

PRiME

an initiative of the
United Nations Global Compact

Sharing Information on Progress 2026

Aston Business School

September 2026

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About Aston Business School

Aston Business School (ABS), founded in 1972, is the largest school of Aston University in 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 undergraduate, postgraduate, MBA, doctoral and executive education combines academic study with applied learning and close engagement with industry and community partners.

Aston has been a PRME signatory since 2008 and a founding member of the UK & Ireland PRME Chapter since 2013. This long-standing commitment has developed into a more systematic approach across the School. A major milestone in 2026 was recognition of ABS as a UN PRME Champion for 2026–27, placing the School among 50 institutions globally, including ten in the UK, and marking its progression towards active contribution to PRME's international agenda.

Responsible management is embedded across education, research and enterprise, partnerships and practice. ABS structures its curriculum around the Four Es of Enterprise, Employability, Experiential Learning and ESG, with undergraduate, postgraduate and MBA modules integrating sustainability-related content. This is reinforced by business simulations, live organisational challenges and authentic assessment.

ABS faculty translate research into practice and policy across climate action, inclusive entrepreneurship, responsible finance, digital resilience and sustainable innovation. In the latest reporting period, 82 peer-reviewed ABS publications were identified as supporting responsible management and sustainable development. The School's international reach, through 60 exchange partnerships alongside progression, articulation, double-degree and strategic relationships, supports student mobility, intercultural learning and collaboration around responsible leadership and sustainability. In 2026, ABS moved into 10 Woodcock Street, a BREEAM Excellent-rated building with natural night cooling, sustainable travel facilities and planned integration with the University's new Green Energy Centre.

These developments sit within a wider University culture of educational quality, inclusion and social impact. Aston holds the highest Gold rating in the UK Teaching Excellence Framework. It was also awarded Athena Swan Gold in 2024, becoming at that time one of only three UK universities to hold this distinction. The University's Sustainability Strategy 2030 guides work across energy, waste, biodiversity and campus operations. The £35.5 million Energy Resilience Programme supports Aston's ambition to achieve net zero Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2028.

PRME has also become an important mechanism for School-wide engagement and organisational learning. Its implementation links academic leadership, programme teams, professional services and student representation. A total of 349 evidence items have been accumulated on PRME Commons across teaching, research, student and staff voice, partnerships and practice. The 2026 report reflects both continuity and progression: a strong commitment to sustainability, social mobility and responsible management, now supported by systematic curriculum integration, School-wide engagement, robust evidence-building and a growing international contribution through PRME Champion status.



Contributors



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Accreditation Team
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 and a PRME Champion for 2026–2027, with a strong focus on impact, we embed the Principles for Responsible Management Education 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 2026, Aston University celebrates 60th anniversary of receiving Royal Charter



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.

1966 – Royal Charter

On 22nd April 1966, Aston University received the Royal Charter and full university status from Queen Elizabeth II.

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. ABS is also one of the few schools which has AMBA accreditation for our Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) programme.

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.

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.

2026 - PRME Champion

Aston Business School recognised as a United Nations PRME Champion reflecting the School's distinctive approach to responsible management education, fostering sustainability, ethics and accountability across programmes, research, partnerships and impact activities. ABS also moved to 10 Woodcock Street, a BREEAM Excellent-rated building designed with strong sustainability features.

Information on graduates, staff and enrollment pertains to the 2025/26 academic year.

Graduates & Enrollment

2025 Statistics	Number
Graduates	2428
Faculty & Staff at the University	2148
Faculty & Staff at the Institution	242
Student Enrollment at the University	19529
Student Enrollment at the Institution	5874
Undergraduate Attendance	4217
Masters-Level Postgraduate Attendance	1445
Doctoral Student Attendance	81
Certificate, Professional Development, or Continuing Education Attendance	131

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.)  Doctor of Business Administration (D.B.A.)

Undergraduate Degree Programmes

 BSc Business Analytics  BSc Business and International Relations

 BSc Business and Management  BSc Business and Politics  BSc Business and Sociology

 BSc Business Computing and IT  BSc Economics  BSc Business Enterprise Development

 BSc Marketing  BSc Digital Marketing  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  BSc Economics and Finance  BSc Accounting & Finance

 BSc Mathematics with Economics  BSc Project Management

Masters Degree Programmes

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

Postgraduate Degree Programmes

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

Certificates, Professional Development, or Associate Programmes

-  PG Certificate - Coaching
-  PG Certificate – Business Administration



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 commitment to the Principles for Responsible Management Education and to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Since becoming a PRME signatory in 2008 and a founding member of the UK and Ireland PRME Chapter in 2013, we have sought to ensure that responsibility, sustainability and ethical leadership are embedded in the purpose and practice of our School.

This Sharing Information on Progress report demonstrates the significant progress we have made across education, research and enterprise, partnerships and institutional practice. Responsible management is embedded within our Four Es framework of Enterprise, Employability, Experiential Learning and ESG. Our undergraduate, postgraduate and MBA modules integrate SDG-related content, reinforced through business simulations, consultancy projects and live organisational challenges. Our research is similarly contributing to sustainable and inclusive development, with 82 peer-reviewed publications during the reporting period identified as supporting responsible management and the SDGs.

Our commitment extends beyond the curriculum. Through initiatives including Help to Grow: Management, Green Advantage and our work with businesses, policymakers and communities, we translate knowledge into practical economic, environmental and societal impact. This activity is reinforced by Aston University's wider commitment to inclusion, social mobility and sustainability, including its ambition to achieve net-zero Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2028.

Recognition as a PRME Champion for 2026–27 represents an important milestone and a responsibility to contribute more actively to the global PRME community. We will use this opportunity to share our experience, learn from others and strengthen collaboration around responsible management education, innovative pedagogy, sustainability competencies and responsible artificial intelligence.

We recognise that this is a continuing journey. Our priorities are to deepen the integration of PRME and the SDGs across all programmes; strengthen evidence of student learning; connect responsible management with employability and experiential learning; and develop our School-wide Societal Impact Strategy, with a particular focus on climate action, sustainable business, inclusive growth, enterprise and social mobility. We will also continue to report transparently on both our progress and the areas in which further work is required.

On behalf of Aston Business School, I reaffirm our commitment to advancing responsible management education and to educating leaders who can create sustainable, inclusive and responsible value for business, society and the planet.

Professor Marian Garcia
Executive Dean



THE FUTURE, POWERED BY YOU.

Definition of Purpose

Purpose at Aston Business School is to advance management education that creates sustainable, inclusive and responsible value for business and society. We translate this purpose into action by embedding the SDGs across programmes, connecting responsible management to student learning, consultancy and mobility, and aligning research, engagement and institutional development with sustainability priorities. Purpose guides both what we teach and how the School develops, ensuring that education and practice contribute to positive economic, social and environmental outcomes.

Institutional Engagement

76% - 100% of faculty at Aston Business School actively contribute to our work with PRME, advancing responsible management education, or addressing sustainable development challenges through their work.

Continue telling your story

Our PRME Journey and Goals - Dr Galina Goncharenko, ABS PRME Lead

Building on its strong commitment to ethics, responsibility and sustainability, Aston Business School has strengthened coordination, established systematic evidence-building and reporting, and expanded SDG curriculum mapping across undergraduate, postgraduate and MBA provision. The mapping process has helped colleagues move from implicit inclusion of sustainability themes towards clearer alignment between learning outcomes, teaching activities and assessment.

This has been supported by stronger pedagogical reflection. Through reflective teaching narratives and participation in PRME Pedagogy Certification, colleagues have documented and shared approaches to experiential learning, ethics, inclusivity and applied case-based teaching. We have also extended sustainability learning beyond individual modules through initiatives such as Aston Power Skills and the SDG-focused Idea Launchpad, while student narratives collected for the 2026 SIP provide early evidence of stronger understanding of ESG, ethical governance, sustainability reporting and the wider consequences of business decisions.

A similar approach to mapping and visibility has been extended to research. In 2026, University-wide SDG mapping for organisational units, researcher profiles and research outputs was enabled through Aston Research Explorer, making sustainability-related expertise easier to identify and connect. At the same time, PRME reporting has become a stronger mechanism for organisational learning. Across the last two reporting cycles, nearly 350 evidence items have been accumulated on PRME Commons across teaching, research, student and staff voice, partnerships and practice.

Our next goal is to deepen and extend this work by further strengthening PRME and SDG integration across programmes, advancing evidence of student learning in responsible management education and consolidating connections between curriculum, experiential learning, employability and wider student-facing sustainability activity. Evidence generated through PRME will also continue to inform the developing ABS Societal Impact Strategy, particularly its focus on Climate Action and Sustainable Business and Inclusive Growth, Enterprise and Social Mobility.

The PRME Champions cycle provides an important platform for this next phase. Champion status marks a shift from participation in the PRME network towards active contribution to its international work. ABS will contribute to collaborative projects, share its experience in curriculum mapping, reflective pedagogy, reporting and organisational learning, and draw on learning from peer institutions, further strengthening international collaboration, knowledge exchange and Aston's contribution to the global PRME community.



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

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

Student Voices

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

Aditya Raja Amarnath, MSc student

Through modules, class discussions, group activities and practical projects, I have learned to consider how business decisions affect people, society, the environment and long-term organisational resilience. As an accounting and finance student, this has helped me understand that finance is not only about reporting numbers, but also about supporting ethical decisions, transparency, accountability and sustainable value creation. The Sustainability and Accountability module had one of the greatest impacts on me. The class activities and simulation exercises were highly engaging and helped me understand how sustainability challenges can be connected to real business decisions. I also found the ESG-related learning particularly meaningful, as it showed how organisations can measure, report and improve their environmental and social impact. This experience helped me connect my finance background with broader issues such as responsible reporting, stakeholder accountability and sustainable business strategy. It has encouraged me to look at finance from a

wider perspective, where financial decisions should support not only profitability but also fairness, transparency and long-term sustainability. Going forward, I would like to contribute to organisations by using my finance, reporting and analytical skills to support better decision-making, stronger governance and more sustainable outcomes.

Nondumiso Bukelwa Gugushe, MSc student

I have developed a strong understanding of sustainable business practices, ESG principles, ethical leadership, corporate governance, and responsible use of technology. These learning experiences have enhanced my ability to evaluate sustainability risks and opportunities, apply reporting frameworks such as GRI and ISSB, and appreciate the importance of transparency and stakeholder accountability. The Sustainability and Accounting module has had the greatest impact on me.

Srivishnuu Vemankattuvalasu Balakrishnan, MSc student

My learning has encouraged me to critically evaluate whether companies are genuinely improving their sustainability performance or simply presenting a positive image through selective reporting. It has also helped me understand the importance of transparent disclosures, reliable ESG data, independent assurance and responsible corporate governance. Group projects, case studies and business simulations have shown me how financial decisions can create both positive and negative consequences for different stakeholders. Previously, I mainly considered financial performance, profitability and shareholder returns. My studies at Aston have helped me recognise that long-term business success also depends on ethical leadership, stakeholder trust, environmental responsibility and effective governance.

Oluwatobiloba Shittu, MSc student

Sustainability and responsible management have been integrated into my study at Aston Business School through discussions on ethical leadership, corporate governance and the importance of balancing financial performance with social and environmental responsibility. One of the impactful learning experiences for me has been studying agency theory and corporate governance. It has encouraged me to think more critically about the wider impact of business decisions.

Yesaswini Pathrudu Pilla, MSc student

Sustainability and responsible management have been reflected in my learning through the Management Accounting module. I learned that management accounting is not only about controlling costs and improving profitability but also about supporting long-term decision-making by considering environmental, social, and ethical impacts. The Management Accounting module has had the greatest impact on me. It helped me understand how management accountants contribute to strategic planning, performance measurement, budgeting, and resource allocation. I particularly found it interesting to see how financial information can be used to support responsible business decisions

and create long-term value for organisations and stakeholders. And through spontaneous in-class presentations and group work, I developed my confidence in communicating ideas, collaborating with others, and solving problems as a team.

Student Awareness

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

Student Engagement

51% - 75% of students at Aston Business School actively contribute to our work with PRME, advancing RME, or addressing sustainable development challenges through their work.

Values Voices

Key Demographic Information (2025/26)

	A&R	P&S	Grand Total
Aston Business School	223.801	10.77	234.571
Female	94.285	6	100.285
Male	129.516	4.77	134.286
Grand Total	223.801	10.77	234.571

	A&R	P&S	Grand Total
Aston Business School	223.801	10.77	234.571
1 ME	111.601	7.77	119.371
1.1 Asian	78.601	5.77	84.371
1.2 Black	14		14
1.3 Mixed	4	1	5
1.4 Other	15	1	16
2 White	87.6	3	90.6
3 ND	24.6		24.6
Grand Total	223.801	10.77	234.571

	A&R	P&S	Grand Total
Aston Business School	223.801	10.77	234.571
Disabled	13.8		13.8
Not Disabled	183.201	9.77	192.971
Not Known/Prefer Not Say	28.8	1	10
Grand Total	223.801	10.77	234.571

A&R - Academic & Research Staff

P&S - Professional & Support Staff

Celebrating Values

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

Prof Virginie Grzelczyk, Head of Inclusion and Development, Aston University

As Head of Inclusion and Development at Aston University, I support Aston's aims of creating conditions in which everyone can contribute, develop and thrive. Our work is organised around strengthening internal governance, supporting external recognition and building engagement and community impact.

For 2025-2026, we are proud to have reaccredited our College of Business and Social Sciences with an Athena Swan Bronze award. We have also created new opportunities for meaningful engagement via National Inclusion Week, a community Inclusion Tapestry, a range of reciprocal and reverse mentoring programmes to support staff growth and connection, and renewed commitments to our staff networks and partners. Working to further other Aston initiatives, such as the University of Sanctuary work and our Civic Agreement, Aston remains proud to call itself inclusive, entrepreneurial and transformational.

2025/26 activities include:

- **National Inclusion Week – 15–19 September 2025**

- Collaborative Inclusion Tapestry
- Honorary Graduates Guest Lecture
- Lunch on the Lawn
- Wider National Inclusion Week engagement and communications under **#InclusionIsAston**

- **White Ribbon and 16 Days of Action – November–December 2025**

- Sign, Snap, Share – 27 October 2025
- White Ribbon Day – 25 November 2025
- Steps to Speak Up Challenge – 25 November–10 December 2025
- Sign, Snap, Share – 1 December 2025
- Development and promotion of resources supporting people affected by domestic violence and abuse

- **Reciprocal & Reverse Mentoring – January–July 2026**

- 20 mentoring pairs
- Programme launch – 4 February 2026
- Mid-point event – 22 April 2026
- Closing event – 1 July 2026

- **Birmingham LGBT Partnership – 2026**

- Gold-level sponsorship/partnership

- **AstonMakers – 2025–26**

- Development of AstonMakers as an inclusive making community
- Official launch at the Design Factory – February 2026
- Refugee Week **Share What You Make** activity – 2 March 2026
- Families Morning at the Library – August 2026

- **Neurodiversity Celebration Week – March 2026**

- Four Lunch & Learn sessions
- Neurodiversity Living Library

- **Disability Inclusion – 2025–26**

- Disability Festival – 4 July 2026

- **Advance HE and External Engagement – 2026**

- Presentation of Aston inclusion activity at the Advance HE EDI Conference: Disability Festival selected for external dissemination, Disability Festival selected for external dissemination



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 36 courses in 2025 that support responsible management education and sustainable development goals.

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.



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.



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.



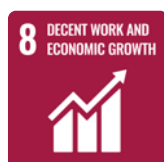
Audit and Professional Ethics | BF3303

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.



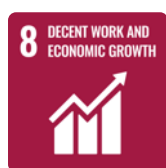
Strategic Retail Management | BMC309

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.



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.



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.



Accounting in Practice | BF2236

The Accounting in Practice module is a second-year undergraduate course designed to bridge academic accounting knowledge and real-world professional practice, with a strong emphasis on employability and career readiness. A central feature is the Bissim business simulation, through which students work in teams to run a simulated company, make strategic, operational, sustainability and financial decisions, and analyse performance data, developing teamwork, communication, problem-solving and decision-making under uncertainty. The curriculum is structured around AI, data analysis and cloud accounting, giving students practical experience with industry-relevant tools while encouraging critical reflection on the applications, limitations and ethical implications of AI. Specialist sessions on not-for-profit accounting and sustainability broaden students' understanding of the profession and the role of environmental, social and governance considerations in financial decision-making and reporting. Assessment reflects authentic professional tasks through an employability portfolio, an individual technical portfolio and a group sustainability pitch. The module also prepares students directly for recruitment through a mock assessment centre and other team-based activities, helping build confidence, technical capability, digital skills, professional awareness and readiness for placement and graduate roles.



Principles and Practice of Marketing | BMM128

The module considers approaches to marketing planning and strategy theory and frameworks. Global, ethical and sustainable approaches to marketing are included together with the importance of consumer behaviour and B2B marketing and approaches to market segmentation, targeting and positioning. Key aspects of marketing planning are highlighted and assessed to include: developing marketing objectives, including the development of the marketing mix strategies to include the services marketing mix. In addition, the application of suitable marketing metrics are outlined to measure plan outcomes. Students develop skills throughout this module in business environment/ situational analysis, competitor/comparative analysis, collaboration, creativity, communication, group working, negotiation, problem solving and planning, reflection, desk research and presentation. This module is designed to support students who may not have studied any marketing modules in their undergraduate studies and provides with the underpinning skills and knowledge required to successfully support them in completing their postgraduate programme in Strategic Marketing

Management. The module uses authentic assessment via a case study of a real life organisational marketing issue. This allows students to apply their skills and knowledge to an authentic marketing issue thereby supporting their future employability as marketers.



Agile Practices in IT and Management | BN2220

The aim of the module is to develop students' ability to act as agile management practitioners. The module will equip students with a range of tools and techniques for analysing and designing information systems, as well as an understanding of the concepts and experience in the practices of agile project management. Upon completion of the module, the student will be able to: analyse information systems from both user experience and information needs perspectives; develop and communicate solutions through iterative, collaborative problem solving in agile teams; and apply agile project management techniques to plan, manage and deliver projects. Students were introduced to a number of challenges provided by real companies related to social, environmental and business problems. They were asked to select one of these challenges. Working actively on information systems exposes students to cultural differences in working practices, communication methods, user preferences and system requirements. This helps them develop a practical appreciation of international dimensions, including the use of agile toolkits and techniques employed globally within business organisations. The module equips students with understanding and practical experience using project management and information systems methods that are widely used in business practice. Working on a real-life problem helps students gain confidence and experience in problem solving and decision making in a business environment. The module builds on the teaching team's research and professional practice in Human Computer Interaction, Information Systems Development, Experience Design and Agile practice. Students develop empathy with users and awareness of commercial imperatives. In doing so, they balance responsibility, sustainability and profitability. The module develops students' ability to consider these trade-offs in a practical manner through decision making and problem solving.



Managing IT in a Global Context | BN3380

This module demonstrates the role of Information Technology (IT) in contemporary business, focusing on the challenges and opportunities firms face internationally. It examines business strategy and the role of IT, IT-enabled business processes, technology-enabled collaboration, and the human and social

dimensions of IT in organisations and society. Students apply key information systems theories and frameworks, identify the core functional capabilities of contemporary information systems and their associated managerial challenges, analyse complex business problems, and propose innovative technical solutions. Particular attention is given to enterprise systems, strategy and competitive forces, collaboration across organisations and teams, and the implications of the international reach enabled by IT, including cultural differences and changing perceptions of distance. Three sessions are led by a guest speaker from an international IT company, and the module incorporates case studies on managing Information Technology across a range of organisations. The module is informed by research on how globalisation and new technological developments are changing the way organisations operate and compete in the digital economy, as well as research on technology-enabled collaboration in geographically distributed settings. It also considers aspects of the digital divide to illustrate current limitations of global IT.



International Perspectives in Organisations | BH1125

The module explores the social, political, technological and cultural contexts that shape, and are shaped by, international organisations. Through contemporary theoretical perspectives, case studies and experiential learning, students examine sustainability and human rights in transnational operations, cross-cultural recruitment and management, coordination and communication across cultures, and leadership of multicultural teams. The module develops students as practitioners-in-information, requiring them to navigate the economic, political, legal, technological, cultural and ethical dimensions of international business decision-making. The principal assessment positions students as international business consultants advising a multinational on expansion into a new market, integrating contextual analysis with culturally informed and inclusive leadership proposals. Ethical considerations are embedded throughout, including cultural and social challenges, AI bias, intellectual property and data privacy. Students use generative AI to support analysis but must critically evaluate its outputs against academic theory and reflect on its limitations in capturing cultural nuance and real-world complexity. Overall, the module develops students' judgement, digital literacy and ethical awareness, preparing them to navigate the practical complexities of working responsibly across borders.



An Introduction to Business Economics | BS1194

The aim of this module is to provide a rigorous introduction to the principles of business economics and their application under a variety of different contexts. Students will study a number of core theoretical models used in Microeconomics and Macroeconomics to allow them to be able to analyse real world markets and the impact of economic policy on firms, households and the economy in general. This will equip students with a thorough understanding of the economic environment and how it impacts upon business.

The module is having a strong impact on students by improving their economic literacy and their ability to apply theory to real world contexts. Students are developing a more structured approach to economic problems, moving beyond description to clear causal analysis. They are increasingly able to interpret market outcomes using core models and explain how firms and households respond to changing economic conditions. Their work shows clearer reasoning, more confident use of diagrams, and stronger links between theory and evidence.

A key outcome is that students are becoming more capable of critically analysing economic policy. They are better able to evaluate the effects of policies such as changes in interest rates, taxation, and government spending, and to consider their implications for businesses and the wider economy. This has strengthened their ability to engage with current economic debates and to form balanced, evidence-based arguments, equipping them with skills that are highly relevant for business decision making.



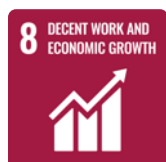
Public Economics | BS2300

The module aims to explore the role of government in the economy, in particular focusing on the sustainability of the public finances. Students taking this module will apply the tools of microeconomic and macroeconomic analysis to issues of public sector economics which includes the optimal design of tax systems and current issues in the provision of public goods.

The module is having a strong impact on students by developing their ability to critically evaluate the role of government in the economy, particularly in relation to the sustainability of public finances. Students gain a clearer understanding of how government revenues and expenditures interact over time, and how issues such as deficits, debt, and fiscal sustainability can be assessed using economic frameworks. They are increasingly able to interpret fiscal data and apply both microeconomic and macroeconomic tools to evaluate the health of a country's public finances.

A key outcome is the development of students' ability to critically assess tax and expenditure policies. They engage with questions around the optimal design of tax systems, trade-offs between efficiency

and equity, and the challenges involved in providing public goods. Students demonstrate a stronger capacity to analyse policy choices, considering both their economic rationale and real world implications. This includes evaluating how governments respond to economic shocks and long term pressures such as ageing populations. Overall, the module equips students with the analytical skills needed to form balanced, evidence-based judgments about fiscal policy and its impact on the wider economy.



Social Enterprise | BMM103

This is a postgraduate, block-taught module that equips students to use entrepreneurship as a lever for social change, with sustained attention to marginalised communities and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Across five weeks, students progress from foundations in social enterprise, hybrid organising and inclusive entrepreneurship to impact design, social business models, financing, measurement, scaling and policy. The module develops practical understanding of tools including Theory of Change, systems thinking, human-centred design, the Social Business Model Canvas, Social Return on Investment, Triple Bottom Line and stakeholder mapping. It is anchored in a live partnership with ACH, a Birmingham and Bristol-based social enterprise providing refugee integration services, with student teams acting as consultants to design a three-year strategic and impact plan. Assessment combines a panel-assessed group presentation based on this live brief with an individual reflective essay evaluating the socio-economic impact and limitations of a UK social enterprise. Pedagogically, the module blends lectures with case, problem-based and project-based learning, role-play and human-centred design exercises, while critical perspectives such as mission drift, evaluation politics and financing tensions are woven throughout. By the end of the module, students are able to assess the role of entrepreneurship in addressing social challenges, evaluate the contribution of social enterprises to sustainable development, apply social enterprise models and critically examine their role in empowering marginalised communities. The module is having a tangible impact on students' understanding of purpose, value and future careers, with strong evaluation results and evidence of improved confidence, participation and career readiness. Through the ACH live brief and reflective assessment, students develop a clearer ability to connect mission with measurable outcomes, appraise financing options ethically and critically evaluate structural constraints and unintended consequences. Overall, the module integrates sustainability, ethics and inclusion into core management education while developing socially responsible, critically minded and action-oriented graduates.



Business Research Methods | BN2224

This module aims to prepare students with the skills for planning their placement projects and knowledge of business research tools. Based on an information systems case study, students have to identify a research question, conduct a literature review and propose a research design. In this way, the assessment takes students through the steps required to initiate information systems projects. The case studies used on the module always have a sustainability element and are structured around one of the SDGs. e.g. in 2025/26 the case was about information systems for the development of sustainable transport in a new town. Students learn the principles of what sustainability is. The main impact is preparing them to work independently during their placement year on a project.



Sustainable and Socially Responsible Human Resource Management | BLM106

The module aims to explore:

The evolution and foundations of sustainable HRM: Describing the historical evolution of sustainable HRM from its strategic HRM roots to contemporary ideas of 'Common Good' HRM; Introducing and explaining the triple bottom line; introducing key theory and concepts that will be central to the module; Placing the module within the UNs goals for sustainability.

Internal Social Responsibility and HRM: Defining internal CSR; Introducing the challenges of greater fairness, justice and ethics in organisations; Critically discussing notions of inclusivity and diversity; Using theory discussing the implications for employee wellbeing and performance.

External Social Responsibility and HRM: Defining external CSR; Introducing notions of philanthropy and explaining, using theory, the potential role played by HRM in encouraging a culture of philanthropic action/practice at all levels of the organisation.

Green HRM: Defining green HRM: Using theory to explain how organisations may use HRM to embed green values and green HRM practices. Critically reflecting upon notions of organisational 'greenwashing' and HRMs role in (combatting) this.



Leadership For Tomorrow | BLM126

The module adopts a blended, student-centred approach combining active learning, case-method teaching, experiential learning and problem-based learning. Students engage critically with complex organisational crises, sustainability challenges and leadership dilemmas through reflective self-diagnostics, applied case analysis and inquiry-based discussion. Drawing on constructivist and transformative learning principles, the module encourages students to challenge assumptions, integrate theory with practice and develop critically reflective leadership capabilities. It develops competencies in ethical leadership, resilience and crisis management, stakeholder awareness, communication, sustainability and responsible decision-making, closely aligned with CMI expectations. Student feedback demonstrates positive impact on professional readiness, with 100% of respondents agreeing that the module contributed positively to their preparedness for future careers. Students particularly valued ethical and sustainable leadership, reflective self-development, real-world organisational scenarios and opportunities for discussion and collaboration. The module also supports a strong sense of belonging and engagement, with students highlighting the accessibility and support of teaching staff. Overall, it combines academic rigour with practical leadership development to foster reflective, ethically aware, resilient and sustainability-focused future leaders.



Sustainability in International Business | 2025-26 BEM100L_BP2_D

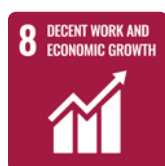
The module integrates international business strategy with the environmental and social consequences of firms operating across borders, treating sustainability as integral to international strategy rather than an add-on. Delivered in an intensive five-week format, it combines lectures, workshops, group discussion, pre-class preparation and applied case analysis. Content progresses from multinational enterprises, foreign direct investment and entry strategies to institutional and stakeholder theory, external and internal analysis, sustainability-linked competitive advantage, innovation and digitalisation, and the particular tensions between growth, livelihoods and environmental limits in emerging markets. Students engage with cases including McDonald's, Patagonia, Coca-Cola, Nestlé, Microsoft and Unilever to critically examine corporate responsibility, greenwashing, climate targets and the evidence underlying sustainability claims. Assessment combines an individual case study applying theoretical frameworks to a contemporary international business with a reflective piece examining how students' thinking has developed. The module aims to move students from accepting corporate sustainability claims at face value to critically interrogating their evidence, beneficiaries and measurable outcomes, while developing knowledge and vocabulary relevant to careers in multinational firms, consultancy and sustainability-related roles.



Python for Finance | BAM106

The module develops Python-based analytical skills for financial applications, progressing from foundational programming to portfolio construction, option pricing, and regression modelling. Learning is scaffolded and supported by formative assessments that provide continuous feedback. The module emphasises industry relevance through applied datasets and builds students' ability to evaluate and communicate financial insights.

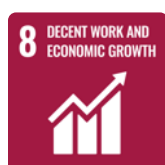
Students move from theoretical understanding to applied computational competence, supported by iterative feedback and model solutions. They gain practical skills in financial modelling and data analysis, alongside improved ability to interpret and communicate results. Employability is enhanced through alignment with industry-relevant Python applications, though prior coding experience still shapes outcomes.



Trading Techniques | BAM112

This module introduces academic tools to conduct financial market analysis to trade financial assets in real-world. Its primary aim is to provide a solid platform upon which they can advance their knowledge on trading techniques. The students can apply the techniques to develop trading strategy and implement it. Gain insights into the fundamental principles of how different markets operate, including the roles of liquidity providers, market participants, enabling effective navigation of trading environments. Learn to utilize technical analysis tools and indicators to identify trading opportunities and understand how the behavioural forces affecting market and trading strategy.

The module helps students connect financial theory with real-time market practice and develop a more critical understanding of how information, liquidity, market structure, and behavioural biases shape trading decisions. Live trading activities expose them to uncertainty, time pressure, and the need to justify decisions with evidence, strengthening analytical judgement and risk awareness. The group presentation supports teamwork and professional communication, while the individual assignment develops independent analysis and critical evaluation. The module also enhances employability by building skills relevant to trading, investment analysis, and wider financial services. More broadly, it encourages students to recognise that financial markets are shaped by institutional design and participant behaviour, supporting the development of responsible and reflective future professionals.



Entrepreneurial Strategies for Cybersecurity | BLM118

This MBA module prepares students to lead and build responsible, compliant and socially beneficial cybersecurity ventures. At the intersection of entrepreneurship, technology, ethics and regulation, it is anchored in AI-GUARDS, a live AI governance platform for cloud-based UK businesses developed through the Innovate UK/UKRI CyberASAP programme. Students engage with real-world challenges across the AI lifecycle, including risk identification, bias mitigation, human oversight, compliance and data protection. The curriculum combines cybersecurity entrepreneurship, market validation, business model development, intellectual property, market sizing and competitor analysis with regulatory frameworks including the UK Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, GDPR, NIST, ISO 27001 and emerging UK/EU AI regulation. Learning takes place through lectures, applied workshops and scenario-based assessment, with access to a funded Cybersecurity Fundamentals Certificate and related dissertation opportunities. Delivered in partnership with Aston's Cyber Security Innovation Centre and industry partners including TechWM, the West Midlands Innovation Alliance, Make UK, West Midlands Health and the NatWest Accelerator, the module exposes students to challenges facing cloud-enabled SMEs and regulated enterprises while embedding ethics, regulation and stakeholder oversight into entrepreneurial decision-making. Students develop practical capability using tools such as the value proposition canvas, business model canvas, stakeholder mapping, TAM/SAM/SOM market sizing and

competitor analysis, while strengthening their understanding of responsible cyber governance. Some extend their learning into dissertation projects connected to this UKRI-funded innovation, contributing to responsible AI adoption in sectors including healthcare, finance and transport. Student feedback highlights the value of the live industry case, the relevance of regulatory and ethical content to future careers and increased confidence in engaging with senior practitioners. The module also broadens participation by approaching cybersecurity through business strategy and responsible governance rather than purely technical content.



Audit, Governance and Company Law | BF2220

The module takes a lifecycle view of companies as legal entities, including directors' duties, risk management and corporate rescue. It introduces the role of corporate governance, using the UK Corporate Governance Code as an example of good practice, while auditing is considered within a regulatory and ethical context and as a process for delivering an audit opinion. Students develop an understanding of how companies are managed and regulated within applicable legal and regulatory frameworks; discuss the core principles of the external audit process and apply them to national and international case studies using International Standards on Auditing; apply relevant aspects of company law to given scenarios; and evaluate whether an entity appropriately applies principles of good corporate governance using the UK Corporate Governance Code. The module incorporates strong moral and ethical considerations from social and broader economic perspectives, including corporate choices, corporate responsibilities and sustainability.





Ethics and Governance | BAM110

The module explores ethics and governance in a business context, with a particular focus on accounting and finance. Ethical theories are applied through case studies and group discussions before progressing to a professional examination of governance that builds on students' understanding of ethics. Pre-sessional activities and interactive group work place theory in context, while two one-to-one sessions provide individual feedback and support students' two-part coursework. AI and GenAI are integrated into the module, exposing students to their practical applications while developing their ability to critically evaluate and improve AI-generated outputs. Students found the use of AI, GenAI and one-to-one sessions stimulating, with high attendance, full participation and no failures. The approach also encouraged students to pursue ideas independently, including exploring unexpected areas generated through their engagement with GenAI.



Management Accounting and Control | BAM116

The module combines generalist content on strategy, sociology and management accounting and control tools with dedicated sessions on public sector and sustainability contexts. Sessions combine group activities, key case studies and proactive material creation, supported by flipped pre-sessional materials and assessment-aligned learning. Students develop the ability to use GenAI critically to prepare professional reports, supported by formative one-to-one sessions that provide feedback and authenticate their work. This approach encourages students to research beyond GenAI-generated content and develop a critical appreciation of its outputs to enhance their productivity. Group activities expose students to different cultures, perspectives and approaches, while the public sector and sustainability components demonstrate the wider impact of management accounting and control and develop students' sensitivity to sustainability across different contexts.



Aston Global Advantage | BSM100

The module enhances students' sustainable employability by developing transferable skills, intercultural competencies and career management capabilities in a global context. It is structured around three components: Professional Development, the ESG Business Challenge, and Simulated and Experiential Learning. Students work across disciplines and engage with research from a wide range of sources to develop as informed practitioners. A central element is the ESG Business Challenge, where students work in teams to address a real-world sustainability issue for a business client, developing their understanding of ethical practices, responsibility and sustainability alongside teamwork and problem-solving skills. Students value the opportunity to engage with sustainability and work on authentic client problems, with recent client feedback highlighting the strong quality of their work. While the group project can present coordination challenges, particularly in large cohorts, it provides valuable experience of collaborative working and addressing real-world ESG challenges.



Ethical and Sustainable Marketing | BM3340

The module provides students with the knowledge and skills to identify issues, explore strategies and manage challenges surrounding ethics and sustainability in marketing from a holistic and international perspective. It develops students' conceptual understanding of ethics, sustainability and CSR and their ability to compare relevant theories and frameworks and analyse organisational marketing practices. Students learn to formulate ethical and sustainable marketing strategies for businesses and organisations. Key topics include critical perspectives on ethical and sustainable marketing, ethics in social marketing, legislation and regulation, and ethical issues relating to new

media, consumption, vulnerable consumer groups, health, tourism, arts and cause-related marketing. Teaching draws extensively on real case studies, with a different prominent case explored each week to connect theory with practice. Students are also exposed to a wide range of sustainable marketing campaigns as inspiration for developing their own approaches. Guest professionals contribute examples of sustainability in practice, including how organisations embed the SDGs. For their assignment, students select an organisation from live case-study companies recruited through the Green Advantage programme or organisations identified as lacking a sustainability strategy. This variety allows students to engage with areas of activity relevant to their interests while developing their knowledge and employability prospects. Student feedback particularly highlights the value of interactive sessions, applied case studies, real-brand examples and supporting resources in making the concepts easier to understand and apply.



Financial Analysis to Drive Value | BLM110

Financial Analysis to Drive Value is an intensive MBA module that develops managers' ability to interpret financial information, use accounting information and tools and communicate using financial terminology. The module is centred on an immersive business simulation in which participants manage organisations over multiple financial years, making decisions relating to pricing, investment, financing, operations, sustainability, marketing and research and development. Participants analyse the impact of these decisions using financial statements, key performance indicators and non-financial measures before refining future strategies. A central theme is that value creation extends beyond short-term profitability. Participants evaluate how investment in innovation, employee capability, customer satisfaction, environmental performance and operational resilience contributes to long-term organisational success. Financial ratio analysis is therefore combined with consideration of intellectual, human, social and environmental capital. Sustainability is embedded throughout the module. Participants assess supplier decisions using financial and environmental criteria, evaluate greenhouse gas emissions, consider circular economy principles, and analyse how sustainability

initiatives influence organisational performance and stakeholder value. The module also introduces the role of integrated reporting and non-financial performance indicators in supporting strategic decision making. AI-supported activities encourage participants to use generative AI responsibly to support financial analysis, scenario evaluation and business communication while critically evaluating AI-generated outputs. The module develops analytical capability, professional judgement, collaboration and communication skills through authentic management challenges that closely reflect contemporary business practice.



Teaching Awards

In 2025, 1 award was given to faculty and educators at Aston Business School.

AAA classification, the 2026 Green MBA Index

Granter: CEO Magazine

Grantee: Aston MBA

Award Description:

CEO Magazine publishes independent global MBA rankings assessing programmes across North America, Europe, Asia-Pacific, and the Middle East. Rankings are conducted through structured annual assessment cycles using defined evaluation criteria applied consistently across participating institutions. AAA is reserved for programmes demonstrating exceptional and consistent sustainability integration across all five dimensions: curriculum, experiential learning, research and thought leadership, institutional environment, and graduate pathways.

Educator Recognition

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

- ❖ Annual teaching excellence awards
- ❖ Student-nominated teaching awards
- ❖ Aston Achievement Awards

- ❖ Faculty promotion and tenure consideration
- ❖ Pedagogical innovation grants

Teaching Voices

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

Pursuing Teaching Excellence with PRME Pedagogy

Nathalie Ormrod, senior teaching fellow in marketing

The PRME Pedagogy sessions were very informative and engaging with the opportunity to work with colleagues from all over the world which was very interesting and inspiring. I especially benefited from learning to use digital tools during live sessions which I aim to include in future class activities. Equally, exploring a wider selection of sustainable topics and case studies will help me develop my practice further. The PRME Secretariat was as responsive as ever to offer support and send timely reminders. An overall enjoyable and enriching experience.

Aarti Sood, teaching fellow in marketing

Participating in the PRME Pedagogy Certification seminars has been a valuable opportunity to reflect on and strengthen my approach to teaching responsible management education. Having completed the Certificates of Participation and Practice, and submitted for the Certificate of Excellence, I have become more intentional about embedding ethics and sustainability throughout my modules rather than treating them as standalone concepts.

Narek Grigorian, teaching fellow in marketing

Completing the PRME Certificate of Excellence has been a valuable and enriching experience. The programme strengthened my understanding of how responsible management education can be meaningfully embedded into my teaching practice across undergraduate and postgraduate modules, such as Consumer Research and Strategic Brand Management.

Prof Vladlena Benson - Teaching Cybersecurity as Responsible Business Practice

My teaching philosophy in Entrepreneurial Strategies for Cybersecurity stems from a simple conviction: cybersecurity is no longer a purely technical discipline, and the leaders our economy needs are those who can integrate responsible business judgement, ethical reasoning, and regulatory awareness with technical fluency.

I design the module around three commitments: Authenticity: Students do not work on synthetic cases. They engage with AI-GUARDS, a live UKRI / Innovate UK CyberASAP project addressing real governance gaps in UK businesses adopting cloud-based AI. They wrestle with real regulatory instruments - the UK Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, GDPR, NIST, ISO 27001, and emerging UK/EU AI regulation - and with real industry partners including TechWM, Make UK, NatWest, and West Midlands Health. When students see that their analysis informs decisions made by actual founders, regulators, and procurement leads, the ethical weight of those decisions becomes vivid. Integration: A value proposition canvas exercise in this module asks not only whether the product solves a customer problem, but whether it does so in a way that respects data subjects, supports human oversight, and complies with the law. Pathway: A module is most valuable when it opens doors students did not know they could walk through. The module connects directly to a funded Cybersecurity Fundamentals Certificate (delivered via the AI-GUARDS project), to dissertation routes embedded in the live project, and to the broader Cyber Security Innovation Centre at Aston. This pathway is also a deliberate inclusion strategy: by approaching cyber through business strategy and responsible governance rather than purely technical content, the module reaches students, including women, who are underrepresented in cybersecurity and would otherwise self-select out.

Dr Shuai Qin - The importance of social enterprise

My teaching is grounded in the conviction that management education should not be neutral about purpose. Social enterprise is, for me, both a subject matter and a pedagogical method: a way of teaching students to take responsibility for the systems they will help shape. I therefore design every session to combine rigorous theory with direct engagement with real organisations and the communities they serve.

My approach has three pillars. First, learning is anchored in authentic problems. Students do not study social enterprise in the abstract; they consult, over five weeks, for a real refugee-integration enterprise (ACH) and produce a three-year strategic and impact plan that the organisation could actually use. Second, I teach critically. Hybrid organisations do not resolve the tension between social and commercial logics; they manage it, often imperfectly. My sessions deliberately surface mission drift, the politics of impact measurement, the asymmetries of BoP financing and the limits of “doing well by doing good” narratives. Students engage with foundational and contemporary scholarship and are asked to take a position rather than simply summarise. Third, the classroom itself models the inclusive, participatory practice we study. Asset-mapping, Theory of Change role-play, human-centred design exercises and structured peer feedback give every student, regardless of prior experience or English fluency, a way to contribute.

Richard Kenyon - Teaching ethics and governance to accounting and finance students

Ethics and Governance in a business related context slanted towards accounting and finance are discussed and practiced through a progressive set of 3 hour long sessions which typically contain 3 group activities. Theory is not neglected but put in context and also into pre-sessional activities. A broad knowledge of ethical theories is played out through case studies and group discussion followed by a rigorous professional introduction to governance which also pulls on the previous work on ethics. Another aspect is integrating the use of AI and genAI into producing work and in thinking critically about the work produced. This exposes students to the tools they may have to use but also their drawbacks and the need to critically appreciate and be able to improve their outputs.

Dr David Cantliff - Leadership For Tomorrow

My teaching philosophy is grounded in a constructivist approach to learning, based on the view that students actively construct meaning through reflection, discussion, inquiry, and engagement with real-world experiences. I believe that leadership and management education should not simply involve the transmission of theory, but should instead encourage students to critically question assumptions, apply ideas to practice, and develop the confidence to navigate uncertainty, complexity, and organisational change.

A central feature of my teaching is the use of applied and experiential learning. I seek to bridge theory and practice through the integration of contemporary case studies, storytelling, simulations, reflective activities, and discussion of real organisational challenges. Drawing on both academic research and professional experience, I encourage students to engage critically with topics such as sustainability, crisis management, resilience, ethics, equality, diversity and inclusion, and responsible leadership.

I encourage students to critically examine the role of organisations within wider social, environmental, and economic systems, and to consider how leadership decisions impact stakeholders, communities, and future generations. Through discussion of ESG, organisational ethics, crisis management, resilience, and systems thinking, students are encouraged to move beyond short-term or purely financial perspectives and instead engage with the complexities, tensions, and responsibilities associated with sustainable organisational practice.



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 strengthen 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 such as the Time to Change Report and Green Advantage programme, and centres focused on disaster resilience, financial wellbeing and sustainable development, our research extends beyond academia, advancing theory while delivering practical, inclusive and globally relevant outcomes. This approach reflects the evolving UK landscape, where 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 through its applied, impact-driven research strengths and consistently strong Knowledge Exchange Framework performance, particularly in 'working with business' and 'local growth and regeneration'. Our vision is to cultivate a collaborative, inclusive and entrepreneurial research culture that enables world-leading outputs, societal and economic impact and prestigious research awards. By investing in our staff, strengthening interdisciplinary and international collaboration, and showcasing our transformative contributions, we aim to 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

271	Peer-reviewed articles were published by Aston Business School from this past calendar year.	vs	82	Peer-reviewed articles were published by Aston Business School from this past calendar year in support of RME.
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Research Funding

In 2025, Aston Business School was awarded funding for research that is:



**Institution
Specific**



Local



Regional



National



International

Socializing Research

In 2025, Aston Business School contributed research findings to:

- ❖ Community organizations
- ❖ Government and policy makers
- ❖ International media
- ❖ Industry and business networks
- ❖ Local media
- ❖ National media
- ❖ Open-access platforms
- ❖ Public events and lectures
- ❖ Research collaborations
- ❖ Social media and digital outreach

Research Projects

In 2025, Aston Business School reported 11 research projects that implemented responsible or sustainable activities.

EMPOWER: Personal finance decision making & Ethnic minority-led businesses - Hussan Aslam, Sally Dibb, Andrew Lymer, Monder Ram, Saidul Haque, Saeed Dixon, Wong

Period Covering: July, 2025 - September, 2026

Department: Marketing and Entrepreneurship | Accounting and Finance

Ethnic minority entrepreneurs make important contributions to the UK economy and local communities through the businesses they run. However, their journeys into entrepreneurship are often shaped by a mix of personal motivation, cultural background, and the challenges they face in the wider business environment. This research is based on interviews with business owners from a range of ethnic backgrounds, focusing on why they started their businesses, how they make financial decisions, and what support they have or lack. Many of these entrepreneurs rely on family and community networks to keep their businesses going, especially when formal support is hard to

access. Cultural and religious beliefs also play a big role in shaping how they do business. At the same time, participants spoke about facing barriers like difficulties getting funding, feeling excluded from mainstream business networks, and dealing with the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. This study shares their experiences and highlights areas where better support, more inclusive policies, and practical help could make a difference. In this report we have outlined some emerging themes from our in depth semi-structured interviews with ethnic minority entrepreneurs.



Carbon Leakage within Firm Ownership Networks - Yang Zheng

Period Covering: January, 2022 - June, 2026

Department: Economics and International Business

This research provides causal evidence on a within-conglomerate channel of carbon leakage under China's regional pilots of the Emission Trading System (ETS). Our analysis leverages firm-level tax records linked to detailed ownership networks and exploits the quasi-experimental nature of the ETS rollout. We find that regulated firms reallocate production and emissions to unregulated sister entities within the same ownership network, leading to a 10.2% increase in carbon emissions among unregulated subsidiaries. This estimate provides a lower bound on total leakage from the ETS pilots, implying that at least 19% of the emissions reductions achieved by regulated firms are offset through within-conglomerate leakage. We further show that leakage is concentrated in pilots regulating total emissions, while we find little evidence of leakage under pilots regulating emission intensity. Leakage effects are also stronger among low-emission firms and in regions with lower regulatory risk. Our results highlight that incomplete regulation can dilute policy effectiveness through leakage within ownership networks, suggesting the importance of accounting for corporate ownership structures when designing and evaluating carbon pricing policies.



SmartChar: Enabling Smart, Circular, and Climate-Positive Construction in the UK - Luciano Batista, Abed Alaswad, Tim Miller, Daniel Nowakowski, and Mujib Rahman

Period Covering: May, 2026 - April, 2031

Department: Operations and Service Management

This is a £5 million project funded by UKRI(EPSRC) aimed at reimagining concrete as a smart, low-carbon, and circular material by integrating biochar into its formulation and structure, and embedding distributed fibre optic sensing for real-time performance monitoring, early fault detection, and predictive maintenance. The project's strategic vision is to establish the UK as a global leader in next-generation smart & sustainable construction by creating a national research platform that spans fundamental science, engineering, environmental analysis, data analysis, policy innovation, and stakeholder co-design. The programme will create a new class of construction materials that are structurally superior, have a long lifespan, and actively reduce carbon emissions and enable circularity. In this context, the project will integrate embedded digital intelligence for real-time monitoring, fault detection, and predictive infrastructure management across the lifecycle.



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

Period Covering: December, 2024 - July, 2026

Department: Leadership and Management

Over the past two years, the Business and Peacebuilding Research, Engagement and Impact project has expanded in scope and significance, with a particular focus on business actors, business–NGO partnerships, and cross-sector collaboration in fragile and conflict-affected settings. While centred on East Africa, the project also contributes to wider comparative learning on the role of business in peacebuilding. The Business and Peace Working Group (BPWG), comprising Aston Business School, Interpeace, CAN International and Strathmore Business School, has provided a platform for dialogue, research dissemination, policy engagement and practice-oriented outputs. In June 2026, the BPWG convened a Business and Peacebuilding Roundtable at Strathmore University, which examined

business engagement in peacebuilding, cross-sector partnerships, and anticipated challenges and outcomes. More than 60 public, private and civil society organisations participated in the associated webinar series, while 29 representatives attended the Roundtable and contributed to the establishment of a Community of Practice. Participants explored how business activity can support peace through employment creation, income generation, inclusive engagement and human rights-based ethical conduct. The project has also informed curriculum innovation through the development of a new Business and Peacebuilding module, designed in collaboration with Roundtable participants and Strathmore Business School, and grounded in applied, case-based and research-led approaches to connecting business activity with peace outcomes.



ESG Performance of Firms and the Structure of Loan Syndicates: Moderating Role of Relationship - Sajid Chaudhry

Period Covering: March, 2025 - December, 2025

Department: Accounting and Finance

This project examines the impact of firms' environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance on borrower–lender relationships within syndicated loans. Analyzing a global panel of contracts, we examine the impact of ESG scores on the number of lenders and the ownership of lead arrangers. Utilizing theories of information asymmetry, agency, relational lending, and resource dependence, our findings indicate that high ESG performance decreases lead bank retention, thus broadening syndicates and distributing risk. However, prior borrower–led relationships can reverse this effect, emphasizing that ESG and relational trust act as complementary governance channels, shaping modern global credit markets and capital allocation across sectors.



Building Sustainability Reporting Capacity and Awareness among UK SMEs: A GRI-Led Knowledge Exchange Initiative - Lucy Ferdous, Kemi Yekini and Khaza Ahmed

Period Covering: October, 2025 - October, 2028

Department: Aston Centre for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (ACEE)

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) account for 99% of UK businesses, 52% of private-sector turnover and around 37% of UK business-related greenhouse gas emissions. Yet many SMEs have limited sustainability reporting capacity because of resource, expertise and engagement constraints. As regulatory, financial and supply-chain expectations increase, including through emerging UK and EU sustainability reporting frameworks, SMEs face growing pressure to strengthen ESG and carbon disclosure.

Building Sustainability Reporting Capacity and Awareness among UK SMEs: A GRI-Led Knowledge Exchange Initiative addresses this challenge through a participatory, practice-oriented approach using the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards. Workshops will develop SME owners' and managers' understanding of sustainability reporting, materiality, stakeholder engagement and ESG disclosure, followed by co-development of sustainability reports tailored to participating businesses.

The project will examine the organisational, technical and resource barriers SMEs face and the support required to build reporting capability. Findings will inform case-based guidance and recommendations for policymakers, professional bodies, standard setters and SME-support organisations, helping make sustainability reporting more accessible and supporting wider UK ambitions around ESG accountability, responsible business, the green transition and net zero.



Addressing Illicit Financial Flows and Financial Irregularities in Offices of Accountants General in Africa: Detection and Mitigation Mechanisms - Teerooven Soobaroyen

Period Covering: March, 2026 - April, 2027

Department: Accounting and Finance

This ongoing research draws on an existing research impact-related collaboration with the African Association of Accountants General (AAAG). Its objective is to evaluate the scale and nature of illicit financial flows and financial irregularities affecting public finance systems in Africa, and to assess existing detection and mitigation mechanisms with a focus on expenditure areas and revenue management processes. Specific attention is given to the systems and controls operating within and around the AAAG-member Offices of Accountants General (OAG), with the following two research questions (i) How do illicit financial flows and financial irregularities manifest within public financial systems in African countries, particularly those managed or overseen by Offices of Accountants General? (ii) What detection and mitigation mechanisms are currently employed by Offices of Accountants General in Africa to address illicit financial flows and financial irregularities, and how effective are these mechanisms perceived to be? The research will involve a desk review of Auditor-General reports, public expenditure reviews, national public financial management frameworks, and other reports produced by international organisations, including UNCTAD, UNECA, the African Union, the IMF, and the World Bank. The second stage of the work will involve interviews with representatives of the AAAG-member Offices. Overall the project aims to shed light on the effectiveness of detection and mitigation mechanisms and make appropriate recommendations.



Time to Change A Blueprint for Advancing the UK's Ethnic Minority Businesses - Monder Ram and Susan Lanz

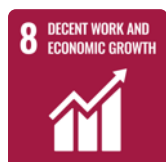
Period Covering: April, 2023 - December, 2026

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

The Time to Change Report: A Blueprint for Advancing the UK's Ethnic Minority Businesses, commissioned by NatWest Group and produced by Aston University's Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CREME), provides ten evidence-based recommendations to unlock the growth potential of ethnic minority businesses (EMBs), including a roadmap to increase their annual contribution to the UK economy from £25 billion to £100 billion in GVA. Since publication, CREME has worked with finance, government and business-support partners to translate these recommendations into action.

Through its Power of Partnership events and wider convening role, CREME has brought together banks, policymakers, business-support agencies and EMB owners to coordinate more inclusive approaches to enterprise support. The report was referenced in the UK Government's 2025 Small Business Strategy, while the Department for Business and Trade has listed CREME as a partner organisation, demonstrating its growing influence on national policy and practice.

At regional level, CREME has helped establish five WMCA-funded community hubs across the West Midlands, providing locally embedded support for EMBs. Together, these activities have developed *Time to Change* from a research report into a sustained programme combining policy influence, stakeholder collaboration and place-based delivery to support more inclusive business growth.



Harnessing Global Standards for Technological Leadership - Cher Li

Period Covering: January, 2025 - April, 2026

Department: Economics and International Business

Harnessing Global Standards for Technological Leadership: A Comparative Study of the UK and Other Leading Nations examines how participation in international technology standards supports innovation, firm growth, competitiveness and technological leadership. Led by Professor Cher Li (Aston), with partners from the Universities of Manchester and Durham, the project was undertaken through the Innovation and Research Caucus with ESRC support to inform UKRI strategy and investment.

The project compares UK participation in international standards bodies with the United States and China across areas including telecommunications, semiconductors, AI, cloud computing and internet technologies. It finds that the US remains the largest participant, China has expanded rapidly in strategically important engineering-focused bodies, and the UK has a credible but more specialised presence. At firm level, standards participation is associated with a 14% increase in employment and a 34% increase in patent families, highlighting links with innovation, knowledge exchange and commercialisation.

The report also identifies barriers facing SMEs and firms outside established innovation regions. Recommendations include stronger UK engagement in advanced connectivity and hardware standards, a Standards Participation Fund for SMEs and scale-ups, and greater investment in emerging areas such as AI, clean energy and health data. Overall, the project provides actionable evidence on how broader, strategically supported standards participation can strengthen innovation, productivity and long-term economic resilience.



FORCE: Fostering Optimal Regulatory Compliance for Cryptocurrencies: An Interdisciplinary Approach - Vladlena Benson, Bogdan Adamyk and Gosia Dzierdzikowska

Period Covering: October, 2025 - September, 2029

Department: Aston Business School, Aston University

FORCE (Fostering Optimal Regulatory Compliance for Cryptocurrencies: An Interdisciplinary Approach) is a four-year Horizon Europe MSCA Staff Exchange project (Grant Agreement No. 101235440), with €1.38 million in EU funding across an eleven-partner, nine-country consortium coordinated by Aston University under Professor Vladlena Benson. The project addresses regulatory and sustainability challenges arising from cryptocurrencies and decentralised finance through interdisciplinary work spanning blockchain analytics, AI, quantum-safe cryptography, regulatory compliance, DeFi and digital-euro readiness.

Energy use and environmental accountability are embedded within the project through consortium partner GridData GmbH, which contributes expertise in electricity-grid management, renewable-energy integration and grid-impact analytics. This supports FORCE's work on environmental-impact disclosure under the EU Markets in Crypto-Assets Regulation (MiCA), including energy consumption and the footprint of underlying consensus mechanisms. The project also develops post-quantum cryptographic methods to strengthen the long-term resilience of AML and financial-security infrastructure.

As an MSCA Staff Exchange, FORCE combines research with cross-border and cross-sector mobility, training and capacity building between universities and SMEs. Its ethics work package also addresses data protection and fundamental rights. Together, these elements strengthen the resilience, energy accountability and long-term integrity of an increasingly digital financial system.



GRACE: Fostering a Gender-Inclusive Workforce for Societal Cyber Resilience - Vladlena Benson, Laura Di Chiacchio and Haider Al-Khateeb

Period Covering: January, 2026 - December, 2026

Department: Aston Business School, Aston University

GRACE (Fostering a Gender-Inclusive Workforce for Societal Cyber Resilience) is a British Council Springboard-funded initiative bringing together a five-country European consortium across cybersecurity, gender studies, information systems, organisational resilience and sustainable finance, in preparation for a full Horizon Europe proposal. This nomination covers two contributions delivered within the initiative.

First, Aston University, together with partners in Valencia and Madrid, contributed a structural gender-equality lens to the Urban Resilience summit and pilot through a report on gender, disaster management and mass-event security. Drawing on established gender and vulnerability frameworks, the report examined gendered patterns in crisis leadership, disaster mortality, barriers facing women first responders and gender-sensitive security planning, including analysis of the October 2024 Valencia DANA floods. The findings fed directly into the Valencia pilot and summit, translating research into guidance for emergency-management and civil-protection practitioners.

Second, the Franco-British AI Trust and Inclusion Forum, held on 21 May 2026 at the French Ambassador's Residence in London, brought together 74 senior representatives from industry, government, civil society, academia and the diplomatic service. It addressed diversity in the AI talent pipeline, ethical AI governance and resilience to AI-enabled disinformation, highlighting how narrow cultural perceptions of the "AI professional" can restrict broader participation. Together, these contributions apply an evidence-based gender lens across physical and digital resilience and translate research into practical guidance for policy and practitioner audiences.



Publications Related to RME and/or Sustainability

Strategic Pathways to Corporate Sustainability: The Roles of Transformational Leadership, Knowledge Sharing, and Innovation

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Alqatan, A. | Simmou, W. | Shehadeh, M. | AlReshaid, F. | Elmarzouky, M | Shohaieb, D.

Date of publication: June, 2025

Department: Marketing and Entrepreneurship

Corporate sustainability has emerged as a critical imperative for firms navigating volatile markets and ecological constraints, yet the mechanisms linking organizational practices to sustainability outcomes remain underexplored, particularly in developing economies. Drawing on the resource-based view and dynamic capabilities theory, this paper examines how transformational leadership and knowledge sharing synergistically enhance innovation capability, which in turn fosters environmental dynamism and corporate sustainability performance. Using a structured questionnaire within a cross-sectional design to gather data from 140 Moroccan SMEs, data were collected via an online questionnaire from 140 Moroccan SME owners and managers, with hypotheses tested using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The results show that knowledge sharing, and transformational leadership significantly strengthen innovation capability. Innovation capability further drives environmental dynamism, which positively impacts sustainability performance. These findings advance theory by integrating knowledge-based, leadership, and dynamic capability perspectives into a novel pathway for achieving sustainability goals. The study underscores the necessity for SMEs in developing nations to cultivate leadership that inspires knowledge exchange and adaptive innovation, enabling resilience amid ecological and market shifts. By highlighting these internal drivers, the research offers actionable insights for SMEs and policymakers seeking to align business innovation strategies with sustainability objectives and pro-environmental transformation in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



The impact of university-industry engagement and the rise of competency transfer partnerships

| [DOI](#)

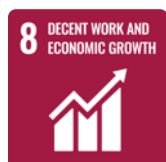
Authors: David Sarpong | Dirk Meissner | Gustavo Hermínio Salati Marcondes de Moraes | Silvio Vismara

Date of publication: June, 2025

Department: Leadership and Management

University-industry engagement has fostered innovation, economic growth, and social transformation. This article explores the evolving landscape of university-industry collaborations, emphasizing the shift from traditional technology transfer mechanisms to structured skill and competencies transfer partnerships. These partnerships foster knowledge co-creation, capacity building, and long-term strategic engagement in emerging technology fields such as artificial intelligence and sustainable technologies. Furthermore, the article discusses how universities serve as central nodes connecting academic research, industry needs, and public policy initiatives through innovation ecosystems and hub-and-spoke models. Key challenges in such collaborations include flexible governance structures,

aligning institutional interests, and the integration of artificial intelligence into knowledge transfer. By presenting empirical and conceptual perspectives, this special issue aims to increase understanding of the impact of university-industry interactions and provide guidance for policymakers, academics and managers in this complex yet transformative domain. Future research directions are also proposed, considering the current significant challenges in the context of university-industry engagement.



Sustainable Advertising and Brand Engagement: The Role of Consumer Minimalism and Scepticism

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Hesham Dinana | Farbod Fakhreddin | Reza Marvi | Donato Massi

Date of publication: July, 2025

Department: Marketing and Entrepreneurship

Recognizing the significance of sustainable advertising practices and their influence on consumer behaviour, this study explores their capacity to not only enhance consumer engagement with the brand but also strengthen brand reputation. Additionally, it examines how these practices can promote more conscious consumption patterns, contributing to broader sustainability goals. In this line, we propose a theoretical conceptual model highlighting how customers perceive sustainability-related activities and how these perceptions can influence brand engagement, ultimately enhancing brand reputation and fostering mindful consumption. Furthermore, we also investigated the moderating roles of consumer minimalism, scepticism towards advertising, and brand value congruence in relation to perceived sustainable advertising activities, brand engagement, brand reputation, and mindful consumption. In order to do so, Based on an online survey of 700 Egyptian customers of an FMCG brand conducted from February to April 2024, we empirically investigated and validated our proposed conceptual framework. These findings can provide managers with valuable insights into the essential operational dynamics of perceived sustainable advertising activities, underscoring their vital role in enhancing brand engagement.



Mobile Mental Health Screening in EmotiZen via the Novel Brain-Inspired MCoG-LDPSNet

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Christos Bormpotsis | Maria Anagnostouli | Mohamed Sedky | Eleni Jelastopulu | Asma Patel

Date of publication: September, 2025

Department: Business Analytics and Information Systems

Anxiety and depression affect millions worldwide, yet stigma and long wait times often delay access to care. Mobile mental health apps can decrease these barriers by offering on-demand screening and support. Nevertheless, many machine and deep learning methods used in such tools perform poorly under severe class imbalance, yielding biased, poorly calibrated predictions. To address this challenge, this study proposes MCoG-LDPSNet, a brain-inspired model that combines dual, orthogonal encoding pathways with a novel Loss-Driven Parametric Swish (LDPS) activation. LDPS implements a neurobiologically motivated adaptive-gain mechanism via a learnable β parameter driven by calibration and confidence-aware loss signals that amplifies minority-class patterns while preserving overall reliability, enabling robust predictions under severe data imbalance. On a benchmark mental health corpus, MCoG-LDPSNet achieved AUROC = 0.9920 and G-mean = 0.9451, outperforming traditional baselines like GLMs, XGBoost, state-of-the-art deep models (CNN-BiLSTM-ATTN), and transformer-based approaches. After transfer learning to social media text, the MCoG-LDPSNet maintained a near-perfect AUROC of 0.9937. Integrated into the EmotiZen App with enhanced app features, MCoG-LDPSNet was associated with substantial symptom reductions (anxiety 28.2%; depression 42.1%). These findings indicate that MCoG-LDPSNet is an accurate, imbalance-aware solution suitable for scalable mobile screening of individuals for anxiety and depression.



From risk perception to informed choices: how consumers use food labels in health-related contexts

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Lara Bou Fakhreddine | Mercedes Sánchez | Marian García Martínez

Date of publication: September, 2025

Department: Aston Business School

Numerous studies have examined consumer behavior regarding the use of nutritional labels. However, the impact of consumers' risk perception on this behavior remains underexplored. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating how personal factors (such as health consciousness and understanding of nutritional labels) and product attributes (including price and packaging) influence the use of nutritional labels, particularly in health-related contexts, with COVID-19 serving as an example." The analysis is based on 2,837 responses from an online survey conducted in Spain and the UK in 2021. The findings show an increase in the use of nutritional labels (i.e. nutrition fact panels and traffic light)

in both countries during the pandemic. Health consciousness is positively associated with healthier behaviors, and COVID-19 risk perception further strengthens this relationship by diminishing the importance of product price and packaging. As a result, marketers may leverage nutritional labels as an effective tool to reduce consumer risk perception during health crises and promote healthier food choices.



Friends or foes: Can large-scale mining companies partner with small-scale miners? Yes, they can?

| [DOI](#)

Authors: George Oforu | Francis Arthur-Holmes | Daniel Siaw | David Sarpong

Date of publication: October, 2025

Department: Marketing and Entrepreneurship

This paper (re)examines the nexus between large-scale mining (LSM) activities and artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) operations. Broadly speaking, the existing combative resource politics between the two mining entities has created room for the emergence of divergent opinions on sustainable solutions encapsulated in standpoints of 'cohabitation' vis-à-vis 'autonomy'. Employing 'partnership' as an analytical lens, this study provides a refreshing perspective of the 'cohabitation' of LSM and ASM where they develop and flourish together. Firmly rooted at the base of this success, however, is the formalisation canon that has long ignored the partnership opportunities for ASM operations in many resource-rich countries. We, therefore, argue for formalisation policies to design cohabitation agreements that focus on creating synergies devoid of resource conflicts. Further, we discuss ways through which resources that cannot be fully enclosed by LSM companies can become sources of compromise and negotiation rather than of conflict and violence.



Market-based resistance: how migrant social enterprises navigate hostile institutional environments

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Maria Villares-Varela | Monder Ram | Shuai Qin | Gerardo Javier Arriaga-Garcia

Date of publication: October, 2025

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

This paper examines how migrant-led social enterprises (MSEs) use market mechanisms as tools of everyday resistance in increasingly hostile environments. Drawing on qualitative longitudinal research conducted between 2015 and 2022, we assess how Pinewood, a UK-based migrant social enterprise, navigated profound institutional changes through innovative organisational practices. Our theoretical approach synthesises “mixed embeddedness theory” with “everyday resistance” scholarship to reveal how MSEs maintain legitimacy and pursue social transformation. The analysis identifies three key mechanisms through which market-based resistance operates: strategic professionalisation, innovative service development, and the creation of alternative economic networks. These mechanisms emerged through organisational responses to critical incidents, including the 2015 refugee crisis, Brexit-related turbulence, and COVID-19 adaptations. The study advances understanding of how migrant-led organisations engage in everyday resistance through market mechanisms, contributing to debates on migrant enterprise, institutional navigation, and social change within hostile migration regimes.



Hybrid modeling applied for a developing plastic waste management system

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Lucas Pereira | Breno Nunes | Francisco Gaudêncio Mendonça Freires

Date of publication: June, 2025

Department: Cyber Security Innovation (CSI) Research Centre

This study aims to suggest improvements to the performance of a developing plastic waste management (PWM) system by integrating partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), interpretive structural modeling (ISM), and matrix of impact cross-multiplication applied to classification (MICMAC). Data were collected through questionnaires targeting recycling stakeholders. The first asked about the importance of various indicators from the literature; the second asked about the relationships between constructs. Urban infrastructure and organizational features correlate with effectiveness and are driving constructs influencing the dependent constructs of efficiency, effectiveness and performance. Efficiency correlates with performance, highlighting the importance of cost-effective recycling. This integration eliminates statistically insignificant indicators and constructs, focusing on key performance drivers. The required sample size is fulfilled, but the methodology's application to Brazil may restrict the results' generalizability to PWM systems in developing countries. To enhance PWM systems' performance, municipal authorities should increase the provision of recycling bins, voluntary drop-off points, eco-points and papa-plásticos. Organizations should focus on personnel training, marketing and advertising and incentive-based schemes. Improving PWM systems reduces pollution for people's health and increases employment. Efficient waste separation

and higher-performance recycling foster sustainability. This novel mixed-methods research offers insights towards SDGs 11, 12, and 13, contributing to performance-driving factors under plans like Planares in Brazil, given the methodology's applicability.



Promoting sustainability in Urban waste management in Amman for a circular economy

[DOI](#)

Authors: Mohammad A. Shbool | Ammar Al-Bazi | Leen S. Jebril | Noha M. Nasrallah | Salwa A. Al-Amad | Basem O. Al-Souliman

Date of publication: October, 2025

Department: Operations and Service Management

Amman, Jordan, faces escalating challenges in municipal solid waste management due to rapid urbanisation, population growth, and limited recycling participation. This study develops a novel decision-support framework that combines a System Dynamics (SD) model with fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) and Artificial Neural Network (ANN) validation. The model explicitly integrates population trends, social awareness, recycling initiatives, and informal waste picker contributions into municipal waste forecasting. Social awareness was quantified using a fuzzy AHP survey of households, and its influence on source sorting behaviours was embedded as a dynamic feedback variable. Model validation demonstrates that the SD model achieved 94.3% prediction accuracy, outperforming the ANN's 91.5%. Scenario testing showed that increasing household participation in source sorting by 20% annually reduced the growth rate of waste generation from 2.56% to 1.38%, diverting more than 60,000 tonnes from landfill by 2030. These findings underscore the critical role of behavioural interventions, beyond technical solutions, in reducing landfill dependency. By embedding social and behavioural variables within a predictive modelling framework, this study contributes a replicable tool for policymakers in Amman and other rapidly urbanising cities to advance circular economy strategies and long-term landfill planning.



Planning methods using data envelopment analysis and markov systems

[DOI](#)

Authors: Andreas C. Georgiou | Georgios Tsaples | Emmanuel Thanassoulis

Date of publication: November, 2025

Department: Aston Business School

This paper explores the extension of a modelling framework that integrates data envelopment analysis (DEA) and markov systems, into a two-stage setting. In a recent paper in EJOR, a single-stage DEA-markov hybrid model was introduced, establishing a research direction blending these seemingly distinct approaches to address the attainability problem in workforce planning. Markov systems are widely used in scenarios where a population system (e.g., staff profiles, patients with chronic conditions) begins the planning horizon in a specific state and aims to transition to a new state by the end of the horizon. Although it is common for this horizon to encompass multiple steps, this hybrid model considered attainability within a single-step horizon. In the current study, we investigate problems in two phases and integrate a network DEA approach with markovian population systems under various assumptions, resulting into new variations of the relevant models. The decision maker (DM) can specify potential future outcomes (e.g., personnel flows) in consecutive steps in time, and use DEA to identify feasible courses of action through convexity (or even use the second stage in a normative manner to identify optimal flows). The two-stage DEA model captures the DM's relative preferences for future states and provides measures of efficacy of potential flows relative to the ultimate desired state. Consequently, the organization can plan interventions to enhance the probability of achieving some anticipated goal. The paper includes illustrations using data from workforce planning and concludes with a discussion on relevant issues in healthcare, circular economy and social radicalization.



Unlocking the Potential for Smart Technology Adoption: Leveraging Mental Health Apps for Improved Well-Being

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Aruna Polisetty | Debarun Chakraborty | G. Sowmya | Sangeeta Khorana | Nazrul Islam

Date of publication: November, 2025

Department: Economics and International Business

Improving access to and transition through complex mental healthcare systems can be challenging because of the intricacy of the pathways and barriers that individuals may encounter. However, as the relationship between information technology and health applications progresses, the accessibility of mental health apps can provide a solution by offering advantages for individuals seeking help. This evolution in technology presents new opportunities for promoting well-being. In this paper, a conceptual model is formulated that utilises affordance theory to investigate, through empirical testing, the necessity of need existence and individual cognitions in enabling users to comprehend the materiality of technology and its particular affordances in diverse situations. A mixed-methods

approach is employed for collecting the data from India. For qualitative analysis, 266 reviews of seven notable mental health apps are collected from app stores, social media and other online forums. For quantitative research, 428 users are included in the study. The study yielded significant findings. It demonstrated a positive and statistically significant relationship between the existence of affordances and their perception. Moreover, the study found a direct correlation between willingness to adopt smart technology and continued usage behaviour. Affordability, which is analyzed as a mediator, was found to partially mediate the relationship between willingness to adopt smart technology and continued usage behaviour. Additionally, the study revealed that user experience had a significant moderating effect.



Location and allocation of primary and backup shelters in transboundary disasters | [DOI](#)

Authors: Oscar Rodríguez-Espíndola | Pavel Albores | Dolores E. Luna | Juan A. Díaz | Sergio Picazo-Vela

Date of publication: November, 2025

Department: Operations and Service Management

There are records of people being unable to find shelter after a disaster or reaching facilities operating over capacity because of facility failure. Natural hazards do not respect geographical or political boundaries and often surpass the capacity of single jurisdictions operating with limited resources. Coordination between jurisdictions can become a solution, but it has been neglected in the literature. This article is the first to investigate the use of backup facilities as a strategy facilitated by transboundary coordination. It proposes a novel solution incorporating collaboration between multiple jurisdictions to establish a shelter location-allocation approach to protect people affected by disasters considering facility failure. The article presents a stochastic bi-objective formulation for transboundary coordination, incorporating the responsibility, priorities, and resources of each jurisdiction whilst considering the possibility of facility failure during disaster management. The objective of the model is to provide shelter to beneficiaries of all the jurisdictions by pooling resources whilst reducing the travel distance and minimizing the maximum cost for each jurisdiction. The contribution of the article is to introduce the formulation, assess the impact of transboundary coordination, and analyze the value of backup facilities in the service provided to people affected by disasters. The model has been applied to a set of numerical examples and a real case of volcanic eruptions in Mexico. The results show the influence of cross-jurisdictional coordination on the support provided to disaster victims, the value of backup facilities, and the capacity of the model design to provide relevant alternatives in practice.



AI legitimacy in energy: A model to improve corporate narratives on sustainability and responsibility

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Laura Di Chiacchio | Haider Al-Khateeb | Usman Butt | Salman Yussof

Date of publication: January, 2026

Department: Business Analytics and Information Systems

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in the energy sector is pivotal for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7). Within the European Union, the regulatory landscape, particularly the proposed AI Act, influences how organisations navigate responsible AI (RAI) adoption while addressing societal expectations, creating a critical need to examine how they communicate their commitment to RAI and sustainability. This study uncovers how narratives employed in the public communications of EU energy stakeholders legitimise corporate efforts and signal alignment with RAI principles. A grey literature search of website pages, whitepapers, and reports was conducted. Thematic analysis, using inductive and deductive coding, was employed to identify emerging themes and evaluate how organisations frame their initiatives in response to regulatory and societal pressures. Analysis of 28 reports reveals that EU energy stakeholders predominantly frame AI as an inevitable technological advancement while lacking concrete strategies for RAI implementation. Communications focus on aspirational commitments rather than measurable actions. To address these gaps, this study develops the Responsible AI (RAI) Communication Model. This framework guides stakeholders in structuring their communication around three core pillars: (1) aligning AI initiatives with measurable sustainability goals and governance, (2) developing trustworthy and accountable narratives backed by concrete evidence, and (3) establishing organisational legitimacy through active stakeholder engagement. By adopting this model, energy stakeholders can move beyond rhetorical narratives towards sharing demonstrable practices. This fosters greater trust, ensures effective communication of priorities like transparency and accountability, and promotes regulatory alignment.



Does Digital Technologies Deployment Promote Environmental Performance? Evidence From China

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Minghao Zhu | Chen Liang | Peter K. C. Lee | Andy C. L. Yeung | Honggeng Zhou

Date of publication: January, 2026

Department: Operations and Service Management

In the face of escalating environmental challenges and growing regulatory and stakeholder pressures, improving firms' environmental performance has become an essential strategic objective. Digital technologies (DTs) are increasingly viewed as transformative tools that can support firms in achieving sustainability goals. However, despite growing interest, existing empirical evidence on the impact of DTs deployment on environmental performance remains fragmented and inconclusive. Moreover, limited empirical research has examined how DTs interact with human-centered production systems, such as lean management, to shape environmental outcomes. Addressing these gaps, this study draws on the natural-resource-based view to investigate whether and how DTs deployment enhances firms' environmental performance, and how this relationship is moderated by lean production and environmental leadership. Using longitudinal data from publicly listed firms in China, our analysis reveals that DTs deployment has a significant positive effect on environmental performance, and this effect is amplified in firms exhibiting higher levels of lean production and environmental leadership. These findings remain robust across various estimation strategies, including alternative variable specifications, instrumental variable methods, Heckman two-step correction, and a quasi-natural experiment. By providing large-scale empirical evidence on the environmental implications of digital transformation and its interaction with lean practices, this study contributes to the emerging literature on Industry 4.0 and sustainable operations, offering actionable insights for managers and policymakers committed to green transition.



CPFTransGAN: A Cross Perception Fusion Transformer-based Generative Adversarial Network for Head and Neck Cancer Dose Prediction in Radiotherapy

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Miao Liao | Enyu Zhou | Xiong Li | Wei Liang | Yuqian Zhao | Shuanhu Di | Victor Chang

Date of publication: January, 2026

Department: Business Analytics and Information Systems

Radiation therapy is one of the primary treatment modalities for head and neck (H&N) cancer in clinical practice, aiming to deliver sufficient dose to Planning Target Volume (PTV) while protecting surrounding Organs at Risk (OAR) from or minimizing exposure to radiation. Quantitative dose prediction of various tissues and organs is a prerequisite for implementing intelligent precision

radiotherapy. In order to improve dose prediction accuracy, we propose a generative adversarial network CPFTTrans- GAN based on Cross Perception Fusion Transformer (CPF Transformer). Specifically, we design a CPF Transformer module through deeply integrating CNN and Transformer. Using the CPF Transformer as basic unit, we constructed a generator with four-stage encoding-decoding structure called CPFTTransGenerator. An adaptive weight loss is used to train the discriminator to alleviate the issues of imbalance training in adversarial learning. To further improve the prediction accuracy, a multiscale cross-window encoding network is designed, which can constrain the differences between predicted dose and the reference one at different granularity levels by calculating feature losses between them at different scales. The proposed method is evaluated on two public head and neck cancer datasets and a local clinical dataset. Extensive experiments demonstrate the superior performance of our method compared with the state-of-the-art ones.



Strategic Sustainability Reporting, Impression Management and Board Gender Diversity: Evidence From Luxury Fashion Industry

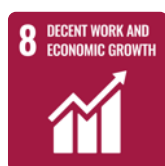
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Christina Ionela Neokleous | Mahmoud Elmarzouky

Date of publication: February, 2026

Department: Aston Business School

The study aims to examine the impression management (IM) of the luxury fashion industry through communications using annual reports and the influence of board gender diversity (BGD). Using a computational approach with Python and Natural Language Processing on sustainability practices and performance of 19 luxury fashion companies from Top 100 global luxury brands over the period 2020 to 2022, it evaluates sustainability dimensions and the BGD's influence on IM practices. The findings reveal a notable increase in IM disclosure over the years and highlight a positive association between IM and sustainability disclosures, illustrating the use of disclosure language strategically to enhance corporate sustainability and reputation. They uncover that the boards with a higher proportion of female directors are positively associated with IM practices. This study contributes to the understanding of IM strategies in sustainability disclosure within the luxury fashion industry and underlines the crucial role of female directors in fostering ethics.



An Integrated Robust Optimization and Simulation Framework for Sustainable and Resilient Automotive Supply Chain Management

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Zahra Jafaripour | Mehdi Davoodi | Seyed Mojtaba Sajadi | Afarin Aghaee | Mohammadreza Taghizadeh Yazdi

Date of publication: February, 2026

Department: Operations and Service Management

This study proposes an integrated decision-support framework that combines robust multi-objective optimization and discrete-event simulation to enhance sustainability and resilience in automotive supply chain management. Automotive supply chains are highly complex and exposed to significant uncertainty arising from demand fluctuations, supply disruptions, and procurement constraints, particularly in emerging economies. To address these challenges, the proposed framework incorporates mixed-integer programming with a multi-objective formulation to balance production, supply, holding, and penalty costs. Additionally, robust optimization based on the Bertsimas–Sim approach is employed to hedge against demand uncertainty. Additionally, a discrete-event simulation model is developed to validate and refine the optimization results under stochastic operating conditions, and to assess the practical performance of the proposed strategies. The framework is applied to a real-world automotive case study, where flexible production policies, including fractional production and urgent procurement, are evaluated in terms of their economic and social sustainability impacts. The results demonstrate that integrating robust optimization with simulation improves supply chain resilience, reduces vulnerability to uncertainty, and supports more sustainable operational decision-making. The proposed approach provides valuable insights for managers seeking to design resilient and sustainable automotive supply chains under uncertain environments.



Sustainable and Safe Last-Mile Delivery: A Multi-Objective Truck–Drone Matheuristic

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Armin Mahmoodi | Mehdi Davoodi | Said M. Easa | Seyed Mojtaba Sajadi

Date of publication: February, 2026

Department: Operations and Service Management

Background: The rapid growth of e-commerce has intensified the need for last-mile delivery systems that can navigate urban congestion while minimizing environmental impact. Hybrid truck–drone networks offer a promising solution by combining heavy-duty ground transport with aerial flexibility; however, their deployment faces significant challenges in jointly managing operational risks, energy

limits, and regulatory compliance. Methods: This study proposes a hybrid matheuristic framework to solve this multi-objective problem, simultaneously minimizing transportation cost, service time, energy consumption, and operational risk. A two-phase approach combines a metaheuristic for initial truck routing with a Mixed-Integer Linear Programming (MILP) formulation for optimal drone assignment and scheduling. This decomposition strikes a balance between exact optimization and computational scalability. Results: Experiments across various instance sizes (up to 100 customers) and fleet configurations demonstrate that integrating MILP enhances solution diversity and convergence compared to standalone strategies. Sensitivity analyses reveal significant impacts of drone speed and endurance on system efficiency. Conclusions: The proposed framework provides a practical decision-support tool for balancing complex trade-offs in time-sensitive, risk-constrained delivery environments, thereby contributing to more informed urban logistics planning.



Agency through Informality: How Bangladeshi Restaurant Owners Navigate Structural Constraints in Times of Crisis

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Monder Ram | Imelda McCarthy | Trevor Jones | Daniel Musa Mafulul

Date of publication: February, 2026

Department: Aston Business School

How do Bangladeshi restaurant owners exercise agency during periods of extreme uncertainty? This question matters most when resource-constrained businesses face existential threats. This longitudinal study examines Bangladeshi-owned restaurants across multiple crises, identifying three agency forms operating through informal practices: navigational (contextual adaptations), relational (social network mobilisation) and innovative (entrepreneurial repositioning). Despite facing similar structural constraints, restaurants exhibited divergent trajectories reflecting their differential deployment of these agency forms. The study advances mixed embeddedness theory by providing a dynamic account of how entrepreneurs actively engage with structural contexts rather than merely responding to them. It contributes to employment relations literature by reconceptualising informality not as a compensatory response to disadvantage but as a strategic resource through which entrepreneurs exercise agency during structural constraints while maintaining operational flexibility. This perspective shows how informal employment practices serve as sophisticated mechanisms for balancing worker needs with business imperatives in challenging conditions.



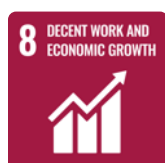
Where angels fear to tread: FDI into sanctioned locations | [DOI](#)

Authors: Nigel Driffield | Saul Estrin | Chris Jones | Ha-Phuong Luong

Date of publication: February, 2026

Department: Economics and International Business

Multinational enterprises (MNEs) are increasingly challenged by the strategic implications of economic sanctions, which are imposed in response to geopolitical instability, international conflict, and violations of international norms. In this paper, we propose that superior resources and capabilities enhance the ownership advantages of MNEs, enabling them to pursue foreign direct investment (FDI) in sanctioned locations. We also build on institutional theory to examine contextual conditions and find that effective home country institutions deter investment to sanctioned locations and decrease the magnitude of the moderating effect of firm resources and experience. Moreover, being in a sanctioned location leads firms to invest more to other sanctioned locations because of the resulting specific ownership advantages. We test our conjectures on a large panel dataset and find support for our arguments. In post hoc analysis, we also examine the impact of sanctions on locational choice, highlighting that they have a deterrent effect. Our results have important implications for managers and policy makers in terms of international management and institutional dynamics.



Policing and care in mental health crisis response: boundary work and the politics of safety and authority | [DOI](#)

Authors: Mark D. Fleming | Dani MacVicar | Aoife M. McDermott | Amanda L. Brewster

Date of publication: March, 2026

Department: Leadership and Management

Demands for alternatives to police responses to mental health crises have driven significant transformations in the frontlines of emergency care. This ethnographic study (2022-2025) analyzes how the boundaries between policing and behavioral health have been negotiated, contested, and reconstructed during the implementation of a large-scale crisis response initiative in California, USA.

Taking an ethnographic approach, we demonstrate how boundary work among law enforcement, behavioral health professionals, and organizational leaders unfolds through intertwined dynamics of competition, collaboration, and reconfiguration. Our findings highlight how boundary work is embedded within broader socio-political contexts shaped by advocacy for racial justice, critiques of police violence, and demands for systemic reform. Specifically, we reveal how the frontline enactment of crisis response is characterized by ongoing negotiations around authority, legitimacy, safety, and care, reflecting and reshaping political and ethical debates on criminalization and police reform. This paper contributes to boundary work theory by illustrating how professional and institutional boundaries are dynamic sites of dialectical engagement that both respond to and actively shape contemporary struggles around race, violence, mental health, and justice.



Why HR Has Failed to Address Healthcare's Workforce Crisis: The Need for a Systems Partner Role

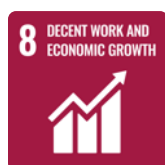
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Aoife M. McDermott | Graeme Currie | Hector P. Rodriguez

Date of publication: March, 2026

Department: Leadership and Management

Attempts to remedy sustained workforce challenges facing healthcare organizations globally have been largely ineffective, despite increased political attention. In this provocation piece we draw on contextually based human resource theory to explain why these challenges remain intractable. We demonstrate that professional healthcare workers' employment relationships are embedded within systems as well as organizations, and that system-level constraints limit organizational capacity to address workforce issues. Informed by UK and US examples of issue-oriented, place-based and system approaches to stakeholder convening we argue that progress requires both stakeholder coordination at the system level (premised on 'deviant innovation', Legge, 1978) and strategic HR innovation ('conformist innovation', Legge, 1978) within organizations. We develop a framework identifying three potential HR roles in system-level engagement: systems partner (actively convening stakeholders), participant (contributing to system-level initiatives), and bystander (remaining organizationally focused). While acknowledging barriers to HR adopting a systems partner role, we advocate for enhanced HR engagement as a systems participant, combined with strengthened within-organization 'conformist innovation' as a business partner to support health workforce recruitment, retention and reform. We identify corporate HR managers and OD specialists as particularly well-positioned to pioneer system-level engagement, whether as participants in existing initiatives, as collaborators through intermediaries or, where feasible, as systems partners driving stakeholder coordination.



Decision analysis of promotion strategies for new green products: the role of secondary platforms and spillover effects

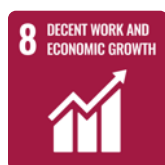
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Zhifeng Qian | Shuli Yang | Joshua Ignatius | Steven James Day | Junwu Chai

Date of publication: March, 2026

Department: Business Analytics and Information Systems

Driven by the concept of low-carbon development, many firms use intelligent technology to promote newly launched green products. Meanwhile, more and more independent remanufacturers (IRs) sell remanufactured products through secondary e-commerce platforms, competing with new products. The promotion of new products will inevitably spill over to remanufactured products, potentially exacerbating the challenge of product cannibalization. However, the existing literature lacks comprehensive insights into firms' green promotion strategies in the presence of secondary platforms and spillover effect. We employ game-theoretic models to integrate promotion strategies for new green product with remanufacturing dynamics, examining their impact on the supply chain and its constituent members. We distinguish between two promotion modes: individual implementation as characterized by non-cooperative strategies employed either by the manufacturer or the retailer, and cooperative strategies based on cost-sharing contracts between the manufacturer and the retailer. Our main findings suggest that the higher promotion effort does not universally translate into increased sales. Only when the manufacturer's promotion capability is relatively limited can the manufacturer and the retailer achieve a win-win situation through cooperation under the scenario where full remanufacturing does not occur. Additionally, despite the potential hindrance of the promotion strategy on IRs' engagement in full remanufacturing activities, consistent promotion proves beneficial in augmenting IRs' profitability. We then contrast our model with the case of Apple Inc, illustrating how promotion spillover causes cannibalization in a firm that combines manufacturing, retailing and remanufacturing functions.



Exploring the practice of coping among non-EU migrant care workers in the UK

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Joseph Ebot Eyong | Mabel Torbor | David Sarpong

Date of publication: March, 2026

Department: Leadership and Management

Migrant care workers (MCWs) are increasingly relied upon in contemporary care economies, yet they often labour under restrictive immigration regimes and precarious employment conditions. This article explores how non-EU MCWs employed under the Health and Care Worker visa scheme in the UK cope with these constraints in their everyday work. Drawing on qualitative interviews with 20 West African MCWs and informed by practice theory, the study conceptualises coping as an enacted social practice rather than an individualised response to stress. The analysis identifies three inter-related forms of coping: collective and relational practices, hybridised caregiving practices, and tactical acts of micro-resistance. These practices, we argue illuminate how MCWs navigate legal dependency, workplace surveillance, and devalued care labour while exercising limited but meaningful forms of agency. The article extends practice theory to migrant labour and coping literature, with implications for practice further highlighted.



An Interpretive Analysis of the UNCITRAL-UNIDROIT Model Law on Warehouse Receipts

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Iyare Otabor-Olubor

Date of publication: March, 2026

Department: Economics and International Business

Warehouse receipts enable stored goods to be used as collateral or traded without the physical transfer of the goods. However, their legal treatment across countries varies widely, which impedes financing and trade. To address this, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law jointly developed the Model Law on Warehouse Receipts, which was adopted in June 2024. This law provides a harmonized private law framework for the issuance, transfer, and enforcement of warehouse receipts. The law is neutral towards paper and electronic receipts, covering both, and defines the rights of holders and the obligations of warehouse operators, including negotiability, good faith acquisition, and security interests. Optional provisions enable jurisdictions that utilize dual documents, i.e., warehouse receipts and pledge bonds, to maintain this structure. This article interprets and critically discusses the harmonized rules of the Model Law, their alignment with electronic commerce standards, and its aim to enhance legal certainty, increase access to credit, reduce transaction costs, and support sustainable development in commodity trade and trade finance. The article also analyses the rationale for the Model Law, critically examines its key provisions, and discusses how effective implementation,

alongside complementary regulations, warehouse licensing, and electronic registry systems, is essential for the law to deliver benefits such as improved financing for traders, reduced post-harvest losses, and greater food security. The Model Law is thus presented as a globally adaptable instrument capable of transforming warehouse receipt systems while accommodating diverse legal traditions.



Growth expectations of entrepreneurs during crisis: the role of social, environmental, and economic motivations

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Thy Tran | Tomasz Mickiewicz | Emma Folmer | Ute Stephan

Date of publication: March, 2026

Department: Economics and International Business

Economically motivated entrepreneurship is argued to contribute to society by creating economic growth and jobs, while socially and environmentally motivated entrepreneurship is positioned as a way of addressing societal needs. We relate this heterogeneity in entrepreneurs' motivations to growth expectations and ask whether the effects of these motivations differ under conditions of adversity, specifically in the context of an economic crisis. We argue that during an economic crisis, socially and environmentally motivated entrepreneurs may expect to grow, in contrast to economically motivated entrepreneurs who often scale back their growth expectations in times of adversity. We test our predictions in multilevel analyses of data from 5605 entrepreneurs across 48 countries collected during the Global Financial Crisis. We find that socially and environmentally motivated entrepreneurs had higher growth expectations than economically motivated entrepreneurs. These relationships were mediated by lower perceived market competition. For environmentally motivated entrepreneurs, higher opportunity perception also acted as a mediating mechanism. By bridging research on growth expectations with research on social and environmental entrepreneurship, our study contributes new insights to both streams of research. It also contributes to entrepreneurship research on crises and adversity by highlighting how motivations shape entrepreneurs' responses to crises and by unpacking the individual-level cognitive mechanisms involved.



Assessing the UK Labour government's tax policies in its first year in office | [DOI](#)

Authors: Sally Ruane | Emma Congreave | Andrew Lymer

Date of publication: March, 2026

Department: Accounting and Finance

The article examines the tax policies the UK Labour government pursued in its first year in office in the context of its economic and fiscal inheritance. It presents the promises of the 2024 Labour Party Manifesto and the government's main tax policies to June 2025. The article considers several possible interpretations of the government's tax policies including the desire both to raise revenues and to establish fiscal credibility and assesses whether tax measures have been used to address social policy goals. The article concludes that, while cautious and even conservative, Labour's approach to tax and tax policy making did not appear to be based on a cohesive plan, was not accompanied by a coherent or compelling narrative and failed to seize the opportunity for a bolder strategy.



Sustainability Orientation and Sustainable Innovation: Can Organisational Resilience Clarify the Missing Link?

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Michael Adu Kwarteng | David Sarpong | Kwadwo Asante | Petr Novak

Date of publication: April, 2026

Department: Leadership and Management

Although firms that integrate a sustainability orientation (SO) may experience a significant improvement in their resource efficiency, many, particularly small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), still struggle with the complexities of incorporating sustainability into their business models. SMEs, particularly those in resource-constrained regions, struggle to depend on their sustainability approaches to achieve better sustainable innovation (SI) outcomes. Anchored in the conservation of resources (COR) theory, this study examines how organisational resilience—conceptualised as a three-order construct: behaviour, resources and capabilities—clarifies the relationship between SO and SI in SMEs. These relationships are examined using two-wave time-lagged data from 232 SMEs. The model was tested using a symmetrical approach (Smart-PLS) to explain the one-dimensional effect and an asymmetrical approach (fsQCA) to clarify the different aspects of resilience, whose presence or absence is necessary and sufficient to cause SMEs' SI outcomes. The symmetrical result reveals that resilience resource and capability mediated the relationship between SO and SI. These interaction effects are identified as full mediation, as SO reports a non-significant effect on SI after the mediation process ($\beta = 0.016$; $p > 0.05$). With the asymmetrical results, whereas resilience behaviour and SO reported an insignificant relationship in the path analysis, the fsQCA revealed that resilient behaviour

had the most significant impact on the configuration analysis, as its presence was required in three of the four generated solutions. These findings offer theoretical and practical insights into how SMEs can leverage resilience to translate sustainability strategies into better innovation outcomes.



Globalisation and Sustainable Development: How Economic Diplomacy Shapes SDG Performance Across Countries and Time

[DOI](#)

Authors: Oksana Liashenko | Olena Mykhailovska | Bogdan Adamyk | Liudmyla Ladonko | Grygoriy Starchenko | Anastasiia Duka | Maksym Urakin

Date of publication: April, 2026

Department: Aston Business School

This study examines whether economic diplomacy—proxied by KOF-based indicators of political globalisation and economic policy openness—is associated with multidimensional sustainable development (SD) across 208 countries over the period 2000–2023. Using two-way fixed-effects panel models with Driscoll–Kraay standard errors, complemented by instrumental-variable and dynamic panel checks, we find a positive but modest within-country association between diplomatic embeddedness and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) performance. The association is driven primarily by political globalisation—reflecting diplomatic networks, international organisation membership, and treaty engagement—rather than trade policy openness. De facto integration exhibits stronger links to SDG outcomes than de jure policy indicators. The relationship is concave, with diminishing marginal returns beyond a diplomacy proxy value of approximately 60. A latent-class framework identifies two institutional archetypes: the association is more pronounced and robust under stronger governance (71 countries), while it attenuates under weaker governance (85 countries). Goal-level estimates reveal systematic trade-offs—gains in inequality reduction (SDG 10) and innovation (SDG 9) alongside adverse associations with climate outcomes (SDG 13)—and a structural breakpoint around 2017 consistent with the onset of slowbalisation. The results suggest that diplomacy can support SD, but its payoff depends on governance capacity and the management of cross-goal externalities.



Development of a Universal Approach for Measuring Servitization

[DOI](#)

Authors: Tim Baines | Raveen Ramachandran Menon | Professor Ali Z. Bigdeli | Andreas Schroeder | Anwar Adem | Dipti Rathi | Mario Rapaccini | Chris Raddats

Date of publication: April, 2026

Department: Operations and Service Management

Although interest in servitization is growing, researchers and practitioners lack a universally accepted approach to measure it in industrial firms. In this paper, we develop and empirically validate a comprehensive measurement approach to address this gap. We begin by defining servitization and critically reviewing existing measurement methods. We develop a three-test approach, refined through pre-pilot and pilot studies with industrial executives, followed by a nationwide survey of 701 firms. The approach captures three dimensions: revenue share between products and services, types of services offered, and revenue share from each service. This reduces construct ambiguity and supports more reliable empirical analysis and theory-building in business model innovation. We introduce 'servitization intensity' to quantify a firm's service footprint and results confirm robustness and reveal variation in adoption. We propose a fourth test to capture scope of service offerings and provider responsibility to offer a richer and more accurate measurement of servitization.



A System Dynamics Evaluation of a Sustainable Energy-Efficiency Business Model Integrating Performance Contracting, Supply Contracting, and Savings Insurance

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Usain Kadri | Nashwan Dawood | Ammar Al-Bazi | Olugbenga Akinade

Date of publication: May, 2026

Department: Operations and Service Management

This paper evaluates a Sustainable Energy Efficiency Business Model (SEEBM) for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the European industrial sector. The sustainability-oriented model, developed by the authors, combines Energy Performance Contracting (EPC), Energy Supply Contracting (ESC), and Energy Saving Insurance (ESI) within a unified framework to support industrial decarbonisation. The study identifies key performance indicators and translates them into a System Dynamics model using a Design-Based Research approach. The model is built from secondary data drawn from 45 SME case studies in the European SMEmPower project and is validated through extreme condition testing and behavioural sensitivity analysis. Results indicate that the integrated model significantly enhances financial performance, reducing the average payback period from average 36 months to 10 months. Sensitivity analysis highlights the influence of contract duration,

energy saving rates, and energy prices on both payback and emissions reduction outcomes. This research introduces a novel dynamic framework integrating EPC, ESC, and ESI, enabling time-based evaluation of investment viability and environmental impact. It offers a replicable decision support tool for policymakers and market actors seeking scalable, low risk pathways to SME decarbonisation. Overall, the model provides practical insights for improving investment decisions while accelerating the transition toward sustainable industrial systems across Europe.



A Bayesian trust-based hybrid truck-drone coalition framework for resilient and sustainable last-mile delivery

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Armin Mahmoodi | Seyed Mojtaba Sajadi | Said M. Easa

Date of publication: May, 2026

Department: Operations and Service Management

This study proposes a novel hybrid Truck-Drone-Coalition (TDC) framework to enhance the resilience and sustainability of last-mile urban delivery systems. The model optimizes four conflicting objectives simultaneously: total delivery cost, service time, operational risk, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs, also called drones) energy consumption. To address behavioral uncertainty among coalition partners, we integrate a Bayesian trust update mechanism with a Markov transition process, enabling dynamic adjustment of cooperation levels and automatic activation of fallback outsourcing when trust thresholds are breached. The solution combines an exact Mixed-Integer Linear Programming (MILP) core with a Non-dominated Sorting Genetic Algorithm II (NSGA-II) metaheuristic to ensure feasible routing, coalition stability, and robust Pareto-optimal trade-offs. Validated using real-world urban scenarios (Solomon benchmarks and commercial UAV specifications), the framework demonstrates: (a) 18% fewer delivery disruptions compared to static trust models, (b) 94% on-time delivery rate under high uncertainty (an 11% improvement over the base case), and (c) 9% lower costs and 12% higher energy efficiency through adaptive coalition reconfiguration. Simulation results demonstrate that the Bayesian trust mechanism effectively detects misbehavior, reallocates tasks via third-party outsourcing, and sustains service reliability under coalition instability or UAV breakdowns. Additionally, dynamic Shapley cost-sharing ensures fair cost allocation among coalition members. By integrating trust modeling, cooperative game theory, and risk-aware controls, this research bridges a critical gap in hybrid truck-drone logistics. The findings provide actionable insights for logistics managers seeking cost-effective, flexible, and resilient last-mile solutions. Future work will focus on real-time trust evaluation and dynamic coalition reconfiguration using live operational data.



Environmental sustainability and risk-aware optimization in hybrid truck-drone logistics: A holistic multi-objective framework

[DOI](#)

Authors: Armin Mahmoodi | Seyed Mojtaba Sajadi | Jeremy Laliberte | Said M. Easa

Date of publication: June, 2026

Department: Operations and Service Management

Compared to conventional truck-only systems, hybrid truck–drone delivery systems offer transformative potential for last-mile logistics by addressing operational inefficiencies, minimizing environmental impact, and enhancing safety through risk-aware optimization. This study develops a stochastic multi-objective optimization framework grounded in the Specific Operations Risk Assessment (SORA) methodology. By extending the vehicle routing problem with pickup and delivery (VRPPD) and the flying sidekick traveling salesman problem (FSTSP), the model incorporates battery optimization, CO₂ emissions reduction, and energy-efficient routing strategies. Delivery cost, time, energy consumption, operational risk, and battery performance are all optimized using a mixed-integer linear programming (MILP) and non-dominated sorting genetic algorithm II (NSGA-II) technique. Sensitivity analysis show that increasing drone fleet size and efficiency results in significant cost, time, and energy savings while improving safety. The model's flexibility in both urban and remote delivery contexts is confirmed by numerical trials. In line with life cycle analysis (LCA), this study offers practical advice for environmentally responsible and risk-aware logistics, assisting decision-makers and industry participants in the development of scalable and sustainable solutions.



DSCANet: Integrating dual encoder and spatial cross-attention for polyp segmentation

[DOI](#)

Authors: Jun Su | Tiantian Shi | Bogdan Adamyk

Date of publication: April, 2026

Department: Aston Business School

Colonoscopy is a crucial clinical procedure for detecting colorectal polyps, which are strongly associated with the development of colon cancer. This endoscopic technique plays a vital role in both cancer prevention and early diagnosis. Accurate and efficient polyp segmentation is critical for enhancing the diagnostic reliability and clinical utility of colonoscopy. However, achieving precise segmentation presents significant challenges, primarily due to the diversity of polyps in their size and shape, coupled with poorly defined boundaries between polyps and surrounding tissues. To address these challenges, we propose a novel segmentation network, named DSCANet, which is a dual-branch encoder-structured network designed to efficiently fuse body and edge features for high-precision medical image segmentation. DSCANet integrates four key modules: a dual-branch encoder, a spatial cross-attention (SCA) module, a bipolar fusion (BF) module, and a flexible axis-attention (FAA) module. The dual-branch encoder consists of separate body and edge encoders, which extract respective features independently. The SCA module bridges the semantic gap between the two encoders' features. The BF module fuses the shallowest and deepest features, while the FAA module assists the decoder in extracting semantic information from high-level features. DSCANet achieved superior performance on multiple colorectal polyp segmentation datasets. The code is available at <https://github.com/Shantdst/DSCANet>.



TRANS-DEEP: an optimized deep learning framework for electricity theft detection in smart grids | [DOI](#)

Authors: Ghulam Mustafa | Asif Nawaz | Muhammad Azeem Abbas | Muhammad Babar | Zahid Khan

Date of publication: February, 2026

Department: Business Analytics and Information Systems

Electricity theft significantly impacts power utilities, causing financial losses and compromising system reliability. Traditional detection methods, such as manual inspections and basic comparisons, lack scalability and accuracy when applied to large datasets. This article introduces TRANS-DEEP, an advanced methodology that integrates sophisticated techniques to effectively detect electricity theft and overcome these limitations. The proposed approach includes data collection and preprocessing, followed by Variational Autoencoder (VAE)-based anomaly detection to identify irregularities in consumption data. The Adaptive Synthetic Sampling (ADASYN) method is employed for data balancing to address class imbalance, complemented by Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) for dataset enrichment. A Bidirectional Long Short-Term Memory Network (BiLSTM) is used for feature extraction, capturing sequential and temporal dependencies. Finally, a Transformer-based model leverages self-attention mechanisms for effective theft detection by focusing on the critical features identified by BiLSTM. TRANS-DEEP was trained and tested to evaluate its ability to enhance detection

accuracy and robustness, outperforming existing computer-based methods. The experimental results demonstrate the superiority of the proposed methodology, achieving high accuracy rates of 94.66% for Smart Meter Datasets (SMD)-I, 96.34% for SMD-II, and 95.12% for SMD-III in detecting electricity theft.



Dynamic Structural Modelling of Systemic Interactions Under Crisis: A Generalised Moment Framework with Application to Pandemic–Economic Dynamics

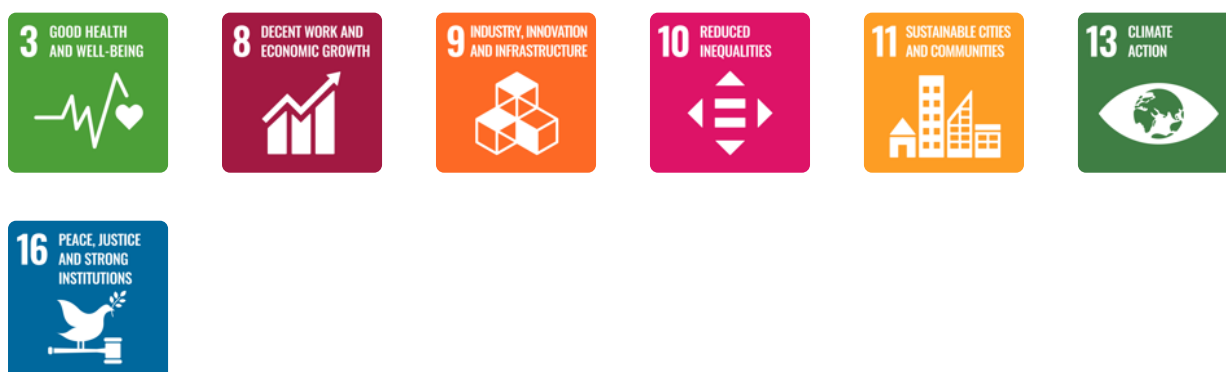
[DOI](#)

Authors: V. E. G. Vilchis | S. J. Antony | S. Munjal

Date of publication: May, 2026

Department: Economics and International Business

This study models the behaviour of economic systems during pandemic events by extending Zellner's Seemingly Unrelated Regressions (SUR) within a Generalised Method of Moments (GMM) framework. The proposed approach identifies systems of equations that remain stable when explaining one or more variables simultaneously. Applied to pandemic–economic dynamics across major economies (2020–2023), the results show interactions between epidemiological indicators (transmission, recovery, mortality) and macroeconomic variables (employment, trade, investment, inflation). The findings suggest that the pandemic negatively affected employment and trade, while higher recovery rates acted as stabilising forces, reducing inflationary pressures and supporting economic resilience. The framework captures how structural relationships evolve across risk phases including initial shock, early recovery and post-vaccination, identifying systemic vulnerabilities and resilience pathways during global disruptions.



Culturally and politically embedded management controls in innovation transitions of PPPs: comparative cases from a developing economy

[DOI](#)

Authors: Chaminda Wijethilake | Bedanand Upadhaya | Pawan Adhikari | Teerooven Soobaroyen | Kelum Jayasinghe

Date of publication: March, 2026

Department: Accounting and Finance

Purpose – This study aims to explore how culturally and politically embedded management controls influence innovation transitions of public–private partnerships (PPPs) in a developing economy. **Design/methodology/approach** – The study relies on the cultural political economy perspective of management controls. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with senior executives from three knowledge-based PPPs operating in telecommunications, power and energy and high-tech research industries in Sri Lanka. **Findings** – The authors demonstrate how cultural political economy factors (e.g. semiotic and cultural; political and institutional; economic and structural) have influenced Western-led, formal management controls across various PPP models (e.g. labour, leadership, innovation, operational, market, neoliberal and bureaucratic controls), both enabling and obstructing the shift towards the state’s professed “knowledge-based economy” discourse. Management controls within telecommunications-based PPPs tend to be receptive to political interference, often supported by powerful, party-based trade unions and primarily focus on innovation to cater to the local market. In contrast to traditional norms, both energy- and high-tech PPPs leverage management controls to resist political interference, promoting a strong, market-oriented approach to knowledge-driven innovation. **Practical implications** – PPPs with solid professional and managerial backgrounds are more likely to initiate innovation transitions through bottom-up approaches, whereas PPPs with considerable state and political influence tend to be predominantly driven by both top-down and bottom-up approaches. Nevertheless, evidence indicates a dialectical relationship between top-down and bottom-up approaches in all PPPs. **Originality/value** – Cultural political economy redefines the complex interplay among the state’s knowledge-based economy discourse, the innovation transition in PPPs, management controls and development priorities as a co-evolving, politically negotiated process rather than a linear policy implementation. The findings suggest that the success or failure of implementing a knowledge-based economy state project through PPPs depends not only on political policy priorities but also on the interaction of political power, professional leadership and management controls in practice.



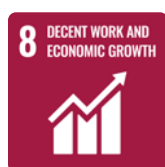
Exploring the agency of skilled refugees in the British labour market | [DOI](#)

Authors: Dulini Fernando

Date of publication: January, 2025

Department: Leadership and Management

Drawing on the analytical distinction between agency and social structure, I provide insights into four strategies used by skilled refugees to navigate labour market constraints: pre-empting, to avoid present labour market constraints; circumventing present constraints, to realise future benefits; persisting in the search for skilled jobs via mobilising longstanding patterns of thought and action; and exercising voice to drive future system improvements that benefit similar others. It is striking how these strategies harmonised self-interest and others' interests. I highlight the interplay between social structure and agency in labour market strategies to depict skilled refugees as reflexive agents of change. I highlight gender-based nuances in skilled refugees' labour market moves and conclude by outlining the implications of my findings for HRM practice.



Short-term gain, long-term loss: Exploring the effects of Covid-19 survival strategies on rural livelihoods and the agrarian economy

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Daniel Siaw | George Ofosu | David Sarpong

Date of publication: January, 2025

Department: Marketing and Entrepreneurship

In this paper, we explore how the practices of agricultural chain actors within the contingencies of the Covid-19 crisis, may have contributed to precarious rural livelihoods and the agrarian economy. Developing our contribution in the context of Ghana's agricultural sector, which is grappling with socio-economic and sustainability challenges such as land degradation, climate change, and biodiversity loss, we identified salient survival practices in the actions adopted during the Covid-19 pandemic which resulted in short-term gain, but also accounted for the long-term intractable decline in production and for producers' wellbeing. Explicating a fine analysis of how individual practices induced by the pandemic may have contributed to foster a decline in the agrarian economy, our study goes on to shed light on the devastating outcomes of the pandemic on rural livelihoods and the agrarian economies often marked by weak institutions and underdeveloped markets.





Environmental Performance, Financial Constraints, and Tax Avoidance Practices: Insights from FTSE All-Share Companies

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Probowo Erawan Sastroredjo | Marcel Ausloos | Polina Khrennikova

Date of publication: January, 2025

Department: Accounting and Finance

Through its initiative known as the Climate Change Act (2008), the Government of the United Kingdom encourages corporations to enhance their environmental performance with the significant aim of reducing targeted greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050. Previous research has predominantly assessed this encouragement favourably, suggesting that improved environmental performance bolsters governmental efforts to protect the environment and fosters commendable corporate governance practices among companies. Studies indicate that organisations exhibiting strong corporate social responsibility (CSR), environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria, or high levels of environmental performance often engage in lower occurrences of tax avoidance. However, our findings suggest that an increase in environmental performance may paradoxically lead to a rise in tax avoidance activities. Using a sample of 567 firms listed on the FTSE All Share from 2014 to 2022, our study finds that firms associated with higher environmental performance are more likely to avoid taxation. The study further documents that the effect is more pronounced for firms facing financial constraints. Entropy balancing, propensity score matching analysis, the instrumental variable method, and the Heckman test are employed in our study to address potential endogeneity concerns. Collectively, the findings of our study suggest that better environmental performance helps explain the variation in firms' tax avoidance practices.



Analyzing the effects of climate risk on discouraged borrowers: Deciphering the contradictory forces

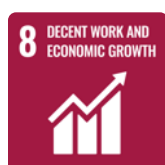
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Dimitris Anastasiou | Antonis Ballis | Christos Kallandranis | Faten Lakhal

Date of publication: January, 2025

Department: Economics and International Business

We examine the impact of climate risk on discouraged borrowers among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the eurozone, using a unique European Central Bank dataset focusing on the demand side of credit markets. We argue that two opposing channels may exist in this relationship: Either climate risk has a negative effect stemming from increased demand for sustainable or climate-resilient projects that enhance creditworthiness, or climate risk has a positive effect arising from heightened climate uncertainty and risk aversion, leading to credit self-rationing among SMEs. Our findings reveal that heightened climate risk prompts SMEs to self-ration credit, leading to higher probabilities of discouraged borrowers. Our research deepens the understanding of the impact of climate risk on credit-related decisions, stressing the need for proactive measures to integrate climate risk assessments into regulatory frameworks and lending practices. The findings underscore the vulnerability of SMEs to climate risk, emphasizing the importance of tailored support mechanisms for economic resilience.



Balancing act or two roads to travel: Evaluating the trade-offs between digitalization and net zero innovation in SMEs

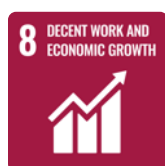
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Effie Kesidou | Anastasia Ri | Stephen Roper

Date of publication: January, 2025

Department: Aston Business School

As firms face the dual challenges of digitalization and net zero innovation to combat climate change, understanding how these twin transitions relate is crucial. This study examines potential synergies or trade-offs between digital technologies and net zero innovations in UK SMEs. By integrating the Resource-Based View (RBV) and the Attention-Based View (ABV), we explore how categories of digital adopters relate to categories of net zero innovation adopters. Utilizing novel survey data for 964 UK SMEs, we employ ordered Probit estimation to examine the relationship between digital and net zero adoption. Our results reveal that digitally advanced SMEs are more likely to be advanced adopters of net zero innovations, suggesting that digital complementarities and enhanced capabilities can reinforce environmental innovations that reduce carbon emissions. We offer valuable contributions for both theory and practice, highlighting the importance of supporting SMEs in their twin transitions.



Modeling Consumer Behavior and Forecasting the Automobile Market: A System Dynamics Approach for Sustainable Mobility | [DOI](#)

Authors: Mohammad A. Shbool | Khalid Alhmsi | Mohammad Amr | Rama Hajeer | Areen Hamed | Ammar Al-Bazi | Mohammad Rawabdeh

Date of publication: February, 2025

Department: Operations and Service Management

The shift in the automotive landscape has led to inconsistent consumer behavior, challenging forecasting the market's future. This work aims to develop a model utilizing system dynamics to predict how the market will behave and how the attractiveness of electrical, conventional, and hydrogen vehicles will fluctuate. Variables, such as fuel price per km, the average electric vehicle range, and the average hydrogen tank capacity, are considered in the model. Data were collected using various techniques such as experts' opinions, surveys, governmental entities, and web scraping. This study employs a system dynamics (SD) model, which facilitates scenario analysis to explore complex, dynamic interactions and provides insights beyond what traditional methods like regression or time series can offer. The results revealed an anticipated rise in the annual percentage of electric vehicle purchases relative to conventional vehicles. (The CV share dropped from 56.4% to 31.5%, whereas the EV share increased from 43.4% to 68.5% in ten years from 2022.) This growth was brought on by higher gasoline costs, technology developments that enable faster charging, longer electric automobile ranges, and lower electric vehicle prices. However, there would be no significant increase in hydrogen fuel cell automobiles due to the lack of infrastructure and government support.



Technostress of HR professionals: the darker implication of remote work transformations | [DOI](#)

Authors: Sunanda Nayak | Pawan Budhwar | Ashish Malik

Date of publication: February, 2025

Department: Leadership and Management

Information and communication technologies (ICT) have facilitated an increased uptake of remote working. This research aims to understand how ICT in a remote working context affects the technostress faced by HR practitioners. Specifically, the effects of remote-working-ICT-induced technostress on work engagement, mental health, work-family conflict, and performance are examined in this study. Using the 'EC-ST-CP-O' (Environmental conditions-stressors-coping process-outcome) theoretical framework outlined by Tarafdar et al. (Citation2019) and conservation resource

theory (COR), we have developed a moderated-mediation model and analyzed data from 218 HR practitioners from 28 software organizations in India. The analysis using PLS-SEM reveals that ICT-enabled remote work induces technostress, negatively affecting mental health, increasing work-life conflict, and reducing HR practitioners' performance. Perceived organizational support (POS) moderates these effects. Addressing the under-researched topic of stress and well-being of HR practitioners, our study provides empirical evidence for POS in lowering the adverse effects of coping processes to manage ICT-induced technostress in the remote working context. This study contributes to the literature on 'technostress' in remote working contexts by researching the phenomenon of usage of ICT in organizations and its consequences and theoretically delineating ICT use on technostress in organizations.



To Cooperate or Not: Evaluating process innovation strategies in battery recycling and product innovation

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Zhifeng Qian | Joshua Ignatius | Junwu Chai | Krishna M.T. Valiyaveetil

Date of publication: February, 2025

Department: Operations and Service Management

Emerging technology products like retired electric vehicle (EV) batteries encounter technical challenges during the collecting and remanufacturing phase. Process innovation for recycling (PIR) presents an opportunity to improve the efficiency of these product recycling processes. To investigate how upstream and downstream firms formulate optimal PIR strategies under the interaction of product innovation and PIR, and to analyze the impact of this interaction on operational decisions, we construct Stackelberg game models comprising a battery supplier and an EV manufacturer, both of which have the potential to assume leadership roles. The supplier engages in recycling and makes PIR investment decisions: invest independently, outsource it to the manufacturer, or cooperate with the manufacturer. The manufacturer performs product innovation and decides whether to participate in PIR. Our results indicate that cooperation is not always the preferred strategy for both firms and tends to be favored only when PIR investment efficiency is relatively low. Although the supplier engages in remanufacturing, the manufacturer may exert higher PIR efforts. When product innovation and PIR are carried out separately by upstream and downstream firms, the two innovations maintain a complementary relationship, which provides the possibility for manufacturers to offer higher-quality products at lower prices. Furthermore, firms are more inclined to invest in PIR when acting as the supply chain leader. However, the first-mover advantage may turn into a disadvantage under collaboration model, which provides insights for firms not to blindly pursue the leader. The sequential innovation decisions and two-period model settings are further explored as model extensions.



Adaptive learning anomaly detection and classification model for cyber and physical threats in industrial control systems

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Gabriela Ahmadi-Assalemi | Haider Al-Khatee | Vladlena Benson | Bogdan Adamyk | Meryem Ammi

Date of publication: February, 2025

Department: Operations and Service Management

A surge of digital technologies adopted into Industrial Control Systems (ICS) exposes critical infrastructures to increasingly hostile and well-organised cybercrime. The increased need for flexibility and convenient administration expands the attack surface. Likewise, an insider with authorised access reveals a difficult-to-detect attack vector. Because of the range of critical services that ICS provide, disruptions to operations could have devastating consequences making ICS an attractive target for sophisticated threat actors. Hence, the authors introduce a novel anomalous behaviour detection model for ICS data streams from physical plant sensors. A model for one-class classification is developed, using stream rebalancing followed by adaptive machine learning algorithms coupled with drift detection methods to detect anomalies from physical plant sensor data. The authors' approach is shown on ICS datasets. Additionally, a use case illustrates the model's applicability to post-incident investigations as part of a defence-in-depth capability in ICS. The experimental results show that the proposed model achieves an overall Matthews Correlation Coefficient score of 0.999 and Cohen's Kappa score of 0.9986 on limited variable single-type anomalous behaviour per data stream. The results on wide data streams achieve an MCC score of 0.981 and a K score of 0.9808 in the prevalence of multiple types of anomalous instances.



From Demand to Impact: Can Sustainable Banking Services Advance UN Sustainable Development Goals?

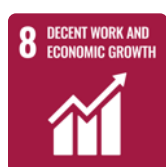
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Shilpa Taneja | Ahsan Siraj | Kaliyan Mathiyazhagan | Sangeeta Khorana

Date of publication: March, 2025

Department: Economics and International Business

In response to growing climate change debate and sustainability concerns, business organizations must adopt relevant sustainable strategies aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs). Extant research examines integration of sustainability in banking and finance, but demand-side mechanisms influencing sustainable banking remain underresearched. With a mixed-method approach, we analyse how consumers' adoption of sustainable banking services can be augmented in order to contribute to the SDG attainment. We develop a model that integrates theory of planned behaviour (TPB), value-belief-norm, and goal framing theory. Using focus group discussions and structural equation modelling, the results indicate that TPB variables, environment-specific factors and altruistic values significantly influence adoption behaviour, with interesting mediating effects. We highlight the moderating role of biospheric, altruistic and hedonic values on linkage between intentions and behaviour. The study provides a comprehensive framework to assess demand-side perspective of sustainable banking and offers insights to managers and policymakers on strategies for promoting these services for sustainable development.



‘In the company of cheerful ladies’: whether female entrepreneurs are more productive?

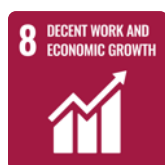
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Tomasz Mickiewicz | Bach Nguyen

Date of publication: March, 2025

Department: Economics and International Business

After over two decades, the debate on the female underperformance hypothesis remains not concluded. This study sheds some new light on the hypothesis by (i) showing that surrounding institutional forces play an important role in determining how female businesses perform and (ii) arguing that to understand gender differences (or lack of those) in performance, we need to look at productivity alongside profitability, revenues, and growth. Specifically, we posit that, in certain developing countries, female entrepreneurs devise specific strategies to cope with challenging institutional contexts. In such contexts, female entrepreneurs have less opportunity to realize economic rents compared to males, but they respond to these constraints by becoming more efficient in resource use through relying on female employment. Investigating a large set of longitudinal data from Vietnam, we find that female businesses are more productive than male businesses, and that this effect is stronger when female owner-managers employ more female employees, or even female employees only. However, we also find that these positive effects are weakened with increased corruption. This provides important implications for female entrepreneurs and policymakers in developing countries.



Circular Economy in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises—Current Trends, Practical Challenges and Future Research Agenda

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Ayon Chakraborty | Debashree De | Prasanta Kumar Dey

Date of publication: March, 2025

Department: Operations and Service Management

The Circular Economy (CE) has evolved as a philosophy to transform industrial supply chains to become greener to combat climate change issues. Countries' target of achieving Net Zero will never be fulfilled unless, along with larger organizations, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are decarbonized, as more than 90% of the world's businesses are SMEs. Although, recently, there have been many studies on SMEs' sustainability practices and performance covering drivers, bottlenecks, and opportunities, the holistic approach for embedding circular economy and sustainability covering design, planning, implementation, and operations is missing. This research bridges this knowledge gap by revealing trends and theories of circular economy adoption in SMEs. Additionally, this research derives the drivers/enablers, issues, and challenges and determines strategies, resources, and competencies for CE adoption in SMEs. This study concludes with a consolidated framework comprising factors and methods for CE implementation in SMEs. This entire piece of research has been undertaken using the secondary data analysis method through the content analysis of 188 published articles in highly ranked peer-reviewed journals.



Depression and anxiety in people with kidney disease: understanding symptom variability, patient experience and preferences for mental health support

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Joseph Chilcot | Christina J. Pearce | Natalie Hall | Zara Rehman | Sam Norton | Sophie Griffiths | Joanna L. Hudson | Lucy Mackintosh | Amanda Busby | David Wellsted | Julia Jones | Shivani Sharma | Paula Ormandy | Nick Palmer | Pooja Schmill | Maria Da Silva-Gane | Neal Morgan | Dimitrios Poulikakos | Kristin Veighey | Stuart Robertson | Rob Elias | Ken Farrington

Date of publication: March, 2025

Department: Aston Business School

BACKGROUND: Depression and anxiety are commonly experienced by people with chronic kidney disease (CKD). This study aimed to evaluate person- and service-level factors associated with depression and anxiety symptoms. We sought to also understand utilisation of mental health treatments and preferences for future psychological support.

METHODS: An online survey recruited participants from six UK kidney services with varying levels of psychosocial provision. The survey was also advertised on social media. Participants completed screening questionnaires for depression and anxiety, alongside questions about mental health history, self-efficacy, treatment and support. The study included adults (18 years or older) living with CKD (stages 3b and above) or those receiving any form of Kidney Replacement Therapy (KRT), including individuals with a functioning kidney transplant. Eligible participants had to complete study measures and be proficient in reading and writing in either English or Welsh, as the survey was administered in these languages. This survey was developed with our Patient and Public Involvement group and was administered from January 2023 until 31st January, 2024 using Qualtrics and RedCap.

RESULTS: Four hundred fifty-eight people completed the survey. Moderate-severe symptoms of depression and anxiety were 37.7% and 26.5%, respectively. Over 50% reported a history of diagnosed depression. In addition to depression, sleep problems and fatigue were identified as future support needs, with over a third indicating a preference for in-centre provision. In case-mix adjusted analysis, there was no variability in depression and anxiety symptoms across centres. Centre location and size were unrelated to symptoms. Age, female gender, current mental health treatments, self-efficacy and perceptions regarding opportunity for support, were associated with symptoms of depression and anxiety. In sub-analysis, there was a negative association between psychosocial staffing levels and depression symptoms.

CONCLUSION: Patient-related factors and behavioural characteristics were related to variation of these symptoms. There was little evidence of symptom variability across centres, although in a small sub-analysis, psychosocial provision showed a weak negative correlation with depression symptoms. Our findings highlight preferences of future needs which could be helpful for designing future research and service provision.



Don't Shoot the Pianist: Creative Firms, Workers, and Neighbourhood Gentrification

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Tasos Kitsos | Max Nathan | Diana Gutiérrez-Posada

Date of publication: March, 2025

Department: Economics and International Business

We examine links between creative activity and gentrification at the neighbourhood level. These dynamics are both complex and important to understand. Artists may help ‘upgrade’ inexpensive neighbourhoods before being displaced, including by higher-paid creative service workers. Alternatively, creative activity may follow patterns of high-income customers and locales. Many city leaders hope creative industries can drive urban growth, while worrying about these highly localised impacts. However, outside case studies, these links are poorly understood. Drawing on urban theory and recent creative industries debates, we frame neighbourhood ‘upgrading’ in larger processes of competition for urban space, then identify distinct creativity-gentrification channels for firms, workers and arts / service activities. We explore impacts on neighbourhoods in England and Wales, via rich microdata on firms and workers between 2001 and 2021. We test aggregate links between creative activity and subsequent gentrification, then explore channels across actors, activity types, level of clustering, the urban hierarchy and property types. Largely, we find very small associations between creative clustering and gentrification in the following decades. Links are larger for creative workers than firms, though less stable. Links are stronger in London and larger cities; in neighbourhoods with denser clusters of creative firms, changes in gentrification scores are three to seven times larger. Overall, arts workers and businesses are most implicated in gentrification, though the former lead and the latter follow neighbourhood change. The findings have important implications for urban economic development and urban planning policy.



‘SWell’ Staff Wellbeing Interventions in Paediatric Critical Care: A Feasibility Study

| [DOI](#)

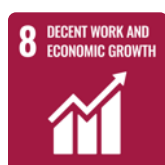
Authors: Rachel L. Shaw | Amy Fox | Shoshana Gander-Zaucker | Karen Maher | Sally Crighton

Date of publication: April, 2025

Department: Leadership and Management

Paediatric Critical Care (PCC) staff experience high levels of stress, distress and burnout. The objective was to test feasibility of delivering staff wellbeing interventions in UK PCC units. The method was a feasibility study of Staff Wellbeing interventions using standardized psychological measures. We conducted a multi-centre feasibility (non-randomised) study at 14 UK PCC units during 2023. Interdisciplinary PCC staff were recruited through principal investigators (PIs) at each site. The primary outcome measure tested was the Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale. Secondary outcome measures tested were: Brief Resilience Scale, Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale with acceptability and feasibility surveys. All were completed online using Qualtrics. Two ‘SWell’

Staff Wellbeing interventions were tested: Mad-Sad-Glad and Wellbeing Images with Appreciative Inquiry. They were low-intensity, group-based, structured reflective discussions delivered by PIs. Baseline measures (t0) were completed by 596 staff, 264 (43%) completed immediate post-intervention (t1), with 6% and 5% at 3 (t2) and 6 (t3) months post-intervention, respectively. 50% (n = 14) of UK PCC units delivered 104 interventions to 573 staff demonstrating delivery feasibility. Wilcoxon signed-rank tests found that wellbeing scores and depression scores were significantly improved in matched pairs (t0, t1; n = 130). Staff ratings indicated high acceptability and feasibility for incorporating interventions into everyday practice. 'SWell' interventions are feasible to deliver. Pre/post data collection is possible but significant attrition prohibited long-term follow-up. Significant improvements in wellbeing demonstrated appropriateness of outcome measures to detect changes in psychological wellbeing. Further evaluation work is required to determine whether positive changes are sustainable longer-term.



Imports, FDI Spillovers and Firm Performance | [DOI](#)

Authors: Anwar Adem

Date of publication: April, 2025

Department: Operations and Service Management

This paper investigates the productivity effects of the number of inputs a firm chooses to import. It also analyses how accounting for the productivity gains from imported inputs affects foreign direct investment (FDI) spillover. The identification of the gains from imports comes from comparing productivity differences among firms that use different numbers of imported inputs, all else being equal. Using a firm-level dataset, I find a positive gain from imported inputs for both domestic and foreign-owned firms with the magnitude being larger for the latter. Moreover, I find a positive horizontal FDI spillover; whereas, the results for backward and forward spillovers seem mixed. Finally, I find little evidence suggesting accounting for the productivity effects of imported inputs affects gains from foreign presence. This indicates that productivity gains from imported inputs and FDI spillover are different and unrelated.



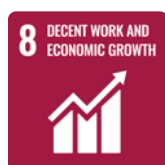
Why Soft Skills Matter for Women in Cybersecurity | [DOI](#)

Authors: Vladlena Benson | Laura Di Chiacchio | Bożena Fraczek

Date of publication: April, 2025

Department: Operations and Service Management

Despite decades of literature investigating the cybersecurity industry's skills and gender gap, women remain underrepresented in this field. Additionally, skill frameworks often emphasize technical skills while overlooking soft skills. This study aims to address these issues by exploring the careers of 18 successful European women in cybersecurity, defined by career advancement, contributions to the field, industry recognition, skill development, and work-life balance. The analysis of these leaders' career journeys highlights the importance of soft skills and how they can enhance cybersecurity professionals' careers. This study underscores the essential soft skills and competencies required in cybersecurity and the unique contributions women bring to the field. It concludes with recommendations for organizations, practitioners, and policymakers to foster a more inclusive environment that supports the professional development of women in cybersecurity.



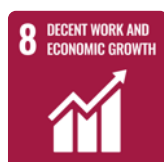
Sustainable Supply Chain Finance: A Multiple Case Study | [DOI](#)

Authors: Wei Zhou | Donato Masi

Date of publication: May, 2025

Department: Aston Business School

Digitalization and Industry 4.0 are transforming supply chain operations worldwide. However, traditional supply chain finance (SCF) practices often overlook sustainability. This study explores how SCF, supported by Industry 4.0 technologies, can enhance supply chain sustainability by integrating the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles. By examining five real-world cases using a qualitative case study approach, we develop a conceptual framework that captures the roles and interrelationships among key actors in sustainable supply chain finance (SSCF). This study employed cognitive mapping to visually synthesize these complex processes. The findings reveal that innovative technologies, stakeholder engagement, and targeted financial incentives can drive sustainable improvements across supply chains. The insights from this research offer valuable guidance for practitioners and policymakers and provide a foundation for future empirical studies.



Corporate Social Responsibility and Technological Advancement of International Service Enterprises: Links and Gaps in the Literature

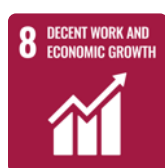
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Ryan W. Tang | Lili Mi | Xi Wen Xi Wen Carys Chan | Hongmin Yan | S. Tamer Cavusgil

Date of publication: June, 2025

Department: Leadership and Management

While technological advancements have significantly transformed the international services sector over the past decades, our understanding of their impact on international service enterprises' corporate social responsibility (CSR) remains fragmented and underdeveloped. We address this gap by conducting a comprehensive three-stage literature review integrating human-led review methods with machine learning and artificial intelligence techniques. Our rigorous analysis mapped evidence from 51 articles published over the past 15 years, identifying fundamental links, conceptual clusters, and evolving research trends within the literature. Our findings provide a robust foundation for future research on the impact of advanced technologies on international service enterprises and their CSR, offering new evidence grounded in the latest analytic techniques and contributing novel insights into the technology–CSR relationship to the scholarly discourse of international services.



Cybersecurity disclosure: board commitment and regulatory impact in the United Kingdom

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Mahmoud Elmarzouky | Tantawy Moussa | Amir Allam

Date of publication: July, 2025

Department: Accounting and Finance

This study investigates the relationship between board commitment to cybersecurity governance (BCCG) and corporate cybersecurity disclosures (CSD) in the UK. It focuses on how the UK's Network and Information Systems (NIS) 2018 regulation influences this relationship, considering cyber threats' rising complexity and frequency.

With the digital age's escalating cybersecurity threats, strong cybersecurity governance and transparent disclosure practices have become crucial. The study seeks to understand whether a board's commitment to cybersecurity, particularly in the context of the NIS regulation, affects the extent of a company's CSD.

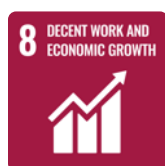
This study tests two hypotheses. The first hypothesis posits a positive association between BCCG and the extent of CSD. The second hypothesis contends that the UK's NIS 2018 regulation positively moderates the relationship between board commitment and CSD.

This study should be of interest to boards of directors, policymakers, regulators, and various stakeholder groups.

The study employed textual analysis using Python to analyze corporate disclosures, fixed effect regressions, Difference-in-Differences (DID), and Propensity Score Matching analyses.

We examined the relationship between BCCG and CSD against the backdrop of the UK's NIS 2018 regulation. We first assessed the extent of CSD in the UK FTSE 350 firms using Python-based textual analysis. Then, we conducted a regression analysis to assess the impact of BCCG on CSD and the moderating effect of the NIS regulation. This was complemented by a DiD analysis to evaluate the changes in CSD before and after the introduction of the NIS regulation.

We find that BCCG is positively associated with the extent of CSD, and that the NIS regulation positively moderates this relationship. Our evidence suggests that firms with a greater focus on cybersecurity governance at the board level (e.g., directors with IT expertise, the presence of IT committees and cybersecurity policies) demonstrate a higher commitment to managing and reporting cybersecurity risks and solutions. Moreover, using DiD analysis, we find a significant increase in CSD levels among firms subjected to NIS regulation compared to control firms, post-NIS regulation. Overall, our study suggests that the interplay of BCCG and macro-social factors, such as NIS regulation, enhances firms' sensitivity to institutional and stakeholder pressures, leading them to increase their corporate CSD.



Digital Capability, Open-Source Use, and Interoperability Standards Within the National Health Service in England: Survey of Health Care Trusts

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Matthew Russell Bennion | Ross Spencer | Roger K. Moore | Richard Kenyon

Date of publication: August, 2025

Department: Accounting and Finance

Background: In 2016, the National Health Service (NHS) England sought to drive digital transformation within select NHS trusts through the Global Digital Exemplar (GDE) program. While the program did advance the NHS's integration with digital technologies, disparities in digital maturity persisted between GDE-funded and nonfunded NHS trusts. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) launched a data strategy in 2022 that aimed to develop the appropriate technical infrastructure and data architecture to enable more effective and efficient use of its data. Given the diversity in digital capabilities, open-source adoption, and interoperability standards within NHS services, official guidance has continued to struggle to provide effective unification. Data about capabilities and technologies from application development teams in the NHS trusts, crucial for advancing these

areas, remains insufficient. Objective: This study aimed to further document the capabilities and technologies used in the NHS to develop digital capacity, comparing those with standard funding against those with additional GDE funding. This comparative analysis provides a foundational understanding for evaluating current practices and identifying potential areas for improvement in the NHS digital transformation efforts. Methods: This study was conducted using Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and systematic website searches. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) allows individuals to request information held by public authorities. This process supports transparency and accountability by ensuring public access to government data. Data were compiled from two sources: (1) FOI requests submitted to NHS trusts between July 2020 and December 2020, and (2) systematic website searches for technology conducted between August 2020 and July 2021. A series of chi-square tests was conducted to validate and strengthen the robustness of the FOI questions. Results: A total of 191 (84.5%) of the then 226 NHS trusts completed the FOI request, and 161 of the 191 (84%) had software and app development, website, or innovation teams. A total of 112 (69.6%) teams developed front-facing service user websites and apps. Out of 191, 150 (93.2%) worked with clinical staff to formulate innovative ideas, 55 (34.2%) carried out developments for other trusts and external entities, 35 (21.7%) had attempted to secure an innovation grant, and 138 (86%) disclosed the technologies they use. A total of 25 (15.5%) said they always used open-source technology, and 24 (17%) disclosed technologies associated with interoperability standards in their responses. Conclusions: The NHS must adopt a cohesive strategy and refine policies to ensure the success of its digital, open-source technology and interoperability standards initiatives. Five recommendations toward greater organizational interoperability are made by the authors. Future research should examine digital innovation across NHS trusts, focusing on barriers such as limited resources, organizational culture, and technical expertise. Identifying these challenges is essential for developing strategies to reduce disparities and promote equal progress.



Does the presence of a corporate social responsibility committee matter for bank risk-taking?

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Asif Saeed | Sajid M. Chaudhry | Riadh Manita | Phassawan Suntraruk

Date of publication: September, 2025

Department: Economics and International Business

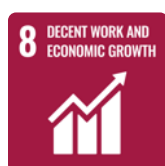
Purpose: This study aims to explore whether the presence of a CSR committee is effective in mitigating the bank tail risk. Next, how corporate governance attributes contribute to this association.

Design/methodology/approach: Using data from the US banking sector, the final sample consists of 583 bank-years from 130 banks. The authors start with a bank-year fixed effect regression analysis. Further, they used bank-level cluster effect, Fama–MacBeth regression and Weighted least squares regression for robustness. For endogeneity, they also apply two-stage least squares and generalized method of moments.

Findings: The regression estimation documents that the existence of a CSR committee effectively reduces the tail risk in the banking sector. The main findings are robust with different regression settings and alternate proxies of tail risk. Further, the authors also confirm the existence of this relationship with different levels of corporate governance (CEO duality, board independence, board size and gender diversity) and corporate social responsibility.

Social implications: Enhancing comprehension of the CSR committee's influence on banking tail risk is pivotal for banks in refining their sustainability strategies, a matter of significant societal importance. This research contributes to advancing the UN SDGs, particularly Goal 17, which emphasizes fostering partnerships to achieve common objectives.

Originality/value: Prior research has intensively focused on whether CSR policies are associated with bank risk-taking. In addition, it has mostly formulated the causality from ESG performance to bank risk; hence, the literature lacks heterogeneity in this respect. The investigation validates that the presence of a CSR committee in the financial sector effectively enhances the bank's ESG performance and mitigates its risk.



Beyond Resources: Understanding Police Attitudes to Fraud and the Barriers to Prioritisation

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Rasha Kassem | Umut Turksen

Date of publication: September, 2025

Department: Accounting and Finance

Purpose – Fraud is the most common crime in the UK, yet it remains persistently deprioritised within policing. This study investigates the underlying reasons for this neglect.

Design/methodology/approach – The study is based on semi-structured interviews with twenty-four experienced police officers, selected from a diverse range of roles, ranks and policing contexts.

Findings – Despite frequent references to limited resources and complex cases, this study reveals a deeper issue: police often view fraud as low-harm, low-priority and less legitimate than violent crime.

Officers describe it as unappealing to investigate, with little public or media concern and reluctant victims. These perceptions contribute to a policing culture that sidelines fraud, weakens investigations and limits victim support. Drawing on first-hand insights from officers, the study offers practical

strategies – such as targeted training, cross-sector collaboration and cultural change – to reframe fraud as a core policing priority and promote a more strategic, victim-centred approach across UK law enforcement. It argues that meaningful progress requires not just greater capacity, but a fundamental shift in how fraud is understood within policing culture.

Practical implications – The study highlights several practical implications for policing. To address entrenched attitudes, cultural change is needed to reframe fraud as a serious and legitimate crime, supported by leadership and training reforms. Enhanced victim engagement and awareness campaigns can improve public trust and reporting. Investment in digital and financial expertise, along with specialist fraud units, is essential to build capacity and confidence. Stronger cross-sector collaboration – with banks, tech firms and other agencies – can support more effective investigations. Ultimately, meaningful change requires not just resources but a fundamental shift in how fraud is understood and prioritised within policing culture.

Social implications – The study reveals social implications related to trust in public institutions, victim justice and social inequality. When fraud is deprioritised, victims – many of whom are older, vulnerable or financially insecure – receive limited support and recognition, reinforcing the perception that certain harms are less worthy of justice. This undermines public confidence in policing and can discourage reporting, leading to under-detection and increased harm. Additionally, the perception that fraud is “victimless” or unimportant contributes to broader societal indifference, allowing perpetrators to exploit communities with little fear of consequence. Addressing these attitudes is vital to promote fairness, accountability and social trust.

Originality/value – This study offers an original contribution by uncovering how organisational culture and frontline officer attitudes fundamentally shape the deprioritisation of fraud in UK policing – an area often overlooked in existing research. Unlike prior studies that focus on resource and complexity constraints, this research draws on first-hand practitioner insights to reveal how fraud is culturally framed as low-harm, low-urgency and professionally unrewarding. It fills a critical gap in the literature by providing empirical evidence from officers themselves, rather than relying on policy commentary. The study advances both theory and practice by proposing culturally informed, practitioner-driven strategies for a more strategic and victim-focused response.



Cryptocurrency dynamics during global crises: Insights from Bitcoin's interplay with traditional markets

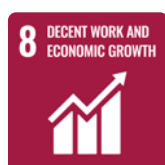
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Antonis Ballis | Ariston Karagiorgis | Dimitrios Anastasiou | Christos Kallandranis

Date of publication: October, 2025

Department: Economics and International Business

This study delves into the differences between traditional financial markets, as proxied by their corresponding future contracts, and the cryptocurrency market, focusing on Bitcoin, during major global events: the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war, and the Israel–Palestine conflict. It reveals Bitcoin’s increased trading volume post-COVID-19, highlighting its appeal as a digital safe haven. This trend persists during subsequent crises, suggesting a strategic shift towards cryptocurrencies as diversification tools. Despite volume fluctuations, Bitcoin’s price stability reflects investor confidence in its long-term viability. The significant change in EuroStoxx 50 returns during the Israel–Palestine conflict, highlights localized geopolitical influences on markets. The study underscores the importance of considering both global and regional factors in investment decisions. It emphasizes cryptocurrencies’ growing significance in the global financial market, particularly during crises, and suggests further exploration into investor behavior and regulatory effects. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for navigating the evolving financial landscape.



Dare to Sell! Impacts of “Make and/or Buy” Decision Strategies on Outbound Open Innovation

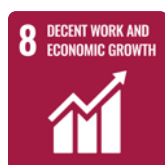
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Omid Aliasghar | Arash Sadeghi | Jarrod Haar | Vahid Jafari-Sadeghi

Date of publication: November, 2025

Department: Economics and International Business

This study adds to the previous literature on outbound open innovation (OI)—that is, external knowledge commercialization activities—by exploring the effects of “make and/or buy decisions” on outbound OI. Notwithstanding the critical role of out-bound OI in shaping firms' competitive advantages, there has been a notable gap in research regarding the drivers of outbound OI. Drawing on the knowledge-based view, this empirical paper addresses this research gap by exploring an array of identified determinates of outbound OI. Through analyzing 468 New Zealand firms, we found that larger and more established firms show a stronger connection between research and development (R&D) investment and outbound OI, whereas smaller firms benefit more from external knowledge sourcing. Additionally, inbound OI positively affects outbound OI, yet the effect diminishes with more international collaborations. Interestingly, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) favor formal appropriation strategies, such as patents and contracts, while larger firms prioritize informal methods, such as secrecy.



Al-Madafah in Sweida, Southern Syria: An Exploration of Architectural Heritage and Socio-Cultural Significance

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Bushra Yaroub Alarbeed | Harshit Sosan Lakra | Komal Raj Aryal | Nimesh Chettri

Date of publication: November, 2025

Department: Aston Business School

Al-Madafah (the guesthouse) is a cornerstone of the cultural and social fabric of Sweida Province in southern Syria. Rooted in the Druze community's history following their settlement in Jabal al-Arab in the 17th century, these structures have served as spaces for hospitality, cultural exchange, political resistance, and community cohesion. Despite their significance, scholarly research on Madafahs in Sweida remains limited. This article examines their architectural design, socio-cultural roles, and historical evolution to uncover this understudied tradition and advance conservation efforts for this heritage. Combining archival research, case studies, and oral histories from residents and experts, this study employs narrative analysis to decode the cultural meanings embedded in these spaces. Findings reveal that Madafahs are more than architectural landmarks; they serve as living embodiments of resilience, cultural pride, and communal identity, fostering social cohesion, while their basalt stone construction reflects Jabal al-Arab's vernacular heritage. Historically, they hosted revolutionary activities against colonial rule. Today, urbanisation and economic pressures threaten their traditional role, yet they endure as symbols of continuity. This study highlights Madafahs as valuable heritage sites and cradles for narratives of magnanimity and defiance. Collaborative efforts between stakeholders and policymakers could revitalise these spaces, ensuring that their legacy persists amid modern challenges.



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

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Reza Farzipoor Saen | Zohreh Moghaddas | Majid Azadi

Date of publication: December, 2025

Department: Aston Business School

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.



Mental health and kidney disease | [DOI](#)

Authors: Joseph Chilcot | Clodagh Cogley | Claire Carswell | Joanne L. Hudson | Sharlene A. Greenwood | Shivani Sharma | Kate Branham | Andrew J. Lunn | Ken Farrington

Date of publication: May, 2026

Department: Aston Business School

Multiple long-term conditions, and particularly mental health conditions, are common in adults with chronic kidney disease (CKD). Some mental health conditions increase the risk of developing CKD, contribute to faster disease progression, and complicate care experiences and outcomes. Depression and anxiety are particularly prevalent and are associated with reduced quality of life, unplanned service use and poorer clinical outcomes. The manner in which depression and anxiety are detected and managed as part of routine kidney care can vary widely. Evidence for effective and acceptable treatments is mixed overall, although meta-analyses highlight the benefits of physical activity and cognitive behavioural therapy. Data on the use of antidepressants in people with CKD are also variable, limited by the lack of robust clinical trials. People with particularly complex needs, such as those with severe mental illness and CKD, have markedly shorter lifespans and higher rates of emergency hospitalizations than those without severe mental illness and are also less likely to access specialist nephrology care and to receive a transplantation. Health inequalities are amplified for those contending with wider disadvantages related to social and structural determinants of health. Reducing the burden of mental health in people with CKD is an urgent priority to alleviate personal and health system impacts. Here, we examine current evidence on mental health and CKD to inform policy and research and to support advances in prevention and management approaches.



Where next for manufacturing productivity research? Propositions based on exploratory empirical investigation

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Ben Clegg | Jill MacBryde | Peter Ball | Donato Masi | Helen Mullen | Stella Despoudi

Date of publication: February, 2025

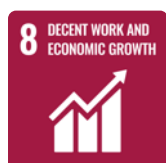
Department: Operations and Service Management

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to develop empirically grounded propositions for further research into UK manufacturing productivity.

Design/methodology/approach: Interviews were conducted with managers from strategic, tactical and operational levels from four manufacturing sectors to produce case studies. A modified strategic alignment theory framework was used to code, compare and contrast narratives on perceived productivity antecedents, definitions, compatibility with the definition from the UK Office for National Statistics, and vertical alignment issues within and across cases.

Findings: It was found that different key antecedents can facilitate and/or prevent strategic vertical alignment. Discussion reveals complex nuances in perceptions of manufacturing productivity and using the modified strategic alignment theory/productivity antecedent framework.

Originality/value: In revealing the alignment or otherwise of productivity definitions at different levels within the firm, the paper reveals nine propositions for future research including definitions, skills, metrics, performance measurement systems, people and system-centric perspectives, the value-added perspective of productivity and the role of innovation.



Metaverse technologies in hospitality: using the theory of consumption values to reveal consumer attitudes and trust factors

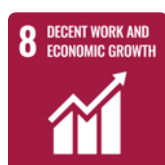
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Debarun Chakraborty | Prashant Mehta | Sangeeta Khorana

Date of publication: April, 2025

Department: Economics and International Business

Purpose: This study aims to apply the theory of consumption value to analyze the utilization of Metaverse technologies within hospitality and tourism while examining the factors that impact consumer intentions to use the Metaverse. **Design/methodology/approach:** This paper aims to consider an extensive study spanning the period October 2021 to March 2023 was conducted to understand the shifts in an individual's intention to use Metaverse technologies in hospitality. **Findings:** The findings of this study confirm that individual attitudes to the Metaverse and trust in Metaverse technologies significantly impact their intention to use the Metaverse. **Practical implications:** The study aims to provide fresh insights into how individuals perceive Metaverse technologies in the context of choosing hotels and resorts, which enriches the understanding of consumer behaviors around Metaverse technology in hospitality. **Originality/value:** This study aims to consider not only tourist intentions to use the Metaverse but also how diverse consumption values impact user attitudes, an area currently underresearched.



Internet of Things for Monitoring and Optimisation of Stand-Alone Systems in Rural Area: an Experimental Case

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Firas B. Ismail | Nur A. Azahar | Salwan S. Dihrab | Dr Ammar Al-Bazi | Hussein A. Kazem

Date of publication: April, 2025

Department: Aston Business School

The integration of the Internet of Things into the renewable energy sector establishes a communication network that interconnects sensors across diverse renewable energy resources and corresponding software for seamless data exchange and functional operations. Rural areas, particularly those relying on stand-alone renewable energy systems, face significant challenges in effectively integrating and optimising renewable energy sources. These challenges include the need for continuous monitoring of energy production and consumption, accurate forecasting of electric energy usage, and enhancing the overall efficiency of renewable energy power generation. This study addresses these challenges by employing advanced networking and data processing tools to enhance the integration and optimal utilisation of renewable energy sources. The objective is to implement an improved wireless monitoring system through IoT protocols, fostering efficient information access and automated workflows. The proposed system encompasses a solar panel, charge controller, battery, inverter, load, and an IoT system for real-time monitoring of electrical parameters. The study results demonstrate exceptional accuracy, achieving 98.6%, affirming the effectiveness of the IoT-enabled monitoring system in optimising power management.



Sustainable Development Goal Research in Accounting: A Systematic Literature Review and Direction for Future Research

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Olayinka Erin | Adeyemi Adebayo | Barry Ackers | Teerooven Soobaroyen

Date of publication: April, 2025

Department: Accounting and Finance

Purpose: The recent rise in studies on non-financial disclosures, particularly those related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), underscores the need for further investigation into the existing SDG literature. This study provides a comprehensive review of the current body of research on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Design/methodology/approach: We adopted the methodology outlined by Denyer and Tranfield (2009), which involves three key stages in conducting a review study: (i) planning the review, (ii) performing the review, and (iii) reporting and dissemination. Our analysis covered 70 studies published in 24 high-ranking journals between 2018 and 2024. The review identified seven key themes in SDG research: (i) SDG practices, (ii) determinants of SDGs, (iii) socioeconomic implications of SDGs, (iv) compliance of SDGs with regulations, (v) proposed indices or models for SDGs, (vi) SDG disclosures, and (vii) studies addressing SDGs 1 through 17.

Findings: The findings reveal notable knowledge gaps in the existing SDG literature, highlighting opportunities for future research. Notably, the analysis shows that most studies focus on developed countries and private sector organizations. Additionally, there has been a significant increase in SDG research during the final three years of the sample period (2022–2024).

Practical implications: Organizations should recognize that a commitment to SDG-related initiatives is instrumental in addressing societal challenges. Given that governments alone may not have the capacity to fully implement all 17 SDGs, the active participation of the private sector is essential.

Originality/value: This review presents valuable opportunities for accounting researchers to pursue future studies addressing the literature gaps identified. It offers critical insights that will benefit business executives, sustainability practitioners, governance and sustainability regulators, accounting standard-setters, private and public institutions, academics, and researchers.





Innovation offshoring: a tri-method review of emerging trends and knowledge management strategies

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Najla AmirDadbar | Pantea Foroudi | Reza Marvi

Date of publication: August, 2025

Department: Marketing and Entrepreneurship

Purpose The purpose of this study is to advance the understanding of innovation offshoring by integrating knowledge management (KM) practices. It aims to identify how KM contributes to strategic offshoring, sourcing decisions for innovation and the utilization of knowledge-intensive business services. By doing so, it seeks to provide a framework that enhances both theoretical insights and practical applications in the field of innovation offshoring.

Design/methodology/ approach This study uses a tri-method approach – bibliometric analysis, co-citation analysis and text mining – to examine the intersection of innovation offshoring and KM. Data from Web of Science (WoS), analyzed using Leximancer and Bibexcel, reveal key KM practices, such as absorptive capacity and knowledge-sharing, that enhance offshoring-driven innovation. Integrating KM with global sourcing strategies is shown to manage complexities, lower transaction costs and boost innovation performance. Addressing the limitations of prior single-method studies, this research presents a structured KM-offshoring integration framework, mapping the thematic interconnections between KM practices and global sourcing strategies to enhance innovation performance and cross-border knowledge transfer.

Findings This study finds that effective KM practices are crucial for optimizing innovation offshoring strategies. Key KM elements such as internal knowledge creation, absorptive capacity and knowledge-sharing routines significantly enhance innovation outcomes. The integration of KM practices with global sourcing strategies helps firms manage complexities, reduce transaction costs and improve innovation performance by leveraging global talent and resources.

Research limitations/implications The study's reliance on data from the WoS and the Association of Business Schools journal ranking may introduce selection bias, limiting the generalizability of findings. Future research should incorporate additional databases such as Scopus to validate the results. Moreover, the study predominantly uses bibliometric methods, which could benefit from being complemented by qualitative analyses to provide deeper insights into KM practices in innovation offshoring. Practical

implications For practitioners, this study underscores the critical role of KM in optimizing innovation offshoring strategies. Effective KM practices enable firms to capture, share and use knowledge efficiently across global operations, mitigating the risks associated with geographical and cognitive distances in offshoring arrangements. Social implications The integration of KM in innovation offshoring has significant social implications. By effectively managing knowledge, firms can contribute to the development of global knowledge economies, promote cross-border collaborations and support the growth of local talent pools. This can lead to increased innovation, economic development and the creation of high-value jobs in emerging markets. Originality/value This study is original in its comprehensive approach to examining the intersection of innovation offshoring and KM. It provides valuable insights into how KM practices can enhance innovation performance in global sourcing contexts. The findings contribute to both academic literature and practical applications, offering a nuanced understanding of the strategic role of KM in innovation offshoring.



Evaluating Accountability, Transparency, and Bias in AI-Assisted Healthcare Decision- Making: A Qualitative Study of Healthcare Professionals' Perspectives in the UK

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Saoudi CE Nouis | Victoria Uren | Srushti Jariwala

Date of publication: July, 2025

Department: Operations and Service Management

Background: While artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a powerful tool for enhancing diagnostic accuracy and streamlining workflows, key ethical questions remain insufficiently explored—particularly around accountability, transparency, and bias. These challenges become especially critical in domains such as pathology and blood sciences, where opaque AI algorithms and non-representative datasets can impact clinical outcomes. The present work focuses on a single NHS context and does not claim broader generalization.

Methods: We conducted a local qualitative study across multiple healthcare facilities in a single NHS Trust in the West Midlands, United Kingdom, to investigate healthcare professionals' experiences and perceptions of AI-assisted decision-making. Forty participants—including clinicians, healthcare administrators, and AI developers—took part in semi-structured interviews or focus groups.

Transcribed data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework, allowing us to identify core themes relating to the benefits of AI, ethical challenges, and potential mitigation strategies.

Results: Participants reported notable gains in diagnostic efficiency and resource allocation, underscoring AI's potential to reduce turnaround times for routine tests and enhance detection of abnormalities. Nevertheless, accountability surfaced as a pervasive concern: while clinicians felt ultimately liable for patient outcomes, they also relied on AI-generated insights, prompting questions about liability if systems malfunctioned. Transparency emerged as another major theme, with clinicians emphasizing the difficulty of trusting “black box” models that lack clear rationale or interpretability—particularly for rare or complex cases. Bias was repeatedly cited, especially when algorithms underperformed in minority patient groups or in identifying atypical presentations. These issues raised doubts about the fairness and reliability of AI assisted diagnoses.

Conclusions: Although AI demonstrates promise for improving efficiency and patient care, unresolved ethical complexities around accountability, transparency, and bias may erode stakeholder confidence and compromise patient safety. Participants called for clearer regulatory frameworks, inclusive training datasets, and stronger clinician–developer collaboration. Future research should incorporate patient perspectives, investigate long-term impacts of AI-driven clinical decisions, and refine ethical guidelines to ensure equitable, responsible AI deployment.



Immersive currents and futures: mapping the metaverse in contemporary hospitality and tourism research

| [DOI](#)

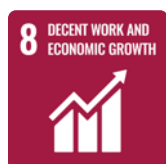
Authors: Pantea Foroudi | Reza Marvi | Dongmei Zha

Date of publication: December, 2025

Department: Marketing and Entrepreneurship

Purpose This study aims to systematically analyze the intellectual structure of metaverse research in the hospitality and tourism domain. It identifies key theoretical foundations, emerging themes and conceptual relationships by leveraging bibliometric analysis. The research seeks to bridge the gap between conceptual studies and practical applications, offering an integrative framework for adoption by industry. **Design/methodology/approach** This study integrates bibliometric and text-mining approaches to systematically review the metaverse research in hospitality and tourism. **Findings** The study identifies six key research clusters, highlighting the metaverse's role in immersive tourism, digital engagement and sustainability. The findings reveal that technological adoption, virtual presence and brand engagement are central to metaverse research in hospitality. Co-citation analysis highlights the dominant theoretical models, such as the stimulus–organism–response model, while text mining identifies gaps in empirical applications. The research underscores the metaverse's potential to enhance customer experience, marketing strategies and sustainable tourism development. **Originality/value** This study is among the first to conduct a systematic bibliometric

review of metaverse research in the hospitality and tourism sector. By integrating co-citation analysis and text mining, it offers a comprehensive and objective examination of the existing literature. The research provides a novel conceptual framework for understanding metaverse adoption, digital engagement and sustainability in hospitality. It bridges theoretical and practical gaps, offering valuable insights for scholars, industry practitioners and policymakers. The study also highlights critical research gaps and proposes a future research agenda, ensuring its relevance in guiding strategic decision-making and technological advancements in the hospitality industry.



Location and allocation of primary and backup shelters in transboundary disasters | [DOI](#)

Authors: Oscar Rodríguez-Espíndola | Pavel Albores | Dolores E. Luna | Juan A. Díaz | Sergio Picazo-Vela

Date of publication: November, 2025

Department: Operations and Service Management

There are records of people being unable to find shelter after a disaster or reaching facilities operating over capacity because of facility failure. Natural hazards do not respect geographical or political boundaries and often surpass the capacity of single jurisdictions operating with limited resources. Coordination between jurisdictions can become a solution, but it has been neglected in the literature. This article is the first to investigate the use of backup facilities as a strategy facilitated by transboundary coordination. It proposes a novel solution incorporating collaboration between multiple jurisdictions to establish a shelter location-allocation approach to protect people affected by disasters considering facility failure. The article presents a stochastic bi-objective formulation for transboundary coordination, incorporating the responsibility, priorities, and resources of each jurisdiction whilst considering the possibility of facility failure during disaster management. The objective of the model is to provide shelter to beneficiaries of all the jurisdictions by pooling resources whilst reducing the travel distance and minimizing the maximum cost for each jurisdiction. The contribution of the article is to introduce the formulation, assess the impact of transboundary coordination, and analyze the value of backup facilities in the service provided to people affected by disasters. The model has been applied to a set of numerical examples and a real case of volcanic eruptions in Mexico. The results show the influence of cross-jurisdictional coordination on the support provided to disaster victims, the value of backup facilities, and the capacity of the model design to provide relevant alternatives in practice.



Optimizing energy and CO2 efficiency in last-mile delivery using hybrid fleet models

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Armin Mahmoodi | Leila Hashemi | Jeremy Laliberte | Seyed Mojtaba Sajadi

Date of publication: December, 2025

Department: Operations and Service Management

Effective urban delivery systems demand innovative approaches to reduce energy use and lower CO2. This study compares the environmental performance of hybrid and diesel trucks with quadcopter and fixed-wing remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS), employing a multi-objective optimization approach non-dominated sorting genetic algorithm II (NSGA-II) to identify optimal delivery routes balancing operational efficiency and sustainability. Given that existing solutions like e-bikes or electric vans may not be feasible everywhere, this research evaluates different vehicle types under various urban delivery scenarios. Using a synthetic dataset that simulates realistic conditions, the findings reveal that fixed-wing RPAS excel in long-range efficiency, while quadcopters perform better in short-range deliveries. Hybrid trucks are advantageous for larger loads, reducing emissions compared to diesel trucks. The results highlight key trade-offs in energy use and emissions, advocating for a mixed-fleet strategy tailored to specific logistics needs. This study provides actionable insights for sustainable urban freight planning and policymaking.



Organizational culture, digital transformation, and product innovation | [DOI](#)

Authors: Guangming Cao | Yanqing Duan | John S. Edwards

Date of publication: March, 2025

Department: Operations and Service Management

This research fills a knowledge gap by introducing a new conceptualization of digital transformation through a multidimensional digital transforming capability. It further examines the influence of four cultural types on this capability and its subsequent impact on product innovation. Empirical findings reveal that adhocracy, followed in descending order of influence by clan, market, and hierarchy cultures, is positively related to digital transforming capability, which in turn is positively related to

product innovation in terms of new product newness, meaningfulness, and performance. Additionally, new product newness and meaningfulness each positively mediate the effect of digital transforming capability on new product performance.



Positive COVID-19 related sentiment, economic uncertainty & risk management implications

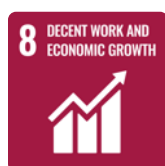
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Dimitris Anastasiou | Antonis Ballis | Christos Kallandranis | Ioannis Vlassas

Date of publication: December, 2025

Department: Economics and International Business

This study explores the impact of positive COVID-19-related investor sentiment—measured through vaccine-related Google search activity—on global economic uncertainty, offering a novel perspective compared to the prevailing focus on negative sentiment. We construct two alternative high-frequency sentiment indices (COVID19+), employing both simple averaging and principal component analysis, to capture optimism associated with the vaccine rollout. Using a Vector Autoregression (VAR) framework on daily world-level data from January 2020 to May 2021, we assess the dynamic relationship between sentiment and multiple forward-looking proxies of economic uncertainty, namely the VIX, the Economic Policy Uncertainty Index (EPU), and a Twitter-based uncertainty index. Our empirical results reveal that positive sentiment shocks lead to a statistically significant and persistent reduction in uncertainty across all measures, consistent with the confidence channel in belief-driven business cycle theory. Robustness checks, including alternative lag specifications and Bayesian VAR estimation, confirm the stability of these results. From a risk management perspective, the findings underscore the strategic value of integrating real-time sentiment monitoring into policy frameworks, stress-testing models, and asset allocation strategies. By demonstrating that positive sentiment can mitigate uncertainty during crises, this research provides new insights into sentiment-driven economic dynamics and offers actionable guidance for policymakers and market participants aiming to enhance resilience in the face of systemic shocks.



Stepping Stone or Quicksand? Ethical Understandings of Non-Profit Support Organizations and Capability Consequences

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Shuai Qin

Date of publication: December, 2025

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

This study examines how non-profit support organizations (NPSOs) construct collective ethical understandings of “support” under structural power imbalances and how these shape beneficiaries’ experiences. Focusing on refugee entrepreneurship services in Western contexts, it draws on interviews with managers from 33 NPSOs and 15 refugee entrepreneurs. Integrating the Sensemaking-Intuition Model and Capability Approach, the study identifies three ethical understandings—Instrumental, Compensatory, and Transformative—that reflect how NPSOs interpret power asymmetries, justify interventions, and define ethical support. Each arises from distinct configurations of organizational expertise, internal culture, and perceived institutional pressures. A capability-based evaluation of ethical completeness assesses how these understandings uphold recognition, equity, substantive freedom, and institutional integrity. The assessment reveals that while Instrumental NPSOs emphasize directive support to avoid failure, and Compensatory NPSOs affirm beneficiaries’ autonomy to counter power imbalances, only Transformative NPSOs approach ethical completeness—though their models remain precarious, strained by dominant neoliberal logics.



The right to be known as knowing: how CEO political ideology shapes discrimination against female scientists

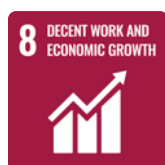
| [DOI](#)

Authors: Ali Radfard | Sama Hassani | Luca Pistilli

Date of publication: December, 2025

Department: Leadership and Management

This study explores the influence of CEO political ideology on gender bias within corporate patenting. Drawing on social dominance theory, we hypothesize that firms led by conservative CEOs exhibit lower ratios of women inventors and women-led patent applications. Furthermore, we propose that a CEO's social status moderates this relationship, with higher status potentially weakening the impact of political conservatism on gender bias. We find evidence supporting these hypotheses by analyzing data from 162 CEOs between 2005 and 2014. Our findings highlight the significant role of managerial values in perpetuating gender inequality in innovation, suggesting that political ideology and social status are crucial determinants of gender bias in corporate patenting.



Managing Sustainability-Related Human Rights Risks: The Role of Multilevel Governance and Institutional Accountability

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Doaa Shohaieb | Tantawy Moussa | Amir Allam | Mahmoud Elmarzouky

Date of publication: June, 2026

Department: Marketing and Entrepreneurship | Accounting and Finance

Sustainability-related human rights risks, including forced labour, labour exploitation and other forms of human rights abuse, remain persistent challenges across countries, particularly where corporate accountability and national institutional frameworks are weak. Drawing on institutional theory, this study examines whether informal institutions (i.e., corporate ethical behaviour and board governance efficacy) and formal institutions (i.e., national governance quality) are associated with sustainability-related human rights exploitation risks. Using a longitudinal cross-national dataset covering 167 countries across the 2014, 2016 and 2018 waves, the study analyses two dimensions of human rights risk: exploitation prevalence and structural vulnerability to exploitation. Fixed-effects regressions and two-stage least squares robustness specifications show that corporate ethical behaviour, board governance efficacy and national governance quality are negatively and significantly associated with sustainability-related human rights risks. Additional analyses indicate that the associations between corporate ethical behaviour, board governance efficacy and lower human rights risks are more pronounced in countries with stronger national governance quality. In contexts with weak national governance, voluntary corporate actions may be insufficient to support substantive human rights-related outcomes. The findings extend institutional theory by showing that sustainability-related human rights risks are shaped not by isolated governance mechanisms alone but by the broader alignment between country-level corporate governance environments and national institutional systems. The study contributes to debates on sustainability governance, human rights accountability and ESG regulation and offers implications for policymakers, regulators and organisations seeking to strengthen institutional accountability, address human rights exploitation risks and support progress towards SDGs 8, 12 and 16.



Revitalising the periphery: How support organisations drive the inclusive evolution of entrepreneurial ecosystems

[DOI](#)

Authors: Shuai Qin

Date of publication: January, 2026

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

This study investigates how support organisations for marginalised entrepreneurs (SOMEs), typically peripheral members within entrepreneurial ecosystems (EEs), facilitate the inclusive evolution of EEs. Employing boundary theory and ethnographic research conducted over three years within a refugee entrepreneurship support organisation in Birmingham, UK, this study identifies a four-stage boundary work process: Knowledge brokering, Boundary buffer spacing, Boundary object developing, and Boundary practice institutionalising. These interconnected strategic stages enable SOMEs to reconfigure the knowledge-cognitive, resource-opportunity, and social network exclusionary boundaries of EEs progressively, facilitating EEs' adaptation to marginalised entrepreneurs' diverse needs and pursuits within the overarching growth-orientation of EEs. Theoretically, this study introduces a “periphery-to-centre” model of inclusive evolution, expanding the prevalent centre-driven perspective of EE inclusive evolution, and demonstrates how inclusion could coexist with EE's growth-orientation because of SOMEs' boundary work. The study also unfolds enablers for such effective boundary work, emphasising the effects of SOMEs' dual knowledge capabilities, dual network embeddedness, institutional rhetoric, and the path dependency of evolution.



Why UK midwives intend to stay in or leave the midwifery profession: A conceptual model of push, pull and mooring factors

[DOI](#)

Authors: Sally Pezaro | Karen Maher

Date of publication: March, 2026

Department: Leadership and Management

Problem: Retention and recruitment of midwives is of global importance as workforce shortages impede the quality and safety of care provided.

Background: Midwives' intentions to leave the profession require examination in a post COVID-19 pandemic context, yet their data is often conflated with nurses.

Aims: To a) measure UK midwives' intentions to leave midwifery, b) explore the reasons behind them using qualitative methods, and c) map these reasons to create a model of push, pull and mooring (PPM) factors.

Methods:

This convergent parallel mixed-methods study included UK midwives ($n = 575$) who completed an online survey consisting of a three-item scale paired with open text response options. Items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale. Mean composite intention scores were calculated. Framework analysis was used to make sense of the qualitative data collected.

Findings: The composite mean score for intention to leave midwifery in the sample was 4.15 (SD 1.87). Themes related to midwives' intention to leave included: Too much pressure (stressful, poor mental health); Poor workplace cultures; Planned retirement or career change; Feeling undervalued; professional constraints and preserving physical health. Themes related to midwives' intention to stay included: No perceived alternative; Their ability to move away from clinical midwifery practice; Being new to the profession; Considering the alternatives to midwifery but staying as the hours and money are good; Professional identity overriding the rough days, and Job satisfaction. Distinctively, our findings reveal a paradox in that although professional identity acts as a pull factor, its connection to burnout and excessive endurance demonstrates that it is not uniformly advantageous.

Discussion: Drawing from PPM theory, we present the first conceptual model of PPM factors for midwifery. The presenteeism identified poses threats to quality and safety.

Conclusion: Findings offer important opportunities to minimise push factors, enhance pull factors and strengthen mooring factors for optimal recruitment and retention in Midwifery.



Co-producing NGO accountability accounts with beneficiaries: evidence from Indonesia

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Amanda Acintya | Sumohon Matilal | Susan Smith | Galina Goncharenko

Date of publication: April, 2026

Department: Accounting

This study examines how accountability is co-produced between NGOs and the beneficiaries, where beneficiaries assume roles as objects and subjects of accountability accounts. The study employs a multiple-units case study approach and draws empirical insights from programmes run by a major Indonesian NGO. Data were collected through interviews, document analysis and observations. Relevant aspects of stakeholder-centric stakeholder theory were used to frame the analysis. Shaped by power dynamics, the NGO accountability framework seeks to quantify its work and actively structures beneficiary participation, positioning beneficiaries as objects. The findings reveal that beneficiaries are, however, not merely passive recipients but active subjects striving to assert their agency as they navigate the constraints and opportunities within these structured spaces. Through their participation – whether through compliance, adaptation or subtle negotiation – they contribute to

the co-production of accountability accounts, demonstrating that even within controlled frameworks, accountability remains a relational process. The study contributes to NGO accountability literature by foregrounding grassroots participation and highlighting how structurally constrained beneficiaries shape and co-produce NGO accountability, offering an alternative to the prevailing top-down accountability framework. It also extends the dialogic accountability literature by showing that beneficiary participation, in the presence of power asymmetries, often unfolds subtly and adaptively, prioritising access to the programme's benefit over direct contestation of the NGO's agenda.





Partner

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

How We Define Partner

Internationalisation at Aston Business School (ABS) contributes to the PRME agenda through strategic partnerships, student mobility, international education collaboration and globally engaged learning. The ABS international partnership portfolio provides a platform for responsible management education, intercultural learning, applied international experience and collaboration with accredited business schools and professional networks. The Business School is supported by partnerships portfolio covering exchange, progression, articulation, double/second-degree routes, and strategic international education delivery. ABS has over 50 exchange partnerships, four progression partnerships, two articulation partnerships, two combined articulation/progression arrangements as well as strategic partner relationship. The portfolio is quality-focused and 36 are triple-crown accredited and 55 ABS partners hold at least one major international accreditation. Strategic partnerships include Kaplan Singapore and EAIM in Singapore, which provides a PG progression route. ABS also has a strategic partnership with Symbiosis International University which offers a dual degree route with Symbiosis International University Dubai. These partnerships demonstrate ABS's international footprint through structured progression, transnational engagement and globally recognised business school collaboration. In addition, ABS also works through high-quality international business school networks, particularly IBSNET and the Global Innovation Challenge alliance. Eight of these are triple-crown accredited, and seven are also GIC partners. This network supports ABS's strategic internationalisation by connecting the ABS with internationally accredited institutions that enable exchange, applied learning, benchmarking and international student experience. ABS's Malaysia engagement provides an example of international education collaboration through the Sustainable Leadership in Disruptive Times programme with Aston Alumni Association Malaysia, Putra Business School and Women Leadership Foundation Malaysia. These bring together academic and professional networks around responsible leadership, sustainability and executive development. Student mobility is a central feature of the ABS partnership portfolio. ABS partners for Global Innovation Challenge (GIC) and students will attend GIC2026 at BI Norwegian Business School, a triple-crown accredited IBSNET and GIC partner. Through these activities, ABS supports student development, responsible management education, applied international learning, intercultural competence, sustainability-oriented leadership and partnership-based engagement.

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
- ❖ United Nations organs other than the UN Global Compact
- ❖ University Councils

Student Organization Partnerships

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

Partnerships

The following provides more details on 15 key partnerships at Aston Business School.

Symbiosis International University (India)

Our partnership with Symbiosis International University shows clear evidence of activity through incoming student numbers. Across 2024/25 and 2025/26, seven incoming students were recorded, demonstrating that the relationship is contributing directly to international student flows. The partnership provides a platform for engagement across India, an important international education market. It supports our wider internationalisation objectives by strengthening links with a major education group and creating routes for student recruitment and collaboration.

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. Following the March 2023 accreditation visit, AACSB commended our strong value-based ethos of societal engagement, social mobility and regional collaboration.

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 also ranked in the top 300 in the world in the 2026 Times Higher Education Sustainability Impact Ratings. This achievement 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): 301-400 in the World

SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth): 4th in the UK and 89th globally

SDG 9 (Industry Innovation and Infrastructure): 301-400 in the World

SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities): =14th in the UK and =48th globally

SDG 13 (Climate Action): 101-200 globally (new entry)

SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals): 101-200 in the World.

BI Norwegian Business School (Norway)

Our partnership with BI Norwegian Business School remained active in 2025–26 through the Global Innovation Challenge and renewal of the partnership agreement. The collaboration also supported incoming student mobility, with one undergraduate student recorded across 2024/25 and 2025/26. In addition, BI's engagement with the Global Innovation Challenge demonstrates that the relationship extends beyond standard exchange into collaborative, experiential international learning. This partnership supports student exposure to a leading Nordic business school and contributes to our wider IBSNet and internationalisation activity.

Bocconi University (Italy)

Bocconi University continues to be one of our strongest European exchange partners, with clear evidence of incoming mobility across 2024/25 and 2025/26. The partnership recorded 3.5 undergraduate and 3.5 postgraduate incoming students, demonstrating sustained student engagement. Although no specific 2025–26 project activity is listed, the scale of incoming exchange confirms that the partnership is active and valuable. Bocconi's reputation and continued student demand make it an important affiliation for supporting international business education and reciprocal academic mobility.

Católica Lisbon School of Business & Economics (Portugal)

Our partnership with Católica Lisbon School of Business & Economics was active in 2025–26 through its role as a Global Innovation Challenge partner. The relationship also supported incoming mobility across several routes, including 1.5 undergraduate students, 0.5 postgraduate students and one double-degree student in 2024/25 and 2025/26. This demonstrates that the partnership combines student exchange, double-degree activity and collaborative international learning. Católica is therefore an important partner for supporting internationalisation, student mobility and applied challenge-based education.

Emlyon Business School (France)

Emlyon Business School remains a significant partner, with strong evidence of incoming activity across multiple study routes. Across 2024/25 and 2025/26, the partnership recorded incoming undergraduate, postgraduate and double-degree students, including one undergraduate student, two postgraduate students and double-degree activity. This breadth of incoming mobility shows that the relationship is active beyond a single exchange pathway. The partnership supports students' access to a highly regarded French business school and strengthens our international portfolio through exchange and double-degree collaboration.

Korea University Business School (Korea)

Korea University Business School was active in 2025–26 through renewal of the partnership agreement, providing a continued formal basis for collaboration. The partnership also recorded 3.5 incoming undergraduate students across 2024/25 and 2025/26, showing sustained mobility activity. This evidence indicates that the relationship is both operational and valued by students. The partnership supports international learning in East Asia and provides students with access to a respected Korean business school environment.

Maastricht University School of Economics and Business (Netherlands)

Our partnership with Maastricht University School of Economics and Business was active in 2025–26 through the Global Innovation Challenge. The partnership also supported strong incoming mobility, with three undergraduate and two postgraduate incoming students recorded across 2024/25 and 2025/26. This combination of student exchange and collaborative challenge-based activity demonstrates a productive and multi-dimensional relationship. Maastricht remains a valuable European partner for supporting international student mobility, applied learning and engagement through IBSNet-linked activity.

University of Mannheim Business School (Germany)

University of Mannheim Business School was one of the most active partners in 2025–26, with involvement in the Global Innovation Challenge, renewal of the partnership agreement and leadership in preparing the IBSNet website. The partnership also recorded 2.5 undergraduate and three

postgraduate incoming students across 2024/25 and 2025/26. This provides clear evidence of both student mobility and wider network contribution. Mannheim is therefore a strategically important partner, combining exchange activity, collaborative international learning and leadership within the IBSNet partnership network.

Queensland University of Technology Business School (QUT, Australia)

QUT Business School was active in 2025–26 through the Global Innovation Challenge, double-degree activity and renewal of the partnership agreement. Incoming mobility evidence shows one double-degree student across 2024/25 and 2025/26. Although the incoming number is modest, the nature of the activity demonstrates a deeper partnership that extends beyond standard exchange. QUT is therefore an important partner for supporting international learning, double-degree opportunities and collaborative student engagement through the Global Innovation Challenge.

Kaplan Singapore (Singapore)

Kaplan Singapore represents one of the strongest examples of active partnership activity in the evidence provided, based on incoming student numbers. Across 2024/25 and 2025/26, the partnership recorded 40 MSc students and 22 DBA students. This scale indicates a substantial and established franchise collaboration supporting postgraduate and doctoral-level business education. Through Kaplan Singapore, we extend access to internationally connected business education and maintain a significant collaborative presence in Southeast Asia.

Partner Voices

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

Green Advantage - Cohort 2.1, led by Paula Whitehouse, Breno Nunes, Nathalie Ormrod and Ahmad Beltagui

Green Advantage is Aston Centre for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship's national sustainability and business growth programme, helping business leaders, managers and entrepreneurs turn sustainability into strategic advantage. Underpinned by Aston Business School research and aligned with PRME and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, it combines expert-led workshops, one-to-one coaching and peer learning to help organisations embed sustainability into strategy, strengthen resilience and develop practical sustainability roadmaps.

The programme brings together SMEs, larger organisations, social enterprises, charities and public sector bodies from across the UK. Participants explore sustainability leadership, stakeholder engagement, sustainable business models, supply chains, environmental impact, social value and implementation. Its emphasis on practical action and collaboration supports efficiency, reputation, innovation and new commercial opportunities, while creating lasting networks, partnerships and joint sustainability initiatives.

Green Advantage also acts as a platform for knowledge exchange between academia, industry and the public sector. Participants report greater confidence in leading sustainability initiatives and clearer pathways for implementing change, including stronger ESG approaches, supply-chain engagement and competitiveness in procurement. To date, participants have represented 42 industries, with women accounting for 50.6% and men 49.4%, demonstrating the programme's broad and inclusive reach.

Zoe Drinkwater, HighlySprung

"One of the most valuable things I gained from Green Advantage was the practical advice and coaching around developing our sustainability roadmap. This, alongside work with the wider team and Board (including our sustainability working group) led to the creation of an annual action plan in 2025/26. Having completed the first year of our action plan, we have now moved onto 2026/27 to build on our work and achievements last year, which included achieving Basic overall in the Theatre Green Book, encouraging new habits in the team, calculating data and signing up to the West Midlands Net Zero Business Pledge."

Ronnie Akumu, Metal Assemblies

"As a result of the programme, our business is now able to articulate what Sustainability means to us and communicate this commercially to our customers and prospective customers. There's a deeper understanding as two other colleagues have enrolled and completed the programme. This increased awareness has enabled the business to invest in Solar panels that project to reduce our costs and carbon by 20% and has helped us diversify into new sectors."

Steve Davis, Chiltern Railways

"The speakers were excellent and gave us plenty to think about. I came away with a practical list of ideas and actions that will help shape Chiltern Railways' sustainability strategy, while also supporting my own professional development."

Marcia Melbourne, JLL

"One of the most valuable things I gained from Green Advantage was the networking and the support of the University. As a result of taking part, we've started to adopt more sustainability initiatives."

Max Lloyd-Ball & Ian Thorpe, Shrewsbury Town Council

“One early example is a new communications strategy for the Town Council for 2026 - 2029 which will ensure that when we start doing any new work there is a focus on achieving some of the UN sustainability goals.”

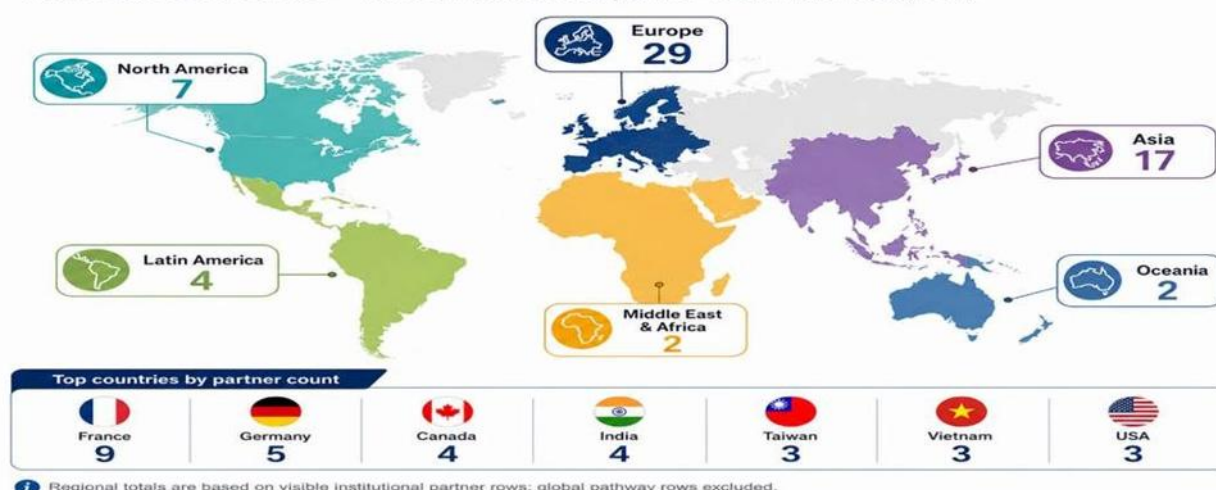
Continue telling your story

ABS Partnerships

Aston Business School's strategic partnerships span 61 institutions worldwide, with the strongest concentration in Europe (29), followed by Asia (17) and North America (7).

Geographic Spread of Strategic Partnerships

Aston Business School — visible institutional partner rows in tier tabs (n=61)





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
- ❖ 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

24-26-sustainability-policies

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

2030-sustainability-strategy

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

2024-2025 Sustainability and SDG Report

View document 

Download document 

2025-30-climate-resilience-carbon-management-plan

View document 

Download document 

Practice Voices

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

Aston Business School's New Home

Aston University is enhancing the environmental performance of **10 Woodcock Street (WSO)** through ongoing investment in intelligent building technologies and sustainable workplace design. The building is currently undergoing a significant **Building Management System (BMS) upgrade**, which will enable automated control of heating and ventilation systems, improving energy efficiency, occupant comfort, and operational performance.

The building was originally designed with a **natural night-cooling strategy**, allowing upper windows to open automatically when external conditions are suitable, helping to reduce cooling demand and reliance on mechanical systems. Once the BMS upgrade is complete, these features will be fully optimised to respond dynamically to occupancy levels, temperature, air quality, and weather conditions.

Acquired by Aston University in 2024, the building holds a **BREEAM Excellent** rating and is becoming a key hub within the University's growing innovation ecosystem. It will house the **Aston Business School, Aston Business Hub, Aston Integrated Healthcare Hub**, and other flagship academic and enterprise initiatives.

Supporting sustainable travel, the building also includes **cycling facilities** for staff, students, and visitors. In addition, as part of Aston University's Energy Resilience **Programme which will support us with our Net Zero 2028 commitment**, 10 Woodcock Street will become home to the University's new **Green Energy Centre**, creating a focal point for sustainability leadership, energy innovation, collaboration, and engagement. The facility will support Aston's wider decarbonisation ambitions while strengthening links between research, teaching, business, and industry.

Aston University takes major step towards net zero goal

Aston University has accelerated its commitment to achieving net zero for Scope 1 and 2 emissions. While the University's original Climate Action Plan set a **2030 target**, the new Energy Resilience Programme will enable Aston to achieve this by **2028, two years ahead of schedule**, reducing Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions by more than 90% against the 2005/06 baseline. The programme is supported by a **£35.5 million UK Government Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme grant**.

At the centre of the programme is a new **Carbon Neutral Energy Centre**, where ground and air source heat pumps will replace the existing gas-fired system and support a low-carbon district heating network. Gas boilers in other campus buildings will also be decommissioned, alongside improvements to building insulation and thermal performance. Construction began in March 2026, with programme completion targeted for March 2028. Aston continues separately to work towards its **2040 net zero target for Scope 3 emissions**.

Sustainability Ranking and Achievements

Aston University continues to strengthen its position as a leading institution for sustainability, social impact, and global engagement through a range of international rankings and achievements aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

QS Sustainability Rankings 2026

In the latest **QS Sustainability Rankings 2026**, Aston University achieved its highest-ever position, rising to **281st globally**, placing the University within the **top 300 universities worldwide for sustainability**. This recognition reflects Aston's continued commitment to environmental responsibility, social impact, governance, equality, wellbeing, and sustainable operations.

QS Sustainability Rankings 2025:

Aston ranked **357th globally**.

QS Sustainability Rankings 2026 (latest released):

Aston improved further to **281st globally**, entering the **top 300 worldwide for the first time** with a 76-place rise year-on-year.

These achievements reflect the University's ongoing efforts to create inclusive opportunities, support student and staff wellbeing, promote responsible innovation, and strengthen partnerships that deliver positive local and global impact.

Alongside these rankings, Aston continues to build on a wide range of sustainability and impact-focused achievements, including:

Continued certification to **ISO 14001** and **ISO 50001**

- Progress in carbon reduction and energy efficiency initiatives
- Strong student and staff engagement in sustainability programmes
- Research and partnerships supporting social and environmental innovation

- Contributions towards responsible education, equality, employability, and community impact

Together, these rankings and achievements demonstrate how Aston University's teaching, research, operations, partnerships, and community engagement collectively contribute towards advancing all **17 UN Sustainable Development Goals**, supporting the University's vision for a more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient future.

Dr Vitor Furlong, Environment and Sustainability Manager

The ABS PRME submission represents an important step towards delivering Aston University's 2030 Strategy by demonstrating how sustainability, responsible leadership, and global citizenship are embedded across our teaching, research, partnerships, and campus operations. It highlights the tangible progress being made through initiatives such as our Net Zero programme, sustainability accreditations, and alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, while providing a framework for continuous improvement and accountability as we work towards our long-term strategic ambitions.

Andrew Wilson - Director of Operations, Aston Business School

Our move to 10 Woodcock Street is an exciting moment for Aston Business School and an opportunity to create a shared home that reflects who we are and where we want to go. My role is to help turn the vision for the building into an excellent everyday experience for our staff, students, visitors and partners. I want the new building to be welcoming, inclusive and collaborative, while enabling teams to work effectively and sustainably. By bringing together academic, professional and enterprise communities, we can create stronger connections, encourage innovation and build a real sense of belonging. This is not simply about occupying a new space. It is about creating an environment that supports our people, strengthens our community and enables the School to achieve its ambition.



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:

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

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

Continue telling your story

Building on Progress



As a signatory to the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement Manifesto, Aston University shares knowledge, expertise and practice beyond academia while learning from the communities, organisations and partners with which we work. In 2026, this commitment has been supported by a more systematic approach to connecting responsible management education, research, business engagement and institutional learning across Aston Business School.

Inclusive growth and community engagement remain central to this work. ABS collaborates with businesses, public bodies, charities and community organisations across Birmingham and the wider West Midlands. Through initiatives such as Help to Grow: Management, Green Advantage and SME decarbonisation programmes, academic expertise is translated into practical support for organisations. Help to Grow has supported more than 700 SMEs, while Green Advantage has expanded from regional to national delivery, supporting professionals to embed sustainability within their organisations.

Sharing also takes place through educational practice. ABS's Four Es framework, Enterprise, Employability, Experiential Learning and ESG, provides the wider structure through which responsible management is connected to programme design and student experience. Aston Power Skills develops digital fluency, inclusive leadership, entrepreneurial capability and sustainability literacy across undergraduate provision, while Aston Global Advantage extends employability, global citizenship and ESG-focused engagement at postgraduate level. Applied learning through consultancy, simulations and live organisational challenges further connects responsible management education with business and community practice.

PRME has strengthened the way this experience is shared within and beyond the School. Curriculum mapping, reflective pedagogy and SIP reporting have created a stronger basis for peer learning, curriculum development and evidence-building. Faculty participation in PRME Pedagogy Certification has supported development in curriculum design, while the School's SDG curriculum-mapping approach and teaching practices can now inform wider exchange across the PRME community. SIP reporting has also become an important mechanism for internal reflection, curriculum review and accreditation evidence.

Aston's contribution to PRME builds on a long-standing record of engagement. The University has been a PRME signatory since 2008 and a founding member of the UK & Ireland Chapter since 2013, when Aston hosted the inaugural Chapter meeting. In 2023, we also hosted the Chapter's 10th Anniversary Conference and AGM, bringing together 140 delegates from academia, business and policy. ABS faculty have contributed to thematic work on climate change, carbon literacy, anti-corruption and Business for Peace, while the PRME seed-funded Disaster Ethics project produced an open-access simulation that has since been used internationally.

Recognition as a PRME Champion for 2026–27 marks the next stage in this development. ABS is contributing to collaborative Champion projects and sharing educational models, pedagogical approaches, research expertise and practical tools through PRME Commons and the wider network. Existing examples include the Sustainability Fitness Model, Green Advantage, GreenerWeb research and approaches to SDG curriculum mapping, alongside emerging work in innovative pedagogy, sustainability competencies and responsible AI.

This work is reinforced by our wider engagement with the United Nations and the UN Global Compact. ABS engages with the UN Global Compact Network UK and contributes research and expertise to UN-aligned activity across sustainable trade, environmental sustainability, governance and social justice. These connections extend the reach of the School's research and educational practice into policy and professional communities.

The 2026 reporting cycle reflects a broader development in how ABS approaches Share through open exchange of educational practice, evidence, tools and experience, sustained engagement with business and communities, and active contribution to learning across the PRME network. This connects Aston's regional and national roles with its growing international contribution to responsible management education.

Our move to the new 10 Woodcock Building allows us to be more sustainable in how we work, but also to develop our EDI, Wellbeing, People and Culture to the next level.



SIGNATORY

Aston Business School



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