Business School
Sharing information on progress 2019

PRME
Principles for Responsible Management Education
Our commitment to the Principles of Responsible Management Education

It is with pride that I report on the recent progress that the University of Auckland Business School has made towards the Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME).

The University of Auckland is New Zealand’s leading university and has been ranked No. 1 globally in the Times Higher Education (THE) University Impact Rankings in both 2019 and 2020.

The University has recently been appointed one of only 17 universities worldwide to be a Hub for the Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) within the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) group. This achievement reaffirms our strong commitment to sustainability and making a positive social impact through our partnerships within the communities we serve.

The University of Auckland Business School takes our contribution to these rankings very seriously. The University ranked 7th in SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth in 2020, with a number of our researchers appearing on the list of top ten Scopus publications by citation for each of the United Nations’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Since 2017, we have refreshed our Business School’s purpose, vision and mission statements to reflect our intention to strategically focus business-related research, education and engagement in ways that will improve individual lives, business, economies and society. We are progressing a number of initiatives that promote and support the SDGs and the implementation of PRME.

In an era of unprecedented technological advancement and disruption, faced with global economic uncertainties, climate pressures and security threats, there is an increasing call for business schools to demonstrate the relevance and impact of our research and teaching on our communities and society. This includes concerns about increasing reliance on fragile global supply chains, dependence on single countries for essential manufacturing, precarious health systems, and placing too much emphasis on economic growth that puts unsustainable pressure on the environment.

Our commitment to sustainability and making a positive social impact has become even more urgent as we consider what a post-COVID world might look like, and how we might reshape economies and societies in more sustainable ways. The Business School hopes to play a leading role in this debate, and through collaboration with our many stakeholders and communities, to meaningfully increase the impact and relevance of the Business School and University.

Summary of progress during the 2018-19 period

The Business School has remained committed to progressing the implementation of the six principles for the United Nations-backed global initiative developed to promote corporate responsibility and sustainability in management education, and ensuring the alignment of its research, teaching, learning and service to the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs). These frameworks continued to provide a useful guide for our planning, progress reporting and reflection in the 2018-2019 period.

Achievements over the 2018-19 period include:

- Developing and embedding specific capability statements to address the social and environmental responsibilities theme in our graduate profile
- Embedding sustainability themes into a range of short course programmes for executives
- Establishing a Community of Practice for Sustainability Education with a series of learning and teaching workshops to assist faculty in the design and delivery of curriculum
- Delivery of a number of events to engage business, government and local communities in dialogue around sustainability and CSR issues
- Targeting allocated strategic research funding at research projects focused on Productivity and Sustainability
- Recognising and incentivising activities related to sustainability and CSR through the Business School’s teaching and research excellence awards
- Appointing a Kaiārahi to lead the development of strategies for effective and enduring engagement with Māori and Pacific communities
- Developing and implementing a Sustainable Business Initiative and recruiting an Academic Director of Sustainable Business who will provide leadership to our Productivity and sustainable business research and education theme.
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 2: Values

The University of Auckland’s mission and values are consistent with its profile as a research-led, international university that plays a strategic role in shaping the future of New Zealand through discovery, innovation, creativity, and engagement in local, national and international communities. The Business School’s values and aspirations align with the University’s, particularly those underpinning the University’s practices in ethics, responsibility and sustainability. The University of Auckland’s mission and values are consistent with its profile as a research-led, international university that plays a strategic role in shaping the future of New Zealand through discovery, innovation, creativity, and engagement in local, national and international communities. The Business School’s values and aspirations align with the University’s, particularly those underpinning the University’s practices in ethics, responsibility and sustainability. 

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We will develop the capability 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 Summit theme Accelerated Action, Together reflected the need for urgency and more significant action to progress sustainable development. The University has undertaken work to increase the visibility of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in its research, teaching, and thought leadership. A recent research capability mapping exercise provided insights on the extent to which the capabilities of research-active staff align with the SDGs and the SDG’s twelve inter-disciplinary thematic networks. The research capability maps have assisted the Business School in identifying areas of strength and recognising opportunities to more effectively focus its research, education, and service.

The University of Auckland Sustainability Report 2019 documents a wide range of initiatives and activities undertaken across the University that align with the Sustainable Development Goals. The report highlights recent Business School research and student development activities that address the values stated in the SDGs. It confirms that the School is making steady progress towards its goal of implementing the six principles of PME developed to promote corporate responsibility and sustainability in management education.
We will create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership

The Business School’s mission statement, “to inspire and enable people to develop ideas, knowledge and skills that shape their development, advance Aotearoa New Zealand business, influence the global economy, and enhance society,” sets a tone that aligns with policy developments that steer New Zealand towards tackling the environmental crisis. At a national level, New Zealand is a signatory to the Paris Agreement which commits to keeping the global average temperature below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, while pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C. New Zealand has committed to reduce its net carbon emissions down to zero by 2050. The New Zealand parliament passed the Zero Carbon Act which sets a legally binding pathway to this target, requiring the Government to make a plan which includes an independent Climate Commission, five year carbon budgets and binding long-term targets. National challenges remain however, including New Zealand’s geographical distance from major global markets, an ageing population and changing ethnic profiles, as well as the environmental impacts of its two biggest industries, agriculture and tourism. This re-invention of the New Zealand economy towards zero carbon is timely and provides numerous opportunities for the Business School to carry out impactful research, and continue evolving its curriculum and pedagogies.

Greater alignment of faculty research outputs with the Strategic Education and Research Themes has resulted in the recent appointment of an Academic Director in Sustainable Business at Professorial level with a designation of Special Interest in the Circular Economy. The Sustainable Business School is now engaged in the creation of outputs with the Strategic Education and Research Themes currently embedded in courses such as BUSMBA 712 Demographic Shifts and Enhancing Enterprise, and BUSMBA 713 Environmental Sustainability. Embedding sustainability into practice is now a key area of focus for the School, with the appointment of a new Academic Director in Sustainable Business at Professorial level with a Special Interest in the Circular Economy. Further examples are provided from the Master of Commerce, research track programme portfolios. In Supply Chains and Operations Management the course OPG 5792 Sustainable Transformation explores sustainable transformation of individuals and families through to organisations, supply chains and society as a whole. Management course OLM 707 Responsible Business and Sustainability explores the critical, social and economic challenges facing business looking towards the future, and to examine the meaning of responsible business action within these contexts.

Postgraduate research track programmes also incorporate issues relating to the ethics of research in research methods courses. An analysis of postgraduate theses indicates that sustainability themes have become more prominent over the past five years. Efforts are being made to align doctoral research, such as the Barry Spicer and Owen & Glenn PhD Scholarship which requires that the proposed topic ‘impacts one or more of the four strategic research and education themes of the University of Auckland Business School’. The current programme portfolio provides opportunities to develop students’ awareness and sensitivity to sustainability related issues at a personal and global level and requires them to engage in exploring possible solutions and their potential trade-offs and consequences.

A wide range of extracurricular learning opportunities also support the development of students understanding of the relevance of sustainability, social responsibility and ethics to their chosen fields. Interdisciplinary opportunities enrich and extend students’ learning experiences and equip them for their future roles as managers and leaders. Examples include: the Impact Consulting Group (ICG), a student-led pro-bono consulting service for social enterprises; Savvy, which conducts workshops in secondary schools around Auckland to promote good financial habits in youth from all backgrounds; Social Innovation (SIN), which provides support for students to discuss and proactively solve pressing issues in the community through social enterprises; UN Youth on Campus, and Beta Alpha Psi.

In addition to volunteering and internship opportunities students are also engaged in activities such as Velocity, an entrepreneurship programme that empowers students to solve social and environmental problems and start new ventures. Many student clubs initiate and enhance social networks. In July 2019 a Business School undergraduate and ICI club member was selected to participate in the Global Changemakers Youth Summit in Switzerland to learn and build networks with like-minded youth and to imbue changemakers with skills to take on modern challenges.

Diversity and Treaty of Waitangi obligations also come into play in relation to strategies employed to stimulate Māori and Pacific student engagement. The Business School places high priority on contributing to strategic planning for Māori not only at the national scale but also within Māori society, for communities and whānau (family). This is an important national and educational responsibility and the School is implementing measures to achieve this objective. The faculty recently appointed a Kaiārahi to lead the development and implementation of strategies to support the inclusion of Māori and Pacific students. The Business School has also strategically reoriented the focus of the Dame Mira Szasy Research Centre to Māori student research development. The aim is to address the low number of Māori students completing postgraduate research degrees at the Business School, and to encourage Māori students, with potential, to consider academic career paths. By growing the pipeline, the Business School also aims to build research capacity that relates to Māori business research and economic development, and to provide Māori role models for current and future students.

Our Kaiārahi

Anahere Morehu is responsible for leading the development and execution of strategies for effective and enduring engagement with Māori and Pacific communities, schools and enterprises. This includes: Recruitment, retention, success and completion of Māori and Pacific students. Supporting the inclusion of Vision Mātauranga into faculty’s research, executing plans to achieve Māori and Pacific staff equity goals. Ensuring the Faculty is connected to relevant Māori and Pacific stakeholder engagement activities.
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.

In line with its mission and vision, the Business School is committed to research that makes an important contribution to the economic and social development of New Zealand and internationally. The School continues to focus on, promote, and invest in its four strategic research and education themes. Each research theme leverages existing capability in the School, and collectively the themes provide a framework for guiding investment decisions in both teaching and research. Their adoption provides a dynamic for the growth of relevant and impactful research outputs by focusing the School’s research centres and other clusters of researchers on the identification of projects that will enhance the School’s ability to attract external funding.

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.

Strategy Research and Education Themes adopted by the Business School

Innovation and value creation: How New Zealand enterprises can create superior value through innovation. Projects under this theme address questions about innovation that are of strategic relevance to New Zealand firms and industries, including the business, managerial and infrastructure dimensions of innovation, and the financial, ethical, legal, regulatory and policy framework that relates to them. Social responsibility and sustainability are increasingly a driver of innovation and is reflected in thematic research.

Succeeding in international markets: How New Zealand and its enterprises can succeed internationally. Research projects under this theme address New Zealand’s international trade, marketing and management, and attempt to answer questions of strategic relevance to the export (or foreign-exchange earning) performance of New Zealand companies and organisations, and the policy framework.

Productivity and sustainable business: How New Zealand industries, enterprises and organisations can enhance their performance against world-class benchmarks and grow in sustainable ways. Research projects funded under this theme address important questions relating to the productivity and sustainability of New Zealand’s industries, enterprises and organisations, and the financial, ethical, legal, regulatory and policy framework that relates to them.

Get Good Done

Sponsored by the Ministry of Youth Development, Get Good Done is an annual three day hackathon that tasks participants to come up with solutions to some of the biggest environmental, social, and cultural issues of our time – based on the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.

The programme attracts participants from a kaleidoscope of cultures, interests, experiences and knowledge. Participants start as individuals and from teams based around a problem they are attracted to. Over the course of the weekend they dive deep into the problem and scope a solution.

In 2019, solutions presented included air-cleaning products, gamification apps to encourage people to use sustainable and healthier modes of transport, an online platform to help those with social anxiety, and a support system for local farmers to reduce carbon produced through food freight and packaging.

The Paperless Classroom Project

In 2019, one of the Business School’s core teaching teams won the University of Auckland Environmental Sustainability Vice Chancellor’s Excellence Award for their work on the Paperless Classroom Project.

The project promotes environmental sustainability through the re-engineering of the BUSINESS 101 and 102 courses to a digital delivery format, eliminating the use of paper. The end result is a saving of approximately 140,000 A4 sheets of paper per annum, with consequent direct cost savings of $20,000 per annum, and a reduction of 8.30 metric tons of CO2 per year. Expansion of this concept is already underway in other Business School courses and programmes, and could be adopted by other faculties should their course or programme content and delivery methods permit.
Leadership and governance: This theme underpins and influences the other three. It is concerned with how leadership and governance can assist enterprises and organizations to innovate, create value, succeed in international markets, enhance productivity and sustainability. Research projects under this theme address issues beyond the enterprise, to include the role of leadership in enhancing the contribution of business to societal aims.

The University of Auckland Business School is committed to research that impacts with impact. Faculty research publications are extensive and appear as articles in both local and international journals, books, book chapters, conference papers, and research reports. See the appendices for a list of recent publications relevant to sustainability and the SDGs.

In order to increase the relevance and impact of its research, the Business School provides strong support for researchers to develop high-quality outputs and outcomes, and encourages and supports collaboration with New Zealand business, government institutions and other important external stakeholders.

The Business School's research strategy is based on three linked imperatives:
- building and supporting strong discipline- and disciplinary-based research and teaching in business and social sciences
- developing multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary programmes of research, development and innovation relevant to the needs of New Zealand in its international context
- meeting the learning and research needs of individuals, industries, enterprises and public sector organisations, especially through contract research

To encourage faculty to focus on producing research that addresses a question of relevance and importance to the economy and society, targeted funding has been allocated through the Strategic Research Themes Fund. In 2019, two projects were specifically aligned with the productivity and sustainability business theme: ‘Exploring the Dimensions and Consequences of Integrated Reporting’, a business sustainability accounting project was awarded $65,000 NZD. ‘Understanding and Facilitating Regional Town Centre Regeneration and Wellbeing in Aotearoa New Zealand Kia tipa e tāone’ was awarded $90,000.

Selection criteria for the fund include: potential for winning external research income from aligned domestic and international funders; the extent to which the project facilitates cross-departmental or cross-Faculty collaboration; the potential for high-quality academic and ‘translational’ publications; and/or capability-building programmes; the degree of support from industry partners and/or University of Auckland research groups; and the extent to which the project builds research capacity through Principal Investigators working in collaboration with less senior colleagues and/or graduate students. The criteria reflect the intent of the Business School, University and Government to encourage research that focuses on issues of national significance.

Business School Research Excellence Award

In 2018, the Business School introduced the Research Excellence and Impact Award, recognising outstanding impact in relation to one of the School’s strategic research and education themes. The award was designed to encourage relevant and impactful research that addresses a question of importance to the economy and society.

In 2018, Professor Paul House from the Department of Accounting was chosen as a winner for the award for his work in the field of accounting and sustainability. His research focuses on performance and productivity measurement. Professor House is a top scholar in the Business School and is recognised as a leading innovator in sustainable business, applying his research in industries such as transport, education and health. In 2018, Professor House was the co-principal investigator on a Treasury-funded programme to develop evidence to support the Social Investment model 2015-2018. This project is a collaboration between the Ministry of Social Development, four District Health Boards, and researchers at The University of Auckland, across Health, Business, Science, and Engineering.

Dr Carla Houkamau
Dr Carla Houkamau is an Associate Professor in the Department of Management and International Business.

Dr Houkamau leads the study Te Tangihau a Te Tauri | Māori and the National Identity and Social Attitudes Study (HIFAS), which aims to address the question, “How does cultural identity matter for Māori economic decision-making?”

The HIFAS was launched in September 2017. The survey is funded by a Marsden grant for “How Great Can We Be: Identity Leaders of the Māori Economic Renaissance.” It is the largest survey of Māori financial attitudes that has ever been conducted.
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.

The Business School recognises that closer collaboration with business, government and civil society is essential and building enduring, high-impact relationships is a key strategic priority for the School. The Business School is located in the commercial capital of New Zealand and maintains very strong relationships with the business community through its research, education and engagement activities. These include, but are not limited to: association with industry bodies and professional organisations, research translation activities; co-creation of research projects; co-hosting of events; conferences and symposiums; student projects; student development, internships, and graduate recruitment activities; awards and prizes; and sponsorship and funding.

The Business School continues to maintain working relationships with major networks that have an economic and environmental focus as well as establishing new relationships with emerging ones. We draw on our continued membership of the Sustainable Business Network and collaborate with them in areas such as the Circular Economy and support their activities through their Million Metre Streams Project. The Business School also has a robust relationship with the Antarctica Circle, which is focused on examining the role of finance and sustainable prosperity in New Zealand as the country moves towards de-carbonisation. The School also continues to engage with Pure Advantage, the Sustainable Business Council and the Environmental Defense Society.

In October 2019 the Business School hosted New Zealand’s second national Sustainable Development Goals Summit, with 460 participants. The Summit, under the theme of Accelerated Action, together brought together people from civil society, education, government, business and many youth leaders. The Summit’s purpose was to develop and commit to positive action and accountability on the critical SDGs. It provided a platform for recognising, sharing and combining knowledge and skills through keynote addresses, panel discussions and action planning.

The Business School continues to host the annual Māori Business Leaders Awards to honour and celebrate the success and achievements of Māori business leaders. The event, jointly organised with the Dame Mira Szászy Research Centre, is recognised as New Zealand’s premier Māori business awards ceremony. It focuses on recognising young Māori business leaders, entrepreneurs and women amongst many others.

The Supply Chain Forum, convened in mid 2019, brought together academic researchers and executives working in supply chain, in order to identify real life issues and opportunities for applied research and collaborations. It focused on a range of issues including how best to handle the last mile of transported goods, how to apply circular economy concepts to business in order to reduce waste and create efficiencies, and how best to decarbonise operations in line with the new government regulations. As a result of the Forum, businesses are partnering with lead academic researchers to create research projects addressing these issues. Forum partners meet on a regular basis to provide updates on progress.

The Business School maintains strong connections with the business community through its various advisory boards and through a wider range of executive education learning opportunities. The Executive Education Unit delivers high quality professional development training to over 300 businesses and offers executives the opportunity to update knowledge in fields such as management, supply chain, finance, information management and leadership. The School’s contact points with high and mid level executives provide avenues for further connection and collaboration as relationships develop.

The Business School is also increasing student opportunities for external engagement through its academic programmes. A new portfolio of capstone courses are being introduced as part of a refresh of the undergraduate programme. These are expected to leverage experiences gained by the Department of Information Systems and Operations Management, which has been operating a successful third year industry project course that places undergraduates into businesses to gain real life industry experience solving a live business problem. The initiative is also being extended to provide Masters students with the opportunity to base their thesis on a real world issue and address this in collaboration with a partnering business. Improved business engagement in the doctoral programme is already evident through a range of externally sponsored research projects and placements.

New Zealand has a wonderful opportunity to lead the world in developing sustainable energy. The Centre has a vital role in underpin this with research, teaching and community outreach.

The Centre is a vital bridge between industry, government and the community. Our researchers independently analyse New Zealand’s key energy challenges, drawing on expertise in economics, engineering and physical, biological and social sciences. The Centre collaborates with business in its annual Summer School in Economics and cross faculty teams are tackling energy challenges based on real world issues. The Centre’s research on the integration of wind, geothermal and solar power into the market appears in leading academic journals, and shows that wholesale prices fall as more wind enters the mix. The Centre is particularly proud of its innovative research into Auckland’s solar opportunities and have developed an online tool to estimate individual homeowners’ solar generation potential. Increasingly researchers will focus on energy-efficient transport, including public transport and electric vehicles.

**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.
The Business School continues to recognise the importance of maintaining regular dialogue with business networks, government departments and local government, social enterprises and civil society, researchers and the media community through forums, seminars and symposiums on sustainability. The Business School maintains an active series of events around issues such as energy, supply chains, regulation and international relations, many of which have a strong sustainability theme.

The recently hosted national Sustainable Development Goals Summit provided attendees with the opportunity to have robust conversations and debates on a wide range of topics such as regenerative farming, sustainable transport, addressing biodiversity loss and social equity in a decarbonising society. Participants discussed how to move from individual to collective action, how the SDGs can be translated into action plans across different levels of society, and explore the potential to draw on Mātauranga Māori and indigenous knowledge. The SDG Summit also featured relevant speakers in their After Five event series. This included speakers such as Kate Nicholl Skattäng who related her research on slavery in the supply chain, and Roger Gray who highlighted the sustainability efforts being made in the aviation industry.

Moving forward, the new Academic Director of Sustainable Business will be developing business and government connections relating to sustainable business, partnering with Māori in relation to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and developing projects with business to solve pressing challenges facing the New Zealand economy.

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.

The Energy Centre engages with students, staff, industry and government through their Energy Matters series which brings together some of the world’s most respected thinkers and commentators to inform debate and challenge current paradigms around the use and exploitation of fossil fuels. In 2019 Michael Liebich spoke on clean energy and transportation, smart infrastructure, technology, climate finance and sustainable development. The Energy Centre Spotlight Forum was an opportunity to present the Centre’s latest research findings with discussions on zero carbon in New Zealand, Auckland transport opportunities and challenges as well as advances in solar and wind research.

The Centre for Supply Chain Management also feature relevant speakers in their After Five event series. This included speakers such as Kate Nicholl Skattäng who related her research on slavery in the supply chain, and Roger Gray who highlighted the sustainability efforts being made in the aviation industry.

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The New Zealand Asia Institute provided guidance to students interested in entering corporate social responsibility or social enterprise.

In 2018, the New Zealand Asia Institute’s annual conference Asia Savvy addressed how firms can pursue a purpose beyond simply making profit.

Panelists from some of New Zealand’s largest corporates and inspiring social enterprises spoke about how businesses conceives of purpose and realise this larger purpose. Each of the speakers gave accounts of their own career path and personal incentives leading to their current positions and provided guidance to students interested in entering corporate social responsibility or social enterprise.
Our activities will focus on achieving the following specific goals in the 2020-21 period:

- Establish a new Research Unit on Modern Slavery Studies that focuses on the role of international business plays in the perpetuation of modern slavery through a continuum of exploitative practices including labour exploitation through to forced labour and modern slavery.
- Engage and support faculty in strengthening the delivery of sustainability, the SDGs and the Treaty of Waitangi across the refreshed undergraduate core.
- Integrate sustainability, Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG), and the Treaty of Waitangi themes into the delivery of the series of new professional masters programmes launching in 2021.
- Consider how the Business School might transform the ways in which it engages and collaborates with its stakeholders and communities in a world disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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The Business School is committed to progressing implementation of the six principles for the United Nations-backed global initiative developed to promote corporate responsibility and sustainability in management education, and ensure the alignment of its research, teaching and engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals. These frameworks will continue to provide direction in the 2020–21 period.

- Engage the incoming Academic Director Sustainable Business to support business plays in the perpetuation of modern slavery through a continuum of exploitative practices including labour exploitation through to forced labour and modern slavery.
- Recruit a Business Manager, an Academic Manager and an Academic Program Manager.
- Integrate sustainability, Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG), and the Treaty of Waitangi themes into the delivery of the series of new professional masters programmes launching in 2021.
- Consider how the Business School might transform the ways in which it engages and collaborates with its stakeholders and communities in a world disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.


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