

PRME

This is our **Sharing Information on Progress (SIP)** Report on the Implementation of the **Principles for Responsible Management Education**

This document is the second report on progress since becoming a signatory of PRME. In our 50th Anniversary Year as a business school, we are pleased to report on progress in a wide range of areas within Aberdeen Business School and within the wider context of Robert Gordon University of which the Business School is one of the three faculties. We were previously able to report that we had been ranked in the global top 50 in the Beyond Grey Pinstripes process and we continue to build on that foundation. In our last update report we had only set general objectives about sustaining the efforts that we had already put in place prior to becoming signatories. This report however identifies a number of actions that relate to each of the Principles and we will report more formally on their achievement within the next update. Our confirmation of continued support is included at the end of document and has also been uploaded separately.

The report is structured under the 6 Principles.



1. Purpose

The University has continued to develop its strategy (<http://www.rgu.ac.uk/about/strategy-and-planning>) through the roll out of a number of external facing positioning papers that address the sectors we serve. These include statements regarding: Oil & Gas; Health and Wellbeing; Big Data; and two cross-sector papers on Employability (a key driver for RGU and one where we have a fantastic track record) and on the Role that RGU wishes to play in the region. The next stage in our development will relate to arts and the creative industries through the formation of a Centre for Northern Culture and Design.

RGU's mission is to transform people and communities. It does this by ensuring that our discovery of knowledge and our dissemination of scholarship have the greatest possible economic, social and cultural impact.

RGU's vision is to be recognised, in Scotland and beyond, as a distinctive university leading and shaping the debate on the future of higher education and placing students at the centre of the education that it

offers. It will be known for the impact of its teaching, scholarship and translational research, the employability of its graduates, its influence in the region, its growing global profile, and its strong interdisciplinary focus on a small number of key issues and concern to the local and global community. It will achieve its goals in partnership with academic, voluntary, public and business organisations that share its ideals and aspirations.

Aberdeen Business School has been working towards achieving AACSB accreditation and has successfully been re-accredited by the Association of MBAs. PRME is becoming more central in the work of a wider range of accrediting bodies and it is our strategy to seek external accreditation of our provision where possible.

The University has launched a Student Partnership Agreement and some of the content of this report focuses on how the University and Student Body are working together to implement the PRME Principles. Under the "Go Green" initiative there is now an RGU Environmental and Sustainability Student Society. Through the Climate Challenge Fund the RGU Union has undertaken a Carbon Footprint Initiative. This last initiative involved students gaining transferable practical skills in areas such as: energy reduction; bike maintenance; vegetable growing & food-box production (community garden scheme) and in community engagement.

RGU's vision for employability is for its graduates to be recognised as the most fit-for-work, innovative, creative and engaged participants in the labour force and the economy, and for the university to be recognised for its close engagement with employers. The University's strategy contains specific objectives to:

- Develop students' capabilities to thrive in an increasingly multi-disciplinary and fast changing world of work
- Lead thinking in the development of professional practice and emerging professions and roles; and
- Engage with employers and professions to develop workforce skills and capabilities to meet the needs of the economy and society.

Objectives for the period ahead:

1. To continue to work with the student body to ensure that the PRME Principles are embedded further in their actions and that RGU is a University of Choice for study based on the principles
2. To continue to enhance the employability of our graduates through their practical understanding of the PRME Principles.



2. Values

At Aberdeen Business School, we uphold the following values which underpin our vision and mission, resonate through our culture and the delivery and intellectual contributions of our faculty:

- Engagement – fostering collaborative relationships with local, regional and global communities
- Enhancement – continually improving our professional impact and student experience
- Entrepreneurship – embracing innovation and creativity
- Ethics – developing socially responsible citizens and promoting ethical behaviour

Our Environmental and Sustainability Policy was updated just after the last Updating Report was submitted and over the last two years there have been a number of developments that have addressed each of the main components of the policy. Examples are provided below.

- Our **energy use plan** which aims to make efficient and environmentally responsible use of energy and water has benefited from the progress made on redeveloping the campus with the construction of more energy efficient buildings. In addition, a student-led Halls of Residence Energy Challenge has seen electricity use down by at least 20% and this is supported by an Energy Ambassador scheme.
- Our **waste management plan** aims to minimise waste production as far as is practicable, to reuse or recycle waste where appropriate and to regulate the treatment and disposal of residual waste – recycling rates have increased considerably since the installation of category bins and has been further improved through the provision of food waste recycling bins in all kitchen areas.
- Our **sustainable procurement plan** aims to promote environmentally responsible procurement of goods and services and governance procedures are in place to ensure that we operate to the highest standards in terms of: Health and Safety; IT Acceptable Use and Security; Confidentiality, Data Protection and Freedom of Information; Intellectual Property; safeguarding against Bribery and Corruption; Ethics and Equality and Diversity.
- Our **green travel and transport plan** aims to minimise the impact of transport on the environment arising from our own vehicles and those brought on to the Estate has benefited from the adoption of a car-sharing scheme with designated parking, a student bike hire (157 bikes being rented out), and with all teaching now on one campus this has meant that there is now very

little inter-site travel. Tax efficient cycle-to-work schemes are also available for staff.

- Our **carbon management plan** aims to reduce the carbon footprint of the university and support compliance with the carbon reduction commitment and we are now entering our third 5 year planning cycle.
- Our **sustainability auditing system** will be developed specifically for the University to monitor and communicate progress on sustainability issues. This is currently under development through the appointment of a dedicated officer to oversee implementation of appropriate standards.

Given our location in the "Oil & Gas Capital of Europe" it is hardly surprising to find a focus on Oil & Gas related MSc provision being offered by the University. CSR and Sustainability has underpinned the development and on-going improvements in relevance and currency of our offerings. We would wish to draw particular attention to our "Energy Policy and the Environment" module which continues to gain high praise through on-going efforts to ensure currency and relevance.

Our values in relation to our purpose are manifested in a number of ways. For instance, we were the first Scottish University to sign up to the Healthy University initiative (<http://www.rgu.ac.uk/healthy-university>) and we have branded this "Fit for the Future". Dame Carol Black (2012) highlighted the importance of workplace health and made particular reference to the fact that staff within the University setting are role models for students and should therefore be demonstrating how to lead a healthy lifestyle.

We want to create an environment that enhances health and wellbeing and facilitates learning and personal development for both staff and students. At times, staff and students may experience mental health/stress issues, musculoskeletal injuries; alcohol, tobacco & substance misuse and sexual health issues as well as low levels of physical activity and these are all obvious target areas. By creating a holistic approach to health we aim to alleviate these issues and encourage our staff and students to be pro-active and to look after their wellbeing which will ultimately prevent ill health. We are just about to run a workshop to design the next phase of implementation to deepen the level of participation. A recent "Town Hall Meeting" in the Business School was used to gauge aspects of general satisfaction with the "Fit for the Future" Agenda and where there was scope for improvement.

Objectives for the period ahead:

1. To make genuine progress with the implementation of our environmental management systems in collaboration with our colleagues in University Estates

2. To continue the work on the “Fit for the Future” agenda to enhance the environment for staff and students at RGU.
3. To utilise the PRME Principles in the periodic review of all of our offerings under the Institutional-Led Subject Review (ILSR) in 2016/17.



3. Method

With respect to our curriculum coverage of UN Global Compact Principles we identified, in the first Updating report, the availability of modules in the following areas: Human Rights, Labour, Environment, and Anti-corruption and were able to demonstrate how pervasive these themes were in the curriculum of our degree programmes. To illustrate our practice in more detail, an example of a module on the MSc CSR and Energy is: *Values, Standards and Organisational Development*. The learning outcomes for the module are:

1. Critically understand theories of ethics and ethical principles relevant to business.
2. Analyse the roles and impacts of corporate socially responsible policies and actions.
3. Apply values and standards to issues concerning developing business environments.
4. Explore the organizational development and change implications of ecological, social and economic societal challenge of sustainable development through multiple stakeholder perspectives.
5. Explore the effectiveness of CSR/sustainability espoused policies and management system practices around international standards and league tables, by taking a multidisciplinary political, cultural, leadership and strategic perspective.

We have however not been complacent and continue to strengthen our portfolio. Our latest new course development is an MSc/LLM Corporate Governance: Policy and Regulation. This new course complements our existing provision but offers a specific specialisation that will equip graduates to make significant contributions to the corporate governance arrangements in the organisations that they choose to work for.

For this update report a choice has been made to highlight the role that the MBA Leadership Week plays in developing the experiences of all our MBAs (FT, PT and DL). Underpinning this week is a module entitled

“Leadership, Communication and Change” and we draw on our deep connections with industry to invite high calibre guest speakers who present on leadership issues. Inevitably much of the Q&A sessions are taken up with dialogue around values and dilemmas. This year was the 9th annual event and the speaker line-up included:

- Lord Digby Jones (sponsored by BP) – formerly Minister of State for UK Trade and Investment
- Sir Ian Wood – Chairman J W Holdings, The Wood Family Trust and Chancellor of RGU
- Malcolm Webb – until recently the Chief Executive of Oil & Gas UK
- Gordon Ballard (sponsored by the Balmoral Group) – Vice President Industry Affairs and Chairman, Schlumberger UK
- Robin Watson – Chief Operating Officer, Wood Group and Institute of Directors Director of the Year 2015.
- Stuart Cochran (sponsored by FWB Park Brown) – Director FWB Park Brown
- Mark Richardson – Projects Group Manager, Apache North Sea
- Alina Elena Nistor – Vice President, Health and Safety Executive
- Alan Brown - Chief Executive Officer, ASCO
- Matthew Anderson – Leadership Consultant

This module continues to receive some of the best feedback from our MBAs and is regarded as the inspirational highpoint of the programme. Guest speakers equally value the debate and many ask to return to engage with our next cohort of students. The module is complemented by our strategic business simulation (part of the Strategic Management module) and this together with a range of activities during the week allow participants to reflect on their professional leadership practices and forms part of their assessment.

Objectives for the period ahead

1. To draw upon the ILSR process (see objectives under “Values”) to further embed the PRME Principles in our delivery by identifying areas for improvement.
2. To explore further opportunities through our research agenda, partnerships and dialogue with stakeholders to enhance our offerings vis a vis the PRME Principles.



4. Research

The University is currently undergoing a restructuring in terms of research management however it still maintains its focus on a number of key

themes and is aligned with the Units of Assessment within the UK's Research Excellence Framework. The Aberdeen Business School plays a full role within the activities of the internal Oil and Gas Institute and also contributes to the work of: the Oil & Gas Innovation Centre; The Marine Renewable Energy Consortium (a collaboration between the Universities of Aberdeen, Dundee and RGU); and The Oil and Gas Academy Scotland.

Since 2013, the Centre for Understanding Sustainability in Practice (CUSP) has received over £1.5 million research funding for renewable energy projects from private funders, industry and governments and has worked in many diverse regions, from UK to West Africa to South East Asia. The expanding research team is currently involved in marine energy policy and strategy in Indonesia, appropriate technology development, energy resource assessment and knowledge transfer between UK and Indonesia

Closer to home, CUSP worked with Aberdeen City Council to produce the baseline emissions inventory and energy analysis for the city of Aberdeen as a supporting part of the regional sustainable energy action plan, and identifies the behaviour change implications of sustainable development, including the social and business demands of using new technologies and intelligent buildings.

Within the Enerman collaboration, we have been working to develop processes to help companies to reduce their energy costs (by up to 30% short-term) and to achieve important long term deliverables in the realms of:

- Reduced operating costs through improved process efficiency.
- Reduced carbon footprint and environmental impact.
- Improved business and energy sustainability

At the individual level we have a number of active researchers who are contributing to policy and practice in diverse areas across the PRME agenda. For instance, Professor Alex Russell has, for the past 5 years, held the position of Chair of the UK's Oil Industry Finance Association which sets accounting standards that are designed to help UK oil companies to be more efficient and effective in exploiting the resources of the North Sea. He is currently leading a work group on setting an accounting standard on decommissioning. Professor Peter Strachan has recently published an article in Sustainable Development entitled "Promoting Community Energy in a Corporate Energy World" (2015). Professor David Gray is a Board member of the Highlands and Islands Regional Transport Partnership. He was an expert advisor during the preparation of Scotland's National Transport Strategy and has acted as an adviser in the preparation of Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review and to a number of bodies including the UK Commission for Integrated Transport and Defra. Professor Rebecca Wallace was appointed Research Professor in International Human Rights and Justice in December 2012. She has, however been associated with RGU Law School

since 2003 when she joined the department as Professor of International Human Rights Law. Amongst her publications includes a report: *Scotland: A safe place for child traffickers?* Commissioned by Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP), published March 2011. Professor Paul Spicker has published the 3rd edition of his text "Social Policy: theory and practice" with Policy Press in 2014.

In line with the expectations of the University, research feeds through into teaching and new course development to meet the dynamic needs of the constituencies we serve. Given the life-cycle stage of the North Sea and our research into decommissioning (including current work by Bryan McNay) we would expect to provide some offerings in this arena.

Objectives for the period ahead

1. Examine ways to improve how research informs teaching in the preparation of our graduates and for short course provision.
2. Determine how agendas, such as decommissioning, can lead to the development of new modules to support the currency and relevance of our courses and programmes.



5. Partnership

The essence of RGU is in its deep association with industry, the public and not for profit sectors, managerial practice and professional bodies as a driver to underpin our employability agenda. Wherever possible the strategy has been to seek professional, statutory or regulatory body recognition and accreditation for our courses. Throughout this report there have been examples provided to indicate that we work closely with a wide range of stakeholders. Some additional examples may be helpful in illustrating the breadth and depth of engagement:

- We have worked with the Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations to assist with the development of social transport solutions in Aberdeen City.
- Deep links with the tourism and hospitality sector have led to the production of content in our MSc International Tourism and Hospitality Management on sustainable tourism.
- Work on "Leadership Voices" led by the Dean, Professor Rita Marcella, sought the views of over 40 senior leaders on the future of leadership in the oil and gas industry. This work was funded by Dana and supported by PwC.

- In partnership with the Chartered Management Institute we ran a business breakfast entitled "Leading in Difficult Times".
- In partnership with Embrion, we recently ran a one day conference on International Safety Leadership.
- This year will be the third time that we will have hosted the Institute of Directors half day event on "Sharing the Secrets of Success".

Objectives for the period ahead

1. Continue to explore opportunities for partnerships that will reinforce our adherence to the PRME Principles.
2. To continue drive our engagement with partners through our underpinning values and the PRME Principles.



6. Dialogue

One of the roles that universities can play is in engaging impartially in local debates as a member of the community in which the university is located. A recent example of this type of activity was a public debate chaired by the report author on the future of energy supply:

<https://www.rgu.ac.uk/events/the-future-of-secure-and-sustainable-energy-supply-is-it-nuclear-or-renewables#> The press release following the debate can be found at: <https://www.rgu.ac.uk/news/rgu-nuclear-versus-renewables-debate-a-huge-success>

The launch of our MSc Corporate Social Responsibility and Energy has prompted the development of a one day short course to stimulate wider debate: <http://www.rgu.ac.uk/news/the-changing-faces-of-csr-in-the-energy-sector-to-be-explored-at-business-event>

An example of earlier engagement in debating relates to the Scottish Referendum held in 2014: <https://www.rgu.ac.uk/news/rgu-professor-chairs-schools-referendum-debate> This is an example of how RGU engages with younger people to stimulate debate about issues that matter to society as a whole.

A different example is provided by the following: <https://www.rgu.ac.uk/news/rgu-researchers-join-european-transport-debate> to illustrate that we operate also at the transnational level as well.

Objectives for the period ahead

1. To actively seek opportunities for dialogue within the communities that we serve that enhance our support for the PRME Principles

Finally, we look forward to be able to providing our next update against the 6 principles of PRME

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Adoption of the Principles for Responsible Management Education

As an institution of higher education involved in the development of current and future managers Aberdeen Business School, Robert Gordon University is committed to progress in the implementation of the Principles for Responsible Management Education, starting with those that are more relevant to our capacities and mission, report on progress to all our stakeholders and exchange effective practices related to these principles with other academic institutions.

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

We encourage other academic institutions, and associations to adopt and support these Principles.



Prof Rita Marcella