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 i.e. 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 & 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.’

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

Through our engagement with the PRME Champions Group, the UK & Ireland PRME Chapter and the PRME working Groups, we continue to encourage other academic institutions, and associations to adopt and support these Principles.

Yours sincerely

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Deputy Vice-Chancellor

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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 about the role, dynamics and impact of corporations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value.

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

Principle 6 – Dialogue
We will facilitate and support 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.
Introduction and Background

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 signatories to PRME. As a result, Aston hosted the Foundation meeting of the newly formed UK and Ireland Chapter of PRME in May 2013.

Members at the Foundation Meeting (above)

PRME beyond the business school

The focus in the early years of the implementation of PRME has primarily (and rightly) been on business and management schools; yet, in considering the range of professions, businesses, and organisations that graduates go on to work in (and many of them in management positions), it is important to consider how the PRME principles can be used to influence the strategy of all programmes, particularly in relation to ethics, responsibility, and sustainability. Therefore, this report will share information on progress for Aston Business School and provide examples of how the values and principles of PRME are being integrated across the University.

Social Responsibility and Sustainability (and related issues) are of concern for private, public, and third sector organisations, professional bodies, community groups, and individual citizens locally, nationally and internationally, and its importance for the global economy is likely to increase as the global indicators relating to resource exploitation, global poverty and inequality, climate change, species extinction, energy consumption (especially fossil fuels), etc., continue to be serious cause for concern. Therefore, it is important that all students at the University are equipped with the relevant knowledge and understanding of current and future implications for businesses and these other groups. As managers/leaders of the future, all graduates will be required to be social responsibility and sustainability literate in order to directly address and make decisions regarding societal challenges in these areas.
As indicated above, the Business School became signatory to PRME in 2008 and has been actively engaged in a variety of PRME events and activities, which contributed to influencing the development of the University strategy. In 2012, Aston University was developing its strategy towards 2020 and discussions centred around the integration of ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability as part of the new strategy in all aspects of University life.

**The University 2020 Strategy** was developed with Social Responsibility & Sustainability as one of the eight 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.’ University strategy of ‘integrating these issues into all aspects of University life.’

This included the development of a University-wide Ethical Framework (see other case study by Aston) that integrates values and underpins changes in the curriculum.

In September 2013, Aston was invited to become a 'PRME Champion School' (one of 25 worldwide) as a part of a Global Leadership Team. Further information about PRME at Aston can be found at: [http://www.aston.ac.uk/aston-business-school/about-abs/srs/prme/](http://www.aston.ac.uk/aston-business-school/about-abs/srs/prme/)
Curricula, Programme Design, Courses and Learning

In relation to the first 3 principles of PRME that relate to ‘developing the capabilities of students’; incorporating global social responsibility values into our curricula’ and creating educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments, the following achievements are reported.

In 2007-2008, a review of the Aston Business School curriculum was undertaken in order to provide a base line of information to enable 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. To this end, module outlines for the postgraduate (MSc and MBA) and undergraduate programmes were scrutinised for explicit reference to the subjects, and curriculum maps were developed.

Following the review, recommendations were made for changes, including new modules, inclusion of these issues in the placement year report and the development of a new MSc in Social Responsibility & Sustainability. These recommendations have all now been implemented and include:

1. Module content in the early years on social responsibility & sustainability (SR & S) for all business undergraduates - to provide underpinning knowledge for SR & S elective modules in different disciplines in the final year.
2. The requirement for all students undertaking an industrial placement year to write a report on the social responsibility and sustainability policies and practices of a placement company (to connect theory to practice).
3. All postgraduate courses to review core content to identify where issues of social responsibility and sustainability issues are addressed. Module outlines (and now the UMD system) have a section entitled, ‘Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability where module leaders identify where these issues are related to the content of their modules. This also now applies to all undergraduate modules.
4. The MBA (that already had SR & S embedded within the programme to extend the sustainability content) Visit: http://primetime.unprme.org/2012/10/08/taking-a-transdiciplinary-approach-to-teaching-ethics/
5. Building on the expertise in the MBA, a new MSc in Social Responsibility and Sustainability was developed. This is now a full time on-campus MSc and an off-campus ‘blended learning’ MSc. The course was a finalist in the Green Gown Awards 2014, organised by the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges that recognise the exceptional sustainability initiatives being undertaken by universities and colleges across the UK.

For further details about Social Responsibility & Sustainability at Aston visit: www.aston.ac.uk/aston-business-school/about-abs/srs/
Modules from this programme are also available for other MSc students as option modules. Modules include:

- Sustainability Accounting & Accountability
- Global Ethics & Human Rights Responsibilities in Business
- Strategic Business Sustainability
- Strategic Change & Leadership
- Communicating Sustainability
- Corporate Governance Regulation and Compliance
- Green Information & Operations Management
- Public Policy for Social Responsibility & Sustainable Development

The MSc programmes at Aston Business School (regardless of discipline) also run an integrated Professional Development Programme (PDP) that focuses on professional development and employability. The programme requires students to build a skills portfolio and includes sessions on Ethics and CSR.

‘Beyond The Business School’

A University wide Curriculum Research Project was established in 2012/13 that aimed to provide an overview of the extent to which ethics, social responsibility and sustainability (and related topics) were already included in the curriculum across the University to enable individual Schools to develop plans for any future changes they wish to make. The project researcher worked on mapping the curriculum for individual schools using the methodology adopted by the Business School in its original review in 2008 (an update of the Business School review of the curriculum was also completed as part of the University project).

The fact that there had been a successful curriculum project on the integration of ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability in the Business School provided a ‘blue print’ for extending this across all Schools in the University. It also provided a persuasive case for research funding to use the same methodology utilised in the Business School review.

The outcome of the project provided a base line of information about the curriculum in each School to enable progress to be made towards all graduates becoming ‘literate in social responsibility and sustainability.’
The first stage of the project, which involved a review at the module level, has been completed for all Schools, and interim reports have been produced. The second stage of the project involves developing curriculum maps for each of the programmes within individual Schools. This will enable the Schools to have an overview of their respective students’ access to content in this area in order to make plans for development of the curriculum in relation to ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability. Examples of curriculum initiatives across the University include:

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

Within EAS all ECUK (Engineering Council) accredited programmes must include aspects of sustainability and the following are examples of programmes that have a more structured approach to the teaching of sustainability with focused modules that include: ME2042 Energy Supply, ME3023 Energy Efficiency, PD3003 Business Preparation for Designers (carbon footprint, CSR, low energy technologies), PD4005 Sustainable Design and EM4023 Corporate Social Responsibility.

In addition, Chemical Engineering students undertake a sustainability project which leads to a mock public enquiry and Aston’s Mechanical Engineering and Design Group won the Eco-Design award at the Shell Eco Marathon competition (2013) for its sustainable ‘flat pack’ concept car.

In 2013, Aston appointed a Royal Academy of Engineering Visiting Professor in Sustainability 2013. In February 2015, Professor Keith Clarke, CBE led an intensive Carbon Design Week exploring climate change, adaptation and mitigation for all 2nd year Engineering students. This is being extended to all 2nd year students in all Schools through a week-long activity, Carbon Week, in November 2015 (see information in ‘Moving Forward’ later in this report).

**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.

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.
These include:
Sessions for members of staff on the role of ESD in the learning and teaching of languages, based on the research undertaken by colleagues to encourage academics to think about ways of promoting ESD in their respective Academic Subject Groups. 2. A session on teaching sensitive issues in Higher Education focusing, in particular, in the need to create safe spaces in the classroom in order to promote critical thinking. 3. Film sessions in French, German and Spanish during Aston Aspires Week, followed by discussions where the role of cinema as a medium to depict themes such as social justice, sustainability and ethics are explored.

As part of ‘Go Green Week 2015’ LSS students were encouraged to attend a session by Dr Arran Stibbe - Sustainability: Language and the stories we live by. The session explored ‘Ecolinguistics’ and how the increasing destruction of the ecosystems that support life is bringing into question some of the fundamental stories that we live by: stories of progress, unending economic growth, consumerism and separation from nature

**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.

All second year students in LHS now undertake a Professional Development module that incorporates a key task on Corporate Social Responsibility. Students are required to attend related lectures, events or undertake an Aston volunteering event and write a reflection on this in the context of CSR policy and practice.

One example of a related lecture in 2015 was ‘Sustainability: Developments in Nursing and the Health Sector’ by Benny Goodman that looked at the 'Social Determinants of Health' and the impact on health inequalities, ecological public health and sustainability and climate change in a health care context.
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 which was completely redesigned and reaccredited with the UK Higher Education Authority (HEA) in 2015. The first cohort has progressed through to the final module and will graduate in December 2015.

Sustainability, equality and inclusion are key cross-cutting themes through-out 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’.

The programme consists of three 20-credit modules that are concerned with: teaching identity; programme design; and innovation. The themes of sustainability, equality and inclusion run through each of the modules as follows:

Module One is focused on evolving one’s teaching identity. This underpinned by the social construction of reality and addresses the epistemological basis of disciplines; and the ideologies that flow from this. As just one example, participants in the business school are encouraged to question the prevailing ideologies such as profit maximization and economic growth. In so doing, they are encouraged to consider both economic equality and sustainability in their assumptions about business.

Module two is focused on programme design. Embedded deeply in this module are the concepts of stakeholder engagement. An example of this in practice is the HEA guidance regarding inclusivity; and participants are encouraged to explore the ways in which the design of teaching can enhance inclusivity by reducing socially constructed barriers. Module two also considered environmental sustainability and uses the Arup ‘Drivers of Change’ sustainability concept (and cards) to explore the impact of sustainability in one’s teaching delivery and curriculum.

Module three is focused on research-led innovation and is based on evidence-led change. Within the exercises that lead to a participant’s innovation are an evaluation of physical resources to support learning and teaching; this is presented in the context of sustainability and technology-enhanced and distance teaching.
Research

In relation to Principle 4, ‘engaging 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 following achievements are reported.

Aston Business School has a range of academics in the broad areas of ethics, social responsibility and sustainability has been growing steadily. The key areas for research and publication in a range of academic journals and books include CSR, Governance, Ecological Sustainability, Social Entrepreneurship, Ethics, Diversity, Responsible Management Education, Environmental Education, Social Accountability, Sustainable Development, Public Policy, Green Supply Chains, Emerging Economies, Green Technologies, Emerging Markets, Risk Management, Climate Change, Stakeholder Analysis, Human Rights and Poverty.

Academics from Aston also regularly contribute articles on ethics, social responsibility and sustainability to professional and practitioner publications and through media channels in quality newspapers, TV, radio and social media.

See information about the research and publications of the ‘ABS social responsibility and sustainability group: www.aston.ac.uk/aston-business-school/about-abs/srs/social-responsibility-sustainability-group/

Aston University Research Groups include the Sustainable Environment Research Group (SERG) based in Engineering and Applied Sciences (EAS) which is a multidisciplinary group that brings together experts from a range of backgrounds including mechanical engineering, chemistry, hydrology, ecology, computer modelling and operations management. Their common interest is in meeting the challenges posed by the impact of human activities on the environment. They aim to develop technologies and tools that conserve and rehabilitate the natural environment while enabling international development.

Research falls in three main areas:

- Solar energy and water treatment
- Land Resources assessment and biodiversity
- Green Transport and alternative fuels
- Sustainability and resilience in the Built Environment

http://www.aston.ac.uk/eas/research/groups/serg/
The European Bioenergy Research Institute (EBRI) conducts world-class bioenergy research ranging from fundamental research and development through to the deployment of innovative technologies. The team of internationally-renowned researchers are focused on methods of generating energy from biomass waste and residues.

Research topics include:

- **Anaerobic digestion (AD)**
  Optimising the AD process and utilizing residues for further processing
- **Algae cultivation**
  Exploring the exploitation of microalgae for waste remediation and bioenergy production
- **Biochar**
  Testing and analysis of biochar for enhancing poor and high-quality soils
- **Bioenergy markets**
  Optimising the business strategy for the bioenergy sector
- **Catalysis**
  Nanostructured catalyst systems for synthesis of biofuels and chemicals
- **Combined heat and power (CHP) engines**
  Adaptation of CHP engines (internal combustion engines) for bioenergy provision
- **Feedstock investigation**
  Testing and analysis of feedstocks for fuel production.
- **Gasification**
  Research and technology demonstration for gasification applications
- **Pyrolysis**
  Research and technology demonstration for fast, intermediate and slow pyrolysis processes.
- **Torrefaction**
  Thermal pre-treatment of biomass to upgrade thermal-chemical properties.

EBRI is committed to providing practical bioenergy solutions for companies and local authorities in the West Midlands, UK, Europe and beyond, to be able to explore the growing bioenergy market and the opportunities it offers. EBRI also welcomes collaboration opportunities with academia and industry. [http://www.aston.ac.uk/eas/research/groups/ebri/](http://www.aston.ac.uk/eas/research/groups/ebri/)
Centre for Critical Inquiry into Society and Culture (CCISC)

CCISC (previously Interland, Inclusion, Equality, Diversity) is an Inter-disciplinary research centre that brings together academics and practitioners working within English Language and Linguistics, Modern languages, Translation Studies, Sociology, Social and Public Policy, Politics and Psychology.

It aims to create a bridge between research, policy, and professional practice and facilitate inventive inter-disciplinary research which contributes to public understanding of major social issues, scrutinizes the evidence base for policy and practice, and expands the policy options under debate.

The Centre represents a space within the School of Languages and Social Sciences and Aston Business School for the incubation of research ideas, enabling researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds to collaborate and develop ideas. It also aims to take a lead in the development of research proposals and projects, enable research with a critical edge to make an impact by building links with policy, civil society, and business actors, and deliver activities for non-academic stakeholders which will enable them to shape social practices relevant to their respective competencies.

- Emphasises partnership and engagement with local communities, policymakers and businesses as both co-producers and users of knowledge.
- Works with practitioners offering practical solutions for national and local government, service-providers and employers.
- Researchers are engaged in work that will shape future thinking and pioneer practices that will have a significant impact on society and organisations in ways that promote equality, inclusivity, and social justice.

Key themes
Inequality, Power and Justice
Social Movements and Social Change
Identity, Language and Religion
State, Business and Society
Gender, Sexualities and the Body
Discourse and Communication

http://www.aston.ac.uk/lss/research/research-centres/ccisc/
**Partnership and Dialogue**

There are overlaps in Aston’s initiatives in relation to PRME Principles 5 and 6.

Principle 5 – ‘interacting 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 – ‘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’.

Aston contributes to the development and regeneration of the region, organisations and communities at a local and global level through knowledge transfer, innovation and inspiration. Aston University’s Vice Chancellor, Professor Dame Julia King is Julia is regularly called upon to advise Government on education and technology issues. Julia led the ‘King Review’ to examine the vehicle and fuel technologies to help to reduce carbon emissions from road transport (published in March 2008). She is currently a Board Member of the Government Committee on Climate Change and UK Low Carbon Business Ambassador. Julia also holds non-executive Directorships of Green Investment Bank and Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult.

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 is to ensure that high potential students from under-represented groups can gain the benefits of university education and the social mobility that comes with professional careers. We have an excellent record on widening participation – of the top 30 UK Universities, only Aston beats all the benchmarks and UK averages for social inclusion.

Employability is a key part of our strategy for all students and to underline this, Aston University is consistently ranked amongst the top Universities in the UK for the percentage of graduates entering employment who achieve graduate level jobs. Yet, we are consistently above all the benchmarks and UK averages for social inclusion and participation. This is achieved through: an outstanding Schools and Colleges liaison team, working with partner schools locally and supporting schools and colleges more widely; Master classes; student mentoring and volunteering in schools.

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.

Below are two examples of this, one local and one global:

**Typhoon Haiyan, the Philippines**
In December 2013, a campaign to raise essential funds for the hometown of an Aston University student which was devastated by Typhoon Haiyan generated thousands of pounds thanks to staff and students.

More than £12,000 was donated for the provision of food, water and medical supplies to the rural town of Barugo, where Lira De Veyra, an MSc student and her family have lived for most of their lives. The money from the appeal was sent directly to the Circulo Barugueno, a group of Filipinos from Barugo coordinating relief efforts from the capital, Manila.

**Ladywood Community Project and Central Foodbank**
During the summer of 2015, Aston helped support the above project which aimed to support 100 local families (identified as living in need) during the summer holidays, when children are not be able to take school dinners.

The following are examples of a range of events and activities over the last two years:

### 2013
- Foundation Meeting Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME)
- Sustainable Development & Sustainability Solutions
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Beyond Philanthropy CSR in the 21st Century
- Midlands CSR event CIMA and RBS
- Searching for resilience in Sustainable development
- Smaller but Better? Post-Growth Public Services
- ACCA Ethics Workshop

### 2014
- Lord Deben, Chairman of the Committee on Climate Change Aston Insight lecture to explore sustainable growth in tomorrow’s world 2014
• Professor Keith Clarke Climate Change Vs Sustainability
• How To Harness the Power of Corporate Social Leadership
• The Bishop of Birmingham, David Urquhart was invited to talk to Aston students on the importance of business, ethics and social responsibility
• Co learning for Community Resilience
• Freedom to speak
• Sustainable Strategies
• 3rd CSR Birmingham Summit Social Innovation: Investment. Implementation. Impact
• Can’t Pay, Won’t Pay: the Myth of Austerity and the Failure of Green Investment Seminar
• The European Bioenergy Research Institute (EBRI) and rural sustainability consultants Greenwatt Technology ran free workshops designed to help West Midlands rural businesses and landowners make the most of the wealth of bioenergy opportunities.

2015
• Hear Me Out (Interland)
• The Post Growth Project: The Regional Dimension
• Sustainability Developments in Nursing and the Health Sector
• Sustainability: Language and the stories we live 4th CSR Birmingham Summit
• Corporate Social Responsibility in the West Midlands
• 4th Annual Birmingham CSR Summit: Reversing the Value Chain: What can the arts and creative sector bring to business and the community?

To find out more visit: http://www.aston.ac.uk/about/news/events/
Organisational Practices

Although not a PRME ‘principle,’ the statement following the principles: “We understand that our own organisational practices should serve as examples of the value. The global environment within which the University operates is characterised by increasing change, ambiguity and uncertainty, and the ways in which members of the University operate have become more complex and regularly present new regulatory, ethical, and legal challenges. This was highlighted by the publication of The Woolf Report: an inquiry into the London School of Economics links with Libya and the lessons to be learned.

In developing its strategy towards 2020, the University set out its plans to integrate ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability into all aspects of University life. In light of this, the University Executive and Governing Council considered the Woolf report and agreed on an action plan to clarify its ethical vision and state clearly its principles, values, and responsibilities. As part of this initiative, a working group was established to oversee the production of an Ethics Framework and review related policies and practices.

The Ethics Framework

The Ethics Framework aimed to underpin the University’s commitment to high ethical standards and regulatory compliance, and to set out the broad range of regulations, policies, and practices that govern its relationships with colleagues, customers, partners, suppliers, and other stakeholders. It sets out the ethical standards expected of all members of the University in everything they do and wherever they operate. The Framework is supported by the more detailed policies referenced from the document and, where appropriate, policies determined locally and tailored to the individual requirements of each School or department. The Framework provides information 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 they are facing ethical dilemmas.

The Ethics Framework aims to embed the University’s ethical values and principles into all activities and to guide behaviour of members of the University. It is intended to complement existing ethics-related policies, procedures and codes of conduct and practice, which are now listed on the University Ethics Resources Website.
The Framework outlines the key areas in which ethical considerations may arise, and sets out the responsibilities of individuals, groups, committees and other bodies in these areas. All spheres of University life and activities have the potential to raise ethical concerns, from learning, teaching, and research to enterprise/commercial activity, financial transactions, student recruitment, staff-student relationships, membership of and behavior in an academic community, alumni relations, donations, and award of honours.

The Ethics Framework is intended to guide 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, 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 become part of the way the University operates.

The Ethics Framework has been developed and was launched in March 2013. The contents of the Framework include:

- The Guiding Principles and Values which reflect Aston’s values and those of the Nolan Committee Principles of Standards in Public Life. The principles include Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, and Leadership.
- The purpose and use of the Ethics Framework.
- How to determine if something is unethical.
- Where to go for help and advice on ethical issues.
- Aston University as an ethical organisation.
- The responsibility for the Ethics Framework and policies on gifts and donations.

A leaflet on the Ethics Framework has been developed focusing on the key messages. A video has also been produced to raise awareness about the Ethics Framework amongst all members of the University Community and is used in staff and student induction and as part of staff development activities.

A Good Governance Group has been systematically reviewing relevant University policies and procedures in the light of the ethical principles and values expressed in the above Ethics Framework and current best practice for leaflets, video and resources.
As part of the Ethics Framework, the working group have developed a ‘Speak Up’ Policy. 
Visit: [http://www.aston.ac.uk/about/university-governance/university-regulation/speak-up-policy/](http://www.aston.ac.uk/about/university-governance/university-regulation/speak-up-policy/)

We operate in a global environment of increasing change, ambiguity and uncertainty. The ways in which we work have become more complex and present new regulatory, ethical, and legal challenges. Sometimes we may have concerns about what is happening at the University and usually, these concerns can easily be resolved. But what if they are about breaches of the law, serious misconduct by another person, health and safety or financial malpractice? In exceptional circumstances like these, it can be difficult to know what to do.

Aston University’s Speak Up Policy provides a confidential and secure way for you to raise concerns about misconduct. The Speak Up Guide outlines the key steps you need to take and who to contact if you wish to raise a concern. The University’s Independent Listener is a source of confidential, impartial and friendly advice and assistance for members of the Aston community who wish to raise a concern. The key principle is: If in doubt – do not hesitate to ‘SPEAK UP, SPEAK OPENLY’!

The working group involved in developing the Ethics Framework were also tasked with reporting on further actions to improve awareness of ethical values and principles such as:

- Staff induction sessions introduce all new staff to the Ethics Framework and the University’s values and principles, as well as engaging them in thinking about ethical issues through the discussion of ethical dilemmas
- All staff are now invited annually to review and confirm their commitment to Aston’s ethical values and principles via the PDR process, and to discuss any ethical concerns that they may have.
- In the Autumn Term 2014, school-based discussion/focus groups of staff and students identified authentic and topical ethical scenarios and dilemmas to further develop the University’s responses and activities around the Ethics Framework.
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”.

The University has been recognised for this work in variety of ways. Aston University received the prestigious Eco Campus Platinum Award in recognition of its wide range of environmental management and has maintained that top rating since 2012. Aston University wins EcoCampus Platinum award.

Aston University achieved ISO14001 accreditation in 2014 and has been ranked in the top 10 of People and Planet’s award winning ‘Green League’ in recent years. The university is a recognised leader in the field of sustainability and already has a number of ‘green’ technologies on campus, such as a Combined Heat and Power plant, a wind turbine and green roof on the recently built student residences, and an electric car and charging points.

Aston University has also been ‘highly commended’ and recognised for projects in the prestigious Green Gown Awards. In 2014, Aston was a finalist in the Green Gown Awards for both its MSc in Social Responsibility and Sustainability and Go Green initiatives. The refurbishment of Aston’s historic Doug Ellis Woodcock Sports Centre were nominated for Green Gown Awards and praised by the judging panel.

Communications and engagement plays an integral role in achieving this and the following objectives have been selected from the University’s Sustainability Policy to highlight this. Aston University aspires to embed sustainability into the curriculum, research, community, and culture of the University; and raise sustainability awareness and promote sound environmentally and ethically responsible behaviour throughout the Aston community.
Aston ‘Go Green’ is a catchall term to summarise the wide range of initiatives at Aston University. Targets and plans include:

- A carbon management plan with sector leading targets to achieve 53% absolute reduction in scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2020.
- Water reduction targets of 1% year on year.
- Zero waste to landfill, with waste hierarchy a priority.
- Achieving level 4 of the ‘Flexible Framework’ and working on embedding sustainability into procurement processes.
- Biodiversity Action Plan led by staff/student Wildlife Group.
- Soil Association Food for Life Accreditation for University Catering.
- Transport Plan, Top Cycle Location status, led by an active BUG.
- Fairtrade University led by active staff/student group.
- Annual Go Green Week programme supported by year round sustainability events and workshops.

There has been a network of Go Green Champions at Aston University since 2008-9. This network engaged a small number (10-15) of keen individuals in actions to improve the environmental performance of the University.
Aston University’s 2020 Corporate Strategy includes a Key Performance Indicator for carbon reduction, a challenging absolute carbon reduction target of 53% against a 2005/6 baseline. Progress against this target is reported on a quarterly basis to the University Executive and annually to University Council. It quickly became apparent that business as usual, with technical fixes implemented by Estates and Capital Development would not be enough for us to meet this 53% carbon reduction target. We needed to decouple growth in staff and student numbers and income from carbon emissions.

Aston University Executive agreed a comprehensive behaviour change programme, across all academic schools and support departments, with the appointment of Go Green Leaders to support, encourage and identify any gaps in the existing Go Green Champions network. A training programme led by the Green Consultancy and the Energy, Environment and Sustainability Team, began in late 2013 and was followed up by area specific audits. Today we have a network of around 100 staff at all levels of the organisation engaged in Aston Go Green in 2013-14. Actions implemented by Champions and Leaders to date include:

- Green team member of the month in Careers.
- A recycling challenge of the month in the Library.
- Detailed area specific audits led by the Dean of the Aston Business School, resulting in lighting and heating improvements.
- Improved recycling facilities and participation rates in Finance.
- Reduced energy use, food packaging and increased recycling rates in Catering.
- School of Health and Life Sciences introduce the concept of Go Green Laboratory Champions, to identify laboratory specific measures.
- Increased participation in lunchtime wellbeing walks for staff and students.
- Successful first year for the Grow Aston Project, with a productive student allotment area and staff growing tomato and chilli plants on windowsills all over the University.

All of this is in addition to the structured Go Green Workbook submissions, action planning and monthly social lunchtime exchanges for Go Green Champions.
Key objectives moving forward

In June 2014, The Higher Education Academy QAA issued Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): Guidance for UK Higher Education Institutions. This document summarises the QAA guidance and provides some of the background to this at Aston University. It then goes on to draft plans in response to the guidance.

The guidance defines Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as the process of equipping students with the knowledge and understanding, skills and attributes needed to work and live in a way that safeguards environmental, social and economic wellbeing, both in the present and for future generations.

Education for sustainable development means working with students to encourage them to:

- Consider what the concept of global citizenship means in the context of their own discipline and in their future professional and personal lives.
- Consider what the concept of environmental stewardship means in the context of their own discipline and in their future professional and personal lives.
- Think about issues of social justice, ethics and wellbeing, and how these relate to ecological and economic factors.
- Develop a future-facing outlook; learning to think about the consequences of actions, and how systems and societies can be adapted to ensure sustainable futures.

The guidance is intended to serve as a reference point for use in curriculum design, delivery and review. Educators are encouraged to use it as a framework, within their own disciplinary context, rather than as a prescription of a curriculum or pedagogic approach. It should be read in conjunction with the appropriate QAA subject benchmark statement.

There are two main parts to the guidance:

- The identification of graduate outcomes - what students will be able to know, understand and do after an appropriate period of learning.
- A focus on teaching, learning and assessment - the ways in which educators can work with students to help them achieve and demonstrate the outcomes.

The guidance is not specific to any particular degree programme or subject specialism but is instead intended to help educators who are seeking to embed or include a knowledge, understanding and awareness of sustainable development across the curriculum.
An action plan for all Schools at Aston University has been agreed for the integration of ESD:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Met?</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Action required?</th>
<th>Actions completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>School/discipline/subject specific plans for further integration of ESD in working towards graduate social responsibility &amp; sustainability literacy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Building on curriculum reports to identify good practice/ gaps in programmes</td>
<td>Identify graduate outcomes related to ESD Generic and subject specific</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Literacy in ESD</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aston part of pilot development of The Sustainability Literacy Test</td>
<td>Extend use of test and/or modify for disciplines/subjects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Opportunities for academic staff to develop their skills, knowledge &amp; understanding in ESD</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. PG Cert in Learning &amp; Teaching in HE Ethics, Social Responsibility &amp; Sustainability included in current programme 2. Discussions about CPD sessions in ESD for existing academic staff</td>
<td>Plans to incorporate this into the new programme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>ESD in teaching, learning &amp; assessment (linked to 1.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>UMD – re orientate CSR to discipline/subject related ESD</td>
<td>If approved, provide guidance aimed at awareness raising and authenticity</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Carbon Week - a worldwide first for Aston**

In the lead up to the Climate Change Summit in Paris in December 2015, Aston plans dedicate a week of the second year teaching timetable to the impact that climate change will have on business and the professional and on society. Our students will gain an understanding of how, with the appropriate skills, they will be able to better navigate a warming world that must adapt and mitigate across all sectors, from engineering to accountancy, health services to e-commerce.

'Carbon Week' led by Professor Keith Clarke and funded by the Royal Academy of Engineering takes place at the start of November. Carbon Week is a week of low-carbon initiatives for Aston University students to equip them for the consequences and challenges of a climate-changed world. On the 2nd November we are holding a conference - Climate Change, Decarbonisation and the Future Business Landscape – at the NEC, with speakers and experts to speak on climate change and sustainability topics. Speakers include Reeta Chakrabarti (Broadcaster/Journalist), Kirsty Lewis (UK Met Office), Caroline Spelman (MP), Clive Myrie (Broadcaster/Journalist) and Robin Ince (Comedian)