Aston PRME SIP Report: Sharing Information on Progress
Letter of Support from Professor Helen Higson expressing Aston's continued commitment to PRME

Aston University

PRME Steering Committee
c/o Jonas Haertle
PRME Secretariat, UN Global Compact Office
United Nations DC2-612 2, United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017, USA

3 October 2017

Dear Jonas

Renewal of the commitment to Principles for Responsible Management Education

As an institution of higher learning involved in the education of current and future leaders, Aston University is committed to upholding the UN backed Global Compact Principles of Responsible Management Education and to engaging in a continuous process of improvement in the application of the Principles for Responsible Management Education. We undertake to report on progress to all stakeholders and to exchange effective practices with other academic institutions.

Our initial signatory to the Principles in 2008 was as a Business School and Aston Business School has worked to integrate the Principles into all areas of the School's activities. This includes the areas identified in the Principles ie the business school curricula, programme design, courses and learning, research as well as in partnerships and dialogue with all our stakeholders. As a University, we believe that the values of ethics, social responsibility and sustainability are important in to all disciplines and professions and our commitment to PRME should be across all Schools in the University. Therefore, Aston University’s 2020 Strategy has Social Responsibility and Sustainability as one of the 8 key strategic aims. The strategy states:

**Aim 07** Sustainability and social responsibility are issues our staff, students and stakeholders feel passionately about, and are central to how we work at the University, and how we relate to the world around us. Sustainability and social responsibility are based on ethical values and underpinned by the idea of economic, social and environmental obligations to our range of stakeholders.

07.01 Commitment to the United Nations backed Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME). Improving the integration of sustainability and social responsibility by embedding our activities in this area into all aspects of University life.

07.03 Social responsibility and sustainability literacy. Extending across the University curriculum changes aimed at enabling all graduates to be ‘literate in social responsibility and sustainability.’

As an Advanced Signatory to UN PRME, we also understand that our own organizational practices should serve as examples of the values and attitudes we seek to convey to our students.

Yours sincerely

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PRME Principles

Principle 1 – Purpose

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

Principle 2 – Values

We will incorporate into our academic activities and curricula the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in initiatives such as the UN 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 of the role, dynamics and impact of corporations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value.

Principle 5 – Partnership

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

Principle 6 – Dialogue

We will facilitate and support 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.

Finally, we understand that our own organisational practices should serve as examples of the values and attitudes we convey to our students.
**Sustainable Development Goals**

On September 25th 2015, all member countries of the United Nations adopted a set of goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda.

Each goal has specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years. There are 17 SDGs with each one having a number of specific objectives and targets. The goals include:

Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere  
Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture  
Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages  
Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning  
Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls  
Goal 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all  
Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all  
Goal 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all  
Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation  
Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries  
Goal 11: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns  
Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production  
Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts  
Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources  
Goal 15: Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss  
Goal 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies  
Goal 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

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**Aston University’s Commitment to PRME and the SDGs**

Aston University’s involvement in PRME started primarily with Aston Business School. It was the Business School that became an early signatory to the Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) in 2008 and were represented at all the Global Forums for PRME in December 2008, 2010 and the Rio+20 Earth Summit 2012.

In 2009 and 2010, Aston Business School hosted UN PRME events aimed at encouraging UK Universities to become signatories. Both events were very well attended and conducted with a collaborative approach that encouraged the sharing of good practice in fulfilling the Principles.
By 2012, over half of the universities in UK had become signatures to PRME. As a result, Aston hosted the Foundation meeting of the newly formed UK and Ireland Chapter of PRME in May 2013 and is currently an Advanced Signatory.

The University 2020 Strategy was developed with Social Responsibility & Sustainability as one of the eight key strategic aims. Since then the SDGs have been published and much of that strategy and the Aston curriculum as a whole is aligned with the SDGs’ aims such as 4.04 Developing Global Citizens and 7.04 promoting community engagement and involvement. Future curricula reviews will be mindful of both PRME and SDG aims, objectives and targets.

There is also a University-wide Ethical Framework that integrates values and underpins changes in the curriculum.

The current Aston 2020 strategy states:

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**07.01** Commitment to the United Nations backed Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME). Improving the integration of sustainability and social responsibility by embedding our activities in this area into all aspects of University life.

**07.03** Social responsibility and sustainability literacy. Extending across the University curriculum changes aimed at enabling all graduates to be ‘literate in social responsibility and sustainability.’

The University strategy is to integrate these issues into all aspects of University life.
The Ethics Framework

The Ethics Framework underpins the University’s commitment to high ethical standards and regulatory compliance. It sets out the broad range of regulations, policies, and practices that govern its relationships with colleagues, customers, partners, suppliers, and other stakeholders.

The Framework is supported by the more detailed policies referenced below and, where appropriate, policies determined locally and tailored to the individual requirements of each School or department. Information is provided to help all members of the University community to make good, informed business decisions and to act on them with integrity. It also provides advice on who to approach for advice when university members are facing ethical dilemmas.

The Framework also identifies the key areas in which ethical considerations may arise and the responsibilities of individuals, groups, committees and other bodies in specific areas. Thus, the Framework guides members of the University in how to act properly with impartiality, integrity, good conscience and judgement at all times.

It provides support and guidance to staff, students, members of the governing body and other stakeholders in their consideration of ethical issues arising from University activities and information about where individuals facing ethical dilemmas can seek further assistance and more detailed guidance in relation to particular spheres of activity. It is designed to define the way the University operates.

The Ethics Framework was launched in March 2013 and full details can be found at: http://www.aston.ac.uk/about/management-structure/university-regulation/ethics-framework/

It has evolved over time and no longer includes an independent listener service as this was not really used by anyone over a 15 month period.

A full review of the Ethics Framework is due to take place in late 2017.
Curricula, Programme Design, Courses and Learning

Aston Business School (ABS)

In 2007-2008, a review of the Aston Business School curriculum was undertaken in order to provide a base line of information enabling progress to be made towards all Business graduates becoming ‘literate in social responsibility and sustainability.’ This review aimed to determine the content and delivery of ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability provided for Business School students. The results of this review can be seen in Aston’s SIP report for 2015.

Aston Business School (ABS) is accredited by all three major accreditation bodies AMBA, AACSB and EQUIS. These bodies require global responsibility, business ethics and sustainability to be integrated throughout the curriculum. From 2015-17, ABS has sought to integrate these issues at both undergraduate and post graduate level in its broad portfolio of courses. The MSc Social Responsibility and Sustainability was closed in 2016 and a new programme developed to replace it. This programme has yet to be launched.

Some indicative examples of current teaching, learning, research and publications include:

- MSc Module BFM 223/155/423 Sustainability Accounting and Accountability
- PG and doctoral supervision: on the topic of social and environmental accounting. Some recently completed doctoral thesis include:

  1. Mr Mohi Uddin, A Case Study of NGO Accountability in BRAC, Bangladesh. Now a full time lecturer at the Business School of Queens University of Belfast. Funded by ESRC. 2014
  2. Mr Rezaul Kabir, A Case Study of Sustainability Reporting in a Garments Manufacturing Company in Bangladesh. Now a full time Assistant Professor at the Institute of Business Administration, Dhaka University. Funded by Commonwealth Commission, UK. 2017

Other modules, shared with a number of different programmes include: Sustainability Science, Technology and Engineering; Strategic Business Sustainability; and CSR, Sustainable Development and Public Policy.

In Aston’s new MBA programme (Regular, Executive and On-line), we have firmly established ‘socially responsible management’ as a cross-cutting subject. Students are required to evaluate their own MBA projects from a CSR and sustainability perspective and submit the evaluation for assessment.
Aston has also launched an NGO Applied Management Research and Teaching Unit to meet our commitment to the Principles for Responsible Management Education (UN-PRME). This unit provides an opportunity for master classes, research collaboration and other interdisciplinary activity focusing on individual and team leadership, strategy processes in the voluntary sector, project management, fund raising, stakeholder management, NGO-business partnerships, NGOs in corporate social responsibility, human rights, poverty alleviation, sustainable development and organisational approaches to transparency and accountability. Doctoral research - PhD and DBA - in these areas is also developing at a significant pace.

Recent publications by academic staff in these areas have helped enhance Aston Business School’s profile and commitment. Such publications include:


Aston Business School staff have been actively developing their impacts on policy and practice.

In alliance with Creative Alternatives Now (CAN), a non-profit organisation based in Somalia and Kenya, Dr Kazmi has also drafted a briefing paper on Business-Led Peacebuilding in Somalia, commissioned by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSM) as a part of its initiative on Peace and Reconciliation in Somalia. The paper is a part of the portfolio which UNSOM will use to shape the policies of new government in Somalia.

Aston has recently gained funding for an R&D project on low carbon SMEs from the European Funded Project (ERDF) which is due to run from March 2017 until February 2020. It provides support to reduce the carbon footprint of client SMEs’ (less than 250 employees with a turnover of less than 50M euros) in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP areas. It particularly focusses on high energy users in manufacturing, foundries, press works, baking, surface treatment, etc. The project’s aim is to achieve total of 385 tonnes in carbon reductions.

Professor Ute Stephan with Dr Emma Folmer, has recently completed an EU funded research project on social enterprise (www.seforis.eu ), which correspond with PRIME objectives. In terms of engagement with social enterprise, the project:

- Organized and hosted a large social enterprise conference at Aston in December 2016 attended by a high-level EU representative as well.

Engagement with social enterprises and teaching has included:

- The development of a MOOC for social enterprises http://www.seforis.eu/mooc/
- The module Entrepreneurship & Innovation in Emerging Economies has been revised to contain social enterprise content.

Significant academic outputs include:

(1) **Prizes include:**

(2) **Best paper proceedings include:**


Faculty members at ABS are involved in promoting integration of CSR and Sustainability education in business schools in India. Prof. Pawan Budhwar convened and moderated a session with business school faculties in India on “Promoting Sustainability Education in Business School in India” on 18 November 2016, as part of Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) 3rd conference – India and Sustainability Standards: International Dialogues and Conference 2016 in New Delhi India.

On 16 November 2017, Dr. Bimal Arora, Lecturer at ABS convened and moderated a follow up session “Promoting Sustainability Education in Business School in India”, as part of Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) 4th conference – India and Sustainability Standards: International Dialogues and Conference 2016 in New Delhi India.

Other significant publications include:


Between 2017-19, as part of their induction programme and in the framework of the Professional Development Programme, Aston’s new MSc students have been tasked with undertaking a small project which they complete in their working team and deliver within the two weeks of induction.
This is meant to help them start building a relationship as a team, work out the group’s dynamics and start understanding the challenges attached to group work. In order to raise students’ awareness of PRME and of Aston as a university supporting entrepreneurship, the project has been linked with PRME, Social Responsibility and Sustainability and BSEEN takes an active part in judging the projects.

Winning Teams will get the opportunity to receive some mentoring time with a BSEEN mentor and all teams are encouraged to enter the Aston Enterprise competition.

**School of Engineering & Applied Sciences (EAS)**

The School’s research profile in the area of bio-energy is award winning. Bio-energy can provide fuels that are very similar to familiar fuels like oil, coal or gas. These fuels are easy to store, unlike many other forms of renewable energy.

However at the moment, most methods for producing bioenergy are inefficient and wasteful. This means that a lot of land is used to grow the biomass required. To overcome this problem, Aston is researching thermal biomass conversion for energy, fuel and chemicals applications through the Bioenergy Research Group (BERG).

Water is also an important research area at Aston. Such is the increase in demand for water that in many places the sea is the only source left. But the salt has to be removed from seawater prior to drinking, and this process of desalination is currently expensive.

The problems of water and energy are linked in many ways. For example, desalination requires energy and to grow crops for bioenergy requires water. Even solar energy installations may require a certain amount of water. Solar energy and desalination are among the topics investigated by our Sustainable Environment Research Group.

**Impact Case Studies include:**

1. A solar powered steam engine capable of transforming salt water into fresh drinking water.

2. An innovative €8m bioenergy project which will see five European countries working together to develop bioenergy initiatives that will significantly reduce the amount of waste being sent to landfill, has been recently launched in the West Midlands.
3. Business and Engineering academics from Aston University and the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi are overseeing the construction of a combined heat and power plant (CHP) in a remote village in northern India.

4. As fuel prices continue to increase, researchers from the European Bioenergy Research Institute (EBRI) at Aston University have developed an innovative bioenergy solution that uses waste products to generate cost-effective heat and power and that could reduce the world’s reliance on fossil fuels.

The market opportunities of the equipment – a Pyroformer, developed by Professor Andreas Hornung, of EBRI – also offer business benefits to the West Midlands region. It is anticipated that 35 jobs will be directly safeguarded or created and over 1,000 indirect jobs created in the West Midlands by 2022 as a result.

School of Languages and Social Sciences (LSS)

As part of their commitment to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) LSS work with staff and students to embed ESD in a number of areas. Several modules in LSS already include topics and assessment which focus on the role of sustainability, global citizenship and/or social responsibility.

LSS are committed to ensuring that all students understand the benefits of learning about these themes and how they fit into the broader agenda of ESD.

More specifically a number of undergraduate modules directly address issues relating to social and environmental sustainability such as: The Politics of Climate Change; Health Policy; Ageing, Society and Policy; The Challenges of Climate Change; The Citizen and the State; Racism, class and gender; Contemporary Social Movements; Learning to Labour? Education and Society; Global Society; and, Corporate Power in a Globalised World.

In addition LSS aim to foster the knowledge of key concepts which will equip staff and students with an understanding of the principles of ESD via a series of activities. Regards the promotion of global citizenship, under the Languages for All scheme we have two different options available for our students to study a language alongside or as part of their degree.

Eligible first year, undergraduate students can study a language available for free of cost (only in their first year). Current Aston students can choose a language module as part of their degree, depending on the degree they are studying and whether or not it entails a languages stream.
LSS has an extensive research programme. Its Centre for Critical Inquiry into Society and Culture embraces a number of areas highly relevant to both PRME and the SDGs. For instance on Migration, Ethnicity and Nation researchers are working across a range of disciplines and subject areas to explore contemporary practices of mobility and experiences of diversity.

Major areas of research for the group include:

- Processes and practices of migration
- Ethnic diversity and super diversity
- Ethnic, cultural and religious identities
- Theories of migration and citizenship
- Migration and social mobility
- ‘Everyday’ experiences of and encounters with diversity

On Health and Well-Being, the Centre’s members are undertaking research and policy engagement on health systems, nutrition and obesity, tobacco and alcohol control, social care, and the politics of ageing. Work is organised into three closely linked, interdisciplinary research and knowledge clusters: corporations and health, patient and citizen engagement, and healthy ageing.

**School of Life and Health Science (LHS)**

LHS recognises that sustainability and social responsibility are based on ethical values and underpinned by the idea of economic, social and environmental obligations to a range of stakeholders.

As part of the University wide review, LHS courses were scrutinised at the modular level for information relating to Ethics, Social Responsibility & Sustainability, and related issues and curriculum maps are being developed for each of the LHS programmes. Awareness raising of these issues with Life & Health Sciences staff and students is also facilitated through specialist lectures.

LHS embraces a wide range of research topics all of which in some way correspond to the SDGs. For instance given the ageing population in many countries, including the United Kingdom, the Aston Research Centre for Healthy Ageing
(ARCHA) takes a multidisciplinary approach to successful ageing by asking how technological, therapeutic and psychosocial strategies can be employed to understand and arrest age-related decline. The Centre’s mission is to facilitate research that helps understand, predict and prevent age-related degeneration with specific focus on the eye, the mind, the metabolism and medicines and devices in the context of the psychological, social and policy factors affecting ageing lives.

**Aston Medical School (AMS)**

Aston Medical School was launched in 2016. Its curriculum is patient-centred which helps to develop the core competencies in medicine, gain key teamwork skills and understand the workings of the internationally admired NHS (National Health Service).

The Aston MBChB undergraduate medicine degree starts in 2018. Aston Medical Research Institute was established in 2014, with the purpose of promoting translational medicine and a culture of discovery-based research, to transform lives across the world by taking molecules to market. Specific research topics include maternal health, cardiovascular medicine, mental health and regenerative medicine.

**Institutional Commitment**

**Aston’s Sustainability Team (Estates)**

A large number of student sustainability projects are offered every year by the University’s Sustainability team. For the academic year 2017-18 projects offered include:

**Biodiversity**

- Retrofit of Green wall/ roofs to existing buildings. Costs, benefits and issues that may associate with this work. (EAS, LHS)

**Energy**

- Produce a model of increasing the use of solar PV systems on our roofs/ outdoor recreational grounds. Costs, savings and payback. (EAS)
- Wind modelling at Outdoor Recreational Centre - work out if there is scope to install a wind turbine at the grounds. What size of turbine, costs benefits and issues. (EAS)

- Look at the option of installing Biomass boilers within the University’s boiler house. Work with ENGIE who maintain the boiler house and the University to look at a feasibility of installing a biomass boiler. (EAS)

Waste

- Marketing for campaigns including poster designs etc. (ABS)
- Creating a video about waste initiatives on site. (ABS)
- Product design course - design out waste. (EAS, ABS)

Water

- Greywater/ rain water options on existing buildings. Costs, benefits and issues. (EAS, LHS)

Transport

- Various behavioural change projects could be looked at such as getting more staff to take sustainable transport, using a car share scheme; choosing electric cars over fuel etc. (ABS, LHS)

- Logistics report if the University removed all car parking spaces - how would staff get in and options available. (ABS)

Construction

- Sustainable project management around future Aston Projects - how to embed sustainability into our estates strategy. (EAS)

- Retrofit of Green wall/ roofs to existing buildings. Costs, benefits and issues that may associate with this work. (EAS, LHS)

- Assessment of sustainable build schemes available for new build, refurbishment and possible benefits of bespoke scheme written in house. (EAS)
Procurement

- Mapping key suppliers - work with one of our key suppliers to map its supply chain and see how it embeds aspects of sustainability as well as meets legal requirements such as Modern Slavery. (ABS)

- Look to increase supplier engagement using the University’s NetPositive supplier engagement tool, working with suppliers to embed sustainability more into their practices. (ABS)

- Audit the University to see where we are on the Procurement tool ‘Flexible Framework’. (ABS)

Communities

- Environmental strategies for local businesses. (ABS)

- Map community spend/ engagement with suppliers. (ABS)

Campus activities

Aston University is committed to integrating sustainability into all aspects of the three corners of our academic triangle, as stated in the mission: “delivering an excellent learning experience for our students, enhanced by interaction with internationally recognised, relevant research, and linked to innovative support for local companies and engagement with schools and the community, involving students and staff in raising aspirations and attainment”.

Aston’s Sustainability team co-ordinates a number of Go Green Champions across the University, Conference Aston and Student Union. These Champions work hard to improve our sustainability at Aston. A monthly workbook is sent to the Go Green Champions, who can gain points by completing the tasks. These will be shared in a monthly league table alongside Aston’s electricity league.
Aston University has also been ‘highly commended’ and recognised for projects in the prestigious Green Gown Awards. In 2016, Aston was HIGHLY COMMENDED - Aston University for its Carbon Week which aimed to help all second year undergraduate students understand the importance of environmental sustainability.

Carbon Week took place between 2 - 6 November 2015 and was an ambitious five-day programme to bring climate change awareness and low-carbon design thinking to all our Year 2 students. In 2017 Aston is again a finalist competing in the Continuous improvement - institutional change category of the Green Gown Awards.

Organisational Policies and Practices

Aston University has developed a range of significant institutional policies, practices and groups to further its commitment to PRME principles and the SDGs.

These include:

- Modern Slavery Statement [http://www.aston.ac.uk/about/management-structure/university-governance/university-regulation/]
- Ethical Investment Policy [http://www.aston.ac.uk/about/management-structure/university-governance/university-regulation/ethical-investment-policy/]. The ethical investment policy is annually reviewed in Aston’s Finance and Major Project Committee; which does have a student representative: [http://www.aston.ac.uk/about/management-structure/university-governance/council/council-committees/finance-major-projects-committee/membership/]
- Aston is a Fair Trade University [http://www.aston.ac.uk/environment/fairtrade/]
- Aston’s regional purchasing consortium SUPC have signed up to Electronics Watch, which maps the IT supply chain [https://www.supc.ac.uk/news/news/item/supc-joins-forces-with-electronics-watch-to-protect-supply-chain-workers]
- In 2017 Aston has signed up to the NETpositive Supplier Engagement Software that looks at Suppliers Sustainable Action Plans [http://netpositivefutures.co.uk/netpositive-supplier-engagement/]
- Aston Sustainable Action Working Group (SAWG) has evolved since 2015 and now includes a number of professional departments, staff and other academics [http://www.aston.ac.uk/environment/policy/sustainable-aston-working-group/]
Faculty Education and Staff Development

A critical aspect of the integration of ethics, social responsibility and sustainability is the education and development of academic staff. At Aston, new academic staff from across the University, undertake the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education.

This programme incorporates this innovative intercultural awareness training. Sustainability, equality and inclusion are key cross-cutting themes throughout the design of the new programme. However, these are not taught in a didactic manner, but are approached from the perspective of critical pedagogy (after Friere, 1998) in order to enhance participants’ ability to question dominant ideologies.

This also accords with the benchmark statements of the United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) for competence in learning and teaching in higher education; ‘Areas of Activity’; ‘Core Knowledge’ in particular the core dimension of ‘Professional Values’.

External Partnership and Dialogue

Aston’s contribution to the community can be also seen in a number of different ways; through widening participation initiatives, business engagement, voluntary activities and outreach work. One example of our commitment to social responsibility is how seriously we take our work in widening participation and social inclusion. This ensures that high potential students from under-represented groups can gain the benefits of university education and the social mobility that comes with professional careers. Aston has an excellent record on widening participation.

One recent event symbolises many. In January 2017 students on the Sir Doug Ellis Pathway to Healthcare learning and development programme attended a medical day in order which aimed to encourage aspirations of a medical career. These students were given a taste of a range of careers in the healthcare professions. The 16 and 17 year-olds met with local professionals including a children’s nurse, consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist, plastic surgeon, audiologist, pharmacist, optometrist, physiotherapist and clinical psychologist as well as a police crime scene co-ordinator.

Employability is a key part of Aston’s strategy for all students and to underline this, Aston University has for over 20 years consistently featured in the top 30 UK Universities for graduate employability.
Currently 78.8% of Aston graduates find a grad-level job or further study within six months of graduation, compared to a national average of less than 70%, placing Aston inside the top 25 institutions in the UK (2017 Complete University Guide).

Additionally, Aston is consistently above all the benchmarks and UK averages for social inclusion and participation. Aston has a reputation for building strong relationships with business, professional and public sector organisations. This includes student support and placements, professional and executive development, collaborative research and consultancy.

Aston regularly host events and conferences for business leaders on issues relating to ethics, social responsibility and sustainability and anyone who is interested in learning more about the business world. There is a wealth of opportunity for students and staff to be involved with the local community at both an academic and extra-curricular level.

**Key specific objectives for 2017-19**

1. Launch a new MSc programme to replace the MSc Social responsibility and Sustainability.

2. ABS intends to strengthen the postgraduate portfolio to correspond more effectively with the SDG goals and targets.

3. To review the Ethical Framework in the context of the SDG goals and targets.

4. The university intends to develop it public engagement activities including a summer schools for NGOs in 2018.

5. To expand the doctoral research portfolio in order to deepen the University's commitment to knowledge generation and transfer in the fields of social responsibility, sustainability, business ethics and human rights.

Finally, it should be noted that although Aston participates in many sustainability and social responsibility activities, they are remain somewhat fragmented and unco-ordinated within and between faculties.

It is hoped that for the period 2017-2019 an overall and over-arching programme or framework will be developed along the lines of the Ethical Framework to enhance Aston’s capability for research and teaching, campus activities and engagement in the fields of responsible business, sustainability and social responsibility.