice. For example, the AMBA graduate attributes map directly to key SDGs such as Quality Education, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Climate Action, and Reduced Inequalities. Following the April 2023 visit we achieved a five-year re-accreditation, with AMBA providing recommendations to further strengthen our integration of sustainability and responsible management across all aspects of our programmes and operations.

The Small Business Charter

The Small Business Charter supports the SDGs in a business school by embedding enterprise education, SME support, inclusive growth, sustainability, and partnerships into the school's mission and activities. In November 2024 ABS applied for all 30 dimensions of the Small Business Charter and following a review visit, was reaccredited for 5 years on all 30 dimensions. The peer review team commended ABS in the following manner:

"Throughout discussions with external stakeholders including representative bodies and those representing the SME community the panel were struck by the extended periods over which Aston Business School has proactively engaged with SMEs to support economic wellbeing at local, metropolitan and regional level."

"Aston Business School (ABS) has demonstrated a notable commitment to fostering entrepreneurship and small business engagement through a diverse range of activities. The school's approach encompasses various aspects of education, extracurricular involvement, research initiatives, and industry partnerships, contributing to a dynamic environment for both students and small businesses."

Times Higher Education (THE)

Aston University is ranked 1st in the UK for SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) and in the top 300 in the World in the 2025 Times Higher Education Impact rankings. This achievement on our first submission demonstrates our contribution to global sustainable development and showcases our commitment to addressing the world's most pressing challenges, including environmental sustainability, social inclusion, economic growth and partnerships.

Aston University is also ranked for these individual SDGs;

- SDG 5 (Gender Equality): 401-600 in the World, and joint 34th out of 45 ranked UK institutions.
- SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth): 88th in the World, and 12th out of 51 ranked UK institutions.
- SDG 9 (Industry Innovation and Infrastructure): 401-600 in the World, and joint 19th out of 32 ranked UK institutions.
- SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities): joint 22nd in the World, and 9th out of 55 ranked UK institutions.

Financial Times

Aston Business School has been named amongst the top 100 in the 2024 Financial Times European Business Schools ranking. ABS also achieved a Financial Times ranking of #81 globally for Executive Education in 2025, reflecting its high-quality, impactful executive development programs. This provides strong evidence of the School's commitment to SDG 4 (Quality Education).

The QS World University Rankings

In November 2024, Aston University rose in the global sustainability rankings to the top 21% of universities for sustainability worldwide. The QS World University Rankings: Sustainability encompasses three categories - environmental impact, social impact, and governance. This year 1,751 universities were ranked, of which 99 are from the UK. Aston University has improved its previous year's position of top 24% of globally ranked institutions. In addition, the University increased its placing in three specific measurements; environmental sustainability - of which it is in the top 140 globally - governance and knowledge exchange.

Sustainable Leadership in Disruptive Times – a partnership with Aston Alumni Association Malaysia, Putra Business School and Women Leadership Foundation Malaysia

Keeping the desire to engage people from across the sectors of industry, academia and government in developing responsible and sustainable management education and practice, we made strong links in our learning programmes.

This leadership programme was designed in conjunction with Aston Alumni Association Malaysia and Putra Business School to support the development of sustainable leadership practice in challenging times. The leadership programme aims were to support the participants' development as transformative and agile leaders, enabling them to set their organisation's strategic direction underpinned by future thinking for a changing global landscape. The programme outcomes included enabling the delegates to:

- Engage in a critical interrogation of their own leadership journey, approach and practice within a VUCA environment,
- Identify and explore leadership challenges facing their sector and industry,
- Critically understand the technologies underpinning what the delegates' businesses do in order to drive sustainable business practice,
- Critically reflect on their learning from the programme in order to develop concrete actions for future development.

The programme is set to run again in October 2025, with the Women Leadership Foundation Malaysia taking the place of Putra Business School as a partner in the programme.

Metal Assemblies Knowledge Transfer Partnership - Aston Centre of Excellence in Enterprise AI, Prof Alexeis Garcia Perez & Dr Breno Nunes

The focus of this partnership is to transform manufacturing processes emphasising energy efficiency and carbon content transparency. Utilising advanced data collection, analytics and visualisation techniques Metal Assemblies Ltd will become a leading carbon-conscious automotive supplier, driving growth and supporting customers to make sustainable choices.

The Centre of Excellence for Enterprise AI - a partnership with Capgemini

The Centre of Excellence for Enterprise AI is a partnership with Capgemini that translates advanced artificial intelligence research into practical business solutions. It works with a wide range of partners such as Blüm Health, Crediflow, the Manufacturing Technology Centre, Intercity Technology, Metal Assemblies, Raiven, Bendi, Digital4Health, SuperTech and TechWM to co-design prototypes, pilot AI systems and scale enterprise applications across healthcare, finance, manufacturing and technology. Through these collaborations the centre provides applied research, implementation support and executive education to help organisations adopt and benefit from AI innovation.

Partner Voices

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

Product & Service innovation: Social Impact to Sustainable Revenue

This project is an example of rich collaboration between a leading Social Enterprise in the UK, Ashley Community & Housing Ltd (ACH) and our academic team (Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship and Advanced Services Group) at the forefront of innovation. A team of researchers worked with students and ACH to create a model that would enable them to better measure how their programmes deliver social, economic and cultural benefits to refugees and migrants. The outcome of this has been a transformative new business model which will drive growth in ACH's commercial training programmes, build new partnerships with philanthropists and incorporate evidence of impact into local authority funding bids. The developed Holistic Impact Measure (HIM) examines outcomes for refugees and migrant communities such as finding a job, broader life-journey measures like improvements in self-confidence, mental health and wellbeing and engagement with social and community activities.

Tom Dixon, Head of Business Development at ACH: *"Aston's academic rigour provides us with the evidence base to demonstrate that the approaches we're taking are the right ones. We'll be able to better understand and build on the value we're making to the lives of refugees and migrants, securing our future as a provider of supported housing and integration services."*

Additional Evidence

Our Partnership with Kids' Village



Aston University partners with Kids' Village to create life-changing sanctuary for critically ill children

Aston University has named Kids' Village as its official charity of the year and committed £200,000 to help create the UK's first purpose-built holiday village exclusively for critically ill children and vulnerable families.

Through this partnership, students from the University's Design Factory Birmingham will design a dedicated "Aston Lodge" for the 10-cabin village and support ongoing fundraising and project initiatives. The collaboration advances Kids' Village's mission to offer vulnerable families a life-changing sanctuary during their most difficult times and shows how academic innovation and compassionate purpose can combine to create lasting community impact across the city and region.

Civic Agreement



Aston University committed to driving civic regeneration and inclusive growth in Birmingham and in the wider West Midlands region when it became a civic university. Bringing together academia, industry, government and society, Aston University is supporting our stakeholders and partners to create transformative solutions that will address current and future challenges. Partner organisations who have joined this commitment include the West Midlands Combined Authority, Birmingham City Council, Birmingham Women's and Children's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, The Royal Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, Birmingham Health Partners, West Midlands Growth Company, Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce, Rigby Group, TechWM, Birmingham Anchor Network, Birmingham City of Sanctuary Committee, Citizens UK, Aston University STEM Multi-Academy Trust, Aston Students' Union, Aston Villa Foundation.



Practice

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

How We Define Practice

We demonstrate our strong commitment to environmental management and energy efficiency through our accreditation to ISO 14001 and ISO 50001 standards. These certifications reflect our robust implementation of both an Environmental Management System (EMS) and an Energy Management System (EnMS). Further reinforcing its leadership in sustainability, Aston has achieved EcoCampus Platinum status, the highest level of environmental recognition awarded to UK universities.

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
- ❖ Open-access guides
- ❖ Professional training opportunities
- ❖ Responsible procurement policies
- ❖ Student equity, diversity, inclusion
- ❖ Sustainability strategy or strategic plan (school or university level)
- ❖ Travel guides
- ❖ Water
- ❖ Zero-waste guides

Policy Documents Related to RME and/or Sustainability

2030-sustainability-strategy

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

2024-2025 Sustainability and SDG Report

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

24-26-sustainability-policies

View document  Download document 

Practice Voices

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

Achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030 - Krutika Ganeru, Environment and Sustainability Officer

We are committed to making our campus more sustainable, with a clear goal of achieving net zero carbon emissions for Scope 1 and 2 by 2030. Through strategic investment in low-carbon infrastructure we are ahead of schedule, aiming for achieving the goal by 2028. While maintaining robust environmental and energy management systems and using data to drive improvements in waste and water performance, we are embedding sustainability into everyday operations and setting a strong example for the higher education sector.

Aston University has secured a £35.5 million grant from the UK Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme led by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, and delivered through Salix Finance, to establish a state-of-the-art Green Energy Centre in the Woodcock Street building. This centre will provide green energy across the entire campus within the Birmingham Innovation Precinct and brings forward Aston's net zero emissions target to 2028, two years ahead of schedule.

The project will replace fossil fuels in the district heating and electricity network—currently responsible for 81% of Scope 1 and 2 emissions—achieving over a 90% reduction from the 2005/06 baseline. It will also decommission gas boilers at EBRI and the Aston Day Hospital, connecting these buildings to the network, while delivering energy efficiency upgrades at Conference Aston, Aston Business School, and the Great Hall.

Additional Evidence

Raising the SDG Flag for a Sustainable Future



On 25 September 2025, we marked World SDG Day and the 10th anniversary of the UN Sustainable Development Goals by raising the SDG flag, reaffirming our commitment to a more sustainable future for our campus, city, and global community. This action highlights the progress outlined in the 2024–2025 Sustainable Development and Sustainability Report and underscores our ongoing efforts to embed the SDGs across teaching, research, operations, and engagement as part of Aston 2030 Sustainability Strategy.



Share

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



How We Define Share

At Aston, we define Share through our commitment to external engagement – working with individuals, communities, charities, organisations, public bodies, businesses, and policymakers. Sharing for us means fostering collaborative partnerships where knowledge, expertise, and experiences flow in both directions. We value meaningful exchange that not only extends the benefits of our research and teaching to the wider community but also enriches our academics, staff, and students through practical, real-world connection. By openly sharing our successes and challenges, we aim to create positive impact in our region and globally, while strengthening our collective learning and living out our values in action.

Engagement Opportunities

Aston 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:

- ❖ Community events and consultation forums
- ❖ Boards and advisory committees
- ❖ Feedback mechanisms (e.g., surveys, suggestion boxes)
- ❖ Open faculty and student meetings and town halls
- ❖ Partnerships with local organizations
- ❖ Public events and panel discussions

Communication Audiences

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

- ❖ Accreditation bodies
- ❖ Alumni and donors
- ❖ Boards and advisory committees
- ❖ Business and industry partners
- ❖ Chamber of commerce and local communities
- ❖ Faculty and staff
- ❖ Government and policy makers

Sharing Voices

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

Celebrating Success and Driving Sustainable Improvement - Dr Elinor Vettrains, Associate Dean (Engagement & Development)

We showcase our successes, such as our 2025 [University of the Year for Student Success](#) award and strong graduate outcomes. We place an emphasis on sustainable and responsible continuous improvement and disseminate our learning through initiatives like our recent [Pathways to Success](#) report and internal reports on areas for change, highlighting strategies to achieve its 2030 goals. Students, staff, alumni and partners are invited to share their stories and to contribute to broader university reports and strategies focusing on future-proofing and innovation with social as well as economic impact in mind.

Sharing Research to Foster Responsible Management - Dr Rasha Kassem, Engagement & Development Lead (Accounting & Finance)

We prioritise the dissemination of research and practice-based insights to strengthen responsible management across sectors. Our work engages diverse audiences through high-profile platforms including Society Matters – Birmingham, the ACFE Global Fraud Conference, the Cambridge University Economic Crime Symposium, the Cybercrime and Forensic Accounting conferences, and the Centre for Personal Financial Wellbeing Conference at Aston University. Professional outreach includes invited contributions for the Institute of Management Accountants, Cifas, the Fraud Advisory Panel, and the Department for Education, alongside thought leadership featured in *Fraud Magazine*, the Charity Finance Group, and podcasts such as Veriff Voices and Fraudible. Through partnerships with government, the United Nations, charities, and professional bodies, we extend the School's impact globally while fostering knowledge exchange and sustainable societal benefit.

Leveraging Learning & Connection - The Department of Marketing & Entrepreneurship

The development of internship programme initiatives with [Tribeca Academy](#) has provided a space for learners and industry to connect for real world projects. The internship is a six-week programme with live projects with organisations such as Redknobs, Intercity and Aston Villa. In addition, members of the team have relationships with charities; Emma Neale is a trustee and Vice-Chair for Sport4Life which helps under privileged young people gain skills and employment and this organisation worked with learners in the BSc Business Enterprise Development programme as part of their Charity Challenge week activity to boost their skills relating to consultancy whilst also supporting the charity with fund raising.

Additional Evidence

Share: Creating Value with Society



As a signatory to the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement Manifesto, a UK-wide commitment to make research accessible and impactful beyond academia, we share knowledge, resources and skills with the public, while listening to and learning from the communities we serve.

Inclusive Growth and Community Partnerships

We are committed to tackling inequalities and building sustainable communities. Aston partners with voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) organisations as well as public-sector bodies, to co-develop solutions to social and economic challenges. These partnerships address barriers to healthcare access, employment and enterprise in underserved communities across Birmingham and the wider West Midlands.

Leader in Sustainability

Aston is on track to be the first university in the UK Midlands region to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2028, with major investments in renewable energy and green infrastructure already under way. Beyond our campus, our Decarbonisation Net Zero Programme, funded through UK innovation schemes, has helped more than 400 small and medium-sized enterprises reduce energy use. This not only cuts emissions but strengthens the resilience of local businesses.

Global Recognition for Inclusion

In 2024, Aston was awarded Athena Swan Gold for its outstanding commitment to advancing gender equality in higher education and research. It demonstrates our sustained leadership in embedding gender equality, supporting underrepresented groups and creating an inclusive culture across research, teaching and organisational life.

Transformative Student Experience

Aston pioneered the placement year model in UK higher education more than 50 years ago. This means undergraduates spend a full year working in industry during their degree—an approach now widely copied across the UK. Today, over 70% of Aston undergraduates take up such placements, one

of the highest rates nationally. At the postgraduate level, Aston Business School has launched a Postgraduate Internship Guarantee Scheme, making it the first UK business school to guarantee professional experience to every master's student. These initiatives ensure our graduates are not only academically prepared but also workplace-ready and socially responsible.

Research with Real-World Impact

Our research is directed towards urgent societal challenges. Aston Business School hosts world-leading research centres that focus on areas such as inclusive entrepreneurship, decarbonisation, disaster resilience and health inequalities:

- **The Advanced Services Group (ASG)**, the only research centre worldwide dedicated to servitization, has worked with more than 450 companies globally to help manufacturers adopt service-led models, boosting productivity and competitiveness.
- **The Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CREME)** is internationally recognised for shaping inclusive enterprise policy and practice, delivering dozens of events annually and directly influencing civic and national strategies.
- **The Cyber Security Innovation Centre (CSI)** leads major EU- and UK-funded projects on digital security, partnering with law enforcement agencies and industry to strengthen resilience to cyber threats.
- **The Centre for Business Prosperity (CBP)** shapes UK and international trade policy and has advised the UK government, EU delegations, and global embassies on economic security and industrial transformation.

By partnering with industry, governments and civil society, we ensure research outputs are translated into practice, delivering measurable benefits for society. Our research informs evidence-based policymaking at multiple levels: from advising the UK government on bioenergy, to publishing policy briefings on ethnic minority entrepreneurship, and contributing internationally to strengthen policymaking practices abroad.

The Green Advantage Programme

Our flagship Green Advantage Programme, run by the Aston Centre for Growth, equips professionals from across sectors with sustainability and low-carbon innovation skills. Recognised internationally in the UN PRME Signatory Spotlight, Green Advantage is an example of how management education can empower individuals to become sustainability leaders in their businesses and communities.

At Aston, we believe that knowledge must not only be created but shared - openly, responsibly and with purpose. From advancing sustainability and inclusion, to shaping policy and empowering entrepreneurs, we turn ideas into action that delivers real benefits for people and communities. Rooted in Birmingham yet connected to global challenges, we support inclusive growth in our region while also contributing to international progress on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Looking ahead, our commitment is to educate, engage and empower students, staff, partners and citizens worldwide to co-create a fairer, greener and more sustainable future.



SIGNATORY

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