



BLUEPRINT FOR SDG INTEGRATION INTO CURRICULUM, RESEARCH AND PARTNERSHIPS

Executive Summary

PRME Principles for Responsible
Management Education

an initiative of the United Nations Global Compact

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1. In 2020 the United Nations announced the [Decade of Action](#) to make the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) a reality by 2030. For business and management schools around the world, this call emphasises the need to accelerate the steps taken to ensure the SDGs are embedded in the curriculum, research and partnerships, in line with the PRME mission to *“Realise the Sustainable Development Goals through responsible management education.”*
2. Evidence of institutional commitment to ethics, responsibility and sustainability (ERS) is not only needed, but also required by all major business school and programme accreditation bodies. These include The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), The European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD), and The Association of MBAs (AMBA).
3. The Times Higher Education (THE) introduced a new [social impact ranking system](#) for Universities in 2019, based on the SDGs, and the Financial Times (FT) has also incorporated a corporate social responsibility (CSR) measure into its business school ranking system.
4. To help business school leaders to create impact, and contribute to the realization of the SDGs, PRME has developed the [Blueprint for SDG Integration into Curriculum, Research and Partnerships](#). Launched at the PRME Global Forum in June 2020, this SDG Blueprint provides simple and effective means to integrate SDGs across curriculum, research and partnerships to achieve positive impact.
5. Integrating the SDGs into a business school can be thought of as a “strategic journey” that evolves over time and through different stages. The SDGs are more likely to become part of an institution’s overall strategy through a systematic approach to SDG integration that engages faculty and staff in different ways.
6. At the heart of the Blueprint is the **PRME SDG Compass** which provides a clear four-stage model that offers Deans, senior management teams, academic programme leaders, research group leaders and administrators a simple **Roadmap** to guide the SDG integration process in higher education institutions. The Blueprint lays out a number of frameworks, guidelines, examples and suggestions aligned with the PRME SDG Compass.

What should Deans and leaders of Business Schools do with the Blueprint?

- [Download](#) the full version of the SDG Blueprint from the PRME website
- Share it with members of the Business School’s senior management team
- Organise a series of workshops in the business school about SDG integration
- Use the Blueprint as a basis for strategic conversations about SDG integration
- Create a SDG Integration Working Group
- Develop a plan for SDG integration and a set of KPIs

The PRME SDG Compass is a four-stage model that offers business school leaders and administrators a systematic guide to the SDG integration process in higher education institutions.

Systematic process to achieve SDG integration



Source: Authors (2020)

Step 1: Understanding where we are

- Understanding the current situation requires some sort of **"mapping"** to assess where an Institution currently stands in terms of SDG integration in the curriculum, research and partnerships. Mapping is an evolutionary process.
- The **first step is to determine the scope of mapping**. Having SDG champions on different levels — able and willing to take responsibility for stakeholder buy-in and implementation — is very important.
- The Figure below identifies where support for SDG integration can come from.

SDG integration requires commitment on different levels



Source: Authors (2020)



Source: Authors (2020)

Where these levels are not represented, The Blueprint recommends that SDG champions are identified and appointed in order to achieve maximum impact.

- Developing a 'mapping strategy' is an evolutionary process and evidence from business schools suggests that mapping can be approached in any one (or more) of three ways, as illustrated below.
- The simplest and most widely used mapping methodology is the "**Mapping by SDG Icon.**" Using this approach, the person or team doing the mapping is using subjective judgment to associate broad topics covered in a syllabus, a degree programme, a research centre or paper, or in a partnership, with the overarching theme of a given SDG.
- A more advanced mapping methodology involves the use of "**SDG Key Words Search,**" where management schools often

use their own judgment to compile a list of words that they feel relate to each of the 17 SDGs. Once a set of key words has been compiled, the person doing the mapping will devise some method of content analysis on curricular, research and partnership documentation. This will identify activities that in some way relate to the SDGs.

- The most rigorous mapping methodology is one that **maps educational activities against specific SDG Targets** of which there are 169). This mapping allows business schools to be very specific about the way in which their activities relate and/or contribute to achievement of specific SDG Targets.
- If one employs a mapping strategy that uses the 'Key Word' or SDG Target' methodology, this is a way of deepening and/or broadening SDG integration.

Step 2: Defining priorities and setting goals

- The Figure below presents one way to help business school leaders to think about their approaches to integrate the SDGs into their curriculum, research and partnership strategies.
- The matrix on the one hand suggests that activity can have a narrow focus (a single or a few SDGs) or a broad focus, which would examine the SDGs as an interconnected and integrated set of goals.

- Key factors influencing a school's selection of priorities or goals (e.g. all areas of activity or some of them) include: levels of top-down and bottom-up awareness and commitment; availability of resources;

institutionalization of SDGs in key documents and processes; creation and dissemination of SDG knowledge; and desired target levels of impact.

	Curriculum	Research	Partnerships
SDG Focus			
Narrow (one to two specific SDGs)	1. Curriculum with a narrow SDG focus	3. Research with a narrow SDG focus	5. Partnerships with a narrow SDG focus
Broad (SDGs as a concept - wide array of SDGs)	2. Curriculum with a broad SDG focus	4. Research with a broad SDG focus	6. Partnerships with a broad SDG focus

Source: Authors (2020)

Step 3: Strategic options for broadening and/or deepening SDG integration

Findings from the mapping exercise provide the starting point for following Steps 3 and 4 of the PRME SDG Compass. Exploratory research suggests four main ways that business schools are currently integrating the SDGs in to academic activities, shaped by two key variables.

On the one hand, SDG integration can have a **narrow focus**, on a single, or small number of SDGs; or a **broad focus**, looking at the SDGs as an inter-connected and integrated set of Goals.

On the other hand one or more SDGs can be integrated in to **existing structures** (e.g. existing degree programmes, research projects and partnerships), but they can also serve as a foundation for a completely new teaching activity, new stream of research, or newly formed partnerships (**new structures**).

The Option Matrix below can be used to understand a) the Institution's current approach to SDG integration (be that planned or emergent); and b) to inform a strategic forward-looking approach to broaden and/or deepen SDG integration.

Delivery Mechanism

	Existing Structures	New Structures
Focus		
Narrow (discipline-specific)	<p>Option 1. Integrate SDGs into existing academic modules and programmes, research activities and partnerships.</p>	<p>Option 2. Create new academic programmes, research activities and partnerships that focus totally on one or two SDGs (e.g. a new academic programme or research project that focuses on gender equality (SDG 5)).</p>
Broad (cross-disciplinary)	<p>Option 3. Integrate SDGs into common core requirements for all academic activities in the business school (e.g. Dean or senior management team recommend integration of the SDGs into all existing academic activities).</p>	<p>Option 4. Create new cross-disciplinary academic programmes, research groupings or centres, and new partnerships with a focus on the SDGs (e.g. Dean or senior management team identify opportunity to develop new forms of academic activity that are SDG-centric).</p>

Source: Authors, adopted from Rusinko, 2010

Each of the four options has its advantages and disadvantages, and these are outlined and explained in the full version of the PRME SDG Blueprint. It should also be noted that the four options are not mutually exclusive, but can be combined to add impact and accelerate SDG integration. Key factors influencing option choice for SDG integration in to academic activities once again include levels of top down

and bottom up commitment, the availability of resources, and desired (target) levels of impact.

Section 4 of the BP provides some practical examples of integration of SDGs across curriculum, research and partnerships used by different business schools. This section has been developed based on the data collected from the PRME champion schools.

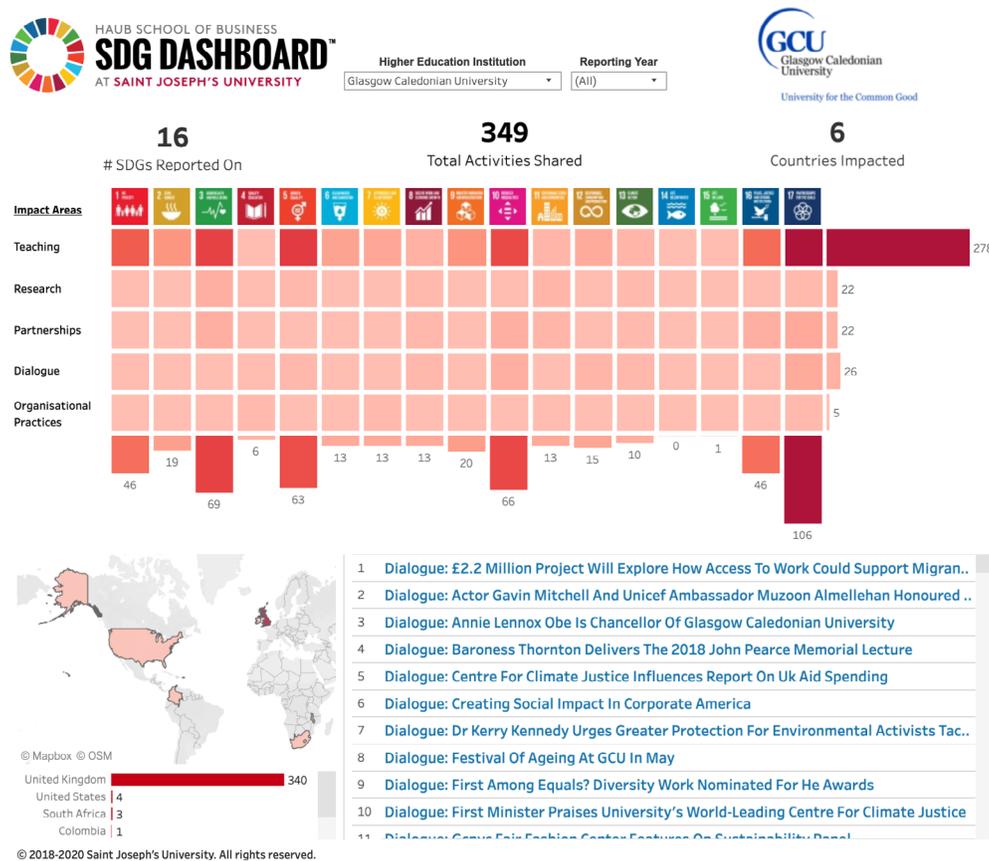
Step 4: Communication and Continuous Improvement

The launch, implementation and impact of new SDG activities should be communicated widely to encourage others to contribute to the school's SDG integration effort. One way of doing this is through use of a SDG Dashboard, such as the one illustrated below.

Capturing and visualizing data in this way has been proven to be an effective way not only of communicating a School's contribution to the SDGs to internal and external stakeholders,

but also as a means of completing a PRME Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) report¹.

In the spirit of continuous improvement, and to inspire business schools working on SDG integration into academic activities, the Blueprint is complemented by an accessible repository of good practice examples and case studies showing how the SDGs have been integrated into business schools across the world.



¹If you have developed innovative ways to integrate the SDGs in to the curriculum, research, or partnership working, we would kindly ask you to contact Nikolay Ivanov in the PRME Secretariat, with a view to showcasing your Institution's work in the forthcoming SDG Blueprint Website Repository.

Six Principles

As institutions of higher education involved in the development of current and future managers, we declare our willingness to progress in the implementation, within our institution, of the following Principles, starting

with those that are more relevant to our capacities and mission. We will report on progress to all our stakeholders and exchange effective practices related to these Principles with other academic institutions:



Principle 1 | Purpose: We will develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large and to work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy.



Principle 2 | Values: We will incorporate into our academic activities, curricula, and organizational practices the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact.



Principle 3 | Method: We will create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.



Principle 4 | Research: We will engage in conceptual and empirical research that advances our understanding about the role, dynamics, and impact of corporations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value.



Principle 5 | Partnership: We will interact with managers of business corporations to extend our knowledge of their challenges in meeting social and environmental responsibilities and to explore jointly effective approaches to meeting these challenges.



Principle 6 | Dialogue: We will facilitate and support dialog and debate among educators, students, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organizations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability.

We understand that our own organizational practices should serve as example of the values and attitudes we convey to our students.