

# 2025 Sharing Information on Progress **(SIP) Report**

Cranfield School of Management

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## About the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME)

The Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) is a United Nations-supported initiative founded in 2007 that aims to raise the profile of sustainability in their classrooms through Seven Principles focused on serving society and safeguarding our planet.

PRME engages business and management schools to ensure they provide future leaders with the skills needed to balance economic and sustainability goals, while drawing attention to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and aligning academic institutions with the work of the UN Global Compact. Driven by its mission to transform management education, PRME equips today's business students with the understanding and ability to deliver change tomorrow. As a voluntary initiative with over 800 signatories worldwide, PRME has become the largest organized relationship between the United Nations and management-related higher education institutions.



“*The PRME initiative was launched to nurture responsible leaders of the future. Never has this task been more important. Bold leadership and innovative thinking are needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).*

**Antonio Guterres**

Secretary-General (2017 - Present)

United Nations

”

## Principles of PRME



### **Purpose**

We advance responsible management education to foster inclusive prosperity in a world of thriving ecosystems.



### **Values**

We place organizational responsibility and accountability to society and the planet at the core of what we do.



### **Teach**

We transform our learning environments by integrating responsible management concepts and practices into our curriculum and pedagogy.



### **Research**

We study people, organizations, institutions, and the state of the world to inspire responsible management and education practice.



### **Partner**

We engage people from business, government, civil society, and academia to advance responsible and accountable management education and practice.



### **Practice**

We adopt responsible and accountable management principles in our own governance and operations.



### **Share**

We share our successes and failures with each other to enable our collective learning and best live our common values and purpose.



## The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In September 2015, all 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted a plan for achieving a better future for all – laying out a path over the next 15 years to end extreme poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and protect our planet. At the heart of Agenda 2030 are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 related targets that address the most important economic, social, environmental and governance challenges of our time. The SDGs clearly define the world we want – applying to all nations and leaving no one behind. Successful implementation of the SDGs will require all players to champion this agenda; the role of higher education is critical to this.





# Getting Started

This section provides foundational information about Cranfield School of Management, including key details and basic institutional data.

## Strategy Alignment

### Cranfield School of Management Strategy Alignment

At Cranfield School of Management (SoM), advancing sustainable development and collaborating for the common good are deeply embedded in our strategic priorities and institutional identity. Our mission to positively impact both business and society through applied knowledge is central to everything we do. As a result, sustainability is not an isolated initiative but a foundational element of our operations, teaching, and research.

Cranfield University, with the School of Management as a key part, is recognised for its leadership in applying technology to address global sustainability challenges. This strength is embodied in the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science (FEAS) with its focus on critical areas such as water and energy resource management. The School of Management's strategic emphasis on the interface between management and technology reinforces and extends this institutional capability. SoM, together with FEAS, is committed to equipping future leaders with the knowledge and tools to drive sustainable development in a responsible and impactful manner.

Sustainability is a strategic pillar for SoM and has been recognised as a pocket of excellence in the May 2025 EQUIS Peer Review Team visit. The team commended the School's strong footprint in sustainability, its systematic research contributions, and the deliberate integration of sustainability across the programme portfolio, highlighting, for example, the School's detailed tracking of sustainability-related content in the MBA programme, quantifying ESG and decarbonisation topics across all modules, demonstrating not just intent, but rigorous implementation. In 2025, the University was ranked in the top 20 globally for SDG 12, which addresses Responsible Consumption and Production, and in the top 50 for SDG 8, which covers Decent Work and Economic Growth. In the 2025 QS World University Rankings, Cranfield achieved a place within the top 15% of universities globally for overall sustainability. The university was also ranked in the top 10% for environmental impact and in the top 6% for environmental research impact.

Ultimately, sustainability in the wider sense of the word is not peripheral to SoM - it is core to our purpose. To diverge from this path would be to step away from our mission, vision, and identity. Our commitment is evident not only in strategic documents but in daily practice, curriculum design, operations, and our standing in global rankings and accreditations. Advancing sustainable development, the common good, and quality education is not just an aspiration; it is an imperative that guides all that we do.

## Institutional History

### Institutional History: A Legacy of Impact and a Path to Responsibility

Cranfield University was founded in 1946 with a pioneering mission to deliver postgraduate aerospace education that combined hands-on technical learning with real-world application. From its earliest days, the institution has been defined by a strong connection to industry and a commitment to practical impact. In 1967, this ethos was formalised through the creation of the Cranfield School of Management, established to provide business education that directly addressed the needs of industry. Its mission to transform the practice of management through applied knowledge remains central to its identity today.

This long-standing commitment to impactful, practice-oriented learning laid the foundation for Cranfield's formal journey into Responsible Management Education (RME). In 2007, the School of Management became one of the early signatories to the United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) in the UK, publicly affirming its commitment to integrating sustainability, ethics, and corporate responsibility into its teaching, research, and partnerships.

That same year, Cranfield launched the Doughty Centre for Corporate Responsibility, funded by a generous £1.5 million donation from alumnus Nigel Doughty. Under the leadership of Professor David Grayson, the Centre quickly became a leading European hub for integrating sustainability into business education. Its mission was to inspire and equip managers to place sustainability and corporate responsibility at the heart of organisational success. Over the next decade, the Centre shaped research, curriculum innovation, and external engagement that brought responsible management into the mainstream of business practice.

Cranfield's institutional commitment extended beyond the School of Management. In 2011, the university created the Board for Energy and Environment (BEE), a senior-level executive subcommittee to oversee energy and environmental strategy. This group has since evolved into the Energy and Environment Committee (EEC), which is now responsible for university-wide environmental performance. The committee oversees carbon, energy, and water management, biodiversity, sustainable travel, procurement, and broader environmental compliance, reporting directly to the University's Executive and Council. A few highlights from 2024 include Cranfield's food and drink services advancing the 2030 zero avoidable waste goal by eliminating plastic cutlery, offering biodegradable packaging, incentivising reusable cups, and partnering with *Too Good To Go*. They also recycle all used cooking oil into biodiesel, reducing emissions and showcasing a circular economy in action. Cranfield advanced its Biodiversity Net Gain strategy in 2024, with over 9 hectares of campus land targeted for actions such as "no mow" areas, habitat restoration, and Tiny Forest maintenance. The University also achieved *Hedgehog Friendly Campus Gold*, expanded the Sustainability Garden, and supported on-site bee hives, engaging staff, students, and the wider community in conservation. Cranfield reduced Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 5% in 2024, cutting to 8,951 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>, with further

savings expected as recent renewable energy and efficiency investments take full effect. Measures include air source heat pumps, expanded district heating, improved controls and insulation, solar PV, LED lighting, and a new large-scale battery system.

In 2014, the School of Management launched its MSc in Management and Corporate Sustainability. The inaugural cohort welcomed students from countries including China, France, Germany, Kenya, Mexico, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. The programme was designed to embed sustainability deeply within business management training, moving beyond specialist "green" courses. In the same year, the Leading Corporate Sustainability module became a core component of the MSc in Management. This marked a shift toward integrating sustainability across the broader management curriculum, a journey that now includes all general management programmes, including the MBA and Executive MBA.

In 2018, Dr Rosina Watson joined the School of Management to establish the Sustainable Business Group. Building on the legacy of the Doughty Centre, the group has expanded to include six full-time faculty members and fifteen associate faculty members. Its purpose is to place sustainability at the heart of business and in the hearts of business leaders. The group achieves this by embedding sustainability into curricula and pedagogy, advancing applied research, convening academic-industry networks, and supporting organisational transformation through executive programmes.

In March 2022, the School of Management partnered with the School of Water, Energy, and Environment to launch a part-time online Master of Science (MSc) in Sustainability. This course is also offered as a Level 7 integrated degree apprenticeship. To date, over 200 professionals have completed the programme, equipping them with technical insight and strategic business skills to lead sustainability transitions in their organisations.

Also in 2022, Cranfield University launched its institutional strategy for 2022-2027, titled "Ambition 2027: Creating Impact Together." This strategic framework placed sustainability, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), diversity, innovation, and responsible education at the core of institutional priorities. It signalled a comprehensive, university-wide commitment to equipping staff and graduates with the mindset, skills, and systems needed to create a positive impact through business and public policy.

In April 2022, Cranfield's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dame Karen Holford, signed the UN SDG Accord, committing the University to embedding the Sustainable Development Goals across all areas of activity. This includes teaching, research, leadership, operations, and external engagement. The Accord reinforces the university's ongoing sustainability efforts, which include a net-zero carbon strategy, utilising the campus as a "living lab," and integrating sustainability into curricula.

In 2023, Cranfield reported to the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings for the first time. The rankings evaluate global universities based on their contributions to the SDGs. In 2024, Cranfield ranked in the top 200 globally and was named first in the UK and sixth worldwide for SDG 17, which focuses on Partnerships for the Goals. In 2025, the University was ranked in the top 20 globally for SDG 12, which addresses Responsible Consumption and Production, and in the top 50 for SDG 8, which covers Decent Work and Economic Growth.

Within the School of Management, a further milestone came in 2024 with the formation of the Responsible and Sustainable Management Education (R&SME) Committee. Led by Executive Committee sponsor Professor Stephanie Hussels, the committee includes representatives from each of the School's six centres. Its purpose is to embed responsible and sustainable management more deeply across all disciplines within the School.

In the 2025 QS World University Rankings, Cranfield achieved a place within the top 15% of universities globally for overall sustainability. The university was also ranked in the top 10% for environmental impact and in the top 6% for environmental research impact.

From its post-war origins to its current position as a globally recognised centre of excellence for applied research and responsible education, Cranfield has consistently evolved to meet the challenges of the times. Its path to adopting Responsible Management Education reflects an ongoing commitment to integrity, inclusion, and impact, and a belief that education must prepare leaders to shape a better, fairer, and more sustainable world.

## Graduates & Enrollment

2024 Statistics	Number
Graduates	731
Faculty & Staff at the University	1892.5
Faculty & Staff at the Institution	163.5
Student Enrollment at the University	6955
Student Enrollment at the Institution	1905
Undergraduate Attendance	0

2024 Statistics	Number
Masters-Level Postgraduate Attendance	1344
Doctoral Student Attendance	420
Certificate, Professional Development, or Continuing Education Attendance	1272

## Degrees Offered

### Masters Programs

- Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.)
- Master of Science (M.Sc. or M.S.)

### Doctoral Programs

- Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)
- Doctor of Engineering (D.Eng.)
- Doctor of Business Administration (D.B.A.)

## Masters Degree Programmes

- Management MSc
- Accounting and Finance MSc
- Business Data Analytics MSc
- Logistics and Supply Chain Management MSc
- Banking, Economics and Finance MSc
- Strategic Marketing MSc
- Procurement and Supply Chain Management MSc
- Finance MSc
- Management and Leadership MSc
- Marketing and Leadership MSc (Strategic Marketing MSc/Management and Leadership MSc)
- Executive Logistics and Supply Chain Management MSc
- Sustainable and Digital Banking (Retail) MSc
- Sustainability MSc
- Executive MBA
- Full-Time MBA
- Executive MBA

## Certificates, Professional Development, or Associate Programmes

- Breakthrough Leadership Programme
- The Director As Strategic Leader
- Essential Management
- Financial Intelligence for Strategic Leaders
- Finance Fundamentals for Growing Businesses
- General Management Programme
- High Performance Leadership
- Impact and Influence
- Improving Project Performance
- Key Account Management Best Practice
- Leadership in Disruptive Times: a Strategic Approach to Building and Strengthening Organizational Resilience
- Leading People Effectively
- Leading Supply Chain Transformation Programme
- The Non-Executive Directors' Programme
- Strategic Negotiation Programme
- Sales Management for Growing Businesses
- Strategic Sales Leadership Programme
- Leading Supply Chain Transformation Programme
- Sustainability Essentials – Business Toolkits for Leaders
- Talent Development Programme
- The Director As Strategic Leader
- The Inspirational Leader
- The Non-Executive Directors' Programme
- THRIVE: Passion, Purpose, Performance
- Women's Leadership Programme
- Help to Grow: Management Course
- Growth Curve Masterclass
- Climate Action Planning for SMEs
- Ready for Net Zero Growth
- Ready to Scale
- Making Sense of the Economy
- Introduction to Financial Management
- Organisation Design
- Transformational Strategy
- Leadership
- Organisational Behaviour
- Strategic Thinking
- Strategic Management
- Strategic Marketing
- Strategic Sales Management
- Global Supply Chain Management
- Strategic Procurement
- Sustainable Business





# Purpose

We advance responsible management education to foster inclusive prosperity in a world of thriving ecosystems.

## Definition of Purpose

At Cranfield School of Management, purpose means equipping students and staff to lead with integrity and create positive organisational and societal impact. Through applied research and teaching, we address real-world challenges, helping individuals discover their own purpose and apply responsible, sustainable management in their professional lives and workplaces.

## Institutional Engagement

**51% - 75%** of faculty at Cranfield School of Management actively contribute to our work with PRME, advancing responsible management education, or addressing sustainable development challenges through their work.



# Values

We place organizational responsibility and accountability to society and the planet at the core of what we do.



## How We Define Values

At Cranfield School of Management, our values - Ambition, Impact, Respect, and Community - underpin our commitment to responsible management. We prioritise societal impact, recognising that people and relationships are central to business. Our values serve as a model, inspiring staff and students to live out their own purpose and values in their professional lives.

## Who Champions Responsible Management Education at Our Institution

- ❖ Interdisciplinary efforts across business school
- ❖ Interdisciplinary efforts across parent organization
- ❖ Research or issue group, society, or club leading sustainability efforts
- ❖ Centralized sustainability office
- ❖ Student contributor
- ❖ Disciplinary efforts within business school
- ❖ Individual leader
- ❖ Senior leadership office

## Student Voices

The following narratives demonstrate how Cranfield School of Management has influenced students' academic journey and personal growth.

### **Anar Karpbayeva | MSc Food Systems and Management British Council Women in STEM Scholar**

**Anar Karpbayeva**

**MSc Food Systems and Management**

British Council Women in STEM Scholar

*"The 'Leading Corporate Sustainability' module deepened my understanding of ESG and sustainable management through the lens of the triple bottom line. It helped me see sustainability not just as a concept, but as a responsibility. Case studies and class debates highlighted the real impact of decisions on people and the planet. This experience shaped my academic journey and strengthened my commitment to a career in food systems that supports equity, resilience, and sustainability."*



Anar brings over 10 years of professional experience across food, energy, mining, and intergovernmental sectors. With a background in economics, her work focuses on supply chain efficiency and operations. At Cranfield, she is expanding her expertise in sustainable food systems, combining scientific and strategic business insights. Her degree takes a holistic 'farm to fork' approach, combining food science and supply chain management with leadership training in responsible business. Through management modules like Leading Corporate Sustainability, she is exploring how ethical and sustainable business practices can be embedded into core food system operations.

We are proud to offer an interdisciplinary environment where students like Anar can draw connections across sectors and shape impactful, responsible careers in specialist technical areas.

## **Emeka Eboagwu | PhD Researcher in Sustainability Convener, Nigeria's Supply Chain Leadership Summit**

**Emeka Eboagwu**

**PhD Researcher in Sustainability**

Convener, Nigeria's Supply Chain Leadership Summit

*"Through my research on social sustainability in the extractive industries, especially within the Nigerian oil and gas sector, responsible management has emerged as a significant theme shaping my academic path. It has strengthened my commitment to ethical supply chains, human rights, labour rights, and stakeholder inclusion. These insights have not only informed my scholarly perspective but have also inspired a career rooted in advocacy, capacity-building, and policy reform. I aim to influence the extractive industry by integrating socially responsible practices into core operations, ensuring that development benefits both corporations and the communities they impact. My mission is to turn silence into voice and inaction into systemic change."*



Emeka's thesis focuses on social sustainability in supply chains, particularly in under-regulated contexts. With academic and professional experience in Africa's development sector, he combines research with public engagement to challenge extractive industry norms. His research draws together academic insight and practical experience to address complex sustainability challenges that are often underexplored in traditional business discourse.

His work exemplifies Cranfield's dedication to equipping scholars to drive ethical reform in high-impact global industries

## **Josephine Chikwana | PhD Researcher in Leadership and Management Founder, Move To Improve (Malawi)**

**Josephine Chikwana**

**PhD Researcher in Leadership and Management**

Founder, Move To Improve (Malawi)

*"Cranfield gave me the space to turn a lifelong desire for social change into something concrete. Coming from a background shaped by hardship, I'd always wanted to make a difference, but here that passion became focused. Through my research on social procurement, I've built something I can stand behind. It's not just academic work; it's personal, purposeful, and a foundation for the kind of change I want to lead."*







Originally from Malawi, Josephine is researching corporate-social enterprise partnerships and social procurement. She is a MasterCard Foundation Scholar alumna, with previous roles in consultancy and secondary education. Her work bridges lived experience with practical social impact. Cranfield has provided a platform where Josephine's academic work and personal values meet.

Her supervisor shares, "Josephine is an inspiring and enthusiastic PhD candidate whose research explores the dynamic intersections of Corporate-Social Enterprise Relationships, Institutional Change, Social Procurement, and Social Impact. Her doctoral journey is not only academically rigorous but also deeply rooted in a personal commitment to fostering positive social change."

Over the past three years, she has immersed herself in the UK's social impact ecosystem, engaging with organisations such as Social Enterprise UK and gathering rich, qualitative data. Her work offers fresh insights with practical relevance, grounded in both scholarly research and personal experience. Josephine's story is a clear example of how responsible management education can shape leaders who are not only academically capable but also purpose-driven and community-minded.

## **Alejandro Terroba | PhD Researcher in Leadership and Management Assistant Professor and Consultant, Argentina**

**Alejandro Terroba**

**PhD Researcher in Leadership and Management**

Assistant Professor and Consultant, IEA Business School

*"From the outset, I was inspired by responsible and sustainable management as guiding principles for impactful research. Cranfield University has supported me fully in exploring these themes rigorously, both through academic guidance and a values-driven environment. My work on how management control systems are used to achieve sustainability goals, and on the critical role of informal controls, has deepened my understanding, shaped my academic identity, and reaffirmed my commitment to fostering fair, ethical, and sustainable organisational practices."*



Alejandro's doctoral research examines how management control systems can enable sustainable development in Latin America. With 15+ years in accounting and controlling, he bridges theory and practice in shaping responsible governance.

Alejandro blends industry experience and academic insight to explore how systems thinking can drive sustainability. Cranfield provides the grounding and guidance for this work to take shape. His experience reflects how Cranfield serves as a launchpad for practitioners to refine and apply their values through responsible management research.

## **Jenny Shepherd | PhD Researcher Environment Centre Green Team and Sustainability Network Member**

**Jenny Shepherd**

**PhD Researcher Environment Centre**

Green Team and Sustainability Network Member

*"Halfway through my PhD at Cranfield University, I am studying the resilience of forests based in the Environment Centre. This interest in the natural world prompted me to join the green team at the university to get involved in gardening and other environmental activities, including a hedgehog survey, tree keeping in the university's tiny forest, hedge planting to increase biodiversity on campus and other conservation work."*

*The Sustainability Network at Cranfield University has provided many opportunities to learn more about environmental and green issues through seminars and workshops. These have included talks from representatives from business and commerce, as well as experts in sustainability and the circular economy. This has provided much to consider about how future business could and should support efforts to live more sustainably."*



Jenny brings over 30 years of experience in research and analysis across sectors, including public health and academia. Her current PhD explores climate change resilience in forests, supported by hands-on environmental engagement across Cranfield's living lab campus.

At Cranfield, she's found a community of peers and a campus that supports sustainability both in theory and in daily practice. Her journey demonstrates how Cranfield School of Management contributes to the wider university through convening the Sustainability Network and creating space for collaborative learning, essential to shaping responsible futures.

## Student Awareness

**51% - 75%** of students at Cranfield School of Management are aware that we are a PRME Signatory Member.

## Student Engagement

**51% - 75%** of students at Cranfield School of Management actively contribute to our work with PRME, advancing RME, or addressing sustainable development challenges through their work.

## Values Voices

### Celebrating Values in Community and Practice

At Cranfield School of Management and across the wider Cranfield University community, our commitment to supporting inclusion by celebrating diversity is not simply a statement of intent; it is embedded in the everyday experiences of staff and students. As part of a specialist postgraduate institution, the School of Management fosters a vibrant culture where diversity is welcomed, identities are respected, and community is nurtured through structured initiatives and grassroots-led activities. These values are not abstract ideals; they are made visible through policy, practice, and human connection.

Cranfield's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy places inclusion at the heart of its organisational culture. From unconscious bias training and gender equality commitments to flexible working and its status as a Disability Confident employer, the University ensures that fairness is structurally supported. Staff networks such as Step Up (Women), EmbRace (Race and Ethnicity), Q at Cranfield (LGBTQ+), and the Disability Network provide safe and empowering spaces for connection, advocacy, and representation across the university.

These values are further brought to life through initiatives like the Women in Leadership webinar series, developed in partnership with top global business schools, which connects aspiring female leaders with inclusive learning and peer networks. In the STEM fields, Cranfield's partnership with the British Council's Women in STEM Scholarships, participation in Soapbox Science, and recognition through Athena SWAN Bronze accreditation reflect the institution's strong commitment to ethical leadership and gender inclusion.

Beyond gender, Cranfield actively creates opportunities to explore ethics, spirituality, and inclusion through a broader cultural lens. The Gender, Leadership and Inclusion Centre, based in the School of Management, curates powerful conversations through webinars such as 'Neurodiversity at Work' and 'Organisational Justice', while events including Race Equality Week invite critical reflection and dialogue across disciplines and backgrounds.

Cranfield also emphasises community engagement as a means of putting values into action. Students and staff take part in participatory research, place-based environmental initiatives, and campus-wide values-led events. These include biodiversity activities, such as hedgehog surveys and tiny forest planting, alongside Global Entrepreneurship Week roundtables that challenge conventional thinking on equity and impact in business.

Underpinning all of this is a university-wide values framework: *Ambition, Impact, Respect, Community*. These values guide our actions, shape our culture, and define how we work together as a community. These principles guide behaviour, decision-making, and institutional culture. They are embedded into the life of the university, informing everything from recruitment and staff development to student leadership and curriculum design.

Cranfield School of Management is proud to contribute to this values-driven environment, where responsible leadership is shaped not only through teaching and research but through the lived experience of being part of a supportive and inclusive academic community. This approach enables students, faculty, and professional staff to bring their whole selves to their work and to grow as principled changemakers, guided by values, grounded in purpose, and ready to make a difference.

## **Inclusion in Action: Lessons from the Global Classroom**

Dr Enrico Fontana, Senior Lecturer in Sustainable Business

*"As a Senior Lecturer on Cranfield's full-time MBA, I see inclusion come to life through the voices and lived experiences of our students - from India to Nigeria, Brazil to China. In one class on organisational ethics, a student's story about farming and governance in Nigeria transformed the theory into reality. These discussions are not just about case studies—they are about cultural insight, ethical reflection, and shared learning."*

*At Cranfield, we design our teaching around both content and community. We encourage students to bring their whole selves, including their struggles and hopes, into the learning environment. For many, it is the first time they have been asked to reflect so openly in an academic setting. Inclusion here means being heard, valued, and taken seriously, and to me, that is one of the most powerful forms of leadership we can foster."*



This approach reflects the School's commitment to cultivating a learning environment rooted in empathy, authenticity and global understanding

## **Celebrating Culture: Everyday Respect in the Marketing Classroom**

The Centre for Strategic Marketing and Sales believes values are often best taught not through theory alone, but through small, meaningful acts. As a diverse team of academics from the UK and beyond, the faculty intentionally creates space in teaching sessions to honour students' cultural traditions. These simple moments, acknowledging a holiday, celebrating a festival, and recognising a student's background, help students feel seen, respected, and welcomed.

These acts of recognition reflect Cranfield's values of Respect and Community, reinforcing that high-performance learning environments flourish when inclusion is intentionally nurtured.





Fen Yan, President, Cranfield Student Association and Master's Student in Strategic Marketing, shares, *"At Cranfield, responsible management is more than a concept, it's a lived experience. Embracing inclusive values through both classroom discussions and cultural celebrations has deepened my understanding of leadership, strengthened my cross-cultural communication skills, and inspired me to foster positive change within diverse teams. These experiences have not only shaped my academic journey but also strengthened my commitment to driving positive impact in my future career."*

See examples from the student-run Instagram page:

[🔗 Cultural Celebration Post 1](#)

[🔗 Cultural Celebration Post 2](#)

## Contributing to Global Communities of Practice

Dr Monica Franco-Santos, Reader in Organisational Governance and Performance  
Vice President, Iberoamerican Academy of Management

*"As a leading member of this association, I participated in the organisation and running of two workshops oriented to young scholars working in Iberoamerican universities (across Latin America, Spain, and Portugal) to support their development and enhance collaborations within and across countries."*



Dr Monica Franco-Santos exemplifies how Cranfield staff contribute to global values-based communities. As Vice President of the Ibero-American Academy of Management, she brings Cranfield's values - Ambition, Impact, Respect, and Community - to an international network of scholars. Her workshops for early-career academics nurture ethical leadership and academic inclusion across borders.

Monica's research into performance measurement and governance systems informs both theory and practice, supporting students across Cranfield's MBA, MSc, DBA, and executive education programmes. Her efforts to foster inclusive academic networks affirm Cranfield's belief that responsible management education is global in scope and personal

## **Celebrating Values**

The following demonstrates a way in which our institution celebrates values in various specializations.

### **Celebrating Values in Community and Practice**

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# Teach

We transform our learning environments by integrating responsible management concepts and practices into our curriculum and pedagogy.



## How We Define Teach

Cranfield School of Management delivers inclusive, innovative, industry-informed education with real-world application. Students develop critical thinking and apply knowledge through experiential learning, including simulations, case studies, and company-based projects. Flexible delivery enables immediate business impact, wider access to lifelong learning and the practical application of responsible management principles.

## Courses that support RME

Cranfield School of Management reports 1 course in 2024 that support responsible management education and sustainable development goals.

### **Sustainable Business in customised programme for KIER**

| NA

The aim of the module is to expand the thinking of participants to help them build working examples of how they can change ways of working to build and capture greater sustainable value. Working in groups that focus on real world Kier challenges participants will share best practice they can take back into their own projects.



## Teaching Awards

In 2024, 4 awards were given to faculty and educators at Cranfield School of Management.

### **EFMD Talent Development Gold Award**

**Granter:** European Foundation of Management Development

**Grantee:** Cranfield Executive Development

#### **Award Description:**

This award recognises the positive impact of Cranfield and Kier's people development partnership through our customised executive education offering. The Building Sustainable Futures Excellence in Practice submission highlighted the impact of increasing the performance, retention and promotion rates of Kier employees from under-represented groups and supporting Kier as a business to execute its sustainable business strategy.



## **Impactful Leadership in Operational Excellence for Education and Career Advancement**

**Granter:** ILSSI - International Lean Six Sigma Institute

**Grantee:** Abdelkader Aoufi

### **Award Description:**

This recognition reflects the significant educational and industry impact of the project-based assessment on the operations module, which integrates Lean Six Sigma and operational excellence principles and tools into real-world learning. Delivered to MBA and MSc students, the course has enabled hundreds of participants each year to earn Green Belt certification while actively contributing to value-driven projects across various organisations.



## **Finalist for Green Gowns "Tomorrow's Employee" Award, 2024**

**Granter:** EUAC (Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges)

**Grantee:** Sustainability Business Specialist Apprenticeship with Sustainability MSc (Rosina Watson and Kenisha Garnett)

### **Award Description:**

The "Green Gowns Tomorrow's Employees" award recognises institutions that are pioneering green skills training and development, equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed for a sustainable economy. Judges commented, "This pioneering Sustainability Business Specialist Apprenticeship with Sustainability MSc is an excellent fit for this highly competitive category. The apt quote "profitably solve problems rather than profit from causing problems" summarises neatly the application of an appropriate alternative mindset for business students. The cross-university collaboration appears to be excellent, and judges were impressed with the speed with which the course was established. We hope the reach of the course is not limited by any future changes to funding rules, as this is a truly laudable course with good use of experiential learning"



## **Outstanding Support for Small Business**

**Granter:** Small Business Charter Excellence Awards 2024

**Grantee:** Bettany Centre for Entrepreneurship, Cranfield School of Management

### **Award Description:**

Cranfield was recognised for its holistic programme designed to help UK SMEs tackle climate change and scale sustainable innovation. The initiative includes: • Future Frontiers Fund – Early-stage innovation support • Technology Accelerator Fund – Scaling technology readiness • Cranfield Seed

Fund – Equity investment to support growth and commercialisation The programme has supported a wide range of SMEs in adopting climate-aligned technologies and building business resilience through tailored funding, technical expertise, and entrepreneurship education. “This award recognises our long-standing commitment to supporting SMEs and scaling climate innovation in the UK. It reflects the strength of our partnerships and the entrepreneurial mindset at Cranfield.” – Professor Stephanie Hussels, Director, Bettany Centre for Entrepreneurship

## Educator Recognition

At Cranfield School of Management, we recognize educators for quality of teaching in the following ways:

- ❖ Annual teaching excellence awards
- ❖ Course evaluation scores
- ❖ Faculty promotion and tenure consideration
- ❖ Financial incentives
- ❖ Institutional recognition events
- ❖ Professional development opportunities
- ❖ Publication or research support
- ❖ Student-nominated teaching awards

## Teaching Voices

The following statements demonstrate ways in which educators at Cranfield School of Management support sustainability and responsible management in their classrooms.

### Dr Enrico Fontana | Simulating Values in Global Supply Chains

**Dr Enrico Fontana, Senior Lecturer in Sustainable Business**

*"As the module lead for the Full-time MBA's Leading Sustainable Business course, I wanted to offer students more than a theoretical understanding – I wanted to create an opportunity for them to experience the weight of ethical decision-making.*

*I developed a simulation that places students at the centre of a global supply chain negotiation, where they represent competing stakeholders, including multinational buyers, local suppliers, and NGOs. Each comes with different goals and constraints. The students must work through the tensions between commercial pressure and social responsibility, short-term profit and long-term trust, organisational goals and human rights.*

*What makes this simulation powerful is its moral ambiguity. There are no clear answers. Students must engage, negotiate, and reflect – often grappling with the uncomfortable reality that leadership involves tough choices. Many have said it was one of the most impactful parts of the programme, helping them understand the real-life stakes behind labour policies, sourcing decisions and reputational risk. These exercises are about more than learning supply chain mechanics. They are about cultivating the courage, empathy and judgement that define responsible leaders. At Cranfield, we design learning experiences that mirror the complexity of the world our students will lead in – and help them prepare to do so with integrity.”*

## **Dr Orsolya Ihasz | Creating Responsible Leaders in Renewable Energy**

**Dr Orsolya Ihasz, Senior Lecturer in Entrepreneurship and Impact-driven Innovation**

*“I have spent the last 15 years in entrepreneurship development, where I have encountered people from various backgrounds and disciplines, across multiple sectors, all with a similar desire to bring change to society and to contribute to the economy at a larger scale. I have also witnessed how entrepreneurship is increasingly becoming a social movement to tackle complex problems, such as sustainability.*

*As an educator, I see my role extending well beyond the School of Management. That’s why I’ve worked closely with colleagues in engineering to lead the Energy Entrepreneurship module for Cranfield’s Renewable Energy MSc. This collaboration is vital, our students are technically brilliant, but to bring meaningful solutions into the world, they also need to think like responsible innovators and leaders.*

*I believe that developing an entrepreneurial mindset, combined with an understanding of the entrepreneurial process, in the context of making things happen, can be a force for change in many ways. I don’t teach business as a narrow discipline. For me, entrepreneurship is about a mindset shift, thinking more holistically, learning to collaborate, and understanding that value is multi-dimensional. The way you create profit matters. It should help the company grow in a way that gives back to society, to people, to the environment. Responsible innovation, as I see it, is not about maximising, but optimising all the resources we have: people, profit, and planet.*

*Over the course of two intensive weeks, I challenge students to step out of their comfort zones. They work in teams, respond to real-world sustainability challenges, and apply what they learn across various topics, including opportunity recognition and valuation, market research, venture strategy, and pitching to investors.*

*The two weeks are transformational. I’ve seen engineers uncover their entrepreneurial potential they never knew they had and start thinking like the founders and leaders of tomorrow.”*

## **Dr Abdelkader Aoufi | Teaching Trade-offs and Precision: How Simulations Build Future-Ready Leaders**

**Dr Abdelkader Aoufi, Senior Lecturer in Operations Management**

*When I step into the classroom, I don't simply talk about sustainability or operational excellence – I make students live it. I believe that responsible leadership cannot be taught through theory alone. It needs to be felt. That's why I use experiential simulations to put students in situations where the stakes are high and the decisions are messy. These are moments where learning becomes visceral, where they must balance efficiency, ethics, sustainability, and profit, and see the consequences unfold.*



*Take, for example, the Paper Bottle Challenge. Students are asked to design sustainable packaging under resource constraints. They have to consider cost, waste, quality, and speed – all under pressure. There's no single right answer. Instead, they must align choices with strategic intent, just like real-world businesses navigating climate targets, cost pressures, and consumer expectations.*

*Another exercise, the Airplane Six Sigma Challenge, reveals how small inefficiencies scale into big problems. Designing and producing ten identical paper planes may sound simple, but it uncovers deep lessons about process discipline, waste, and quality control – all of which relate directly to sustainability goals in industry.*





*Perhaps the most transformative session is the Agile Prototyping sprint. Students develop digital solutions for a real business challenge, switching between roles like Product Owner and Developer, working iteratively, and engaging with end-users. They learn not only about systems and tools but about empathy, adaptation and inclusion – essential leadership skills in today's complex world.*

*The feedback I receive tells me that these sessions resonate. One student shared, "It wasn't just theory; it was lived experience." Another said, "Mixing fun with a very important subject – it was a different approach and certainly pleasing to the entire class."*

*Through simulation, I help students move beyond abstract ideas. They learn to weigh trade-offs, make difficult decisions, and reflect on how those decisions affect people, processes, and the planet. These are the leadership muscles they'll need to flex in the real world, where ambiguity is the norm and responsibility cannot be outsourced.*

## **Dr Rosina Watson | Designing Sustainability Education for Career Impact and Systems Change**

**Dr Rosina Watson, Associate Professor of Sustainability at Cranfield School of Management, and Head of Sustainable Business Group**

*"When I set out to design the MSc in Sustainability, I knew it had to reflect both the complexity of the subject and the diversity of the professionals who would study it. I took a highly collaborative approach, co-creating the programme with over 60 organisations – from Severn Trent to Unilever – and working closely with professional bodies like IEMA to ensure it addressed real needs.*





*We shaped the structure through a co-creation workshop with councils, business leaders, and professional bodies. Their input helped us build something accessible and relevant – including flexible learning formats, cross-cohort peer learning, and new modules on sustainability reporting and green economics.*

*The result is a truly interdisciplinary experience that blends academic rigour with real-world application. Live online sessions from Cranfield's Grenville Turner broadcast studio ensure dynamic, interactive teaching, while self-paced digital learning materials are carefully designed for accessibility. Our annual residentials bring students together for leadership development, collaboration and reflective practice – creating a strong community that extends far beyond graduation.*



*This model is working. 69% of our first cohort received at least one promotion within 30 months, with some achieving multiple promotions. One student's thesis, which proposed a circular mattress design dubbed "The Immortal Mattress," received Cranfield funding to develop a working prototype. These outcomes show that we are not only building knowledge but enabling meaningful change.*

*The course has also been recognised externally. In 2023, our apprenticeship pathway earned the King's Coronation emblem for green skills. In 2024, we were a finalist for the Green Gown "Tomorrow's Employee" Award. Ofsted selected the programme as an exemplar during their review, praising its industry relevance, inclusivity, and practical impact.*

*To me, this course is more than a qualification. It serves as a springboard for professionals seeking to lead sustainability transformation. Cranfield provides the fertile ground – and I'm proud to help cultivate the leaders who will make a lasting difference."*

## **Dr Mikko Arevuo | Ethics and Decision-Making in a Complex World**

**Dr Mikko Arevuo, Senior Lecturer in Strategic Decision Making and Political Economy.**

*"Before I became an academic, I worked in international finance and consulting – fast-paced worlds where there was little time to ask the bigger questions. We were focused on what we could do, not always on what we should. Now, as a lecturer and researcher, I help students explore those deeper questions – the kind that define truly responsible leadership.*



*My teaching focuses on how individuals and organisations make strategic decisions under conditions of uncertainty. I bring in ethical frameworks – utilitarianism, deontology, virtue ethics – to challenge students to think beyond short-term gains. I ask them to consider what kind of leaders they want to be, and what kind of decisions they will stand behind when no one is watching.*

*One of the most powerful methods I use is visual cognitive mapping. It allows decision-makers to visualise problems, navigate complexity, and reduce cognitive bias. It's especially powerful for students who may be introverted, neurodiverse, or working in a second language – it gives everyone a voice. That's how inclusive decision-making begins: with shared understanding and space for reflection.*

*Ultimately, I believe that how we make decisions is as important as the decisions themselves. At Cranfield, I help students cultivate the ethical awareness, practical tools, and critical thinking needed to navigate the real-world ambiguity they'll inevitably face. The boardroom is not just a place for strategy – it's where values are tested, and futures are shaped."*

## **Fostering Innovation**



### **To a great extent**

Teaching and learning at our institution strongly foster innovation.

## **Experiential Learning**



### **A lot**

Our institution supports experiential learning significantly through teaching and learning.

## **Learning Mindset**



### **A lot**

Our institution supports a lifelong learning mindset significantly through teaching and learning.

## **Method of Teaching and Learning**



### **In person**

Traditional classroom-based learning with face-to-face instruction.

## **Barriers to Innovative Curriculum**

In 2024, Cranfield School of Management identified the following barriers to innovating, updating, or taking risks in existing curriculum:

- ❖ Budgetary limitations
- ❖ Overloaded faculty
- ❖ Resource allocation challenges
- ❖ Time constraints

## **Barriers to Innovative Pedagogy**

In 2024, Cranfield School of Management identified the following barriers to innovating, updating, or taking risks in existing pedagogy:

- ❖ Budget constraints
- ❖ Limited faculty development opportunities
- ❖ Limited interdisciplinary teaching approaches
- ❖ Overloaded faculty
- ❖ Resource constraints



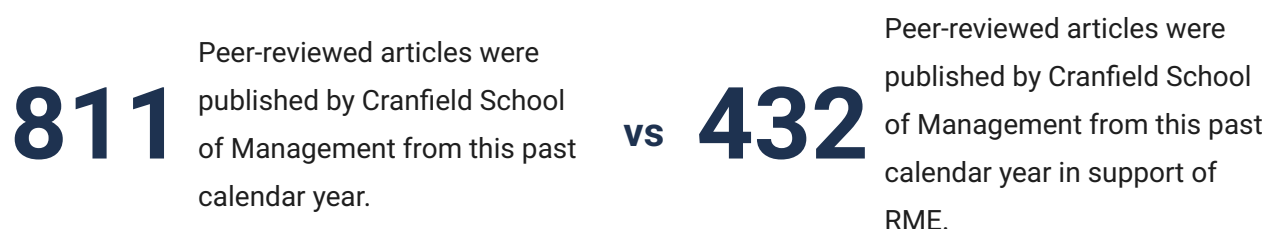
# Research

We study people, organizations, institutions, and the state of the world to inspire responsible management and education practice.

## How We Define Research

At Cranfield School of Management, we conduct applied, impact-driven research in close collaboration with industry, government, and society. Our work advances the theory and practice of responsible, sustainable, and ethical management across management disciplines. We foster interdisciplinary collaboration between social and natural sciences to pioneer sustainable innovations for global challenges.

## Research vs Research for RME/Sustainable Development



## Research Funding

In 2024, Cranfield School of Management was awarded funding for research that is:



**Institution  
Specific**



**Local**



**Regional**



**National**



**International**

## Socializing Research

In 2024, Cranfield School of Management contributed research findings to:

- ❖ Community organizations
- ❖ Government and policy makers
- ❖ Industry and business networks
- ❖ International media
- ❖ Local media
- ❖ National media
- ❖ Open-access platforms

## Research Projects

In 2024, Cranfield School of Management reported 6 research projects that implemented responsible or sustainable activities.

### The Role of Green Technology and Artificial Intelligence in Sustainability Manufacturing

**Period Covering:** January, 2024 - December, 2028

**Department:** Sustainable Business

Exploring AI and clean technologies in food production, this project investigates practical applications for improving energy and resource efficiency in manufacturing, driving sustainable industrial innovation.

**Project participants:** Rajagopalan Poyapakkam (DBA Researcher), Miying Yang, Ying Xie (Supervisors)



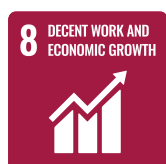
### Deliberative Mini-public with Members of a Pension Scheme to Identify Sustainability Preferences

**Period Covering:** January, 2023 - December, 2024

**Department:** Sustainable Business

Funded by Pensioenfond's Detailhandel, this project convened randomly selected pension members to co-create 49 informed policy recommendations on responsible investment, leading to immediate changes in pension investment strategies.

**Project participants:** Emmeline Cooper, Rob Bauer (Maastricht University)





## Green Infrastructure Financing: Its Impacts on Climate Change Adaptation Acceleration

**Period Covering:** January, 2024 - December, 2027

**Department:** Economics and Banking

This research investigates barriers and enablers to financing green infrastructure, aiming to accelerate urban flood risk management and climate change adaptation efforts through innovative financial solutions.

Project Participants: PhD student: Otitodirichukwu Nwaigwechukwu; Supervisors: Andrew Angus, Matt Nnadi



## ECO-READY project

**Period Covering:** January, 2023 - December, 2026

**Department:** Logistics and Supply Chain Management

Developing a digital platform to monitor and model food security under climate and biodiversity stress, ECO-READY integrates data and policy tools to support resilient food systems in Europe.

### Project participants

Prof. Michael Bourlakis

Dr Nam Vu - Research Fellow in Logistics & Supply Chain Management



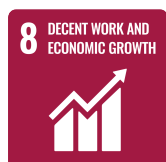
## Strategic Integration of ESG Practices in Technology SMEs

**Period Covering:** January, 2024 - December, 2028

**Department:** Sustainable Business

This DBA research examines how technology SMEs overcome barriers and capitalise on opportunities to integrate ESG into their strategic decision-making, offering frameworks for sustainable growth.

**Project participants:** Sara Hassan (DBA Researcher), Namita Shete, Oksana Koryak (Supervisors)



## UK SMEs' Pro-NetZero Actions

**Period Covering:** January, 2022 - December, 2026

**Department:** Entrepreneurship

Investigates behavioural, strategic, and regulatory factors influencing UK SMEs to adopt NetZero practices, contributing to national and global climate goals. The project examines factors influencing UK SMEs to adopt pro-NetZero actions. The initial part of the project was funded by the Cranfield Seedcorn Research Grant.

**Project participants:** Zimu Xu, Richard Adams



## Research Awards

In 2024, Cranfield School of Management was awarded 2 research awards for responsibility- and/or sustainability-related research.

### **Harry Boer Best Student Paper Award 2024**

**Granter:** EurOMA

**Grantee:** Josephine Chikwana, Leila Alinaghain, Kamran Razmdoost

#### **Award Description:**

**Harry Boer Best Student Paper Award** The Harry Boer Best Student Paper Award, established in 2009, is granted to the best paper presented at the conference authored by a PhD student. The award is supported by Emerald Group Publishing, publisher of the International Journal of Operations &

Production Management. Papers are judged on their contribution towards the advancement of theory and practice of Operations Management. The winner of the best student paper receives GBP250 and a framed certificate; up to two runners-up receive framed certificates. All prizes are announced and handed over during the closing session of the conference, during the Awards Presentation. In addition, the winner is awarded one complimentary conference registration voucher for the following year for the main author, sponsored by EurOMA. 2024 Harry Boer Best Paper Award The winners are : Josephine Chikwana, Leila Alinaghian, Kamran Razmdoost For their paper "Embracing Social Procurement: An Institutional Work Perspective on Implementation in Procurement Practices".



## **2024: Winner of "Best developmental paper - Entrepreneurship track" at British Academy of Management**

**Granter:** British Academy of Management

**Grantee:** Christine Mera (Open University), Hugh Wilson (Warwick), Richard Adams (Cranfield), Rosina Watson (Cranfield), Emma Macdonald (Strathclyde)

### **Award Description:**

British Academy of Management – Winner: Best Developmental Paper (Entrepreneurship Track) This study explores how sustainable entrepreneurs form communities of practice (CoPs) based on shared values and mutual support. It finds that CoPs help entrepreneurs overcome isolation, share resources, and drive sustainability-oriented innovation, revealing a powerful meso-level mechanism that complements traditional ecosystem or policy views.

## **Research Presentations Related to RME and/or Sustainability**

In 2024, Cranfield School of Management gave 7 research presentations related to RME and/or sustainability.

### **All Change: How Peripheral Actors Theorize Change in Mature Fields** | [DOI](#)

**Authors:** Ibrat Djabbarov (Imperial College), Andrey Pavlov (Cranfield University), David Denyer (Cranfield University)

**Date of publication:** August, 2025

**Presented at:** National or international academy of management, 15th Process Organization Studies Symposium, 84th Academy of Management Meeting

**Department:** Management

These related studies explore how under-resourced actors (e.g. small social enterprises in global health) navigate incumbent resistance and theorize change through layered, adaptive approaches. The research shows how actors develop “master theorizations” to persuade stakeholders and drive institutional shifts in mature fields.



## Transforming Marketing Agility into a Responsibility Advantage: Embracing a Paradoxical Mindset

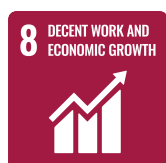
**Authors:** Andrey Pavlov, Cranfield University, Vasilis Theoharakis, Cranfield University, Moe Khant-Thu, Cranfield University

**Date of publication:** August, 2025

**Presented at:** National or international academy of management, Academy of Management

**Department:** Management

This research integrates paradox theory with marketing capability development to explore how top managers' cognitive framing can enhance marketing agility. While agility is widely recognised as beneficial in dynamic markets, this paper reveals that paradoxical thinking—embracing tensions rather than resolving them—can significantly strengthen how agile capabilities are applied for long-term strategic advantage.



## Unlocking Synergies: Exploring Coopetition in Surplus Food Redistribution Networks

**Authors:** Emmanuel Sawyer, Cranfield University, Prof Michael Bourlakis, Cranfield University

**Date of publication:** August, 2025

**Presented at:** 28th International Symposium on Logistics (ISL 2024)

**Department:** Management

This research investigates how charitable food redistributors balance cooperation and competition to access surplus food. Interviews with 31 organisations reveal how coopetition can improve efficiency and equity in food redistribution networks, while also surfacing barriers such as ethos clashes and limited resources.



## From Intent to Impact: Accelerating Corporate Sustainability Integration into Strategic Management

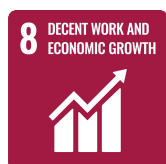
**Authors:** Victoria Kemanian, Cranfield University, Rosina Watson, Cranfield University, Andrew Angus, Cranfield University

**Date of publication:** August, 2025

**Presented at:** Strategic Management Conference, Istanbul, 2024

**Department:** Management

This study investigates how organisations can embed sustainability into strategic management. It uses case studies across three industries to examine barriers, mechanisms, and stakeholder dynamics that impact integration. The findings show how sustainability becomes embedded not just in policy, but in decision-making and operations, influencing long-term business transformation.



## Sustainable Entrepreneurship as a Community of Practice

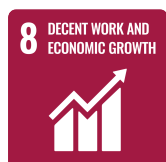
**Authors:** Christine Mera (Open University), Hugh Wilson (Warwick University), Richard Adams (Cranfield University), Rosina Watson (Cranfield University), Emma Macdonald (University of Strathclyde)

**Date of publication:** August, 2025

**Presented at:** National or international academy of management, British Academy of Management

**Department:** Management, Entrepreneurship

This study explores how sustainable entrepreneurs form communities of practice (CoPs) based on shared values and mutual support. It finds that CoPs help entrepreneurs overcome isolation, share resources, and drive sustainability-oriented innovation, revealing a powerful meso-level mechanism that complements traditional ecosystem or policy views.



## Research Challenges for Eco-Efficient and Circular Industrial Systems

| [DOI](#)

**Authors:** Mélanie Despeisse Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, Sweden, Federica Acerbi Politecnico di Milano, Milano, Italy, Veronica Arioli University of Bergamo, Bergamo, Italy, Stephen Childe University of Plymouth, Plymouth, UK, Beatrice Colombo University of Bergamo, Bergamo, Italy, Steve Evans University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK, Clarissa A. González Chávez Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, Sweden, Saul Jones University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK, Bella B. Nujen Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Ålesund, Norway, Giuditta Pezzotta University of Bergamo, Bergamo, Italy, Daryl Powell SINTEF Manufacturing, Raufoss, Norway, Carl Toller Melén Blekinge Institute of Technology, Karlskrona, Sweden, Margarida Vasconcelos Instituto Superior de Engenharia do Porto, Porto, Portugal, Miying Yang Cranfield University, Cranfield, UK, Thorsten Wuest West Virginia University, Morgantown, USA, David Romero Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico City, Mexico

**Date of publication:** August, 2025

**Presented at:** IFIP International Conference on Advances in Production Management Systems

**Department:** Management, Engineering

Based on expert-led webinars, this paper identifies 10 key research challenges for improving eco-efficiency and circularity in industrial systems. It offers recommendations for applied sustainability research and cross-sectoral collaboration.



## Navigating the Green Transition: A Mixed-Method Study of Pro-NetZero Actions in UK SMEs

| [DOI](#)

**Authors:** Zimu Xu, Cranfield University, Richard Adams, Cranfield University

**Date of publication:** August, 2025

**Presented at:** National or international academy of management, Academy of Management 2024

**Department:** Management, Entrepreneurship

This mixed-methods study investigates the motivations and influences behind UK SMEs adopting Net Zero strategies. It highlights the role of leadership, policy, and sectoral pressures in driving pro-environmental behaviour.



## Publications Related to RME and/or Sustainability

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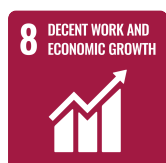
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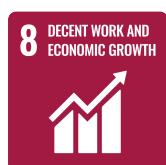
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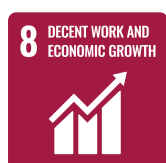
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## Research Voices

The following statements demonstrate ways in which researchers at Cranfield School of Management bring sustainability and responsible management into their research.

### **Dr Emmeline Cooper | Reimagining Pension Policy through Public Deliberation**

**Dr Emmeline Cooper | Senior Research Fellow and Lecturer in Sustainability**

*"In 2024, I led the design and delivery of the UK's first Deliberative Mini Public (DMP) for a pension scheme, aimed at shaping its responsible investment policy. DMPs are widely used in public governance to amplify 'unheard' voices, allowing citizens to engage with expert views and deliberate on complex issues before making recommendations.*

*For me, this project was transformative. It brought the ideals of deliberative democracy to life: equality, inclusion, reasoned debate, and lived experience. Watching a randomly selected group of pension scheme members – most with little background in finance – produce 49 thoughtful recommendations balancing sustainability and financial goals was extraordinary.*

*It also reinforced how participation can change people's sense of agency. I witnessed a deep shift in how participants viewed their influence and responsibility. As a researcher of democratic engagement, it was profoundly rewarding to see the process unfold with such impact and integrity."*



Emmeline's research focuses on the governance of sustainability, specifically examining the shift towards sustainable investing among institutional investors. Her PhD developed the case for member voice in pensions and examined governance innovations involving member voice in sustainable pension schemes. She designed and delivered a unique governance model to enhance member voice in the governance of sustainable investing for the Netherlands' retail sector pension fund, Pensioenfonds Detailhandel, which was recently recognised in the [Pensioen Pro awards 2025](#). In partnership with Nest Corporation, one of the largest pension schemes in the UK, she is developing a governance model to incorporate member voice into decision-making regarding Nest's investments. At Zurich University her research addressed the sustainability preferences of institutional investors. At the University of Basel, her research addressed corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the financial sector, and she taught CSR courses at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. As TH Marshall Fellow, London School of Economics and Political Science, she led comparative research on the organisation of deliberative public governance. Prior to this, she was Research Manager at the UK Audit Commission, and Senior Research Executive at Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute, London.

## **Dr Leila Alinaghian | Advancing Social Impact through Business Relationships**

### **Dr Leila Alinaghian | Professor of Business Relationships and Social Impact**

*"My research explores how strategic relationships between organisations can become a powerful driver of social impact. Drawing on diverse theoretical perspectives – from institutional theory to resilience and dynamic capabilities – I examine how businesses collaborate with social enterprises and intermediaries to deliver meaningful change.*

*This work has taken me across sectors and organisation sizes, engaging with external collaborators such as Social Enterprise UK and Supply Change. Together, we evaluate impact, identify best practices, and co-develop new models to scale social procurement.*

*Through these collaborations, I contribute to Cranfield's mission to integrate responsible business into mainstream management thinking. Our research challenges conventional assumptions and supports organisations in becoming agents of social value – not just economic growth."*



Leila's research advanced the scholarship and understanding of business relationships and networks, as well as their role in driving sustainability and social impact. Her work has been published in a number of world-leading and internationally excellent journals. Leila is highly engaged in the school's PhD and DBA programmes. She is presently supervising several PhD and DBA work and sits on a number of doctoral review panels.

Leila has been recognised for working to establish a social impact movement within business ecosystems. She has worked with various stakeholders, including private sector corporates, social enterprises and intermediaries/professional bodies, to advance the social procurement agenda in the UK and internationally.

Leila is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and holds a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice from Cranfield University. She delivers lectures and leads modules on a number of School of Management and University postgraduate and executive development programmes.

Leila is also a member of the Academy of Management, the British Academy of Management, the European Operations Management Association and the Strategic Management Society.

## **Dr Miying Yang | Leading Circular Economy Innovation through Robotics and Sustainability Assessment**

### **Dr Miying Yang | Reader in Sustainability**

*"As Circular Economy Theme Lead for the EPSRC-funded RoboTriage project, and Chair of the Early-Career Researchers Committee for the EU COST-funded MultiViewLCSA network, I've had the privilege to shape two ambitious, cross-sector research programmes aligned with Cranfield's responsible management values. RoboTriage focuses on developing robotic triage systems that sort and separate high-value components from used products – a vital step in scaling the circular economy. This collaboration spans Cranfield, the University of Birmingham, Durham University, the Manufacturing*

*Technology Centre, and 12 industry partners. Simultaneously, the MultiViewLCSA project is redefining how sustainability is measured across business models. We're developing digital tools, data frameworks, and participatory modelling approaches that reflect how businesses actually create and deliver value, particularly in models like servitisation and dematerialisation.*

*Both projects reflect the ethos of Cranfield: applied, interdisciplinary research that solves real-world problems. They also inform how we teach sustainability, ensuring that students engage critically with the tools, trade-offs, and innovations shaping the future."*



Dr Miyong Yang is a Reader in Sustainability at Cranfield School of Management. Her research focuses on sustainable business models, circular economy strategies, and systems thinking for responsible innovation. With a strong background in engineering and industrial sustainability, Dr Yang is passionate about equipping future leaders with the tools to drive meaningful change. She leads interdisciplinary projects and collaborates widely with industry and policymakers to embed sustainability into strategic decision-making.

## Research Barriers

In 2024, Cranfield School of Management identified the following barriers to conducting research related to sustainability and/or responsibility:

- ❖ Funding challenges
- ❖ Institutional policies and bureaucracy
- ❖ Time constraints





# Partner

We engage people from business, government, civil society, and academia to advance responsible and accountable management education and practice.

## How We Define Partner

Cranfield School of Management partners with business, government, NGOs, and academia to co-create impactful research and education. From apprenticeships to policy-shaping research, we build communities that share knowledge, resources, and a common purpose. Through participatory approaches, we ensure partnerships advance our mission, support partners' goals, and deliver wider societal good.

## Institutional Partnerships

- ❖ AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business)
- ❖ AMBA (Association of MBAs)
- ❖ EFMD (European Foundation for Management Development)
- ❖ Financial Times
- ❖ Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC)
- ❖ Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)
- ❖ Times Higher Education (THE)

## Student Organization Partnerships

- ❖ None

## Partnerships

The following provides more details on 8 key partnerships at Cranfield School of Management.

### Central Bedfordshire Council Scholarship Programme

Since 2021, Cranfield's Bettany Centre has partnered with Central Bedfordshire Council to deliver the Central Bedfordshire Scholarship Programme - a package of fully funded courses, workshops and decarbonisation support for local SMEs ([cranfield.ac.uk](https://cranfield.ac.uk), [cranfield.ac.uk](https://cranfield.ac.uk), [centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](https://centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)).

Highlights include:

- - Business growth and scaleup masterclasses (Business Growth Programme, GrowthCurve Masterclasses, Ready for Scale)
  - Climate-action offerings (Ready for Net Zero Growth, Climate Action Planning)
  - "Exploring Sustainable Futures" simulation workshops to immerse business leaders in sustainability decision-making scenarios ([cranfield.ac.uk](https://cranfield.ac.uk), [cranfield.ac.uk](https://cranfield.ac.uk)).

- Annual Cranfield VentureDay conferences showcasing sustainability and entrepreneurship, co-hosted with the Cranfield Sustainability Group ([centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](https://centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)).

#### Provide supporting materials:

- ◦ Central Bedfordshire Scholarship Programme webpage ([cranfield.ac.uk](https://cranfield.ac.uk))
- Programmes featured in press releases: “Free programmes to help Central Bedfordshire businesses grow” (Dec 2023) ([cranfield.ac.uk](https://cranfield.ac.uk)) and “Leading Business School and Council unite...” (Aug 2021) ([becentralbedfordshire.co.uk](https://becentralbedfordshire.co.uk))
- Media coverage of VentureDay 2022 sustainability event ([centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](https://centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

## Green Future Investments Ltd

- GFIL is a philanthropic fund established in 2021, focused on climate-positive technological innovation in partnership with Cranfield University
  - GFIL and Cranfield co-manage the **Green Future Investment Fund**, which channels funds, mentoring, technical expertise, and facility access into green-tech projects across the TRL spectrum.
  - The Fund includes four pillars:
  - **Future Frontiers Fund**: ~£10k grants to early-stage (TRL 1–3) idea-stage innovators.
  - **Technology Accelerator Fund**: ~£50k for prototyping and scaling (TRL 4–7), including six awards per year.
  - **Green Future Entrepreneurship Fund**: via the Bettany Centre, offering convertible loans (£25–50k), Net-Zero Growth scholarships, and student SDG-prizes.
  - **Brian Meredith Net Zero Scholarships**: awards of £20k each to support students on sustainability-driven postgraduate programmes.
  - Cranfield School of Management, through its Bettany Centre for Entrepreneurship, delivers the **Green Future Entrepreneurship Fund**, a dedicated fund supporting sustainable entrepreneurship and responsible business leadership aligned with the SDGs. Although this initiative is part of the broader Green Future Investment Fund, it is uniquely integrated into the School of Management’s academic ecosystem. It offers:
- Convertible loans (£25k–£50k) to early-stage green startups founded by Cranfield students or alumni.
- Green business development mentoring and access to the Bettany Centre’s entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- Scholarships and SDG prizes to support students on entrepreneurship programmes with sustainability-driven ventures.
  - The fund is integrated into teaching delivery through the Entrepreneurship module delivery across the School. It allows students to apply their academic learning to real-world ventures that address climate, energy, and biodiversity challenges.

### Provide supporting materials:

- - [Green Future Investment Fund homepage](#)
  - [Award spotlight: “KE Awards 2024 Sustainable Collaboration”](#)

## Cranfield–Colworth Innovation Challenge

The Cranfield–Colworth Innovation Challenge, hosted by the Bettany Centre for Entrepreneurship together with Cranfield’s Centre for Design Engineering, connects multidisciplinary teams from the School of Management and technical schools with innovation-led companies (Unilever, dsm-firmenich, Symrise, Pioneer Group). Each year, around 130+ students form mixed teams to tackle real-world sustainability challenges—such as food-tech innovations to reduce waste, automate lab practices, or develop edible packaging—through a structured five-week program:

- - **Application and team formation** at the intersection of technical and business disciplines
  - **Workshops and mentored pitching**, facilitated by the Bettany Centre and Centre for Design, alongside company mentors
  - **Final pitch at Colworth Science Park**, judged by senior leaders; winning teams receive combined prizes (£4k top prize)

### Highlights from the 2024 Challenge:

- - Unprecedented scale and reach: Over 140 students participated, marking the largest cohort to date
  - Cross-disciplinary real-world engagement: Students from management, engineering, design, and science collaborated on industry-driven sustainability challenges, developing solutions ranging from lab automation to precision farming and liquid waste treatment.
  - Tangibility of solutions: Finalist concepts—such as the energy consumption reduction proposal (Irradiance), a multifunctional drone for effective precision farming (Goshen), and comprehensive liquid waste treatment (Greenwave) — were realistic and prototyped, with a total prize fund of £7,000.
- Strong industry endorsement and relationships: Keith Purdie, Commercial Director at Colworth Park, said: *“This is the first time the park has been involved in this competition, and it has had a really positive impact in terms of fostering better working relationships between the key stakeholders that have taken part in it.”*
- Embedded in entrepreneurship curriculum: The challenge is woven into entrepreneurship and innovation modules - students leading market analysis, venture design, and pitching prepare with academic rigour and business relevance.
- Real-world career and impact pathways: Finalist teams are eligible for summer thesis projects and commissioned innovation projects; several winners saw further mentorship and seed funding opportunities post-challenge

### Provide supporting materials:

- Shorthand story overview: *Cranfield–Colworth Innovation Challenge 2024*  
[cranfield.ac.uk/cranfield.shorthandstories.com](https://cranfield.ac.uk/cranfield.shorthandstories.com)
- Press release: *Student-driven sustainability solutions shine* (Mar 2024) [cranfield.ac.uk](https://cranfield.ac.uk)

## Central Bedfordshire Council - Green Business Network

The Green Business Network brings together like-minded businesses and is part of our ongoing commitment to fostering a sustainable future through collaborative business practices. Through the network, businesses may help each other reduce energy and water consumption, eliminate waste, design products more sustainably, increase biodiversity, manage impact, gain an understanding of connected legal obligations, and put environmental issues at the heart of business decision-making. We organise quarterly events and facilitate communications and collaborations among members. Central Bedfordshire Council funded 75 GBN membership places. We also work with our membership organisations to advance the Green agenda.

The 2024 events featured inspiring presentations, hands-on workshops, and peer-led discussions designed to integrate sustainability into business strategies.

### Provide supporting materials:

[Green Business Network 2024 Events](#)

## Ernst and Young

Since 1999, the Female FTSE Board Report has been authored by Cranfield School of Management, led by Professor Sue Vinnicombe and her colleagues. In 2020, EY became the formal supporting partner, helping to extend the report's influence, industry reach and policy engagement.

This partnership combines Cranfield's academic rigour with EY's sector expertise and stakeholder networks. The report is published annually and offers an authoritative analysis of gender diversity across UK corporate boards, with a particular focus on the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250.

The 2024 edition, marking the 25th anniversary of the report, exposed a critical paradox. While most firms meet gender targets at the board level, female executive representation is falling, prompting calls for systemic change.

### Key highlights from 2024:

- **25-year milestone publication:** Celebrating Cranfield's longstanding leadership in gender equity research with new forward-looking commentary.
- **Key findings:**
  - Women hold **42%** of FTSE 100 board roles and **41%** of FTSE 250 roles.
  - But the **number of female executive directors in the FTSE 250 fell by 11%** (from 47 in 2022 to 42 in 2024).

- Only **10 female CEOs and 23 female CFOs** remain on FTSE 250 boards.
- **Broader media and policy impact:** The 2024 findings were widely covered in *The Guardian*, *Financial News* and *The Standard*, sparking public conversation about workplace culture, maternity penalties and executive succession bias.
- **Policy and boardroom influence:** The report supports the UK Government's **Women Leaders Review** and serves as a benchmarking tool for companies committed to gender equity.
- **Curricular and research integration:** Findings are embedded in Cranfield's MBA, MSc and executive programmes focused on leadership, board governance and inclusive strategy.

**Provide supporting materials:**

- [Female FTSE Board Report 2024 \(Cranfield\)](#)
- [Cranfield press release \(Nov 2024\)](#)
- [Guardian article: "Female executive directors in FTSE 250 down 11%"](#)

## **Faculty of Engineering and Applied Sciences and School of Management**

The Cranfield Sustainability Network Speaker Series is an informal forum co-hosted by the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Sciences and the Sustainable Business group in the School of Management. Since 2020, it has hosted four to five early-evening events each year, featuring visiting speakers who seed discussions on pressing sustainability topics. It aims to embed a sustainability lens across leadership, business and innovation education, not as a standalone module but as a critical thread woven through the entire learning journey.

### **Highlights of 2024: Sustainability Network Speaker Series**

- ◦ The Activist Leader – a conversation with Lucy Parker
  - *Collaborator:* Lucy Parker
  - Can my money save the planet? Everything you need to know about the carbon footprint of your money
    - *Collaborator:* Dan Sherrard-Smith, Founder and CEO of MotherTree
  - Biodiversity – Nature's gift to business?
    - *Collaborators:* Dr Neil Strong (Network Rail), Chris Bawtree & Matt Nokes (Ground Control), Prof Jim Harris (FEAS), Anna Barrett (Alumna)
  - Spilling the Tea on Sustainability
    - *Collaborators:* Dr Helen Saini (Lipton Teas & Infusions), Kurush Bharucha (Tea Industry Expert), Prof Paul Burgess (FEAS)
  -

**Provide supporting materials:**

<https://www.cranfield.ac.uk/som/expertise/sustainability/events-and-networking>

## Pensioenfond Detailhandel (Dutch retail sector pension scheme)

Cranfield's Dr Emmeline Cooper and Maastricht University's Professor Rob Bauer collaborated with Pensioenfond Detailhandel to design and facilitate a Deliberative Mini-public. Forty-nine randomly selected pension scheme members convened over a series of sessions to learn about and debate responsible investment policy. Participants co-created 49 written recommendations, which were formally presented to the scheme's board.

## Student-Industry Projects

Across Cranfield's MBA, MSc in Management (MiM), and Management and Leadership (MML) programmes, student consulting and internship projects are embedded into the curriculum as a practical expression of responsible management education. These partnerships enable students to apply academic insights to real-world social, environmental, and strategic challenges while supporting organisations, often at no cost, with innovation, transformation, and sustainability initiatives.

In 2024 alone, student teams partnered with over a dozen organisations across sectors:

- - **MBA internships** involved full-time placements (July–Sept), tackling issues such as:
    - *HyperGen Ltd* – market analysis for hydrogen-based fuel technologies.
    - *Colab-8 Consulting* – AI-supported product development for social impact.
    - *Digital Nomads for Good* – designing a UK sponsorship strategy for a philanthropy-meets-travel platform.
  - **MML programme projects** supported a range of charities (e.g., *Cosmic NHS*, *SoundProof Box*), schools (*Carterton Primary*), local clubs (*Northants Baseball*), SMEs (*Cannon*), and global firms (*Eiffage*, *Thales*). Standout initiatives included:
    - Working with *Thales* to design SME engagement strategies with enhanced social value propositions.
    - Collaborating with *Shelter* to optimise homelessness advocacy and advice services.
    - Partnering with *SoundProof Box* to develop preventative education around domestic abuse.
  - **MiM programme teams** undertook consulting projects including:
    - A high-impact partnership with *Deloitte East Europe* exploring how AI can be ethically and effectively embedded in consulting services.

These collaborations exemplify Cranfield's commitment to learning through action and its mission to foster leaders who not only understand business but also apply it in the service of people and planet.

## Partner Voices

The following statements from our partners demonstrate ways in which our collaborations at Cranfield School of Management support sustainability and responsible management education.



## Kier Group – Gold Award for Talent Development Partnership

### Partner context:

Kier Group is a leading UK infrastructure services, construction, and property group. In collaboration with Cranfield University, Kier has developed and implemented talent development programmes aimed at fostering leadership and career progression within the company.

### Nature of collaboration:

Cranfield University partnered with Kier to deliver two key programmes: *Raising Leaders* and *Building Leaders*. These programmes are designed to provide participants with insights, practical tools, and skills to advance their careers. The collaboration focuses on inclusive leadership, strategic action, and assessing risks and opportunities. The programmes have led to notable outcomes, including 58% of *Building Leaders* participants being promoted and a 98% retention rate within the company.

### Contribution to responsible business:

The partnership exemplifies a commitment to developing internal talent and promoting inclusive leadership within the infrastructure sector. By investing in employee development, Kier and Cranfield contribute to building a more skilled and diverse workforce, aligning with responsible business practices.

### Partner voice:

*"Kier is built by brilliant people, and I am committed to investing in them and helping them progress. I am delighted our efforts have been recognised at the EFMD awards." "We have a longstanding partnership with Cranfield University and I am extremely proud of the talent development programmes that we have, and continue to deliver, for colleagues at Kier. At the heart of these programmes is inclusive leadership and what I see time and time again is how our people are flourishing, through thinking differently and engaging with their teams in new ways."*

Andrew Davies, Chief Executive of Kier

[!\[\]\(d3102649f02e825ddb76dc3de0190154\_img.jpg\) More on the partnership](#)

## Central Bedfordshire Council – Accelerating SME Growth and Sustainability

### Context:

Cranfield University's Bettany Centre for Entrepreneurship has partnered with **Central Bedfordshire Council** since 2021 to deliver the *Central Bedfordshire Scholarship Programme*, a suite of fully funded courses and decarbonisation support designed to help local SMEs grow responsibly.

### **Nature of collaboration:**

The Council funds local businesses to participate in growth and sustainability-focused initiatives led by Cranfield. Offerings include the *Business Growth Programme*, *Ready for Net Zero Growth*, and immersive decision-making simulations, such as *Exploring Sustainable Futures*. This initiative combines Cranfield's research-led teaching with the Council's local economic development priorities, focusing on green growth and business resilience.

### **Contribution to responsible business:**

The programme strengthens regional economies by equipping SMEs to expand sustainably, adopt climate-positive strategies, and navigate decarbonisation. Through tailored support, businesses have accelerated their growth trajectories while embedding ESG-conscious practices. This directly supports SDGs 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), and 13 (Climate Action).

### **Partner voice:**

*"I think we've had some really positive testimonials and case studies from some of those businesses and how the programmes that they've been on have absolutely supported them. Some have seen exponential growth in terms of turnover, they're expanding into new markets, it's been phenomenal, really. Through the partnership with the Bettany Centre, we've supported 238 unique businesses, of which 50 have gone on to receive grant funding. That equates to around 6,600 hours of business support- again, phenomenal figures."*

— Anna Bosworth, Head of Investment, Employment and Skills, Central Bedfordshire Council

### [Central Bedfordshire Scholarship Programme](#)

## **Cranfield School of Management x EY | 2024 Cranfield Annual Female FTSE Women on Boards Report**

**Partner context:** EY (Ernst & Young) is one of the world's largest professional services firms, with a long-standing commitment to building a better working world through inclusive growth, innovation, and sustainable leadership. Since 2020, EY has served as the formal supporting partner of the *Female FTSE Board Report*, produced by Cranfield School of Management and led by Professor Sue Vinnicombe.

**Nature of collaboration:** This partnership combines Cranfield's research expertise with EY's strategic networks to produce an annual report that tracks gender representation on the boards of FTSE 100 and FTSE 250 companies. In 2024, the 25th edition featured a landmark study on female Chief Financial Officers (CFOs), examining career barriers and leadership development.

**Contribution to responsible business:** The report informs policy, shapes executive search criteria, and catalyses boardroom dialogue about the structural changes needed to improve gender equity at the executive level. The partnership supports leadership accountability and evidence-based interventions aligned with SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

**Partner voice:**

*"Our relationship with Cranfield is hugely important to EY, and this year's report again brings gender diversity to the fore. Our hope is that it helps to underpin change and spark important reflection in boardrooms, leadership meetings, coaching sessions and peer discussions."*

— Anna Anthony, Managing Partner, UK Financial Services, EY



## The Female FTSE Board Report 2024

### 25 years on: Milestones and Misses



Shape the future  
with confidence

**Professor Susan Vinnicombe CBE,**  
Cranfield School of Management

**Dr Michelle Tessaro,** Visiting Professor,  
Cranfield School of Management

**Dr Valentina Battista,**  
Cranfield School of Management

[2024 Cranfield Annual Female FTSE Women on Boards Report](#) highlighting the widening gap between the number of women in executive roles and the number in non-executive roles. A special research study on the career experiences of FTSE women Chief Finance Officers (CFOs), identifying the barriers women face to achieve the top executive roles and what needs to change. EY and Cranfield University partner to produce this report.

## BioPhorum – Industry Collaboration via Sustainability Simulation

**Partner context:** BioPhorum is a global collaborative platform for biopharmaceutical companies. It brings together industry professionals across supply chains, manufacturing, regulation, and sustainability to co-develop best practices and tackle system-wide challenges.

**Nature of collaboration:** In 2024, Cranfield University facilitated a bespoke sustainability simulation at a BioPhorum cross-industry forum. The session engaged technical and operational leaders in active dialogue and decision-making around sustainability trade-offs—bridging functional divides and embedding long-term thinking into business practice.

**Contribution to responsible business:** The simulation enabled participants to explore interdependencies between sustainability, compliance, and commercial performance in pharmaceutical operations. By making sustainability a shared responsibility, the event fostered behavioural change and cultural alignment aligned with SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

### Partner voice:

*“I think that the shared experience they had playing the game has given them permission to talk about sustainability more, and be more aware of the touchpoints that exist with their colleagues in sustainability.”*

— Catherine Wyatt, Drug Substance Forum Lead, BioPhorum

## Colworth Science Park / Unilever – Innovation Challenge for Sustainable Business

**Partner context:** Colworth Science Park, home to Unilever R&D and other innovation-led firms such as dsm-firmenich and Symrise, has long fostered public–private collaboration in science and sustainability. In 2024, the Park partnered with Cranfield University to host the annual *Cranfield–Colworth Innovation Challenge*.

**Nature of collaboration:** This flagship competition connected over 140 students from business, design, and engineering programmes with Colworth-based companies to develop and pitch solutions to real-world sustainability challenges, including food waste, energy reduction, and biodiversity.

**Contribution to responsible business:** The challenge promotes experiential learning, cross-disciplinary teamwork, and purpose-driven innovation. Finalist projects were commercially viable and environmentally conscious, demonstrating the role of academia–industry partnerships in building SDG-aligned careers and ventures.

**Partner voice:**

*“This is the first time the park has been involved in this competition, and it has had a really positive impact in terms of fostering better working relationships between the key stakeholders that have taken part in it. It has been brilliant to host these students here—they have been a real credit to the university.”*

— Keith Purdie, Commercial Director, Colworth Science Park

 [More on the challenge](#)



# Practice

We adopt responsible and accountable management principles in our own governance and operations.



## How We Define Practice

Cranfield School of Management embeds responsibility and sustainability in its culture and governance. With clear accountability through frameworks like Times Higher Impact and the SDG Accord, we lead by promoting inclusion, staff well-being, and ethical governance. Committees, volunteer groups and dedicated teams drive progress as a responsible employer and educator.

## Institutional Policies and Practices

- ❖ Employee equity, diversity, inclusion
- ❖ Accreditation body recommendation documents
- ❖ Buildings/real estate
- ❖ Campus operations guides
- ❖ Carbon reduction or offset commitments
- ❖ Climate action plan
- ❖ Curriculum guidelines
- ❖ Environmental stewardship policies
- ❖ Ethical data sourcing guides
- ❖ Ethical leadership or good governance policies
- ❖ Faculty hiring, tenure, and promotion guidelines
- ❖ Greenhouse gas emissions
- ❖ Local staff/student/faculty transportation
- ❖ Ministry of education recommendation documents
- ❖ Open-access guides
- ❖ Professional training opportunities
- ❖ Responsible procurement policies
- ❖ Student equity, diversity, inclusion
- ❖ Sustainability strategy or strategic plan (school or university level)
- ❖ Travel guides
- ❖ Water
- ❖ Zero-waste guides

## Policy Documents Related to RME and/or Sustainability

Annual Environmental Report 2023 to 2024 (4)

[View document](#)  [Download document](#) 

Biodiversity Action Plan (2)


[View document](#)  [Download document](#) 



BSi ISO14001 Certificate

[View document](#)  [Download document](#) 

EDI strategic plan

[View document](#)  [Download document](#) 

## Practice Awards

In 2024, Cranfield School of Management received 1 award for responsible and/or sustainable practices.

### **Platinum 'Hedgehog Friendly Campus' status**

**Granter:** British Hedgehog Preservation Society

**Grantee:** Cranfield University

#### **Award Description:**

Cranfield University has been awarded the prestigious Platinum level accreditation from the British Hedgehog Preservation Society, recognising its ongoing commitment to protecting hedgehogs and enhancing biodiversity across its campus. This achievement marks several years of dedicated work by the University's staff, students, and local community volunteers. Having already attained bronze, silver and gold awards in previous years, the platinum status reflects the University's highest level of engagement with the national Hedgehog Friendly Campus initiative. The initiative encourages universities across the UK to improve habitats for hedgehogs, raise awareness about hedgehog-friendly practices and support wider biodiversity goals. Cranfield's platinum success is underpinned by a wide range of environmental measures and community-led projects. Gareth Ellis, Energy and Environment Manager at Cranfield University, said: "This award reflects years of work by a really committed group of staff, students and partners. From our first bronze award to now reaching platinum, we've steadily built up the campus as a place where wildlife can thrive. It's been a real community effort and we're proud to see that recognised."

## Practice Voices

The following statements from stakeholders at Cranfield School of Management demonstrate our commitment to sustainable and responsible practices.

## Rooted in Knowledge, Growing with Purpose: The Library's Sustainability Story

Anne Knight, Head of Library Content, Systems and Customer Experience, and Louise Woodland, Research and Study Skills Developer, share how they are embedding sustainability into library services at Cranfield – transforming everyday practices and spaces to support a greener, more resource-conscious university.



*"Sustainability has been part of our day-to-day thinking in Library Services for some time. We started with small-scale actions, like improving lighting and recycling practices in partnership with facilities. But things really began to take shape when one of us took on the role of Energy Champion, and we began receiving regular energy usage reports from the University's Energy and Environment Team. That data gave us a foundation to build on and encouraged us to think bigger.*

*Around a year ago, we formalised our efforts by creating a Library Sustainability Group. The group includes team members with different areas of focus, from biodiversity to responsible procurement, and together we've taken a more proactive and structured approach. One of our first steps was to sign up to the Green Libraries Manifesto, recognising the unique role libraries can play as trusted knowledge hubs and advocates for change. We've hosted Green Libraries Week events, curated sustainability-focused book displays and reading lists, and even collaborated with the Tree Council to mark National Tree Week.*

*A key part of our ethos is recognising and amplifying the everyday practices that make a difference – some of which we didn't even realise were sustainability-driven until we began working more intentionally as a team. These include reducing plastic use in book jackets, sourcing sustainable alternatives from suppliers, and recycling old books with specialist companies. One of us is mapping our activities against the UN Sustainable Development Goals, while another is reviewing the environmental credentials of our suppliers.*

*We're also finding creative ways to care for our campus environment. With support from Estates, we plan to enhance the green space near the library with a bug hotel, bird boxes, seating from felled trees, and wildflower seeding. Several of us have taken part in campus-wide initiatives like litter picking, the hedgehog count, and building habitat spaces with deadwood in the wildlife area.*

*Sustainability also shows up in how we support staff and students. We've created posters highlighting the carbon savings associated with borrowing books, added food caddies to staff spaces, and collected hard-to-recycle items like blister packs. One of us recently completed a course with the Carbon Literacy Trust and hopes to train other staff as well.*

*While it's still early days, these pockets of action are growing – and they're already helping to shift our collective mindset. As library staff, we're proud to influence both the operational side of campus and the learning environment our students engage with daily. We believe that by demonstrating how sustainability can be woven into our roles, we're helping to normalise responsible practice and inspire others to act within their own spheres of influence.”*

## **How the Hedgehog Friendly Campus Brings Us Together**

Clare Hanson, Senior Marketing Manager at the School of Management, shares how participating in the Hedgehog Friendly Campus initiative revealed a deeper, more personal side of sustainability.



*"Taking part in the Hedgehog Footprint Tunnel survey was a powerful reminder that sustainability isn't just about policies, it's about connection. Over the course of a week, staff and students came together to monitor hedgehog activity across campus. It was a brilliant opportunity to slow down, explore the quieter corners of Cranfield, and contribute to something meaningful as a team."*

*We found hedgehog footprints at several sites – a small but exciting sign that our campus is a shared space, not just for people, but for wildlife too. As someone working in communications, I'm proud to help raise awareness of initiatives like this that bring together community, curiosity, and care. Earning the silver accreditation felt like a lovely validation of that collective effort and I'm already looking forward to what we'll do next."*

## **Additional Evidence**

### **Cranfield University rises in annual sustainability ranking**

An annual survey of sustainability in higher education has placed Cranfield University 40<sup>th</sup> out of 151 institutions. This places Cranfield within the top 30% in the UK, a climb of 26 places from 2022/23, for its environmental and ethical performance. Cranfield gained a 2:1 in student network [People & Planet's latest University League 2023/24](#).

Assessed across 14 categories including sustainable food, carbon management, waste reduction and environmental policy, Cranfield's overall score of 58% compares favourably to the 2022/23 score of 44.5%.

Chief Executive and Vice-Chancellor of Cranfield University, Professor Karen Holford CBE FREng, commented: "Sustainability cuts across everything we do at Cranfield, from research and teaching through to our campuses, and how we operate as a university. I'm really proud of our result in this ranking but there is still more to do, in reducing our carbon footprint further and in researching and developing crucial solutions to the climate challenge our world faces."

Cranfield has an ambitious programme of environmental improvements and targets outlined in its latest [corporate plan](#). It has recently published a sustainable food policy, a strategy for achieving [environmental goals](#), and outlined how the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) relate to its teaching and research.

Its work to improve the University estate was recognised in the Times Higher Education Awards 2023, where the [Estates Team were highly commended](#). In the past three years, £20 million in funding has been secured to decarbonise the campus, futureproof energy supply and redevelop the estate. People & Planet's University League is the only comprehensive and independent league table of UK universities ranked by environmental and ethical performance.



# Share

We share our successes and failures with each other to enable our collective learning and best live our common values and purpose.



## How We Define Share

Cranfield School of Management fosters a collaborative culture by sharing progress, challenges, and opportunities in embedding responsible management. Through school-wide meetings, interdisciplinary networks, and shared accountability, we build a strong team ethic. Shared learning and accountability drive our efforts to embed responsibility and sustainability through openness, innovation, and continuous improvement.

## Engagement Opportunities

Cranfield School of Management offers transparent engagement opportunities for members of our institution and community to contribute to our sustainability and responsibility efforts in the following ways:

- ❖ Boards and advisory committees
- ❖ Annual reports
- ❖ Community events and consultation forums
- ❖ Feedback mechanisms (e.g., surveys, suggestion boxes)
- ❖ Partnerships with local organizations
- ❖ Public events and panel discussions
- ❖ Publicly accessible sustainability data and dashboards
- ❖ Student and staff volunteer programs
- ❖ Sustainability-focused research and collaboration Opportunities

## Communication Audiences

Cranfield School of Management communicates its policies and progress on sustainable development and responsibility with:

- ❖ Accreditation bodies
- ❖ Alumni and donors
- ❖ Boards and advisory committees
- ❖ Business and industry partners
- ❖ Faculty and staff
- ❖ Government and policy makers
- ❖ Media and public relations channels
- ❖ Prospective and current students
- ❖ Research and academic networks

## Sharing Voices

The following statements from stakeholders at Cranfield School of Management demonstrate our commitment to sharing and learning from sustainability and responsible management practices.

### Green Team Spirit: Connecting Campus for a Sustainable Future

Becky Wishart, Environment Officer (Communications), reflects on how she supports and celebrates grassroots sustainability efforts across campus – building momentum, sharing stories, and helping Cranfield’s community see themselves as part of the climate solution.

*“As part of the Energy and Environment Team, I help lead the Green Team – a growing network of staff, students, and tenants who actively contribute to Cranfield’s sustainability ambitions both on and beyond campus. Together, we align with targets such as achieving Net Zero carbon emissions and Zero Avoidable Waste by 2030, as well as increasing biodiversity by 20%.*

*“What’s most powerful about the Green Team is its flexibility. Individuals can contribute in ways that suit their skills and interests – whether by joining the Energy Champions network to promote smarter energy use, or getting stuck in with tree planting, biodiversity surveys, and food growing projects. We run annual events such as Green Week, Fairtrade Fortnight, charity collections and biodiversity drives – many of which also speak to wider values like wellbeing, inclusion, and financial resilience.*

*Engaging students is a core part of our mission. Each year, we collaborate with the Cranfield Students’ Association to recruit a student-led Green Team and support the elected CSA Green Officer. We also work with local authorities and environmental charities – including Central Bedfordshire Council, Forest of Marston Vale, Earthwatch Europe, and the Wildlife Trust – to improve transport, create green space, and offer volunteer opportunities like the Hedgehog Friendly Campus programme.*

*Cranfield has also supported my own development through IEMA training, software skills, and a part-time MSc, helping me better contribute to our environmental strategy. For me, the Green Team embodies the spirit of Ambition 2027 – enabling a collaborative, secure and environmentally resilient campus, while delivering on the University’s commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.”*



## From Coordination to Leadership: Driving Collective Impact in Sustainability Reporting

Gabriela Pearson is Marketing Manager at Cranfield School of Management, with a key role as the PRME Report Lead. In this capacity, she coordinates and manages the contributions of senior stakeholders to produce a comprehensive and insightful report that reflects the School's commitment to responsible management education and sustainability.

*"After several years coordinating the report, I am now privileged to serve as report lead, managing senior stakeholders' contributions to ensure a comprehensive and impactful submission. Over this time, I have witnessed how our PRME Executive Lead, Professor Stephanie Hussels has successfully secured greater buy-in across the School, strengthening engagement and commitment to our shared sustainability goals. This evolving collaboration has deepened my appreciation for the collective effort driving our progress.*

*I take great pride in this role because it allows me to engage directly with the innovative spirit within our university. I genuinely enjoy hearing academics describe their creative learning innovations, such as games and interactive activities, which bring fresh energy to education. Equally rewarding is connecting with colleagues across the campus services team who are making meaningful contributions behind the scenes. What I find most inspiring is the collective reflection during all-school meetings, where we come together to review our progress, recognise our shared achievements, and appreciate the significant impact we are making as a community."*

## Communication Barriers

Cranfield School of Management faces the following barriers in transparent communications:



**Audience  
reach**



**Media visibility**

SIGNATORY

# Cranfield School of Management

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## Website

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