



# Sharing Information on Progress

Powering change for better businesses and better lives

Inaugural Report - 2022



1495  
UNIVERSITY OF  
**ABERDEEN**  
BUSINESS SCHOOL

**PRME**



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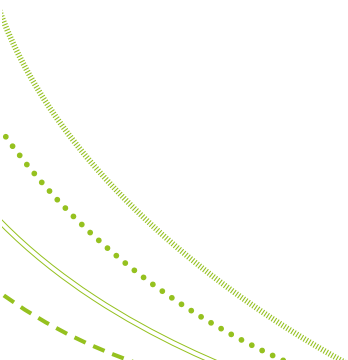
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## MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL PROFESSOR HAINA ZHANG

The United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) is a global initiative with the mission to inspire and champion responsible management education, research and thought leadership globally by bridging relationships and catalysing collaboration. PRME's vision is to realise the Sustainable Development Goals through responsible management education.

The University of Aberdeen Business School became a signatory to PRME in June 2020, at a time of reaffirmation of the University of Aberdeen's foundational purpose and at the establishment of the Business School's vision and mission. This was therefore the ideal time to become a stakeholder in the PRME initiative and embed PRME principles in our wide sphere of activities. In these times of huge global uncertainty, it has never been more important to raise awareness of the UN Strategic Development Goals and the need to ensure that our future leaders are committed to and equipped for a sustainable future.

This is therefore our first Sharing Information on Progress Report, and I am delighted to relay our commitment to addressing ethics, responsibility and sustainability within our teaching, research and societal engagement. Since 1495 the University of Aberdeen has been open to all and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in the services of others. This purpose defines our actions and underpins our ethos and mirrors SDG 4 Quality Education. As an ambitious school, we welcome this opportunity to review our activities across teaching, learning, research and societal engagement.

Our first SIP will help ensure that we deliver our strategic mission across three key strands all of which link directly into the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

### OUR COMMITMENT

I am delighted to support our commitment to the UN Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) and to their implementation throughout all our activities. We undertake to report on our progress and disseminate information on our effective practices which underpin these principles.



*Haina Zhang*

**Professor Haina Zhang**

Head of University of Aberdeen Business School

The University of Aberdeen Business School and the University of Aberdeen are committed to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In 2020, the University of Aberdeen Business School became a signatory to PRME.



## ABOUT PRME

The United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) is a global initiative with the mission to inspire and champion responsible management education, research and thought leadership globally by bridging relationships and catalysing collaboration. PRME's vision is to realise the Sustainable Development Goals through responsible management education. This report follows the structure of the Six Principles of PRME, namely:

**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 organisational 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: Partnerships**

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 organisations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability.

**5th in  
the UK**  
FOR OVERALL  
STUDENT  
SATISFACTION  
(2022 UK National  
Student Survey)

## ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

**Open to All and Dedicated to the Pursuit of Truth in the Service of Others**

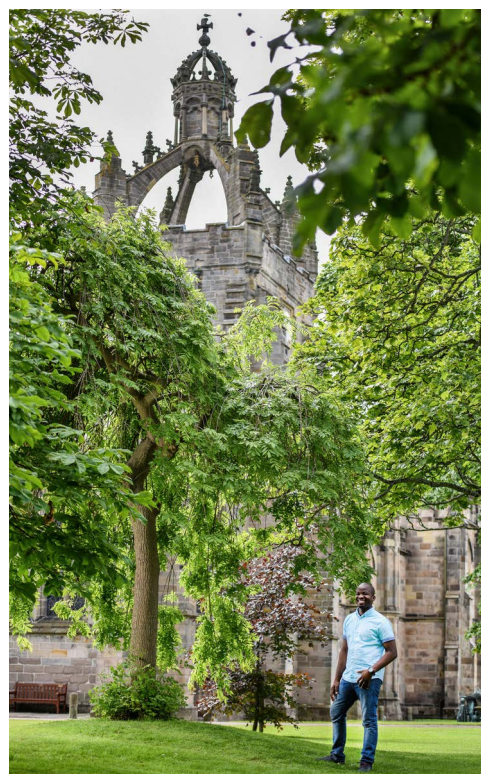
The University of Aberdeen is a public institution and one of the four ancient universities of Scotland. It is the fifth oldest University in the United Kingdom. It is consistently ranked within the top 30 universities in the United Kingdom and is ranked 158th in the world in the Times Higher Education 2022 ranking.

The University of Aberdeen is a broad-based, research-intensive University, and puts students at the centre of everything. Outstanding in a wide range of discipline areas, Aberdeen is credited for its international reach and commercialisation of research ideas into spin out companies. The University has over 16,000 matriculated students and 3,600 staff representing 130 nationalities. It encourages bold thinking, creativity and innovation, and nurtures ambition with many opportunities for professional and personal development in an inclusive learning environment which challenges and inspires.

The University continues to build on its achievements. Underpinning our high performance and significant growth is a £100m investment in Aberdeen's estate which will include the completion of a new Science Teaching Hub, the regeneration of the historic King's Quarter and a new Business School building. The University has also invested in new academic posts and in 2020 launched five interdisciplinary, cross-institution Research Centres that will catalyse world-leading research in our areas of strength. Our five Interdisciplinary Challenges are: Energy Transition; Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity; Environment and Biodiversity; Data and Artificial Intelligence; and Health, Nutrition and Wellbeing.

### OUR EDUCATION

Recognised as the Scottish University of the Year in the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2019, the University remains true to its roots as an ancient Scottish university, combining breadth and depth in its degree programmes and drawing strength from the quality of its research. Its flexible curriculum encourages students to grow as independent learners and therefore to thrive as graduates in the diverse workplaces of the future. Its education is open to all and the University is setting ambitious targets to further widen access. The University was ranked 5th in the UK for overall student satisfaction (2022 UK National Student Survey).



**INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK**

Aberdeen is increasing its international presence, positioning the University as a global organisation and building on established global partnerships in e.g. Qatar, China, North America, Europe. We feature in the top 50 institutions worldwide for international students and have been named 31st in the world for International Outlook. The University of Aberdeen is proud to be the first UK University to deliver programmes on a dedicated campus in Qatar in partnership with AFG College. Phase 1 has successfully recruited over 600 students and Phase 2 will see the creation of a substantially larger campus, with capacity for at least 5,000 students and research activity.

**IMPACT**

In 2020, the University of Aberdeen signed the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Accord. Our dedication to building a sustainable future is reflected in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2022, which seeks to capture universities' impact by assessing their activities against the UN SDGs. The University had been ranked among the top 200 universities in the world for societal impact, performing well in areas including Climate Action (SDG13) and Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG8) where it was placed 48th globally for both. Overall the University is ranked within the top 100 globally in eight SDG areas.

**ABERDEEN 2040 AND****INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENTS**

Since 1495, the University of Aberdeen has been open to all and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in the service of others. The University of Aberdeen still has this foundational purpose today.

On its 525th anniversary the University launched Aberdeen 2040, a strategic vision for the next 20 years. Four strategic themes will shape our learning and discovery, underlined by 20 commitments we have made against each theme:

**Inclusive**

We welcome students, staff and partners from all backgrounds, organisations and communities. **We value diversity.**

**Interdisciplinary**

We innovate in education and research by generating, sharing and applying new kinds of knowledge. **We learn together.**

**International**

We connect with others and extend our networks and partnerships around the world. **We think across borders.**

**Sustainable**

We understand and nurture our environment, and take care of our resources, including our people and finances. **We work responsibly.**

[abdn.ac.uk/2040/](https://abdn.ac.uk/2040/)



## ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN BUSINESS SCHOOL

**12TH**  
FOR BUSINESS  
MANAGEMENT  
STUDIES

Complete University  
Guide 2022

**10TH**  
FOR  
ACCOUNTING  
& FINANCE

The Times &  
Sunday Times Good  
University Guide 2022

The University of Aberdeen Business School, established in 2003, is in an exciting and ambitious phase of its development. While proud of the University's 525-year history, the Business School is a core part of the University's plans for the future and is committed to increasing its profile. The Business School has a distinctive identity in areas such as energy and real estate with an ambition to transform individuals, organisations and society. It is home to a thriving community of diverse students, faculty and staff members and industry experts. The School had an international focus and outlook with on and offshore operations and many nationalities are represented in its faculty and student community.

To facilitate its further growth and development, the Business School is now a stand-alone unit within the University. As an integral part of its growth strategy, the School has initiated a plan to earn accreditation of the School from the main international accrediting agencies in the coming years. The Business School comprises several related disciplines: Accountancy, Economics, Finance, Business Management, and Real Estate. The School is consistently high ranked in national league tables, often among the top 20 for most of its subjects. Most recently it was ranked 12th for Business Management Studies in the Complete University Guide 2022, and achieved 16th for Business, Management & Marketing and 10th for Accounting & Finance in the Times & Sunday Times Good University Guide 2022.

A strong research ethos runs throughout the School as evidenced in our submission to the Business and Management panel in REF2021 where, overall, 99% of our submission was considered to be world-leading, internationally excellent or internationally recognised. Research is organised around multidisciplinary themes, and there

is a developing culture of cross-disciplinary research that engages in 'real world' problems and issues. This fits into a broader research agenda that builds partnerships across the University, including close research ties with, for example, the Aberdeen Institute of Energy and the Health Economics Research Unit. The School also has a number of Research Centres including the Aberdeen Centre for Research in Energy Economics and Finance, the Centre for European Labour Market Research, the Centre for Business Research, and the Scottish Experimental Economics Laboratory. There is a strong and growing base of PhD students in each of the disciplines. Teaching is also at the core of our activity. We have strong undergraduate programmes across the range of disciplines. The School is home to a growing suite of postgraduate degrees from traditional degrees such as MBA and Executive MBA and an MSc in Accounting and Finance and in International Business Management to more distinctive offerings, such as our MSc Finance and Business and MSc in Finance and Investment Management, which are integrated with the CFA Level 1 exam, the MSc in Petroleum, Energy Economics and Finance and our new fully online MSc in Finance.



## OUR MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

### OUR MISSION

Powering change for better businesses and better lives:

- > through research engaging global societal challenges, and
- > by developing new and impactful leaders and entrepreneurs with an ethical and international mindset.

### OUR VISION

To be internationally recognised for

- > leadership in interdisciplinary research and education on sustainable transitions;
- > capacity building, collaborative innovation and entrepreneurial learning;
- > connecting change-makers, entrepreneurs and strategic thinkers in the world's energy cities.

### OUR VALUES

Our School embraces the University's foundational purpose, encompassing two fundamental values:

- > Open to all: inclusive, accessible and committed to sustainable partnerships;
- > Dedicated to the pursuit of truth in the service of others: championing independence and responsibility of thought and action with respect for all within and outside the University; building an empowered community so all can thrive.

### As a Business School, we also aspire to:

- > Innovation and relevance in our education, research and engagement, and
- > instilling and developing resilience in uncertain times.

## 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.**

Following work on the 2040 vision, the School embarked on a process to revisit its own Mission, Vision, and Values (MVV) with a view to refine and distil their essence. The aim of the process was to craft a revised mission, vision and values that captured input from faculty and staff, students as well as key stakeholders acknowledging the new commitments in the University's 2040 vision that was co-created by members of the School. This iterative process was started with an initial discussion at a School Forum in 2020 about aspirations for the School and areas for improvement which was followed up by a brief survey. The Dean had one-to-one discussions with current faculty and staff in the School as well as conversations with key stakeholders, such as the Advisory Board Chair. This was complemented by roadshows and events. We ran well-attended events for student course representatives which involved discussion and in-class surveying about aspirations and what the business school in the future should look like. We used online tools to develop mind maps of what our school wants to be known for, what our students aspire to and what they believe the business school of the future should look like. Key terms that were introduced into the mission include impactful, entrepreneurs and international. Sustainable and responsible management are reflected in the mission's tagline – which places 'for better lives' right next to 'for better businesses' – and the part of the mission that relates to developing graduates with an ethical and international mindset and research addressing global societal challenges. Individual conversations highlighted that all faculty and, particularly, our early-career faculty felt strongly about additional emphasis for this.

The feedback we received from our different stakeholder groups was aligned and complementary. Students highlighted the need for greater practice focus, their aspirations to become entrepreneurs and leaders is now captured in the education part of our mission statement, and we included as an aspiration in our vision to become recognised for collaborative innovation and entrepreneurial learning, connecting change-makers, entrepreneurs and strategic thinkers – some of these terms directly taken from student feedback. External stakeholder feedback, provided via our Advisory Board Chair, highlighted the need for even greater connectivity to business and introduced the focus on developing partnerships with actors in the world's energy cities to which Aberdeen is linked. One fundamental point that has come from stakeholders is that even as one of the oldest universities in the English-speaking world our focus must be on the future. This is reflected in the mission's 'powering change' and our vision to achieve leadership on sustainable transitions by connecting change-makers. The University's foundational purpose dating from 1495 informed the values and seeks to link our traditions with heritage with what it means to be part of the University and School. This was particularly important to longer serving faculty and staff as well as long-standing members of our wider community.

**1**

Going beyond this, the School is also in the process of implementing a faculty and staff development strategy (Strategy for People) which allows us to bring together all developmental measures for faculty and staff with the aim to further develop a culture that embraces our aspirations in a spirit of development and collegiality. The goal of the School's Strategy for People is supporting staff to perform to the best of their ability – whether that be in teaching, research or supporting other staff or students. This links to our commitment to ensuring a purposeful, professional and respectful culture in the School, Equality Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) plays a key role in this, ensuring diversity among staff. There will be a continued emphasis on diversity through recruitment as the School continues to grow. The School values EDI and is continuing to implement the actions from the successful Athena SWAN Bronze application in November 2016, being amongst the first 10 UK Business Schools to have received Bronze status.

The University is also working towards the Advance HE Race Equality Charter

[www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/race-equality-12589.php](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/race-equality-12589.php) and the School is currently appointing a Race Equality Champion to promote good practice and support the new University Race Strategy.

## 2

**VALUES**

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

Our institutional 1495 foundational purpose is to be open to all and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in the service of others. That purpose is reflected in the spirit and intent of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and continues to frame our activities as we work to have a positive impact on the world around us. In February 2020, the University of Aberdeen launched our 20-year strategy, Aberdeen 2040, establishing sustainability as a core element of the University's long-serving strategy. Alongside a headline commitment to becoming a Net-Zero institution before 2040, Aberdeen 2040 also acknowledges the importance of engaging and enthusing our staff and student communities to be leaders in protecting the environment. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals were identified as a vital framework for us to adopt as we endeavour to convey the impact of our academic and operational activities. They comprehensively articulate the intersecting economic, human, social, and environmental challenges facing the world. While the global focus in the past year has naturally been on emissions and the COP26 process, the SDGs serve to remind us of the wider challenges we face – from public health to poverty, and educational access to inequality – as well as the pressing climate and ecological emergency.

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also emerged through consultation as a key mechanism against which to articulate our academic and operational contribution to addressing complex societal challenges. The University therefore signed the global SDG Accord, reporting on progress in 2020 and 2021, and joined the associated Race to Zero.

In 2022, the University of Aberdeen Impact against the SDGs was assessed for the fourth time and was ranked among the top 200 universities in the world for societal impact, performing well in areas including Climate Action (SDG13) and Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG8) where it was placed 48th globally for both. Overall the University is ranked within the top 100 globally in eight SDG areas.

## 3

**METHOD**

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

The University of Aberdeen Business School has a growing portfolio of attractive programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels which is subject to regular review. In parallel with PRME, our strategy has involved a substantial programme of organisational and cultural change to develop a more integrated and interdisciplinary approach to research, teaching and engagement.

The Business School Mission reflects its commitment to develop new and impactful leaders and entrepreneurs with an ethical and international mindset. We have started to review our curriculum - in furtherance of the School's mission to develop new and impactful leaders and entrepreneurs with an ethical and international mindset, these reviews have engaged with employers through the programme advisory boards (which rest within the School Advisory Board) and PSBRs (subject level accrediting bodies, such as ICAS for Accountancy, or the Economics Network and Bank of England in the case of Economics).

Our recent curricular reviews have taken cognisance of themes within the University's 2040 vision (Inclusive, Interdisciplinary, International, Sustainable) - for example the introduction of more specific ethics training into all UG dissertations as well as bespoke ethics courses in Accountancy. All of our UG degrees are to some extent interdisciplinary, all of our degrees emphasise international aspects, and the sustainable and ethical nature of management and business is a key pillar. Our data shows that 86% of courses engage explicitly with SDG themes (which means all programmes include some level of discussion) - International Business for example has courses which look at sustainability, and 'big issues' such as climate change specifically. In examples of more granular coverage of the SDG goals, the SDG goal in relation to Sustainable Cities and Communities is addressed in the level 4 course Applied Economic Policy Evaluation where the use of experimental economics for policy analysis focuses on the topic of negative externalities and more specifically pollution emission. Students explore how experimental economics can help decision makers to design efficient markets for pollution or help them to implement well-designed tools to reduce it. Similarly, in the Level 2 Land & Property Economics course students critically evaluate the impact of regional growth and urban agglomeration on real estate markets.

The University, and the School, also take staff development in these areas very seriously. This includes a range of workshops and online training activities, some compulsory.

## 3



## EXAMPLES OF ERS AND PRME IN THE CURRICULUM

### UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION | YEARS 1 AND 2

#### ACCOUNTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

This course introduces the theoretical and contextual foundation of accounting. It does not involve any technical aspects of accounting or bookkeeping but provides an introduction to the political, economic, institutional, professional and managerial context of accounting. The main content includes:

- Socio-political and economic mechanisms of accountability; theories of accountability.
- Constitution of organisations and the role of accounting within organisations.
- Constitution of accounting as a business function: how accounting is organised within organisations.
- Constitution of Accountancy as a Profession: how accountancy is organised as a profession.
- Sustainability and accounting: how accounting is reorganised to address sustainability issues.

#### THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

What are the causes of the current financial crisis and what can governments across the globe do about it? Why is it that certain countries have experienced rapid growth in incomes over the past century whereas others are stuck in severe poverty? Why do some nations have high rates of inflation and others stable prices or deflation? Why is unemployment low in some countries but very high in others? Why do all countries experience periods of economic recession and depression and how can government reduce the size of the associated fluctuations in incomes and employment?

This module, which looks at the behaviour of the economy as a whole, tries to answer these and other questions. This course introduces students to macroeconomic theory and policy. This will enable students to understand the determinants of the level of national income, the overall growth rate of the economy, unemployment and the rate of inflation as well as the role of government in influencing these variables.

#### LAND AND PROPERTY ECONOMICS

The course will facilitate greater understanding of real estate and land markets and of the linkages between supply, demand and price. It will provide explanations of market behaviour and discuss activity patterns and outcomes with reference to specific property markets. Students will gain an understanding of the institutions that govern land use and real estate transactions and will develop skills to identify and interpret property market data in order to analyze market sectors and property types. Students critically evaluate the impact of regional growth and urban agglomeration on real estate markets. Students will also make critical economic assessments of land use and planning policy and the methods of policy delivery.

## 3



## EXAMPLES OF ERS AND PRME IN THE CURRICULUM UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION | YEARS 1 AND 2

### INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT FOR BUSINESS

This course investigates the big issues and key questions facing international business in a global economy and seeks explanations using a variety of real-world tools, models and concepts. Issues covered include technology and automation, innovation and the networked economy, scarcity and choice, globalisation, inequality, the firm (its owners, managers, employees and customers), markets and public policy, financial instability and environmental issues. This innovative course is designed around the use of materials from the global CORE project – an open-source collaboration of hundreds of global scholars. Each part of the course begins with a question and looks at the real-world evidence. Then models are used to help understand what is observed. These are then critically evaluated to assess how well they explain the evidence and provide insight into the issue. This course gives an exciting introduction to contemporary issues, ideas and debated facing international business in a global economy.

This course will enable students to develop the tools needed to provide insight into a range of contemporary and historical issues from around the world. Students will be encouraged to investigate some of the interesting questions facing international business in a global economy. They will first look at the evidence and then build models that can help understand what they see in the real world. Students will then be guided how to critically evaluate how successfully these tools and models have explained the evidence and how well they have yielded answers to the issues faced. They will develop their understanding of economic decision making, relationships and interactions in the global economy, how markets work and fail, the challenges arising from globalisation (trade, migration, and investment), environmental sustainability, and innovation and technology. At the end of the course students will be able to understand key issues facing international business in a global economy and be able to critically assess how policy makers seek to address these issues using an appropriate evidence base.

### BIG DATA IN OPERATIONS AND SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

This course uses four interrelated topics as foci to study operations in international business and management. It starts addressing the value chain then it covers energy security and sustainability, the knowledge economy and the underpinnings of big data analyses.



## 3



## EXAMPLES OF ERS AND PRME IN THE CURRICULUM HONOURS

### BUSINESS ETHICS AND CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

This course covers the fundamental question of what ethics is granting a context for the discussion of business ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility. It will explore a range of ethical theory and areas of ethical business relationships (employer & employee relationships, business & consumer, business & community, business & environment). In an increasingly global business environment, the issues of business ethics and corporate social responsibility are coming to the fore. The business world increasingly realises that how it acts and how it is perceived to act are vital to its continued existence. Corporations around the globe produce elaborate CSR policies designed not only to be read by their employees but also by the wider society. This course will engage with why these issues have become important and why businesses are looking to have an ethically informed workforce.

### APPLIED ECONOMIC POLICY EVALUATION

The course will include a range of applications to show how the methods may be applied in practice, help develop the students' skills in applying the techniques to practical, real work problems and show their limitations. Applications may include appraisals of a large-scale infrastructure project, evaluations of government policies such as the minimum wage, welfare-to-work policies, trade policies, electricity market reform, and so forth. the course will cover a selection of four or five topical issues, which may include:

- Market failure and the role of government policy-making and the roles of microeconomic policy analysis; welfare economics foundations; first-best and second-best settings; efficiency and distributional considerations.
- Principles of project appraisal; economic efficiency; inter-temporal choices and discounting; equity considerations
- Economic appraisal from private and public perspectives; measuring benefits and costs in practice
- Econometric approaches to policy evaluation, including social and quasi natural experiments, and consideration of issues of endogeneity and causality.

### ACCOUNTING AND SUSTAINABILITY

This course introduces students to accountability issues related to management and disclosure of corporate sustainability practices, processes and their financial and non-financial impacts. The course will include an overview of accounting for sustainability and a critical analysis of how corporations would (and should) deal with social and environmental issues. This course also involves engagement with relevant theoretical frameworks which have been popular in analysing social and environmental accounting practices. Students will be expected to provide theoretically informed critical analyses on corporate accountability issues and practices, including sustainability disclosures practices.

## 3



## EXAMPLES OF ERS AND PRME IN THE CURRICULUM HONOURS

### CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

This course introduces students to the foundation of corporate governance systems, ethical guidelines, accountability mechanisms and the related theories and practices in the context of contemporary business. The course will include an overview of corporate governance systems worldwide, major reforms, and a critical analysis of how corporations as well as professional bodies (such as accounting profession) would (and should) deal with the ethical dilemmas associated with corporate scandals, conflict of interests, manipulations of financial statements, crises like the global financial crisis, credit crunch or even pandemic and so on.

This course also involves engagement with relevant theoretical frameworks which have been popular in analysing different corporate governance systems and professional codes of ethics worldwide. It develops students' understanding of demonstrating accountability to boards, investors and wider stakeholder groups. It also considers the influence of board of directors, professional bodies (such as accounting/audit firms) and the role of investors, risk management and internal control in corporate governance of contemporary business.

### DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS

This course on Development Economics focuses on the countries of the developing world and tries to ascertain how low-income economies can be set on a track of sustained economic development in order to reduce poverty and achieve levels of wealth akin to developed economies. Development economics, like economics generally, is a subject where there is often much controversy: about how to define an issue, about the economic mechanisms which are at work and how they work, about the respective roles of the market and of the state, and much else. Consensuses may form – often for short periods of time – before fresh controversies break out. This means that there are not always “correct” answers or a single way of looking at an issue but the compensation is that development economics is a subject of lively debates.

### HOUSING ECONOMICS

The course starts with a benchmark model for the housing market, where actors have complete information and perfect foresight. The model is used to examine the interaction between user, asset, and development market in a frictionless setting. After that, the strong assumptions are relaxed, leading to the examination of search in the housing market, the discussion of submarkets, and an analysis of the decision on tenure choice and mortgage financing. This is followed by a discussion of government intervention in housing markets: rent controls, land use regulation, differential taxation of tenure models and assets, provision of social housing. The welfare implications of such interventions are discussed. The course finishes with an examination of housing and the macroeconomy.



## 3



## EXAMPLES OF ERS AND PRME IN THE CURRICULUM POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION

### ISSUES IN CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS

This course introduces students to the foundation of corporate governance systems, ethical guidelines, accountability mechanisms and the related theories and practices in the context of international business. The course will include an overview of corporate governance systems worldwide, major reforms, and a critical analysis of how corporations would (and should) deal with the ethical dilemmas associated with corporate scandals, conflict of interests, manipulations of financial statements, crises like the global financial crisis, credit crunch or even pandemic and so on. This course also involves engagement with relevant theoretical frameworks which have been popular in analysing different corporate governance systems and ethics guidelines worldwide.

It develops students' understanding of demonstrating accountability to boards, investors and wider stakeholder groups. It also considers the influence of board of directors, professional bodies (such as accounting/audit firms) and the role of investors, risk management and internal control in corporate governance of international business. Students will be expected to provide theoretically informed critical analyses on corporate governance and ethical practices that affect the operations of contemporary business organisations.

### FUTURE ENERGIES

In this module students are encouraged to bring all their previously acquired knowledge and understanding to the task of further developing your appreciation of the challenges of strategic planning in the energy sector.

- Defining energy - Sources of Energy (Energy Generation: Hydrocarbon & Non-Hydrocarbon) - Energy demand
- The Energy Industry (supply) - Energy Markets - The Energy Infrastructure - The Legislative Framework - Climate Change and Energy Technology - Energy and the environment (Non-carbon issues).

### MANAGING HUMAN RESOURCES

Managing human resources is important for survival and prosperity of organizations and economies and has implications for individual attitudes and well-being. Managers are expected to contribute to the delivery of the human resource strategy, supported by expert advice and guidance. This module explores the key concepts underpinning the management of human resources and their practical application in organisations today. Focus on four important themes: Recruitment and selection; Equality and diversity; Flexible employment and work-life balance; Talent management.

### ISSUES IN ENERGY AND PETROLEUM ECONOMICS

The aim of this module is to equip students with little or no economics with sufficient knowledge and understanding of microeconomics to allow them to use economic theory to examine key issues in the petroleum and energy industries. It will provide an introduction to microeconomics and show practical application of economic theories to issues in petroleum and energy. In so doing, the course will provide a comprehensive and up-to-date assessment of upstream petroleum economics, and an introduction to economic analysis of global warming, the potential roles of government and implications for energy markets.

## 3



## EXAMPLES OF ERS AND PRME IN THE CURRICULUM POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION

### GOVERNANCE, RESPONSIBILITY AND ETHICS

The social and environmental challenge for contemporary business organisations and institutions drives change in a powerful way. The competing logics across internal and external stakeholder groups give rise to a need for new organizational forms that embrace competing views and depend on co-creation and social partnerships. The political and economic backdrop to these dynamic settings is a direct influence on business ventures. The balance between environmental sustainability, social impact, value creation and traditional performance measures brings about a new dynamic for leaders who in turn, are redefining the meaning of success.

### ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION

This course considers marketing as the nexus point of value creation and reputation management. This is integrated with the traditional view of functions of marketing departments in providing analytical intelligence and data on customers and markets, integrated product development, branding and communication plans and incentivising and managing distributive aspects of business. The multi-dimensional and dynamic nature of brand and reputation is critically evaluated against the need for organisational monitoring and control in this field. The balance between value creation and co-creation, sustainability and ethics are juxtaposed with functional requirements and expectations of marketing functions to produce a contemporary overview and deep understanding of how marketing is changing as a core function of business.

### HEALTH SYSTEMS AND POLICY RESEARCH

The course aims to instil knowledge but, much more importantly, stimulate students' thinking about the major challenges within different health systems and the options for the health services management. Furthermore, it aims to take a genuinely international perspective on health care, providing knowledge of different health care systems and encouraging comparison and critique. It covers a wide variety of topics including an overview of the health systems around the world, the effects of social inequalities on health inequalities and their repercussions for social policy and issues of public health policy towards tobacco, alcohol and obesity.

## 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.

### THE BUSINESS SCHOOL'S RESEARCH

The Business School has a strong research focus at the heart of its mission:

- Powering change for better businesses and better lives through impactful research addressing global societal challenges.

This articulates our commitment to research that addresses fundamental societal challenges. We draw these together under the concept of sustainability, which includes economic/financial, environmental, societal and institutional elements. The School's research mission and vision reflect three of the priorities in our University's Aberdeen 2040 (REF5a) vision:

- Sustainability and Global Challenges
- Interdisciplinary Research
- Partnerships

To implement our institutional strategy and our accreditation programme, we aim to:

- be internationally recognised for leadership in interdisciplinary research on sustainable and socially inclusive transitions;
- be known for capacity building through collaborative innovation with stakeholders in the private and public sector, nationally and internationally;
- become a catalyst for developing new solutions by connecting change-makers, entrepreneurs and strategic thinkers in the world's energy cities;
- provide an inclusive research environment that enables all researchers to achieve their potential;
- enable effective dissemination of and open access to research outcomes and data.

We have strengthened research in areas that address themes in energy, work, health and the global digital economy. These areas align with our institutional interdisciplinary priority themes and with several UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Research is consolidated in four main areas:

- Energy and the Environment
- Work, Society and Wellbeing
- Finance, Organisation and Governance
- Real Estate Market Analysis

As part of our research strategy, two new research interdisciplinary centres focussed on (i) entrepreneurship and (ii) sustainability have very recently been launched and we are very excited about the potential that these centres have to advance PRME and SDG objectives.

The following sections provide some snapshots of the recent portfolio of work carried out by our academic researchers in this whole arena.

## 4



## ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

This area of research is a clear example of our impactful achievements in relation to economic, environmental, and institutional sustainability. There is a range of long-term collaborations with government and industry. In particular, work undertaken over an extensive period by Professor Alex Kemp has been influential in the development of UK fiscal policy in the North Sea Continental Shelf. For example, recent work informed policy on field allowances in the West of Shetland region. Kemp has been a consultant on petroleum contracts and legislation to a large number of Governments, the World Bank, the United Nations, and was a Member of the Council of Economic Advisers to the First Minister of the Scottish Government. He is currently a member of the Scottish Energy Advisory Board to the Scottish Government. Kemp's research in this area has resulted in significant impact on "Decommissioning in the UK Continental Shelf."

**Energising Scotland's Rural Renewables Provision**

The University of Aberdeen has joined forces with one of Scotland's largest agricultural cooperatives in a new venture that could help farmers produce their own clean, green energy on a mass scale. The Business and Engineering Schools have entered into a knowledge transfer partnership (KTP) with ANM Group which will see the creation of a new renewable energy consultancy division to advise farmers and other agricultural enterprises on sustainable energy solutions. The ANM Group, founded in 1872 by pioneering farmers, is today one of the most dynamic, progressive and forward-looking businesses serving the UK farming, commercial and industrial sectors. It has led the development of modern auction centres by the pioneering of electronic and video auctions - developed in a previous KTP with the Business School.

The two-year partnership, funded through a UK Government grant valued at around £250,000, will also explore the potential for delivering a range of agricultural technology solutions to market. This could include development of a micro wind turbine that is small enough to be erected easily on existing farmland or buildings but powerful enough to generate the energy used on day-to-day activities and contribute to the national grid.

KTP's help business to improve their competitiveness and productivity through the better use of knowledge, technology and skills that reside within the UK's academic knowledge base. This is the second collaboration between the Business School and ANM Group.

The University opened its Centre for Energy Transition in May this year and this latest agreement is part of its commitment to playing a role as a research and innovation leader in the Scottish renewables industry.

**"This partnership has the potential to position ANM Group as a national provider of renewable energy solutions, with farmers and other agricultural businesses able to contribute on a much larger scale to Scotland's sustainable energy supply than was previously possible. We're delighted that we can play such a hands-on role in helping the agricultural industry and individual farmers - regardless of acreage - play a part in Scotland's clean, green energy future"**

ADAM SMITH, DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES,  
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN BUSINESS SCHOOL

## 4



## WORK, SOCIETY AND WELLBEING

### £1m research project to tackle land loss in Ethiopia

The University of Aberdeen is leading an international collaboration of researchers in a £1,000,000 project that aims to improve land and soil degradation in Ethiopia, which affects over a quarter of the East African country.

With climate change predicted to increase the risk of future loss, the Ethiopian Government has established specific 'closed' conservation areas where activities are restricted, to allow degraded land to recover. However, this practice mostly affects the poor in these communities as they depend on access to support their livelihoods.

The project - Reducing land degradation and carbon loss from Ethiopia's soils to strengthen livelihoods and resilience – is funded through a £1,000,000 grant from the UKRI Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) is having direct livelihood benefits in Ethiopia by training and resourcing groups of landless people to undertake new productive activities in beekeeping and livestock management. (GCRF is a £1.5 billion fund supporting cutting-edge research and innovation that addresses the global issues faced by developing countries, and forms part of the UK Government's ODA (Official Development Assistance commitment.)



Professor Euan Phimister, from the University of Aberdeen Business School, is coordinating the research. He said:

**“ Land and soil degradation is a major problem in Ethiopia, and we will implement and evaluate various options to improve land conservation measures, including how benefits to local communities from closed conservation areas can be increased in a fair way while safeguarding soil conservation.”**

## 4



## FINANCE, ORGANISATION, AND GOVERNANCE

In relation to research on corporate accountability on modern slavery, the school has engagement activities across UK, Australia, New Zealand, USA and Bangladesh, with stakeholders such as actors in the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015, the Australian Modern Slavery ACT, 2018 and the California Transparency in Supply Chain Act 2012. Also involved are major global retail companies, suppliers' associations, such as the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and accounting professional bodies, including CPA Australia and ICAS. Key academic collaborators are ANU, UNSW, AUT and Illinois State University.

## REAL ESTATE MARKET ANALYSIS

Our methodological research on housing price indices and Automated Valuation Models (AVMs) has examined how such indices and valuation models should be constructed and implemented to be accurate and timely and has achieved high impact, summarized below.

Housing Price Indices - The Real Estate Discipline has produced the quarterly Aberdeen Housing Market Report (AHMR) since 2012. Users of the index have been local councils for planning decisions, surveyors, housing associations, and financial institutions. In recent years, several new users have emerged. For instance, local councillors use the index to estimate housing affordability. Developers are a new group of users of the index and have asked for tailor-made price series - correlated with the building activity in Scotland's North East.



## 5



## PARTNERSHIPS

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.

### ADVISORY BOARD

2018 saw the creation of the Business School Advisory Forum in order to help shape the Business School's strategic goals to enhance students' employment prospects, collaborate with industry and assist in being forward focussed with research and course offerings. The Forum is made up of 11 industry experts and meets three times a year to assist in shaping the strategic direction of the School. For example, the Board conducts a rolling review of the School's teaching provision, and the next meeting of the Advisory Forum will be dedicated in large part to review and approval of the School's External Engagement Forward Strategy. The experience of the external members of the board chosen to represent a cross-section of the School's disciplines, stakeholders and key local industries include Chair: Oilfield start-ups and acquisitions, founding Chairman of Aberdeen Sports Village and past president of Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce, the Career Development Director of a national Accountancy firm, the Head of Skills/ Director of Developing the Young Workforce (North East of Scotland) and the Chief Executive of one of Scotland's largest farming, food and finance businesses.

### BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

A new Business Engagement Adviser was appointed at the start of 2019 with the remit to initiate and support liaison and partnership activities between companies, public bodies, not-for-profit organisations and the School, including guest lectures and involvement in programme delivery. For example, the Business School is for the first time sponsoring the Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce Business Breakfast series in 2020. The Business Breakfast series attracts expert regional and national speakers from a diverse range of sectors to brief the North-East business community on

on topical issues impacting economic growth and development. This will help to build connections between the School with businesses across the North-East.

### PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS

In 2019 the Business School recruited a School Engagement Officer who develops relationships with primary and secondary schools across Aberdeen City and Shire, as well as with local branches of Developing the Young Workforce (The Scottish Government youth employment strategy to better prepare young people for the world of work) and Skills Development Scotland (Scotland's National Skills body with the remit of developing and retaining a skilled workforce). As part of the institutional philosophy of being open to all and in service of others, the School Engagement Officer runs project-based workshops to encourage and support pupils, raising aspirations, providing employability skills and introducing them to the world of business. There is now an extensive diary of engagement activities. Some examples of this engagement include hosting a 'Pupil Conference', competitions (e.g. designing an app, Brexit poster competition) and delivering workshops. We have started to roll out opportunities for our students to get involved in an extra-curricular capacity.



## 5



## STUDENT EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

There are many vibrant student-led initiatives and networks which reinforce the communication and organizational skills developed at the curricular level. These are encouraged and supported by the School and include the following: The Economics and Business Society The Economics and Business Society is the main society of the Business School, connecting Business School (and non-business school) students, through an array of social, academic and careers-orientated events. Since its founding 2013, it has swiftly grown to one of the largest societies on campus.

## SHIFTING PARADIGMS CONFERENCE

The Shifting Paradigms annual conference, which takes place at the University of Aberdeen, is organised by the student-led Aberdeen Political Economy Group (APEG), supported by the Rethinking Economics Network and the Royal Economic Society. The conference covers a range of topics, with a focus on technology, inequality and climate change. Leading thinkers in the fields of entrepreneurship, the economy and social policy gathered in Aberdeen in November 2019 for the latest conference focusing on society's big issues.

## ATHENA SWAN

The University of Aberdeen has been a proud member of the Athena SWAN Charter (the UK and Ireland's framework to support and transform gender equality within HE and research) since 2011 and is committed to its principles. In 2012, the University was awarded, and still currently holds, the prestigious Athena SWAN Bronze award. The Business School was awarded Departmental Athena SWAN Bronze accreditation in 2017 and is currently one of only 17 UK Business Schools to have received this accreditation to date. The School is currently applying for renewal and consolidation of its Athena SWAN accreditation.

## OUR IMPACT

As an example of our impact, one of our School lecturers was awarded the Aberdeen University Students Association and University of Aberdeen Teaching Excellence Award in 2021 for 'Outstanding Contribution to Blended Learning for experiential learning strategies: adapting role-play simulations for online learning in the Negotiations and Cross-Cultural Management postgraduate course' and was runner up for the University Principal's Excellence Award. Five other faculty members were shortlisted for other awards. In the Qatar campus, the Finance faculty took part in the national Qatar CGFA (Certified General Forensic Accountant) 2021 competition and won first place. Our students also prove to be successful in national competitions (one of our postgraduate students won the 2020 Institute of Business Ethics Student Essay Competition in Business Ethics with an essay on the ethical dilemmas facing the accounting profession).



## 6

**DIALOGUE**

**We will facilitate and support dialog 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.**

The Business School is an international community working to promote equality and maximise the development opportunities available to staff and students. Based on data published early in 2019, in 2018, almost 46% of core funded school staff (including professional services) were female. The School's overall staffing (academic and non-academic) is internationally diverse with 58% of staff being non-UK nationals, although there is a predominance of UK staff in non-academic roles. There is a wide variety of nationalities being represented. (Nations represented in the School's current staffing profile include Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Italy, Iran, Japan, Malaysia, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, South Korea, Switzerland, United States of America and Vietnam). The School benefits enormously from the collective diversity of background, experience and perspective that this brings to its culture.

The Business School is governed by a range of institutional process and practices that advance diversity and inclusion amongst faculty. The institutional Equality and Diversity Policy is embedded in all relevant policies and codes. For example, selection committees must have an adequate gender balance. The Staffing Policy against Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying in the Workplace sets out guidance to staff about what to do if they are being harassed, discriminated against or bullied and contains information on courses of action open to them and sources of support such as Wellbeing Coordinators who are independent members of staff willing to listen and offer help and support, on a formal or informal basis.

The University has launched an Equality and Diversity e-training facility for all staff. The e-training is designed to ensure that staff knowledge on Equality and Diversity matters is up to date and the Business School issues regular reminders. Two modules are available. "Diversity in the Workplace" provides basic training on the legislative framework and its practical implications, and this module is mandatory for all staff. The second module "Diversity in Teaching and Learning" focuses on specific issues for teaching and is strongly recommended for all faculty, allowing colleagues to reflect on their teaching practice and providing guidance on developing an inclusive learning environment. The University is committed to engaging in constructive dialogue with members of staff wishing to explore the possibility of flexible working practices – such as part-time working/part-year working/jobsharing/flexible working hours/career breaks/health-related adjustments. The availability of such arrangements is publicised to staff via HR webpages, university emails, and occasional, ad-hoc publicity. Equality and Diversity issues within the school are managed through a committee which reports directly to the School Executive. The School analyses gender differentials in terms of student admission and degree attainment and staffing complement. The Athena SWAN diversity and equality programme is an important initiative. As part of the School's departmental Athena SWAN bronze award it has an Equality Action Plan that promotes gender equality in such key aspects as student recruitment, attainment and progression, staff recruitment and induction, career progression, research issues, flexible working and communication and governance.

## 6



Diversity and Inclusivity: We strongly believe that excellence in pedagogy is better supported in a diverse and inclusive environment. All members of staff are expected to enrol on staff development programmes to introduce issues of equality and diversity – specifically e-training modules on Diversity in the Workplace and Diversity in Teaching and Learning. Uptake on these courses is monitored centrally and the Dean receives regular updates and periodic reminders to staff are issued. The School also takes pride in its Athena SWAN Bronze award which demonstrates its commitment to equality through a wide range of processes in learning and teaching, recruitment and promotion as noted previously. The Business School's Equality and Diversity Committee which includes student representation has been proactive in organising/supporting a range of events designed to raise awareness on equality and gender issues.

One of the core pillars of the University 2040 strategy is 'inclusivity' and the School strapline is 'open to opportunity' which is linked to the University 'open to all' policy. We have mandatory training on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), but more importantly drive this as part of the culture of the School. This inclusivity is of course a focus of our pedagogic approaches but also important for faculty and staff themselves. The School EDI Committee reports at all School Forums and issues regular newsletters to promote inclusiveness and diversity for all staff and students. In what we consider to be an example of good practice, the School collaborated with the Centre for Academic Development and the School of Medicine to deliver three mini online sessions on supporting learning for students from diverse ethnic, cultural and educational backgrounds to support the University's teaching staff before the start of the 20/21 academic session. Following the success of these events it was decided to stage a follow-up event in August 2021 with a student panel where the student panel members spoke about their views on intercultural communication. This was followed by discussion topics including:

- managing intercultural communication
- preparing for possible cultural challenges
- good practices for better collaboration and possible approaches
- power dynamics
- different motivations for study.

The University of Aberdeen is one of the sponsors for the 'Symposium on Futures of Sustainability' held in Hangzhou, China (and online) in September 2022 which is the 2nd Annual Symposium of the China Association for Socially Responsible Leadership. Our PRME Champion will give a keynote speech about the University of Aberdeen approach to sustainability, and a number of faculty members will present research topics.

## 7

**ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICES**

We understand that our own organisational practices should serve as example of the values and attitudes we convey to our students. We understand that we need to ensure that our internal approaches to ethics, responsibility and sustainability mirror our teaching and research endeavours and the School promotes environmental and social sustainability in a range of different ways:

**ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

A particular focus for the Business School is the planning for a new Business School which will align with the wider University commitments to sustainability in campus development. Therefore, the decision has been made to repurpose a disused hall of residence and for a rebuild using the masonry structure stripping everything else out and renovating. Maintaining the same footprint would be important for sustainability purposes. The new building will embed micro-renewable and low energy technologies and will ensure full sustainability as well as accessibility. There has been extensive consultation with the School community (staff and students) and a long-standing working group is progressing the building.

A public consultation has already taken place and the new business school home will take full account of the physical environmental and the local conservation area.

In the meantime, our current buildings have benefited from a number of energy efficient and emissions reductions measures, that include:

- PC power management
- Installing automatic light control in appropriate areas and replacing less efficient light bulbs with LED bulbs
- Managing heating demand and improving insulation

The University is committed to reducing water usage as part of its wider environmental sustainability policy and therefore a number of water saving technologies have been introduced including sensor controlled taps and low volume cisterns as standard in toilet areas.

The School has introduced the use of multi-function devises for day-to day printing needs, in place of individual office printers, procuring the most energy efficient equipment for individual offices. It contributes to a number of innovative ways of diverting waste from landfill such as:

- Recycling paper and procuring recycled stationary
- Participating in the wider University charitable partnership to divert ex-use IT equipment for re-use in African school and in social enterprise projects locally.

There is encouragement of sustainable transport behaviours in the School, and in 2021 a hybrid working policy was introduced which meant that, there can be agreement for staff to work partially from home, which will help to cut carbon emissions.

## 7

## SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Inclusion is one of the five main institutional strategic themes, and the School is committed to enhance a purposeful, professional and respectful culture which we believe is vital for achieving our strategy.

**Culture and People Strategy** – We have recognised that a commitment to staff and placing people at the heart of the School requires a rethink of culture and governance. To assist the attainment of strategic aims whilst developing an inclusive, transparent and fair working environment, the School is committed to developing a professional, purposeful and respectful culture ensuring positive staff engagement and sustainable growth. In support of this development, the School has implemented a People Strategy which sets out specific people management aims, goals and objectives. The School has in the current academic year created the Executive position of Director of Staffing to directly address a desire to improve overall culture, support development needs, and working on the workload pressures reported by staff in recent School survey. Some current initiatives as a result of the School's new People Strategy include:

- Workshops to Support Promotion Applications
- New Management Workshops for Academic Line Managers
- Interviews with New Starters to Understand and Promote Good Practice in Recruitment and Induction

In terms of student admissions, the admissions policies which are consistent with the School's mission to develop new and impactful leaders and entrepreneurs with an ethical and international mindset are entirely on merit and on the basis of ability to achieve. The School is committed to recruiting the most talented students from the widest range of backgrounds.

Some further examples of our organisational practices include:

- Encouragement to everyone to try to keep down the number of formal meetings with core hours between 9.30 and 4.30. In addition, Friday's to be kept clear of internal meetings if possible.
- Rollout of email etiquette.
- Providing support to staff for the academic promotions exercise through a series of workshops and individual mentoring
- The introduction of Mental Health First Aiders
- Introducing the dedicated role of Student Progression Coordinator in the School to provide individual support to students who have academic or emotional difficulties
- Equality and Diversity e-training which is designed to ensure that staff knowledge on equality and Diversity matters is up to date. Two modules are available – "Diversity in the Workplace" provides basic training on the legislative framework and its practical implications, and this module is mandatory for all staff. A second module "Diversity in Teaching and Learning" focuses on specific issues for teaching and is strongly recommended for all faculty, allowing colleagues to reflect on their teaching practice and providing guidance on developing an inclusive learning environment.
- Equality and Diversity issues within the school are managed through a committee which reports directly to the School Executive. The School analyses gender differentials in terms of student admission and degree attainment and staffing complement. The Athena SWAN diversity and equality programme is an important initiative. As part of the School's departmental Athena SWAN bronze award it has an Equality Action Plan that promotes gender equality in such key aspects as student recruitment, attainment and progression, staff recruitment and induction, career progression, research issues, flexible working and communication and governance.

## 7

**SOME OF OUR INITIATIVES...****Project SEARCH**

DFN Project Search is an international transition to work programme committed to transforming the lives of young people. It supports young people with additional needs to gain skills and experience and to go on to employment. Launched in September 2013, the project is a partnership between the University of Aberdeen, VIAS, North-East Scotland College, Skills Development Scotland, the Department for Work & Pensions and both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils. It offers a one-year Internship programme to twelve young people aged 16-24 every year. In August 2021, a new cohort of 12 Interns commenced the programme and are making good progress across both curriculum and internship activities.

The programme is delivered on the University of Aberdeen campus and participants receive support to undertake three work placements within the University, whilst studying to attain a vocational qualification. By the time they graduate, the Interns leave with a recognised City & Guilds qualification and over 800 hours of work experience on their CVs. Upon graduation, the Interns receive continued support to source and sustain paid employment and to date, 68% of our graduates are in employment in the Grampian area - nearly 10 times the average employment rate for those with a learning disability who do not enter any type of post-school programme. Since the programme began, nearly 80 young people have achieved employment in a variety of organisations across the Northeast of Scotland. The School Professional Services team has been an enthusiastic supporter of the Project SEARCH initiative. The interns undertake the role of office junior/anchor receptionist.

**EDI EVENTS STAGED BY THE SCHOOL**

The Active EDI Committee stages a wide variety of events which have been well-received by staff in the School and are often open to other Schools in the University.

Recent examples of these events include the following:

- Research event entitled Research in Equality and Diversity incorporating presentations from staff and students
- Unconscious Bias training for staff
- “Women in Business” Event comprising inspirational external speakers from industry and a student-led debate on the motion “This house supports the rise of gender quotas in large organisations”.
- Inequalities in Staff Attainment Rates Across UK Universities
- Pregnancy Loss in the Workplace
- Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity
- Menopause in the workplace
- Leading the Change: Embedding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Across Business and Social Science Projects.

## FUTURE OBJECTIVES

- ▶ We are currently creating a targeted list of stakeholders to send the report to. We will create an electronic version rather than create and distribute paper versions.
- ▶ Work is ongoing to develop an action plan to decolonize the curriculum, developing an approach which addresses embedded racial stereotypes and/or limited perspectives in the curriculum and at the same time developing learning materials which offers students a rich diversity of views and role models.
- ▶ We will conduct a more granular analysis of SDG relevance of our course and programme portfolios at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.
- ▶ We will plan our new Business School building according to the highest sustainability standards and with a view to ensuring full accessibility.
- ▶ We will expand our portfolio of socially responsible programmes and initiatives as part of our wider societal outreach.
- ▶ We will submit our next Athena SWAN application in 2022 and continue to develop meaningful actions.
- ▶ We will create and appoint to a new role of Race Equality Champion for the School – to be a contact point for staff and students and to help embed good practice in equality.
- ▶ We will embed PRME-related discussions in all relevant committees and groups in the School.



