



# Sharing Information on Progress Report

December 2020–March 2023

Faculty of Business and Law  
20 March 2023

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You can find us here:

[The Open University Business School](#) and [The Open University Law School](#)

Please note that we've used a common sans-serif font (Poppins) with a font size of 12pt, a blue colour, and a line spacing of 1.5 to make the text in this report dyslexia friendly.

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# 1. Introduction

The Open University Business School became a signatory to PRME in 2011 and submitted Sharing Progress on Information (SIP) reports in 2013, 2015, and 2018.

In 2020, The Open University's Faculty of Business and Law (FBL), which comprises both The Open University Business School (OUBS) and The Open University Law School (OULS), submitted its first PRME Sharing Progress on Information (SIP) as a faculty.

This is the second SIP report submitted by FBL. In Section 2 of this 2023 report, the Executive Dean of FBL confirms and renews the faculty's commitment to the United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education (UN PRME). Section 3 of this report briefly introduces the university, the faculty and OUBS and OULS. Sections 4 to 10 present an overview of the ways in which FBL has engaged with, and implemented, its commitment to each of the seven UN PRME principles. These sections also discuss our progress on the ten goals we set ourselves in the last section of the 2020 SIP report, for the period 2020–2022.

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## **The seven Principles for Responsible Management Education**

### **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 and curricula the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact.

### **Principle 3 – Methods**

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 and other organisations 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 dialogue and debate among educators, students, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organisations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability.

### **Principle 7 – Organisational practices**

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



## 2. Renewal of FBL commitment

The Open University's Faculty of Business and Law is committed to upholding the UN Global Compact Principles for Responsible Management Education and to engaging in a continuous process of improvement in the application of the Principles for Responsible Management Education. We undertake to report on progress to all stakeholders and to exchange effective practices with other academic institutions.

We believe that the values of ethics, social responsibility and environmental sustainability are important in all areas of the faculty's activities. This includes the areas identified in the principles: the faculty's curricula, programme design, courses and learning, research as well as in partnerships and dialogue with all our stakeholders. We also understand that our own organisational practices should serve as examples of the values and attitudes we seek to convey to our students. We continue to encourage other academic institutions and associations to adopt and support these principles.

Date: 20 March 2023



Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Devendra Kodwani'.

Devendra Kodwani

Executive Dean

# 3. Introducing the OU and FBL

## The Open University (OU)

The Open University is a publicly regulated, not-for-profit, higher education institution, incorporated by Royal Charter (RC000391), which operates across the four nations of the United Kingdom: England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Like all universities in the UK, The Open University operates within the guidance of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

The OU was founded in 1969 on the belief that information and communications technology could bring high-quality degree-level learning to people who had not had the opportunity to study at university. Our aim is to promote educational opportunity and social inclusion by providing high-quality education to all who wish to realise their ambitions and fulfil their potential.

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### OU vision

To reach more students with life changing learning that meets their needs and enriches society.

### OU mission

To be open to people, places, methods and ideas.

### OU values

Inclusivity towards students and staff.

Innovation in teaching and research.

Responsiveness to the needs of students, employers, communities, and society at large.

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Characteristics of the OU are:

- a radical open admissions policy to our undergraduate curriculum at entry level/first year of undergraduate degree
- a focus on delivering high-quality, carefully designed education at scale
- online study through extensive use of modern learning technologies and virtual learning environments
- student support, interaction and dialogue which are at the heart of Supported Open Learning, which is the OU's core pedagogic model
- the use of learning analytics to provide targeted student support in accordance with student needs.

The OU is the largest academic institution in the UK with 157,886 directly registered students on credit-bearing courses (approximately 87,976 FTE) and a further 48,289 students studying with our validated partner institutions in 2021/2022. About 70% of OU students study part-time at different levels of intensity. Our distance-learning model supports students where they live and work. Hence, OU students integrate their learning with work and life commitments, rather than the other way around. This does mean that, except for our PhD students, OU students do not participate in campus-based learning.

The Open University comprises the following four faculties:

- Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS)
- Faculty of Business and Law (FBL)
- Faculty of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
- Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies (WELS)

The University also offers programmes to private, public and third sector clients as well as open online educational resources. These include massive open online courses (MOOCs) on the University's platform [OpenLearn](#) (which hosts our freely available educational resources) and Badged Open Courses (BOCs)

on the platform [FutureLearn](#), which was developed by the OU, was formerly co-owned with the SEEK Group and was sold to GUS N.V. in December 2022.

Furthermore, every year the OU provides educational materials to around 327 million people around the world through our partnership with the BBC. For example, the OU put plastics on the world stage through the Blue Planet II series, a co-production with the BBC, and is committed to showing that the education sector is an integral part of tackling the climate emergency.

## OU Strategy 2022–2027

In November 2018, The Open University became a [signatory to the UN Global Compact](#). Hence, the OU has committed itself to the ten principles of the Global Compact and to supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). This is reflected in the new OU strategy for the five-year period from 1 August 2022 until 31 July 2027. The OU's 'Learn and Live' Strategy has the following five strategic goals.

- 1) **Greater reach**, offering unrivalled choice, quality and flexibility to more people from all parts of society through a range of channels and learning opportunities, with the University's core offer of qualifications and accredited learning at its centre.
- 2) **Success for our students**, supporting them to achieve their goals, whoever and wherever they are, with outcomes that are equitable and open up new opportunities in life and work.
- 3) **Societal impact** locally and globally through research, enterprise and skills development that shape the future.
- 4) **Equity**, greater diversity at all levels, and inclusion in every aspect of how we work and what we achieve.
- 5) Environmental and social **sustainability**.

# The Faculty of Business and Law (FBL)

The Open University's Faculty of Business and Law (FBL) comprises both the Open University Business School (OUBS) and the Open University Law School (OULS).



In July 2023, FBL will issue its faculty strategy 2023–2028, to incorporate the new OU strategy 2022–2027. For the period under consideration in this SIP report, the FBL strategic plan until 31 July 2023 (set out in Section 4 below) still applies.

## OUBS

The Open University Business School (OUBS) was established in 1983 and is therefore celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. OUBS is triple accredited by AACSB, AMBA and EQUIS. With more than 108,000 graduates in 125 countries to date for all postgraduate and professional programmes, OUBS has grown to be one of the largest business schools in Europe. In OUBS, teaching and research are organised around the following academic departments:

- Accounting and Finance
- People and Organisations
- Public Leadership and Social Enterprise

- Strategy and Marketing
- Policing Organisation and Practice (until December 2020 part of the Department of Public Leadership and Social Enterprise)

OUBS offers [13 Honours Degrees in Business and Management](#), eight Diplomas of Higher Education in Business and Management, and eight Certificates of Higher Education in Business and Management, a [Master of Business Administration](#) (MBA), an [MSc in Finance](#), and an [MSc In Human Resource Management](#).

At 31 July 2022, there were 108 central academic staff across the five departments of OUBS, led by Head of Business School, Siv Vangen.

## OULS

The Open University Law School (OULS) was established in 1998 and is celebrating 25 years of providing open access legal education in February this year. Beginning in February 1998 (in partnership with the College of Law), our first in-house module was launched in 2006, followed by an entirely home-grown Bachelor of Laws (LLB) programme in 2014. OULS has taught more than 60,000 students and its undergraduate law degree is the most popular in the UK. Currently, 9,000 students in 45 countries are taking OULS courses.

OULS offers the Bachelor of Laws with Honours (LLB), which is the most popular undergraduate law programme in the UK, a graduate entry LLB, and a joint honours award, the BA (Hons) in Criminology and Law. At postgraduate level, OULS offers a [Master of Laws \(LLM\)](#) programme and modules that contribute to the Master of Business Administration (MBA).

At 31 July 2022, there were 35 central academic staff across the five departments of OULS, led by Head of Law School Hugh McFaul.

# 4. Principle 1 – Purpose

**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.



The University's founding vision, mission and values underpin everything we do. As signatory to the Global Compact, the OU is committed to putting into practice the values of global social responsibility and supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As signatory to PRME, FBL is committed to including these values in its business and law curriculum, teaching and pedagogy, research and scholarship, partnerships, and dialogue. Furthermore, Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability (ERS) forms an important policy area for which the Business School must provide accountability as part of our efforts to maintain triple accreditation by EQUIS, AMBA and AACSB.

This section will briefly describe PRME in FBL's strategic plan, its emergent approach to sustainability, and in doing so report on the developments in respect of the two goals under Principle 1.

Goal 1: To explore establishing a separate PRME or ERS strategy.

Goal 2: To establish a method for continuously collecting PRME-related information and displaying this in a dashboard.



## 4.1. PRME in FBL's Strategic Plan

FBL's 2020–2023 Strategic Plan articulates the following four overarching strategic aims which inform our decision making and drive all our activities.

1. Enable our students to succeed in their chosen study goals.
2. Grow and uphold financial sustainability.
3. Increase academic impact through research, enterprise and scholarship that has economic, public, and social value consistent with our mission.
4. Making a positive difference for our people.

FBL's 2023–2028 strategy is currently being developed and approved.

## 4.2. FBL's emergent approach to sustainability

Between December 2020 and March 2023, the following developments took place as part of the process to make progress towards achieving our two goals.

### **FBL PRME Working group: March 2020 – December 2021**

Following its inception In March 2020, the FBL PRME Working Group and the Executive Dean had decided to apply to become a PRME signatory as the Faculty of Business and Law rather than the Open University Business School to better reflect FBL's commitment to the SDGs. As reported in the 2020 PRME SIP Report, the UN PRME secretariat confirmed this change in July 2020.

Until its dissolution in late 2021, the FBL PRME working worked:

1. To raise awareness of our commitment to PRME and the UN SDGs among FBL members and stakeholders.
2. To invite engagement, exploration and discussion of the seven PRME principles and the 17 UN SDGs to identify what they currently mean for FBL,



its students and other stakeholders, and how they relate to the faculty's strategic aims for the coming years.

3. To collect data to inform discussions in the faculty and with stakeholders in order to develop a more joined-up approach to including PRME and the SDGs in the curriculum, and communicating with, and inviting input and participation from, students and other stakeholders
4. To set up a system in the faculty for collecting PRME-related data, on an ongoing basis, in order to support the development of a PRME/Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability dashboard.

Partly due to the COVID 19 pandemic, progress was made on only the first two aims. These activities mostly involved issuing a mini newsletter and making virtual visits to departmental meetings to inform colleagues and invite engagement.

From December 2020 until June 2021, the PRME lead was tasked to explore and develop a separate PRME or ERS strategy for the faculty. A five-year strategy was drafted and considered, but ultimately, FEX decided against a stand-alone strategy. This was partly because it became clear that the OU's new 'Live and Learn' strategy would focus on societal impact, equity and sustainability, and that there would be an OU VCE sponsor for Sustainability.

## **The OU's VCE Sponsor for Sustainability**

The Open University's 'Estate Strategic Plan 2015–2025' includes the 'Carbon Management Plan', and the 'Environmental & Sustainability Policy' underpinned by the 'Energy Policy'. These aim to encourage and embed the desirable behaviours required to reduce the OU's carbon footprint to Net Zero by 2050. Progress will be discussed in Chapter 1.

Although the Open University became a signatory to the UN Global Compact in November 2018 and activities took place across the university, it took a while for a co-ordinated approach to supporting the SDGs to emerge at university level. In 2021, the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) was appointed as VCE Sponsor for Sustainability. The new policy included the placement of sustainability in operations with a member of the executive in each faculty. A second policy recommendation was for each school in each faculty to create the position of sustainability lead tasked with championing sustainability in the academic activities across the school.

## **FBL's current approach to sustainability and EDI**

Currently, in FBL, the responsibility for environmental sustainability and EDI in operations is included in the portfolio of the Director of Strategy, Planning and Resources. Section 10 on Principle 7 will report on the sustainability and EDI goals and activities in FBL's operations.

As of 1 August 2022, OUBS and OULS each have a sustainability lead for sustainability in each school's academic goals and activities. Over the past six months, the two sustainability leads have started to find their feet and give shape to their responsibilities.

### ***OUBS sustainability lead***

The OUBS sustainability lead attended an EFMD online course on mainstreaming the SDGs in business education, held a discussion with the OUBS Alumni Council about integrating the SDGs in OUBS teaching, research and knowledge

exchange. For the time being, she has chosen to focus on integrating the SDGs in the School's curriculum. To this aim she is:

- Organising a workshop on integration of SDGs in OUBS curriculum planned for March.
- Having discussions with the undergraduate and postgraduate teaching directors for the Business School to develop our academic and administrative approaches to integrating SDGs in the curriculum. These discussions also involve adjusting the administrative process to enable to collect data
- Working with module teams to explore the best ways of developing module content and pedagogy to make students sustainability literate.

### ***OULS sustainability lead***

The OULS sustainability lead has been actively involved in the Responsible Futures agenda and has been in discussion with the OULS leads in research, employability, and education to explore opportunities to embed sustainability across the OULS curriculum and research. To this aim she is:

- Leading a workshop for OULS in March, to update colleagues on OU wide strategies for embedding sustainability and to involve them in developing a strategy for embedding sustainability into the curriculum in a meaningful way.
- Having discussions with the OULS teaching director to develop our academic approach to integrating SDGs into the curriculum. These discussions have centred on exploring opportunities to develop module content and pedagogy and running a pilot tutorial on SDGs in a core module. An approach to this will be explored in the staff workshop in March.

- Having discussions with the OULS research director to develop a system to map engagement of our research with SDGs and to identify any gaps.
- Having discussions with the OULS employability lead to explore opportunities to include sustainability literacy in our employability strategy.

## Summary of progress on Principle 1

	2021-2023	2023-2025
Goal 1	A stand-alone PRME/ERS strategy was drafted, considered, and rejected. FBL has chosen for an integrated approach.	Clarify how PRME/ERS/SDGs are integrated into the new FBL strategy 2023-2028.
Goal 2	The aim of continuously collecting PRME-related information and displaying this in a dashboard has been narrowed down to teaching, for now.	For OUBS and OULS, the administrative process for integrating the SDGs into the business curriculum, the data to be collected, and how to display it are being developed in collaboration with the teaching directors.  Research will be the next step.

# 5. Principle 2 – Values

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

While FBL embraces the University's mission, vision and values, Section 5.1 will present FBL's own mission and vision, which were created with the education of business and legal professionals and research in business and law in mind. Section 5.2 will report on the developments in respect of the two goals in the 2020 PRME SIP Report under Principle 2.

Goal 3: Increase the level of awareness among all staff, students, and stakeholders of FBL of our commitment to PRME.

Goal 4: Improve understanding of how the FBL's commitment to PRME is relevant to the work of every person in the faculty and to our students and other stakeholders.

## 5.1. FBL's mission, vision and values

The faculty's aim is to transform business, legal, and management education, research, and thought leadership globally to deliver just outcomes and create a sustainable future. Our core values commit us to being inclusive, innovative, and responsive to the needs of students and employers and the communities in which they live and work.

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### Faculty Mission

To provide world-class open education and research which empowers individuals, organisations and society to influence future global development and deliver just outcomes.

### Faculty Vision

To empower all professionals who strive to solve complex, critical problems by continuously learning, improving practice, supporting diversity, creating knowledge, and innovating for responsible growth. Our global community will deliver social mobility and create a sustainable future.

### University values

Inclusivity towards students and staff.

Innovation in teaching and research.

Responsiveness to the needs of students, employers, communities and society at large.

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## 5.2. Level of awareness

In 2022, one staff survey and two student surveys were carried out. The following two subsections will describe the result.

### FBL staff survey

From 13 April until 13 May 2022, a short online survey among all the staff in the FBL was carried out to gauge the level of awareness of our commitment to PRME. 83 staff responses were received (compared with 54 in 2020).

Q1. Please select your staff category (responses received from)

Central/Regional Academic/Research	42
Associate Lecturer	4
Secretarial & Support	15
Academic Related	22

Q2. Before this survey, were you aware that Open University is a signatory to the UN Global Compact, and as such is committed to supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs)?

- **Yes: 55 (66%), No: 28 (34%)** (Question not asked in 2020)

Q3. Are you familiar with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) and their targets?

- **Yes: 56 (67%), No: 27 (33%)** (2020 result: Yes: 38 (70%), No 16 (30%))

Q4. Do you think that any of the UN SDGs and targets are relevant to your work?

- **Yes: 75 (93%), No: 6 (7%)** (similar to 2020 result, but question in 2020 allowed for 'Not sure')

Q5. Before this survey, were you aware that FBL is a signatory to the UN Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME)?

- **Yes: 45 (54%), No: 38 (46%)** (2020 result: Yes: 43 (80%), No 11 (20%))

Q6. Do you think that any of the UN PRME principles are relevant to your work?

- **Yes: 68 (87%), No: 10 (13%)** (similar to 2020 result, but question in 2020 allowed for 'Not sure')

The results seem to indicate that we are not making much progress. One reason for this may be that, during the pandemic, we had to recruit many new members of staff because OU student numbers temporarily increased by 40 percent.

As most of the people who responded 'No' to Question 6 were secretarial and support staff, they organised a team event to discuss how the UN PRME principles are relevant to each team member's work.

## FBL student survey

With the help of two virtual student interns and a colleague from the Law School, we developed and carried out two FBL student surveys. The purpose of this project was to ensure that:



1. FBL understands how best to communicate to FBL students its social and environmental sustainability-related commitments and how these commitments influence its curriculum and teaching, research, partnership, knowledge-exchange, outreach activities and operations.
2. FBL takes into consideration what students think FBL needs to do to fulfil its commitments to sustainability and the UN SDGs.
3. FBL understands what shape students would like an FBL student sustainability community to take.

### **Survey 1**

Survey 1 was intended to gauge FBL students' level of awareness of the OU's and FBL's commitments to the UN SDGs. It ran from 7 May until 20 May. 49 student responses received (0.5% response rate, possibly due to a mistake).

Q1. Before this survey, were you aware of the UN Sustainable Development Goals?

- **Yes: 23 (47%), No 26 (53%)**

Q2. Before this survey, were you aware that the Open University is a signatory to the UN Global Compact, and hence committed to supporting the UN SDGs?

- **Yes: 6 (12%), No 43 (88%)**

Q3. Before this survey, were you aware that the Faculty of Business and Law is a signatory to UN PRME, and hence committed to supporting the UN SDGs?

- **Yes 4 (8%), No 45 (92%)**

The results of Survey 1 make it clear that FBL needs to better communicate to all the FBL students its signatory status and commitments to UN PRME and the SDGs.

## Survey 2

The follow-up survey served to find out what students find important. Some interesting results are as follows.

Q3. What do you think are the three most pressing issues that the world needs to address?

	OUBS	OULS	FBL
Poverty	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Inequality	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
Responsible/sustainable economic development and growth			
Climate change	<b>3</b>		<b>3</b>
Loss of biodiversity			
Environmental pollution			
Democratic institutions being under threat		<b>3</b>	
World peace			

Q 7. Which of the following groups of the UN SDGs would you most like to learn more about in the FBL curriculum?

	OUBS	Both	OULS	FBL
People: UN SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6	10		4	<b>14</b>
Prosperity: UN SDGs 7, 8, 9 and 10	2	1	2	<b>5</b>
Planet: UN SDGs 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15	3		5	<b>8</b>
Peace: UN SDG 16	1			<b>1</b>
Partnership: UN SDG 17			2	<b>2</b>
Total	<u>16</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>12</u>	<u><b>30</b></u>

In answer to the question what kind of content FBL students would like FBL to present on a sustainability hub, the most votes went to:

- Wider information on the UN SDGs, PRME and global progress towards the goals (as measured by the UN and others).
- Information on sustainability-related policies, events, and activities in FBL.
- Links to resources on implementing greener business practices in business and other organisations.
- Information on internships, placements, and other opportunities available to work with the SDGs and/or sustainable development and practice.

## Summary of progress on Principle 2

	2021-2023	2023-2025
Goal 3	Student and staff surveys show that the level of awareness of FBL's commitment to PRME and the UN SDGs has not increased significantly.	Further increase the level of awareness of FBL's commitment to PRME and the UN SDGs.
Goal 4	A FBL student survey has shown that they find poverty, inequality and climate change the most pressing problems. They would like to learn more about the SDGs related to people, planet, and prosperity.	Organise events for students related to poverty, inequality and climate change.  Further include SDGs related to people, planet and prosperity into the FBL curriculum.

# 6. Principle 3 – Method

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

FBL's programmes are underpinned by a rigorous attention to quality in terms of academic standards, student experience and multimedia learning products. In 2020, an exercise mapping assessed module learning outcomes against ethics (E), social responsibility (R), and environmental sustainability (S) resulted in the finding that our business and law curricula strongly reflect ethics and our social mission, but they focus much less on environmental sustainability. In February 2023, a similar curriculum audit was repeated.

Section 6.1 will discuss the findings of the most recent ERS mapping exercise for the Business School and the Law School. Section 6.2 explains our approach to supporting students in achieving their study and career goals. Section 6.3 will discuss activities related to Goals 5 and 6.

Goal 5: To consider explicitly in what ways to include the UN SDGs in new curriculum at the business proposal stage. KPI: Include this as a criterion in the proposal documentation.

Goal 6: To attract more expertise in sustainability in business and other organisations and place more emphasis on environmental sustainability in our curriculum.

## 6.1. Business and law curriculum ERS audit

How to audit or map the faculty's curriculum for teaching about ethics, social responsibility and environmental sustainability is a difficult problem. In FBL, we analysed the formally assessed learning outcomes stated in each module's business proposal documentation. This documentation is supposed to be kept up-to-date as a module is revised or updated every few years. If these assessed learning outcomes do not mention ethics, social responsibility, or environmental sustainability, it does not necessarily mean that these topics are not taught or assessed in a module. However, it does mean that the high level assessed learning outcomes do not specifically include these topics.

FBL's main undergraduate business programme is the BA (Honours) Business Management. On successfully completing this course, students will be awarded the BA (Honours) Business Management degree. If students have chosen a specialist route, their degree title will reflect it as follows:

- BA (Honours) Business Management (Accounting)
- BA (Honours) Business Management (Economics)
- BA (Honours) Business Management (Innovation and Enterprise)
- BA (Honours) Business Management (Leadership Practice)
- BA (Honours) Business Management (Marketing)

At post-graduate level, the business curriculum includes our MBA, MSc in Finance and MSc in Human Resource Management. In the table below, these are shown as 'Core OUBS'. The Policing curriculum and the three degree-apprenticeships, which are taught in England only, are included in 'Other OUBS' in the table below.

	2023				2020			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>S</b>
Core OUBS	45	28	9	9	51	34	6	5
Other OUBS	42	19	8	0	45	18	9	1
OULS modules	15	7	3	0	16	3	3	0

The table shows that, in 2020, 34 of the 50 modules in the core business curriculum included assessed learning outcomes mentioning ethics. Six modules included assessed learning outcomes explicitly mentioning social responsibility. Environmental sustainability was explicitly mentioned in the assessed learning outcomes of only five modules across the core business curriculum. There were two undergraduate business modules that were entirely dedicated to sustainability and innovation in management. In 2020, three of the 16 modules in the law curriculum had assessed learning outcomes that explicitly mentioned ethics, three mentioned social responsibility and zero modules had assessed learning outcomes that mentioned environmental sustainability.

Deliberations started on how best to make sure that ethics, social responsibility, environmental sustainability, and the UN SDGs are included in the learning outcomes of the business and law curricula. The idea was that planned new curriculum for the coming years should be designed to reflect the FBL's commitment to UN PRME and the UN SDGs.

The table also shows that, in 2023, across the 44 modules of the core business curriculum, 26 modules include assessed learning outcomes related to ethics

(42 learning outcomes). Nine modules include assessed learning outcomes related to social responsibility (11 learning outcomes). Nine modules include assessed learning outcomes related to environmental sustainability (also 11 learning outcomes). Of OUBS's 41 other modules, 18 modules have assessed learning outcomes related to ethics (24 learning outcomes), eight modules have assessed learning outcomes related to social responsibility, and zero of the learning outcomes are related to environmental sustainability. Click [here](#) for an overview of the current business curriculum.

In 2023, of the 15 OULS Bachelor of Laws (LLB) and BA (Honours) Criminology and Law modules, seven have assessed learning outcomes that mention ethics, three have assessed learning outcomes that mention social responsibility and zero mention environmental sustainability. In the process of producing its new LLB, the Law School has taken the initiative to decolonise the law curriculum. Furthermore, the Law School is exploring how to include the UN SDGs in the new law curriculum. Click [here](#) for an overview of the current law curriculum.

## **6.2. Access, Participation, Student Success and Employability**

Including ethics, social responsibility and sustainability in our curriculum is one aspect of FBL's commitment to PRME in terms of teaching. However, another aspect stems from our mission to be 'open to people, places, methods and ideas', that is, our commitment to ensuring access to higher education for all who seek it. The Open University is radically inclusive in the following three ways.

1. Our open admissions policy helps thousands of people who failed to achieve their potential earlier in life.

- 33% of students had one A level or a lower qualification at entry.

2. There is no typical OU student. People of all ages and backgrounds study with us, for all sorts of reasons – to update their skills, get a qualification, boost their career, change direction, prove themselves, or keep mentally active. For example,

- 71% of directly-registered OU students work full or part-time during their studies.
- 25% of OU UK undergraduates live in the 25% most deprived areas.
- 32% of new OU undergraduates are under 25.
- 71% of OU undergraduates had no previous HE qualifications on entry.

3. The OU is the largest provider of [higher education for people with disabilities](#) in the UK:

- 37,078 students declaring a disability studied with us in 2021/22.

The University's Access, Participation and Success strategy provides a robust guide to achieving our aims related to equality, diversity and inclusion, and lays foundation for the University's plans submitted to the regulators to increase access and student success for diverse student groups.

Another area of activity focuses on the development of employability skills, particularly for our undergraduate provision, guided by the University's Employability Framework. The faculty has worked closely with the University's Enhanced Employability and Career Progression (EECP) team to embed employability skills (including digital and information literacy) in the



undergraduate curriculum through module learning activities and assessment, and to map skills development supported by the University's FutureYOU personal development planning resource for students.

The faculty collaborates with the Careers and Employability Services unit (CES) to enhance career progression of postgraduate students and build links with employers and professional bodies as well as host events and other career enhancement activities.

### **6.3. Working to reach Goals 5 and 6**

As mentioned above, the sustainability leads for OUBS and OULS are working with the Teaching Directors in the respective schools to develop ways of including the UN SDGs and ethics, responsibility, and sustainability in the curricula. The overview in Section 6.1. was based on the information provided in the documentation that is part of the business proposal for a module. This information will be updated throughout the life of a module and must be mapped at qualification level.

In the past two years, OUBS has recruited a few academics who have this expertise. Modules that focus more strongly on environmental sustainability are B327 Sustainable Enterprise and Innovation, BB853 Contemporary Issues in Organisations, and B872 Creating and Sustaining Value. OULS developed W260 International environmental and space law as part of our new LLB degree. This has been written by experts in environmental and space law and in collaboration with [AstrobiologyOU](#). Furthermore, the STEM Faculty's T891 Making

Environmental Decisions and T892 Sustainable Organisations are electives on the Master of Laws programme.

### Summary of progress on Principle 3

	2021-2023	2023-2025
Goal 5	It is not yet clear how to make sure that new modules will pay more attention to ERS and/or the SDGs. The two sustainability leads are working on this.	Ensure that Ethics, Responsibility, and Sustainability (SDGS) are embedded in the assessable learning outcomes at learning design stage. In this way, we will be able to capture this data for reporting purposes as well.
Goal 6	FBL recruited a few new people with expertise in environmental sustainability.	Ensure that FBL has sufficient expertise to create new modules that teach about environmental sustainability.

## 7. Principle 4 – Research

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

The Faculty of Business and Law is home to four Academic Centres of Excellence (ACE) and members from both schools contribute to one cross-faculty Research Cluster (RC). In addition, the Business School is home to five RCs and the Law School is home to eight RCs. The research in each of the ACEs and RCs is intended to solve social problems. See: [Research activity | The Open University Business School](#) and [Research | The Open University Law School](#) .

Goal 7: To place emphasis on environmental sustainability in our research and scholarship. KPI: increase the percentage of peer reviewed research output related to environmental sustainability.

## 7.1 Research centres in FBL

The Academic Centres of Excellence (ACE) comprise:

- The Centre for Voluntary Sector Leadership (CVSL)
- The Centre for Policing Research and Learning (CPRL)
- Research into Employment, Empowerment and Futures (REEF)
- Centre of Public Understanding of Finance, Institutions and Networks (PUFin)

### Centre for Voluntary Sector Leadership (CVSL)

[The Centre for Voluntary Sector Leadership \(CVSL\)](#) focuses on leadership development and collaborative leadership in the voluntary (non-profit) sector through a virtuous circle of engaged research, learning and knowledge exchange. At present, it focuses on the smaller, locally based voluntary organisations that have limited resources to access expensive training and development resources. Through a focus on inclusive, participative and collaborative leadership (as opposed to leadership focused on the elite or those in position of power), it seeks to enable such organisations to tackle more effectively the complex social and environmental challenges that they face in the post-austerity policy environment.

### Centre for Policing Research and Learning (CPRL)

[The Centre for Policing Research and Learning \(CPRL\)](#) is a collaboration between The Open University and, currently, 24 UK police forces and police agencies to create and use knowledge to improve policing for the good of society. The Centre is led from the Business School and works with more than 50 academics from all faculties and institutes across The Open University covering a wide

range of academic disciplines relevant to policing, including leadership, management, organisation studies, psychology, law, engineering, web science, criminology, and educational technology. CPRL's impact will be discussed under Principle 5.

## **Research into Employment, Empowerment and Futures (REEF)**

[Research into Employment, Empowerment and Futures \(REEF\)](#) is concerned with the profound change driven by developments in technology, shifts in geo-political power and the climate emergency as experienced in societies and workplaces. It seeks to grapple with the urgent question of how to create sustainable economies and societies in a way that secures the future of the planet and all humans, animals and wildlife that inhabit it.

## **Centre of Public Understanding of Finance, Institutions and Networks (PUFin)**

[Centre of Public Understanding of Finance, Institutions and Networks \(PUFin\)](#)

works to improve public understanding of personal finance through its research and the delivery of free resources, providing individuals with the tools to make sound financial decisions. PuFin has been refreshed to focus on financial decision-making under uncertainty, institutions that affect and are affected by people's decision-making, and the interaction between people and their networks.

## **7.2 Research clusters in FBL**

The Research Clusters (RC) represent common and congruent research interests of staff. They are led by a senior researcher, are at various stages of

exploration and development, and have a long-term plan to grow expertise and reputation. Like the ACEs, the RCs provide an environment for academics to lead externally funded research and engagement projects, and an academic base for doctoral researchers with related interests.

The cross-faculty RC is:

- Space Exploration Analysis and Research (SPEAR).

The five RCs in the Business School are:

- Gendered Organisational practice (GOP)
- History and Political Economy of Business and Finance (HYPE)
- Social and Responsible Marketing (SRM)
- Social and Sustainable Enterprise (SSE)
- Strategic Management and Leadership (SML)

The eight RCs in the Law School are:

- Brain Science & Law (BraSciL)
- Feminism, Gender and Law (FLAG)
- International Law
- Law and Belonging
- Law and Religion
- Law, Information, Future, Technology (LIFT)
- Legal Histories
- The futures of legal education and practice

## **Cross-faculty Research Cluster: Space Exploration Analysis and Research (SPEAR)**

[Space Exploration Analysis and Research \(SPEAR\)](#) focuses on research, scholarship and knowledge exchange in the increasingly important area of

analysis and evaluation of the deeper and wider socio-economic benefits of space exploration and development. Building on existing capacity created by the multi-disciplinary and cross-faculty reputational capital of the OU's expertise on space, the cluster focuses on key issues of business and society, public policy, industrial strategy and place-based leadership, governance and law, combating social exclusion and global challenges/sustainable developments goals that are related to the Space and Earth Economies.

## **OUBS: History and Political Economy of Business and Finance (HYPE)**

[HYPE](#) brings together scholars who aim at developing a critical approach to business and financial theory. HYPE puts forward an interdisciplinary research agenda using insights from the perspective of political economy (i.e. an interdisciplinary approach to the relations among individuals, governments, and public policy) and history.

## **OUBS: Gendered Organisational Practice (GOP)**

[GOP](#) takes feminist solidarity as a starting point to create a space where feminists of any gender can share insights and knowledge from academic study and practice. The cluster fosters continuous collaboration and exchange between practitioners and academics and provides a hub for those interested in developing equality through their research but also for practitioners wanting to make their organisations more egalitarian and fairer places.

## **OUBS: Social and Responsible Marketing (SRM)**

[SRM](#) seeks to explore the principles and practices of social marketing, sustainability in marketing, and strategic marketing focused on behaviour change interventions for societal wellbeing. It draws on the Strategy and Marketing Department's scholarly expertise in social marketing, strategic marketing, marketing ethics, marketing creativity, marketing-led corporate social responsibility, social enterprise and voluntary sector marketing, sustainable and ethical consumption, and consumer culture.

## **OUBS: Strategic Management and Leadership (SML)**

[SML](#) is concerned with strategic management and leadership in its widest sense and in all contexts (e.g. global and local, private and public sector), while also focusing on sub-interests that specifically address the OU mission – including strategic corporate social responsibility and strategic management in developing/emerging economies.

## **OUBS: Social and Sustainable Enterprise (SSE)**

[SSE](#) addresses the connections between entrepreneurial activity, innovation and the transition towards more environmentally and socially sustainable ways of doing business. It builds on a tradition of research, teaching and engagement activities in the Faculty and includes pioneering research on cooperatives, performance measurement for social enterprises and corporate social responsibility.



## **OULS: Brain Science & Law (BraSciL)**

[BraSciL](#) is concerned with examining the use and potential use of evidence from neuroscience and associated brain sciences within the justice system. They are collaborating with neuroscientists, psychologists and psychiatrists to understand the reliability of scientific claims and working with lawyers worldwide to understand how science is being used in different jurisdictions and to recommend best practice.

## **OULS: Feminism, Law and Gender (FLAG)**

The focus of research in [FLAG](#) is on the intersections between feminism, gender and the law. Academics and PhD students within OU Law examine this complex relationship in relation to a number of areas, including gender, sexuality and criminal law, first women lawyers, online violence against women & online misogyny, international law & women's rights in post-conflict situations, women in the legal profession, women, coercive control & criminal law, coercive control, prisons, gender identity and law, civil weddings and the cost of marrying.

## **OULS: International Law**

Much of OULS' research has an international focus, reflecting the global nature of our Masters programme. Three areas of focus are:

- gender, international law and human rights: exploring how public international law addresses the long-term impact of armed conflict on women, and how women's rights are protected in the transition from war to peace
- international human rights law and asylum law

- private international law, restitution and arbitration.

## **OULS: Law and Belonging: Identities, Citizenship and Justice**

The focus of research in the Law and Belonging RC informs questions of matters of belonging, identity, citizenship, and justice.

## **OULS: Law and Religion**

The [Law and Religion RC](#) is particularly interested in interdisciplinary study – the synthesis of law and philosophy, theology, politics and history. It is run by a team of Open University and international academics researching in the field of Law and Religion.

## **OULS: Law, Information & Technology (LIT)**

The legal discussions of emerging issues in the uses and abuses of technology, and regulation pose increasingly challenging questions for the law, and its responses. The [LIT cluster](#) explores issues connected to these topics and more, using interdisciplinary methods and approaches.

## **OULS: Legal Histories**

The [Legal Histories](#) RC provides a collaborative space for academics, PhD students and visiting researchers interested in legal histories.

## **OULS: The Futures of Legal Education and Practice**

[The Futures of Legal Education and Practice](#) RC draws together several academics from within The Open University Law School who have an interest in the development and future directions of legal education and legal practice. Research topics covered within this cluster include:

- the use and integration of learning theories
- the role of emotion within legal education
- the place of EU law within the curriculum
- skills development within the law degree
- the development of apprenticeship models of legal education
- clinical legal education
- training within the legal profession
- the wellbeing of practitioners
- ethical issues involved in all aspects of legal education and practice

## 7.3 Open Research Online

Open Research Online (ORO) is the Open Access repository of The Open University's peer reviewed and published research, as well as other research output types which meet the ["Frascati" definition](#) of research. Deposit to ORO is required in the [Code of Practice for Research](#).

The service is publicly accessible and can be browsed and searched freely. While most records are research papers, the repository allows a range of research output types to be recorded.

See: <http://oro.open.ac.uk/>

## Summary of progress on Principle 4

	2021-2023	2023-2025
Goal 7	In the period 2021-2023 about 5% of peer reviewed publications were about environmental sustainability.	Increase the proportion of peer reviewed publications on environmental sustainability in business and law. Increase the number of PhD students working on sustainability.

## 8. Principle 5 – Partnership

**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.

As will be clear from the information under Principles 3 and 4, the Open University Faculty of Business and Law engages in many different types of partnership in terms of designing curriculum, carrying out teaching, doing research and contributing to society, both locally and internationally.

Goal 8: To involve more students in our PRME-related activities, especially in the Business School.

## 8.1 FBL partnerships

In partnership with the NHS in Milton Keynes, for about two years from 2021 until the end of April 2023 during which most colleagues were working from home, the ground floor of the faculty's building, the Michael Young Building, was used as a COVID vaccination centre.

PolicyWISE will be the UK's first academic network to lead policy research and knowledge exchange across the four nations of the UK and Ireland taking a deliberately comparative approach to public policy-making in post-devolution, post-Brexit UK. The Open University has been awarded £1m in funding from Dangoor Education for its launch and development over four years. Director of PolicyWISE, Dewi Knight, will be based in Cardiff heading up a small team of staff whose academic home will be the Faculty of Business & Law. Two institutionally funded post-doctoral research positions link the work of PolicyWISE to Societal Challenges and the OU's own research strategy.

## 8.2 Business school partnerships

The Open University Business School is a member of the Global Business School Network (a group of over 130 schools worldwide pledged to strengthen management education in developing countries.)

Commitments to international development activities – for example with Ghana and Ethiopia in capacity-building projects, are continuing and expanding. Such initiatives demonstrate our support for business development as a way to

combat abuses of human rights, labour conditions and environmental degradation (as covered in Principles 2, 6 and 8 of the UN Global Compact). The Centre for Policing Research and Learning (CPRL) involves collaboration between The Open University and, currently, 24 UK police forces and police agencies serves to create and use knowledge to improve policing for the good of society.

## 8.3 The Law School's Open Justice Centre

The [Open Justice Centre](#) at The Open University Law School provides free legal advice and guidance to people and groups who may struggle to access appropriate legal support through other means. An online clinic is run by Open University law students and supervised by qualified solicitors. It provides free legal advice on contract, tort, employment law and consumer issues. In addition, Open University law students, under the supervision of Law School academics, provide both face-to-face and online sessions with schools, prisons and community groups on specific legal topics to help people understand their rights. The [Open Justice Centre's 2022 Annual Report](#) is its sixth.

- The Open Justice Centre works with the UN's Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to deliver the [Education for Justice \(E4J\)](#) initiative which aims to supply integrity and ethics education resources for schools, colleges and universities around the world.
- Open Justice has developed '[A practical guide to UK human rights and discrimination law](#)', an introductory free online course for anyone who is interested in learning more about human rights and discrimination law.

- The Open Justice Centre collaborated with UK legal charity Support Through Court (STC) to launch a [free open online resource](#) to for those working or volunteering in organisations dealing with domestic abuse issues.

## Summary of progress on Principle 5

	2021-2023	2023-2025
Goal 8	The 2022 FBL student survey indicates ways in which students would like to be involved with the UN SDGs.	Apply the learning from the 2022 student survey to create more ways for students to be involved in ERS and UN SDG-related activities.

# 9. Principle 6 – Dialogue

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

This section will show some examples of how the faculty engages in dialogue on critical issues related to social responsibility, and to a lesser extent, environmental sustainability.

Goal 9: To give greater publicity to FBL research seminars, blogs and other communications

## Examples from 2023

- *Dragons' Den* star Deborah Meaden and Felicity Hannah talk to some of the world's biggest business names about climate change and sustainability in the return of [The Big Green Money Show](#). Ali Ataullah (Professor in Finance) and Rodion Skovoroda (Senior Lecturer in Finance) have remained as the academic consultants for this OU / BBC co-production which started a new 10-part series in March 2023.
- Open University Business School alumna Zoë André-Lawson is one of 25 business school graduates who has been selected by AACSB International (AACSB)—the world's largest business education alliance— as a 2023 Influential Leader. Zoë is a serving member of the OU Business School (OUBS) [Alumni Council](#) and since completing her MBA with distinction in 2015, Zoë has gone on to excel in her career. Now a senior scientist for Johnson & Johnson, and an active member of the Women in Pharma communities, Zoë is a role model for women in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) through her work with various professional and civil society organisations.
- On 2 February 2023, the Research into Employment, Empowerment and Futures (REEF) academic centre of excellence held a day of dialogue from leading practitioners and academics on active organisational research to combat climate change.
- On 17 and 18 January 2023, our Gendered Organisational Practice (GOP) research cluster hosted an event to create and nurture spaces where we can collectively contemplate gender equality, in academia and broader practice.



- Launch of the free [‘Search and rescue of refugees at sea’](#) course, which is an introduction to international laws that govern maritime search and rescue (or SAR). It also seeks to examine issues of wellbeing which might arise from working with traumatised people and is designed for those who have an interest in the law of the sea or may find themselves working on SAR operations.

## Examples from 2022

- FBL held five events to celebrate UK Disability History Month (16 November – 16 December) which had its theme of ‘Disability, Health, and Well Being’.  
**15 November** (10:30 – 12:30) – hybrid event: Inclusive Assessment Workshop.  
**24 November** (12:00 – 12:45) – online: Legal Regulation and Disability.  
**1 December** (12:00 – 12:30) – online: Exploring barriers for students.  
**1 December** (12:30 – 13:00) – online: Exploring barriers in the workplace.  
**14 December** (13:15 – 14:15) – online: Accessibility and its role in the OU’s strategy.
- Hosted by our Centre for Policing Research and Learning (CPRL), an event was held to increase awareness and understanding of the key strands of work being undertaken in Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) from a policing, politics, practice and research perspective. The high-profile Labour MP Jess Phillips, the Shadow Minister for Domestic Violence and Safeguarding, joined the panel on campus in Milton Keynes for a one-day hybrid conference last Wednesday (2 November) looking at ways to combat gender-based violence.

- Presenter Tine Thygesen, described as ‘in the top 10 most influential tech entrepreneurs and speakers in Europe’, is on a mission to protect planetary boundaries. The international speaker and strategist chatted about the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) agenda, what this really means and how companies are responding, as part of the Business School’s series of lunchtime webinars for our alumni.
- A fascinating recent two-part OU / BBC co-production [\*Trouble at Topshop\*](#) explored how the brand was transformed by a group of young, talented and creative women, into a mecca for everyone who loves fashion. The story ends in its spectacular crash under the stewardship of controversial entrepreneur Sir Philip Green. The show’s two academic consultants from the Business School were Nela Smolovic Jones (Senior Lecturer in Organisation Studies) and Yue Meng-Lewis (Senior Lecturer in Digital Marketing).
- Former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn kicked-off the OU Law Society’s Guest Speaker Series this academic year. The OU Law Society was created in 2010 by students aiming to bring together learners, academics, professionals and any other individuals interested in the law, to discuss its study and research. Its guest lecture series runs monthly between September and June.
- The Business School is one of the partners of ‘We Invented the Weekend’, a bold and imaginative free festival for the North of the UK. The partnership with HemingwayDesign, event delivery partners, is led by Owain Smolovic Jones, Director of our Research into Employment, Empowerment and Futures (REEF) academic centre of excellence. The two-day event in

Salford seeks to celebrate and build on the fact that it was ordinary people organising together who managed to invent and win the concept of a 'weekend' in the first place.

- Prof Alex Garel was the guest speaker for a research seminar from our Centre for Public Understanding of Finance, Institutions and Networks (PUFIN), exploring whether investors' personal experience of climate change affects their voting behaviour on environmental issues.

## Summary of progress on Principle 6

	2021-2023	2023-2025
Goal 9	All ACEs and RCs now regularly organise and publicise seminars and events.	Advertise and publicise FBL seminars and events externally and make them easy to find and easily accessible.

# 10. Principle 7 – Organisational practices

**Principle 7:** We understand that our own organisational practices should serve as example of the values and attitudes we convey to our students.

The Open University's organisational practices demonstrate that in terms of environmental sustainability, ethics and social responsibility, we try to practise what we preach. Most policies for organisational practices related to ethics (E), social responsibility (R), and Environmental sustainability (S) are developed at university level instead of initiated by the faculty.

Firstly, The Open University's Ethics Policy sets a framework for all the key University policies relating to our organisational practices.

Secondly, there are the University's policies whereby our values are also those expressed in UK legislation, policy and practice. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is undoubtedly the issue that is most important to the University because it directly relates to our mission of being open to people, places, methods and ideas.

Thirdly, there are the University's policies that are rooted in our values and that align with the Global Compact and the UN SDGs relating to sustainability.

Goal 10: To report on the FBL's progress towards the University's equality targets for 2022

## 10.1 Ethics (E)

The Open University's Ethics Policy is sponsored by the Vice Chancellor and University Secretary and reviewed annually by the Academic Policy and Governance unit. The OU's Ethics Policy is based on the seven Nolan Principles of Public Life.

The Open University's Ethics Policy sets a framework for all the key University policies relating to our organisational practices. It requires that the mission and values of the institution inform what we do and how we do it, and that we will always conduct our business with integrity and in a legal manner. University officers, employees, students, other members of the University and any other associated person acting on the University's behalf are responsible for acting honestly and with integrity by ensuring that their activities, interests and behaviours do not conflict with these values regardless of their seniority.

## 10.2 Social responsibility (R)

As a public body, The Open University has statutory duties that set out responsibilities to society. The Open University operates in all four nations of the United Kingdom. Therefore, its statutory duties derive from the Legislative Frameworks in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

The starting page of The Open University website displays our Statement on Equality and Diversity (<http://www.open.ac.uk/>) which links to our Equality and Diversity website (<http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/>). We take our mission of being '*open to people, places, methods and ideas*' very seriously, particularly when it comes to being open to people.

For example, the Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the *Equality Act 2010* requires us to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations between groups of people. A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Furthermore, government policies concentrated on the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) agenda, leading to a formal action plan to meet regulatory targets about access and widening participation in higher education for students from different socio-economic categories. The OU developed an Equality Scheme and the Access, Participation and Success (APS) strategy, appointed a Dean for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, strengthened student support policies, and invested in capabilities in data analytics.

## **The University's Equality Scheme**

The University's equality scheme was originally launched in April 2016. A mid-term review was conducted in 2018. The refreshed equality scheme was in place from 2018 to 2022. A new [\*Open University Equality Scheme 2022–2026\*](#) was launched in the year 2022/2023. Information about the equality scheme, plans, actions and reports can be found here (<http://www.open.ac.uk/equality->

[diversity/content/policy-plans-reports](#)). See also [The Open University in Scotland: Public Sector Equality Duty Report 2017](#).

## **Access, participation, and success (APS)**

The APS plan aims to support all students who fall within Office for Students (OfS) and Open University defined characteristics of underrepresentation and disadvantage, and focuses on differentials between various groups of students across the whole student lifecycle including but not limited to:

- Students from low socio-economic backgrounds;
- Disabled students;
- Students from different ethnic backgrounds;
- Mature students;
- Care leavers.

## **Objectives and KPIs**

The University's four equality objectives<sup>1</sup> are:

1. Increased proportion of Black and Asian students registering.
2. Reduce the gap in the award of good module passes between Black and White students, Asian and White students, students in the lowest and

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<sup>1</sup> Note that these KPIs were reformulated and are therefore a little different from the 2020 SIP report.

highest Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), disabled and non-disabled students.

3. Improve the representation of disabled, BAME, and female staff in senior roles.
4. Improve line managers' capability to recruit, manage and develop diverse teams.

Progress on achieving the four equality objectives in the University's Equality Scheme is as follows.

### 1. Increased proportion of Black and Asian students registering.

	2017/2018	2020/2021	Target for 2022/2023
Black	3.8%	5.0%	5.2%
Asian	3.6%	7.1%	5.5%

### 2. Reduce the gap in the award of good module passes between:

	Gap in 2017/2018	Gap in 2020/2021	Target for 2022/2023
Black and White students	31.1%	25.3%	20.6%
Asian and White students	16.6%	14.9%	12.1%
Students in the lowest and highest IMD	15.4%	13.7%	12.2%
Students with disability and no disability	15.7%	14.8%	12.8%

FBL Undergraduate students declaring a disability in 2021-22:

- 19.61% (3858 out of 19669 headcount) / 21.26% FTE



### **3. Improve the representation of female, disabled, and BAME staff in senior roles**

- (i) An increased proportion of female staff in senior roles to 45% by 2022. [At 31 July 2022 this figure was 47.7%]
- (ii) An increased proportion of disabled staff in senior roles from 2.9% to 6% by 2022. [At 31 July 2022 this figure was 4.2%]
- (iii) An increased proportion of BAME staff in senior roles from 8% to 11% by 2022 [At 31 July 2022 this figure was 11.1%]

Furthermore, the University provides information on the gender pay-gap in accordance with the statutory requirement for organisations with more than 250 employees. See the reports here: <http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/content/gender-pay-gap-reports>.

### **4. Improve line managers' capability to recruit, manage and develop diverse teams.**

Key Performance Indicator(s):

- (i) 50% participation achieved by 2020, and 80% by 2021, on the following line manager development modules:
  - Management Practices. As of February 2023, 38% of line managers working in FBL had commenced or completed this training.
  - Prevent (Counter Terrorism) [At 31 July 2022: 95%]
  - Safeguarding [At 31 July 2022: 90%]
  - Unconscious Bias. As of February 2023, 37% of all staff working in FBL had completed this training.
  - Equality Essentials [At 31 July 2022: 84%]
- ii. A reduced gap in Staff Survey results between disabled staff and non-disabled, for the following two metrics by 2022:

- Satisfaction with line management (i.e. staff report that they are satisfied with line management) – from 5% (2017) to 2% (by 2022)
- Satisfaction with managerial support (i.e. staff report that they receive positive managerial support) from 7% (2017) to 4% (by 2022)

In the University's 2022 Staff Barometer Survey, 87% of staff (declared disabled and non-disabled) reported their line manager as being supportive, and 84% reporting that their line manager communicates effectively.

## **Students in secure environments (SiSE)**

The unique partnership between the University and the UK's prison services began in 1972. It provides access to higher education for prisoners who have not previously had the opportunity to study at this level and who have demonstrated their potential and motivation to succeed.

The University offers qualifications in a broad range of subjects and provides access to many educational opportunities, from short introductory modules to longer, broader modules leading to degrees and other recognised qualifications including our Business and Management degree programme. Courses are available in approximately 150 prisons and 50 Secure Hospital Units, covering all security categories, and many students continue their education when released into the community.

Open University learning materials are often provided in hard copy formats in order to address prison requirements. However, in recent years SiSE has developed 'The Virtual Campus', a secure intranet system, currently available in England and Wales, which enables students to access a range of information, communication facilities and other resources which would otherwise only be available online.

## **Eradicating modern slavery**

The annually renewed statement on *Eradicating Modern Slavery in Supply Chains* can be found here

(<http://www.open.ac.uk/about/main/sites/www.open.ac.uk.about.main/files/files/modern-slavery-act-statement.pdf>) and is valid until 31 December 2023.

## **Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults**

Another element in this group of policies is our *Safeguarding Policy Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults*, effective from September 2022 and reviewed in February 2023 by the Safeguarding Steering Group. This policy is informed by legislation and guidance including:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022)
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2019
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0–25 years – Statutory guidance 2014
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Children Act 2014
- England: Working together to safeguard children – A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, Updated December 2020, The Care Act 2014 and Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- Scotland: National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014

## 10.3 Environmental sustainability (s)

The Open University is committed to the principles of environmental protection, sustainability and sustainable development. The Open University Estates management policies are aimed at environmental protection and ecological sustainability. The Open University's Estates Strategy 2015–2025 aims for Net Zero Impact by 2050. For example, the Open University's Estates department has a 'Sustainability Policy' which is supported by a 'Carbon Management Plan'.

Estates aimed to minimise the consumption of resources, the production of waste and harmful emissions to air, land and water. The University committed to reducing its carbon emissions by 36% by 2020 from a baseline in 2006, which it achieved. Furthermore, The Open University continues to build on its success of increasing the overall waste not sent to landfill from 46% in 2006 to 97.4% in 2019. In 2019, waste to landfill in 2019 was just 2.59% of the total waste produced. Only 0.35% went to landfill in 2021/22.

Go Green is a University-wide programme that will reduce the Open University's impact on the environment. Go Green will achieve environmental and financial savings across the University by engaging and empowering staff to take action on energy, waste, water and travel.

### Summary of progress on Principle 7

	2021–2023	2023–2025
Goal 10	Reported on FBL and OU progress. Some data still incomplete.	Continue to report on OU and FBL progress.

# 11. Goals for the next two years

This section of the SIP report summarises the main goals that we have set ourselves for the next 24 months until March 2025 and the key performance indicators that will indicate our progress towards achieving these goals.

## **Principle 1 – Purpose**

Goal 1: Clarify how PRME/ERS/SDGs are integrated into the new FBL strategy 2023–2028.

Goal 2: For OUBS and OULS, the administrative process for integrating the SDGs into the business curriculum, the data to be collected, and how to display it are being developed in collaboration with the teaching directors.

## **Principle 2 – Values**

Goal 3: Further increase the level of awareness of FBL's commitment to PRME and the UN SDGs.

Goal 4: Organise events for students related to poverty, inequality and climate change. Further include SDGs related to people, planet and prosperity into the FBL curriculum.

## **Principle 3 – Method**

Goal 5: Ensure that Ethics, Responsibility, and Sustainability (SDGS) are embedded in the assessable learning outcomes at learning design stage. In this way, we will be able to capture this data for reporting purposes as well.

Goal 6: Ensure that FBL has sufficient expertise to create new modules that teach about environmental sustainability.

#### **Principle 4 – Research**

Goal 7: Increase the proportion of peer reviewed publications on environmental sustainability in business and law. Increase the number of PhD students working on sustainability.

#### **Principle 5 – Partnership**

Goal 8: Apply the learning from the 2022 student survey to create more ways for students to be involved in ERS and UN SDG-related activities.

#### **Principle 6 – Dialogue**

Goal 9: Advertise and publicise FBL seminars and events externally and make them easy to find and easily accessible.

#### **Principle 7 – Organisational practices**

Goal 10: Continue to report on OU and FBL progress.

