



University of Essex

Essex  
Business  
School

**PRME**



# **PRME REPORT 2023**

**Sharing Information on Progress (SIP)**

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**HOME TO THE CURIOUS  
BOLD AND BRAVE**

# University of Essex

The University of Essex (UoE) is a place where curiosity prevails, where exploring new ways of thinking and pushing boundaries is not just encouraged, it is expected. We are determined to do things differently and put student success at the centre of everything we do.

We are committed to excellence in teaching and excellence in research. We put student success at the heart of our mission, supporting every student from every background to achieve outstanding outcomes; preparing our students to thrive in their future lives.

Our determination to make a difference in society means we are ranked 76th in the global Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, which ranked more than 1,400 universities around the world.

We are Top 25 for the most international student community in the THE World

University Rankings 2022 and Number 1 in the UK for the number of Innovate UK funded Knowledge Transfer Partnerships. Essex is top 40 in the UK (Complete University Guide 2023).

Making an impact through our research is at the heart of our University. We are in the UK top 10 for research quality in four subjects (Grade Point Average, REF2021) and in the UK top 10 for research power in five subjects (Times Higher Education 2022). We are 25th in the UK for Research Quality (TGUG 2022). Find out more about our REF2021 performance.

## Committed to sustainability

The University of Essex has committed to reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2035. We declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency on 9 December 2020. And we have already cut our emissions by 28% (from a 2005 baseline). Sustainability is a fundamental part of our future planning and is directly referenced as an objective in the University's strategy for 2019-25. We consider finding solutions for environmental issues to be a vital factor in the educational experience of our students.

Everything we do in the delivery of excellence in education and research and the actions of our 18,000-student community has an environmental and carbon impact.

Addressing our impact requires the right environment, moments of transition and significant change in the things we do, progression on a broad range of activities and initiatives and to take a collaborative approach with our community. Our approach does not just adapt or mitigate in the face of the climate crisis, but is one that is regenerative, has a positive outcome for our people and our environment and one that is fair and equally considerate to our community. Aiming to implement a just transition will support our community to realise the far-reaching benefits of sustainable and equitable development. For recent Sustainability at Essex action and initiatives: [essex.ac.uk/sustainability](https://essex.ac.uk/sustainability)

The University's mission is to contribute to society through excellence in education and research. Doing this in a sustainable, environmentally conscious, low carbon way is crucial to our future, as all the University's activities contribute to our carbon emissions and environmental impact. The University continues to make significant progress for a sustainable future, through realising the benefits our community can provide and through enhancements to our built environment.

**Rob Davey, Director of Sustainability**



# ESSEX BUSINESS SCHOOL



**Professor Claudia Girardone**  
Dean of Essex Business School

# Overview and Mission

EBS is the largest department in the University, and was formed in 2008, following a merger of the School of Accounting, Finance and Management in Colchester and the School of Entrepreneurship and Business in Southend-on-Sea. The School sits within the Faculty of Social Sciences, one of three faculties at the University. EBS is a full-service business school and delivers undergraduate, Masters and doctoral programmes as well as Executive Education

at the Colchester and Southend campuses. There are more than 3,000 students on campus for the 2022-23 academic year, of which 1,509 undergraduate and 1,526 postgraduate students. The School has produced 10,280 graduates since opening. EBS is home to The Essex MBA, offered as both a full-time and part-time programme of study and many of our courses are professionally accredited, allowing students to move into a professional role faster.

## Our mission is to offer a transformative education and research excellence that has a positive impact on business and society.

Through our world-class research and teaching, we train students to think critically about business and encourage them to make a positive impact on society. We want students to learn that they have the power to shape their future world with the actions taken in the workplace and to use business as a power for good: [essex.ac.uk/departments/essex-business-school](https://essex.ac.uk/departments/essex-business-school)

EBS In 2015, the zero-carbon £21 million business school building opened at the Colchester Campus, which includes dedicated space for MBA candidates. The building supports a growing faculty of academics across five Subject Groups: Accounting, Finance, Management and Marketing, Organisation Studies and Human Resource Management (OSHRM) and a fifth group - Strategy, Operations and Entrepreneurship (SOE) based at Southend.

EBS Southend is housed in the modern Gateway Building and the adjacent £27 million Forum Building, which includes a library, 24-hour co-working spaces and cafés. champions responsible, ethical, and sustainable business. From global organisations and the public sector to small and medium enterprises (SMEs), family businesses and start-ups, EBS is interested in real-world business challenges, ensuring they are tackled responsibly. EBS champions that same ethical and sustainable mission by embedding this into the life of the School, its programmes and its partnerships.

At Essex Business School we are committed to ethical behaviour and responsible practices that help to build a more sustainable environment. This means taking into consideration the impact that our actions have on economic, social, and environmental factors, both in the short and long term. We promote equality and diversity principles in all our activities and culture and educate our students to become responsible managers and leaders that are concerned for the long term and future generations.

**Professor Claudia Girardone, Dean of Essex Business School**

## **Vision and values**

Essex Business School (EBS) seeks to continually advance its reputation as a leading UK-based business school.

As part of a leading dual-intensive University, thus recognised for both excellence in research and education, its ambition is to be rated in the top 20% for both the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), providing excellent education and impactful research across all subjects in the school for the benefit of communities and businesses.

To achieve its mission, EBS is committed to ten core values, which are integral to the delivery of the school's strategy and mission:

- excellence (in education and research)
- academic freedom
- integrity
- community
- sustainability
- inclusivity
- innovation
- global outlook
- partnership
- accountability

These values inform all policies and are embedded into procedures, and practices across the School. They also closely align to those of the University, which strongly values inclusivity and having a truly international community, and places people, knowledge, and communities at the heart of everything. In so doing, we seek to ensure that EBS is a place that is welcoming, where everyone can feel they belong and find 'the world in one place'.



# Essex Business School PRME commitment

## Alignment with PRME strategic direction

EBS is proud of its participation in Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) which seeks to inspire and champion responsible management education, research and thought leadership globally. Sustainable, long-term business strategies are at the heart of teaching and research at EBS. The School's commitment to sustainable business practice is highlighted being a signatory to PRME since 2011, now in 2023 celebrating the 10th anniversary of reporting via Sharing of Information. EBS implements PRME's founding principles:

- **Purpose** – The mission to develop socially responsible entrepreneurs delivering sustainable business directly relates to the PRME principle of 'purpose' – developing the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society. Examples include, Dr Jose Linares-Zegarra's funded research into SMEs as Social Enterprises, graduate of The Essex MBA; Dr Arun Kumar's work on addressing social inequalities through management education and learning; and José Antonio Aguilar Contreras, Essex MBA graduate and prominent LGBT rights activist and magazine publisher from Mexico who received a prestigious Echoing Green Fellowship in 2021.
- **Value** – The School's holistic approach to business education seeks to add economic value and recognition of the social, ethical, and environmental implications of business strategies and practices.
- **Method** – at EBS we embed Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability issues across the curriculum as well as teaching and learning methodologies to equip students with the ability to understand the broader implications of business strategies. Through a blend of theoretical and practical applications, students are expected to develop the critical skills that will help them make responsible decisions in the workplace.
- **Partnership** – EBS works collaboratively with business and policy making communities on social and environmental responsibilities, with examples including Dr Danielle Tucker's work on Ethical Consumerism, and Dr Noelia-Sarah Reynolds work helping Colchester Borough Council and the local Business Improvement District to create a sustainable city centre.
- **Dialogue** – EBS has long been champion of a multi-disciplinary and holistic approach to business education. It regularly collaborates on sustainability and social issue research with colleagues in other departments at Essex and at other universities, academic and professional bodies, students, alumni, media, and national and international interest groups. Recent examples include a workshop on Sustainability Reporting, Regulation and Practice in 2021 which focused on non-financial reporting bridging both accounting and banking, delivered in partnership with Norwich Business School, and the World Bank Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability program (PEFA) on 'Integrating Climate Change Budgeting into public investment policies: A Cross Country Assessment in South Asia (India, Sri Lanka and Nepal)', which involved a number of EBS academics including former EBS Professor Kelum Jayasinghe, Director of the University's Centre for Environment and Society.
- **Research** – EBS research aims to address important sustainability and social issues faced by commercial businesses, public sector bodies and not-for-profit organisations. An example here would include research into Spatiality and Accounting: The Case of Female Segregation in Audit Firms, published in 2021 in the prestigious journal Accounting, Organisations and Society by Professor Teerooven Soobaroyen and Dr Dila Agrizzi.

## Our Environmental Policy

As a champion of responsible, ethical and sustainable business, EBS recognises the need to take decisive action in response to climate change, as part of the University of Essex's declaration of a Climate and Ecological Emergency. We are committed to placing environmental and social sustainability at the heart of our activities.

### A sub-component of our EBS Sustainability strategy, our environmental policy aims to:

- Enable and actively promote the democratic participation of all members of our community in developing and enacting our plans for a more sustainable future, and ensure our actions contribute to a just transition.
- Work proactively with University Estates and other partners to continue to reduce waste and carbon emissions and promote biodiversity on both of our campuses while designing initiatives and reviewing our internal processes to reduce waste within and around our EBS building.
- Embed environmental and social sustainability within all programmes of study and link this work to the decolonisation of the curriculum to enable our students to be responsible leaders of change in the future.
- Raise the profile of our cutting-edge sustainability research already going on across all of five groups within the School, continue to support this work and actively promote further collaborations.
- Promote green transport options for our staff and students and work with the central university to reduce carbon emissions from international travel.
- Use our expertise to produce impactful, positive change across the University, in our wider community and beyond.
- Maintain our affiliation with the UN's Principles in Responsible Management initiative and seek out opportunities to participate in similar schemes.



## Commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Alongside our commitment to PRME, EBS is also committed to advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals through our teaching, research, and related activities. The 17 interconnected SDGs are a ‘call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere’<sup>1</sup>, and EBS is committed furthering these goals through our work at every opportunity.

## Equality, inclusion and diversity

EBS is committed to being an inclusive and diverse community, open to all who have the potential to benefit from membership of the School and who can bring positive benefit to the School. The equality and diversity statement reflects this, and is showcased on the EBS website at: [equality-and-inclusion](#) alongside research into issues of gender inclusion. This encourages equality of opportunity for all EBS members, including faculty, and demonstrates that the School always treats its members with equal respect and dignity.

## EDI event [See LinkedIn](#)

On 26 June 2023 EBS held the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Conference with an interesting array of speakers.

Dr Maria Hudson, Equality and Diversity Director for Essex Business School said, “What a fantastic conference, with thought provoking speakers fostering constructive discussion; helping us to reflect on our policy and practice including action points for the future”.

Participants found the conference both informative and inspiring, asking to learn more about this topic in the future.

We work together with mutual respect and integrity. We value a working and learning environment in which people are free to be themselves. The School respects the multi-dimensional lives of all its members and is committed to creating and supporting a learning and working environment in which staff and students can flourish in all aspects of their work and lives.

EBS is Athena SWAN Bronze award accredited, driving structural and cultural progress towards ensuring that EBS is a gender equal working and learning environment for all staff, students and visitors. As part of the application process, we have drawn up an action plan to ensure that championing gender equality is at the heart of our research, teaching and professional practice. Actions include establishing a regular Equalities Café – the most recent of which took place in December 2022, established to continue to provide an informal vehicle for staff and students to come together to consider gender-related issues and increase staff awareness on equality work in the School, to at least 80% the percentage of people that feel well informed around these policies.

<sup>1</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

## Inclusive Student Recruitment

We are proud of our inclusive recruitment policies, which are working to broaden access to Higher Education (HE).

By end of 2022 around half of our School's undergraduate applicants come from the UK, primarily from within a 50-mile radius of either campus.

Outside of the UK, significant markets are India and China, in addition to smaller cohorts from across the EU, Africa and the remainder of Asia.

## Diverse Faculty

The University of Essex is a flourishing and internationally diverse community, made up of people from more than 140 countries. Essex prides itself on being ranked 22nd for international outlook in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2021, being the third most culturally diverse university in the UK.

Similarly, EBS is a very international Business School and academics are recruited from all over the world, with EBS staff base hosting over 30 different nationalities. 95% of all EBS faculty hold doctorates and are aged between 24 and 66 years old, with an average age of 44 (of those who gave their age) with an average of 6.4 years of industry experience. 64% are male and 36% female. Female academics occupy some of the School's most senior positions, including the Dean, **Professor Claudia Girardone**; the Director of Education, **Dr Noelia-Sarah Reynolds**; and Director of Research, **Professor Ileana Steccolini**.

The target population for EBS postgraduate programmes is largely from overseas, with India being the top recruiting market.

Our community is also internationally diverse, with 57% of our students joining us from overseas in 2021-22. Our culturally dynamic classrooms provide positive environments for intercultural collaboration, and this is promoted through a strong emphasis on discussion, teamwork, and group project.

EBS is [Athena SWAN Bronze award](#) accredited. There is a strong representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) colleagues across the School, including in the Senior Management Team (SMT) roles, such as Heads of Group and programme directors. The EBS mentoring scheme ensures that all staff are supported through their professional development, including encouraging faculty to attend training courses to raise awareness of BAME inequalities and how to tackle them. Much work has taken place across the University to address issues of racism, and that work continues today. During summer 2020 the UoE took a new approach to tackling racism in all its forms across the University which started with listening to the University's own community. After a period of consultation, and in response to a wide range of information gathered from student surveys, discussion, and webinars, the UoE set up the 'Tackling Racism Working Group' to provide leadership on the University's response. Other initiatives include:

## EBS Anti-Racism Working Group

The Anti-Racism Working Group (ARWG) was established in 2021-22 for all staff and students of EBS with the aim of working with and supporting the SMT of EBS to identify, examine and eradicate racism and racialisation in all their forms across all aspects of academic, network and outreach provision, and improve awareness, representation, development and the voice of BAME staff and students in all EBS activities.

To this end, its main objectives are to: support (promotion, curation, advocacy and inclusiveness) research, education and learning, outreach work and administrative functions that support anti-racism, inclusivity and BAME representation; advise SMT on the resources required to support such initiatives. It is currently developing the following activities:

- The BAME Research Cluster: Race and BAME related research – promotion of research on anti-racist, BAME-focused issues, at local, national, and international levels – led by **Dr Maria Hudson**.
- The BAME Enterprise Initiative – BAME enterprise and innovation (covering issues of racism in teaching, applied research, knowledge exchange and enterprise). To support the study of anti-racist pedagogies and content and references to racial discrimination and BAME issues in the curriculum as an embedded seam in all areas of business and management studies - led by **Professor Jay Mitra**.
- The BAME Lecture Series – series of lectures by academics, reflective practitioners, and policy makers on BAME and Global Majority issues.
- The Data Initiative – ARWG members working with SMT for BAME Representation: monitoring staff and student Inputs, progression, attainment and outcomes through data collection, and to include Professional Services and Academic Groups (at both Colchester and Southend) and other services.

The Group meets twice a term, and Co-Chairs are **Professor Jay Mitra** and **Dr Jacob Agyeman**

## The Essex End Everyday Racism Project

The Essex End Everyday Racism Project is led by EBS faculty member **Dr Maria Hudson**, Senior Lecturer in Human Resource Management, and was launched in January 2023. It is an independent research project that provides a vehicle for university students and staff to share their experiences of racism and is the sister project of similar initiatives at Cambridge and Oxford Universities. The project asks staff and students to participate by anonymously sharing their experiences of what, how and where racism happens including, for example, the emotions experienced, life consequences, social support, and whether/why the incident was/was not formally reported. It aims to build our understanding of the impact of racism on the lives of students and staff. Encouraging them to share their experiences of racism on an anonymous and informal basis, the project will help the research team draw on individual stories to develop periodic reports that help to map racism. The project aims to develop understanding of everyday racism with numeric, descriptive and geographic evidence. However, this is not just a mapping exercise. The evidence collected will be used to support antiracism advocacy and social justice activism:

[the-essex-end-everyday-racism-project](#)

## Decolonising The Curriculum

At EBS, we have identified the need to prioritize the decolonization of our curriculum to foster a more inclusive approach that acknowledges the impact of colonialism on knowledge and practices from a global perspective. To achieve this goal, we established the DeBUG (Decolonizing Business Education Group), a cross-disciplinary working group that aims to support our colleagues in implementing necessary changes. We conducted research on successful approaches from other business schools and incorporated these practices into our own programs. Our current focus is on creating a comprehensive set of resources that will be available on Moodle for each discipline and module. These resources will provide guidance and support for incorporating diverse perspectives and critically analysing the impact of colonialism on business practices and knowledge. Our efforts aim to cultivate an inclusive and diverse learning environment that reflects the experiences and perspectives of our students. Our ultimate objective is to develop a curriculum that challenges traditional narratives and presents a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of business practices and their societal impact.



# PRACTICAL ACTIONS AND PROGRESS

## A transformative education

EBS strives to provide a transformative education for its students with the three key priorities of people, knowledge, and communities in line with the University of Essex's overall Education strategy.

The School's teaching is focussed around providing a transformative education for all our students which enables them to view business in an ethical, holistic, and sustainable way. We believe that students should be actively engaged in their own education, and we integrate student thought into everything we do. Students learn to appreciate both the theoretical and practical sides of business, and this blend enables our students to develop strong critical thinking skills.

We are particularly keen to ensure every student undergoes a well-supported learning journey in which essential skills are developed that go beyond our curriculum.

Our students join us from all over the world and we place an emphasis on the global context in which businesses operate. We draw upon our cultural diversity to promote discussion, group work and presentations that encourage our students to develop a truly global outlook.

EBS seeks to change the way students think about business. The School's aim is to produce graduates who can critically evaluate complex issues and think creatively to offer responsible solutions to business problems. Students are exposed to multi-cultural business perspectives through case studies and develop an international mind-set by learning amongst peers from all over the world. Our programmes teach leadership with integrity. By training our students to think critically about business, we know that they will be encouraged to act ethically and leave us committed to doing business better.

At EBS, students embark on a journey of transformative education. Our approach to business Education is strongly shaped by a strong emphasis on integrity. Through our programs, we challenge students to become independent thinkers, adept problem solvers, and ethical leaders. We not only equip them with the skills desired by employers but also empower them to question the status quo and critically analyse it. By doing so, our aim is to enable them to make significant positive changes within organizations, ultimately transforming them for the better.

**Dr Noelia-Sarah Reynolds, Director of Education**



## Example modules

We seek to develop our students' social consciences by encouraging them to consider the impact of business actions on society. Issues of sustainability and responsible management are embedded into compulsory modules and offered as specialist advanced modules. Examples include:

### Business Ethics

This undergraduate module builds upon existing understandings of management and organisation by considering specifically the ethics of, and in, business. In this module students are introduced to the origins, practice and theory of Business Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility and examine critically the nature of their contributions.

### Understanding Organisational management

Drawing on both historical and contemporary sources, this undergraduate module introduces students to a range of approaches to, and ways of thinking about, organisations and their management. The module introduces students to seminal organisational theories, but importantly includes a specialist lecture on 'green' issues and a specialist lecture on inequality and diversity. The end-of-module essay requires students to discuss these two challenges as well as actual or possible organisational responses. The module therefore sought to enhance students' understanding of environmental and human sustainability and to inform their future management practice and career, the curriculum specifically addressed gender equality, decent work, and sustainable production and consumption.

### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

This module, which forms part of the MSc Human Resource Management programme, introduces students to the importance for organisations of managing workforce diversity and equity. While this importance is extensively discussed in practitioner and academic communities there remains a gap between equalities policy and its effective implementation in the contemporary work(place). This module provides students with an opportunity to reflect on the ideas, debates and concepts underpinning the development of different policies and practices shaping the management of equality, diversity, and inclusion.

### Communication and Intercultural studies

This final year module emphasises that an understanding of different cultures is of critical importance to the current globalised economy. By equipping students with communication and intercultural skills, it provides them with insights on how to effectively manage diverse cultures in an ever-changing global work reality. This module not only aims to develop students' cultural self-awareness but also to prepare and nurture their confidence within the perspective of managing responsibly across national boundaries through critical awareness of the impact of values in communicating effectively and by considering the ethical issues involved in preventing the emergence of bias hampering the growth of mutual understanding.

# The Essex MBA

The Essex MBA, led by MBA Director **Dr James Fowler**, puts the concept of sustainability at the centre of our teaching and the culture in which we encourage our MBA candidates to view their future careers as entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs. We see sustainability from a variety of perspectives. These range from the general ideas that we hold things we own on trust for future generations and that any activity must be carefully thought through in order that it has the correct resources to be viable and resilient through to the specific actions we can take to reduce waste.

The MBA programme opens with precisely this blend of concepts when we teach our new MBAs Sustainable Operations in the first weeks of their arrival. Here, they explore what makes operating an organisation from any

sector of the economy practically feasible and socially worthwhile. Later, we reinforce ideas through a variety of theoretical material taught across the modules but more specifically through our programmes of Director's Workshops where we invite a selection of outside speakers to talk and work our MBA through a selection of practical exercises which address issues of sustainable business. In 2022-23, we also intend to introduce a new Consultancy Week where MBAs will meet, work with, and be guided by practicing consultants. Our intention is that our MBAs leave our programme confident and with the right skills to make an effective impact on the long-term sustainability of the organisations that they encounter as intrapreneurs and create as entrepreneurs.

## Module examples include:

- **Sustainable Operations:** students acquire the skills to manage business operations in a sustainable way that helps deliver the triple bottom line of people, planet, and profit.
- **Strategy:** this module explores how to design, evaluate, and implement organisational strategy, how external and internal factors influence strategy and how organisations can do well, as well as doing good.
- **Markets, Governance and Ethics:** students study how concepts and tools from economics can help guide the managers of successful organisations in making complex, ethical decisions.
- **Leading with Impact:** this module examines organisational and team dynamics and analyses ethical and values-based approaches to leadership.

## Executive Education

We have been teaching the next generation of business professionals for over 25 years. We are offering our expertise through unique executive programmes to current business leaders. Our programmes also provide the opportunity to create valuable networks with like-minded business leaders. In our Executive Education and short courses, we focus on promoting sustainable enterprise, responsible management and leadership practice.



# ENGAGING OUR STUDENTS

## Sustainable recruitment

Responsible, sustainable, and ethical business is at the heart of EBS, and we begin imparting these values from the moment potential students explore the possibilities of joining Essex. From our marketing materials, through to our induction programme, these themes run through everything we do, enabling potential students to make an informed choice about their future.

## A place to call home

EBS is the largest department at Essex, but we work hard to ensure our students feel part of a community of peers in collegiate inclusive environment where they can access the support they need and make links with likeminded people.



## Student services team

EBS has a dedicated Student Services Team, who acts as the first point of contact for student queries and is able to offer support and advice on a range of course-related issues and signposting to other teams within the University. Our largest student cohort is based on the Colchester campus. Student Services have a prominent position with the helpdesk being positioned within the EBS foyer, so easily accessible to any student that needs support, has a question, or just wants to say hello. Students can also book appointments, which can be held in our confidential meeting space or on Zoom. Having both an in-person and online presence ensures that our service is accessible to all students ensuring they feel included and part of the wider EBS community.

Developing a sense of community starts with Welcome and Induction. Welcome week 2021 took a blended approach with both in person and online events including The Business Week task, which encourages undergraduates to work in groups and meet other students from their course,

EBS Building tours and the Deans event that was dual delivered. Welcome week 2022, in addition to The Business Week Task, introduced the Student Services led 'Getting Started' Sessions for the students to familiarise with the University's online systems and study resources. With an increase in postgraduate taught students, Student Services hosted a PGT networking event with a talk from the Dean, and a chance to meet other students, academics and professional services staff.

Building a sense of community continues throughout the academic year, with regular communications being sent out to students including EBS Connects the student newsletter, which was given a new look for 2022, with interactive features such as Cooking on a budget, EBS Through the lens and Student spotlight.

Pre-pandemic, EBS had a successful Student Engagement Team (SET) that put on a range of community building events. Now that Essex has returned to face-to-face teaching, our newly recruited SET team are in the process of planning events for Spring and Summer Term.



## Staff support

Staff also enjoy a supportive environment in which they are encouraged to fulfil their potential. Besides our thriving and collaborative research culture, we actively promote professional development opportunities for all our staff. This ranges from the annual Education Away Day and training workshops for our Graduate Teaching Assistants, to our academics and professional services teams attending conferences run by the Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS) and other organisations.

## Supporting progression

We encourage our students to be active participants in our lectures and seminars, and closely monitor their engagement to help them progress throughout their studies. For example, our Learner Engagement Activity Portal (LEAP) measures student participation across several learning events. It identifies those at risk of falling behind and facilitates meaningful interaction between personal

tutors and their tutees. LEAP helps us to personalise the student experience, improve student outcomes, allow for early intervention where issues arise and ensure that every student feels a valued member of the EBS community, whilst remaining sensitive to student privacy.

Since the last PRME Sharing of Information of Progress (SIP), we have also increased the frequency of personal tutors' sessions and piloted the Professional and Academic Development (PAD) course to support students at our Southend campus and this module has now been introduced at the Colchester Campus. This compulsory undergraduate module helps our first-year students to build core academic skills that will help them to improve the standard of their academic work throughout their programmes. Students are introduced to themes of career planning and employability skills, as well as how to establish a career path. Over the past two years we have also introduced a second year PAD that further supports the progression of our students.



# Supporting employability

Several events have been held to support student employability since the last SIP was submitted. These include:

## Autumn term careers fair - Student development event

Over a period of two weeks, EBS offered a programme of employer events for the 2022 Autumn term, replacing a one-off large scale generic careers fair. The event saw 297 unique EBS students attend a total of 522 Careers Festival events.

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace: Successful Futures 2023

The EBS 'Successful Futures' conference took place on 8 March 2023 and explored Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace in recognition of International Women's Day.

By prioritising Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, a company can challenge discrimination, remove barriers, and improve its overall success. Having an effective diversity strategy is essential to creating a positive work environment, and in a post-covid world, it is more important than ever. The event heard from a range of speakers from many different industries about their Equality, Diversity and Inclusion projects. Speakers included Enterprise, Linklaters' Technology Team, The Land Collective CIC, Teach First and Essex Startups and the event was sponsored by Enterprise Rent-A-Car.

## Elevate Essex – EBS BAME Employability Workshop

Delivered in March 2022 and 2023, this workshop aimed to address the employability challenges faced by BAME and first-generation students and to create employable networks and connections for our BAME students. EBS is committed to supporting all BAME and first-generation students in their journey towards successful careers. Students had fantastic opportunities to hear from and interact with key recruiters, industry champions and successful alumni to help navigate their way through the employment process. The day revealed insights on how students can prepare themselves prior, during or after education for the world of work!

## Democracy in action

Students completing the first year of an award-winning University of Essex module are contributing to real change in the local community. The interdisciplinary Democracy in Action module, delivered in partnership with Citizens UK, sees final-year students from across the University of Essex working with local organisations to have an immediate impact on the life of our community. The course gives students training in community organising and experience in engaging in local campaigns, bringing communities together to identify what local issues need to be addressed.

Course leader and EBS faculty member **Dr Rebecca Warren** said: “In October, 30 students signed up for Democracy in Action visibly recovering from the pandemic and navigating a new face-to-face experience. Fast forwarding a year, they have engaged with four community campaigns, contributed to discussions and role-play in the classroom and worked together to give presentations at public meetings to local decision-makers, standing proud and with confidence in their action teams. They know they have made a difference and they are taking their new skills with them into the careers they have ahead of them.”

## The campaigns that came out of the course included:

### Living wage for social care workers and beyond

Students worked with Unison, Colchester Foodbank, Methodist Church to raise awareness of the living wage.

### Violence against women and girls

Students conducted a listening campaign to gather experiences of misogyny and presented their powerful presentation at a safety summit attended by Essex Police which has agreed to work together on fighting violence against women and girls improving awareness and reporting around issues of gender-based crime.

### Affordable Housing

Following the announcement of central Government funding awarded to support economic growth, connectivity and quality of life to be spent on improvements to Greenstead estate, the students involved in this project conducted a listening exercise to highlight issues such as high rents, poor living conditions, lack of repairs, and a lack of sense of community among residents.





# OUR ETHICAL ALUMNI

## Examples of businesses and projects

We aim to create sustainably minded managers, leaders, and entrepreneurs through our transformative education. Examples from EBS Alumni include:

### Understanding hospice care in the local community

Our MBA alumna Yewande Savage completed a consultancy project with Havens Hospices as part of her studies at EBS. The project aimed to assess and evaluate the awareness perception of the Hospice in the local community and investigate if there were preferences for similar Hospices. This information would help in shaping the services of Havens Hospices in a way that better serves the local community. Feedback from the hospice confirmed that the project cemented, with evidence, that there are still gaps in knowledge and understanding of hospice care among stakeholders. Havens Hospices have now embedded engagement and education within their organisational strategy to try and close these. This should mean that more people will be referred for hospice support earlier in their diagnosis, reducing fear and barriers to receiving good palliative care.

*(page 25 image credit: Havens Hospices)*

### RacismoMX – Opening up conversations

MBA graduate José Antonio Aguilar Contrera founded RacismoMX, an organisation which aims to make visible, denounce and open the conversation about racism in Mexico, with the aim of collectively reflecting on its impact on people's lives: He states "My MBA gave me confidence to operate in an international setting and helped me to understand different cultures. It also helped me understand the importance of creativity as part of the business mind... The Essex MBA was crucial to me laying the groundwork to found RacismoMX".



# RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

We have a world-class reputation for research, with 96% of our faculty submitting at least one output rated 3\* or above into the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021. Our academics aim to conduct and disseminate research that makes a positive impact on theory, practice, and society by engaging academics, businesses, and policymakers. Much of our theoretical and applied work addresses the important issues currently being faced by commercial businesses, public sector bodies and not-for-profit organisations.



**We are recognised for our cutting-edge research in:**

- accounting in emerging economies and global development
- work, organisation, and society in the global economy
- finance, banking, and financial modelling
- entrepreneurship and innovation
- global sustainable supply chains
- workplace inequalities and injustices

## Our research centres

Our research strategy centres on creating an environment that encourages all our academics to be research active at an international standard to maximise excellent outputs and impact. Our research centres play an important part in maintaining our exciting, collaborative, and nurturing research culture, with many dedicated to exploring issues of responsible management in a stimulating and positive environment. Our Research Centres include:

### Centre for Accountability and Global Development

The Centre for Accountability and Global Development (CAGD) is a vibrant research hub of EBS that promotes debate and seeks solutions to various issues of global interest. CAGD adopts an interdisciplinary approach to research focusing on accountability aspects across various societal spheres (i.e., social, business and public governance), in both emerging and advanced economies contexts.

### Centre for Environment and Society (CES)

CES brings together world-leading and impact-focused research on all aspects of sustainability science being undertaken at Essex, including significant expertise on the social dimensions of sustainability challenges and solutions. Throughout our research and delivery to the wider community, CES is committed to informing the global transition to a green economy which supports environmental well-being and social and economic justice. CES acts as an incubator of community enterprises, a knowledge hub for green business and policy-makers communities local to Essex and around the world, local and international businesses, partner academic organisations and as consultant to local sustainability initiatives.

### Centre for Research on Entrepreneurship, Innovation Management and Internationalisation (REIMI)

REIMI enhances the frontiers of knowledge in management and business studies for the sustainable growth of business, society, and the economy. It provides a hub of practice in the three areas drawing on existing links with local government and industry established through the ESRC Business and Local Government Data Centre. It also provides thought leadership in the three areas of entrepreneurship, international management and innovation, whilst drawing thought leaders in these areas to interact with the centre. REIMI creates a high-quality PhD programme by leveraging the strengths of the research centre.

### Centre for Work, Organisation & Society (CWOS)

The Centre aims to support cross-disciplinary research on work, society and organisational life. It is a hub for internationally recognised innovative, and critical research on all aspects of work, organisations, and society. Its interdisciplinary research draws on the humanities and social sciences, bringing in perspectives from disciplines such as cultural studies, history, literary theory, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and political economy. The Centre's strengths lie in social scientific research with a largely qualitative orientation, with growing capacity in aesthetic and visual methods, and workplace ethnography.

**In this reporting period, we would like to highlight research by the CWOS undertaken by colleagues from the OSHRM group.**

The research undertaken by staff in the Organisation Studies and Human Resource Management (OSHRM) group and supported by the Centre for Work, Organisation & Society (CWOS) makes a substantial contribution to innovative, and critical research on work and organizational life across the social sciences with a particular focus on research challenges relating to ethics, social justice, corporate social responsibility, and wellbeing at work. It thereby advances the current understanding of how practices in and around work contribute to the creation of sustainable social, environmental, and economic value, as detailed in PRME, Principle 4.

The following Group research themes resonate strongly with SDGs 1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16:

- Collective creativity and innovation
- Gender, sexuality and embodiment
- Integrated health care, workplace wellbeing and mental health
- Job insecurity and its consequences across countries
- Sustainability ethics and corporate social responsibility in HRM
- Work and employment in the global economy

**Example papers for this reporting period (in bold are colleagues from the group)**

Canterino, F., Guerci, M., **Cirella, S.** and Shani, ABR., (2022). The intertwined effect of HRM practices and transformational leadership on employees' attitudes in an M&A context: Evidence from a collaborative and mixed-methods study. *European Management Journal*, online first.

Carr, M. and **Kelan, EK.**, (2023). Between Consumption, Accumulation, and Precarity: The Psychic and Affective Practices of the Female Neoliberal Spiritual Subject. *Human Relations*. 76 (2), 258-285.

**Cirella, S.** and Murphy, S., (2022). Exploring intermediary practices of collaboration in university–industry innovation: A practice theory approach. *Creativity and Innovation Management*. 31 (2), 358-375

Cutcher, L., Riach, K. and **Tyler, M.**, (2022). Splintering Organizational Subjectivities: Older workers and the dynamics of recognition, vulnerability and resistance. *Organization Studies*. 43 (6), 973-992.

**Hancock, P.**, (2022). Employee Recognition Programmes: An Immanent Critique. *Organization*, online first.

**Hoedemaekers, C.**, (2021). "Selling themselves": conceptualising key features of freelance work experience. *Culture and Organization*. 27 (5), 345-364.

Jolles, D., Holford, D., Juanchich, M., Buchannan, K. and **Piccoli, B.**, (2022). Frontline employees are ready to accept smart energy-saving technologies, especially when they are engaged at work and concerned about climate change. *Occupational Psychology Outlook*, online first.

**Kelan, E.**, (2022). Men as Middle Managers Doing and Undoing Gender In Organizations. *European Management Review*. 19 (2), 236-247.

**Michalski, M.**, Śliwa, M. and Manalsuren, S., (2021). Context-specific understandings of uncertainty: a focus on people management practices in Mongolia. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*. 32 (17), 3600-3626.

Pagan, V., Haynes, K. and **Reissner, S.**, (2022). Accountable selves and responsibility within a global forum. *Journal of Business Ethics*, online first.

**Piccoli, B.**, Reisel, WD. and De Witte, H., (2021). Understanding the Relationship Between Job Insecurity and Performance: Hindrance or Challenge Effect? *Journal of Career Development*. 48 (2), 150-165.

**Roper, I.**, Prouska, R. and Chatrakul Na Ayudhya, U., (2022). The rhetorics of 'agile' and the practices of 'Agile Working': Consequences for the worker experience and uncertain implications for HR practice. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*. 33 (22), 4440-4467.

**Tyler, M.** and **Hales, S.**, (2022). Heroism and/as injurious speech: Recognition, precarity and inequality in health and social care work. *Gender, Work and Organization*. 29 (4), 1199-1218.

## Research impact and projects

### Public services and public value

Research by **Professor Ileana Steccolini**, EBS Director of Research, focuses on understanding how what counts as public value is decided upon (for example, through budgeting, planning and decision-making processes concerning public services and local communities); delivered (for example, through public managers decisions, and decisions on how to deliver public services); measured and accounted for (through reports, performance measurement systems, and other forms of accounts and counter-accounts). Her work, which has attracted four awards in the last five years, as well as funding from a plurality of sources (CIMA; UKRI; SENSS; Swedish Research Foundation; FAPESP; as well as IAA) highlights some of the implications of expanding the concept of public value from being based on traditional values of fairness, representation, efficiency and effectiveness, towards encompassing wider values of social equity, sustainability, resilience, participation and inclusivity.

She is particularly interested in understanding the role of politicians, public managers and citizens, and the technology in such processes. For example, she is studying how, and why, in processes of public value planning, generation, and measurement, communities and citizens take initiative, participate and are included (participatory budgeting; inclusivity of public services, including when they are offered in vulnerable communities; co-assessment, or counter-accounts of public services performance); how politicians and managers use information to make decisions about public services, and how bias can be reduced in such decisions; how accountability and inclusivity of public services is being enhanced or eroded by the rise of digitalization and social media.

In the last few years her research has focused on participatory budgeting (looking at how citizens and communities make joint decisions on what is valuable to them) and, among others, she has guest-edited special issues on public value(s) and gender budgeting; she is currently developing a

model for citizens' inclusion and participation in the assessment of public services performance. She has conducted extensive research in how politicians and public managers make decisions on public services, obtaining UKRI funding to look at how communities self-organize in replacing the state when it is absent, focusing on the case of Brazilian favelas. Over the last decade, she has led an international team of researchers to conduct extensive research into the financial resilience of local government across several countries and continents. This research has highlighted the importance for local government to nurture and develop anticipatory and coping capacities to be prepared for future crises, leading to a plurality of academic and policy-oriented publications, and to the development of a financial resilience toolkit that has increasingly attracted practitioners' attention in a plurality of countries, including the US, Italy, Sweden, and the UK.

Her focus on a public value and values also inspire her engagement as a standard setter for the Italian public sector, and her taking leadership roles as the Director Research at EBS, Editor in Chief of Financial Accountability & Management, the premier international journal on public sector accounting, President of the International Research Society of Public Management, Chair of the Public Service Accounting and Accountability Group, and Chair of the Standing Scientific Committee of the European Accounting Association.

## REAMIT

**Professor Ramanathan** is leading a large project called the REAMIT project ([www.reamit.eu](http://www.reamit.eu)) funded by the Interreg North-West Europe. REAMIT stands for "Improving Resource Efficiency of Agribusiness supply chains by Minimising Waste using Big Data and Internet of Things sensors." The project aims to help reduce food waste in food supply chains in the EU by collaborating with food companies in fitting sensors for monitoring the quality of food in supply chains. By doing so, the project is helping the EU in its goal of halving food waste by 2030. Internet of things sensors for monitoring temperature, humidity and more parameters have been fitted by the project for nearly 10 food companies (small and large) across the EU (including the UK). The sensors output is being collected by cloud servers for data analytics by dedicated partners in the project. Food companies can track the readings of the sensors via user-friendly dashboards. In case the sensor readings consistently fall outside the acceptable range, the companies receive alerts via smartphones. Due to the close link between saving food waste and sustainability, the project has significant economic, environmental, and social impacts. Several case studies, publications and a policy brief has been generated from the project as evidence of impacts.

## SE4Ces

SE4Ces is a knowledge alliance seeking to create an enabling environment for the social economy to thrive by promoting closer partnerships between higher education institutions active in social economy, social economy organisations and enterprises as well as community stakeholders. Our aim is to facilitate moving beyond existing traditional models of teaching and learning in the field of SE and suggest alternative models of teaching using community-centred, cooperative approaches that are at the heart of the overall philosophy and principles of Social Economy. Such approach aims to improve collaboration, employability and citizen engagement, but most importantly act as a catalyst for Social Economy and its potential for European societies and beyond. Lasting 36 months, SE4Ces Knowledge Alliance brings together 10 partners, including Principal Investigator for the University of Essex **Dr George Kokkinidis**, Senior Lecturer in Management at EBS, and is financed under Erasmus+.



## Emissions Trading, Firm Behaviour and Corporate Governance

**Professor Neil Kellard (EBS)** and Dr Panayiotis Andreou (Cyprus University of Technology) are involved in an ongoing research collaboration to assess the efficacy of the European Union's Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) and relatedly, how firms regulated by the system behave environmentally. In work published in the British Journal of Management (2021), they show that public, state-owned and firms in common law countries are less environmentally proactive than their peers. It shows that proactiveness is associated with poorer firm financial performance and note that while the EU ETS is reducing emissions overall, improved system design could better compensate and encourage such firms. In follow up research, presented at Bank of Greece (2021) and Trinity College Dublin (2022), Andreou and Kellard show that corporate governance measures such as independent directors are important for firm pollution reduction and that effectiveness is shaped by the operation of the EU ETS. Watch Trinity College Dublin (2022) seminar "[Professor Neil Kellard on Carbon Trading](#)"

Sources/References: Andreou, P.C, and Kellard, N.M., (2021). Corporate Environmental Proactivity: Evidence from the European Union's Emissions Trading System. British Journal of Management. 32 (3), 630-647.

## Techno-Economic-Societal Sustainable Development Training in Sri Lanka (TESS)

This project aims to promote circular economy adoption in Sri Lankan higher education institutions. As a part of the project delivery team, EBS academic Dr Debashree De is responsible for training and facilitating circular economy adoption in participating institutions. She is responsible for implementing circular economy and sustainability in Sri Lanka's higher education system. The training is provided in collaboration with DTU, Denmark, USN, Norway, and NOVA Lisbon.

The circular economy system aims to eliminate waste and promote the efficient use of resources. It is a system that promotes sustainability and economic growth. By adopting circular economy principles, Sri Lanka can reduce its environmental impact and promote sustainable development. The adoption of circular economy principles requires a change in mindset and behaviour. It requires a shift from the traditional linear economy model, where resources are extracted, used, and disposed of, to a circular model, where resources are reused and recycled. This requires a change in the way we design products, consume resources, and manage waste. The training provided by TESS aims to promote this change by providing participants with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement circular economy principles. This includes training on waste management, resource efficiency, and sustainable production.

The project has a budget of 102,705EUR available from ERASMUS+. The outcome of the project would be the launching of MSc and BSc in Waste Management and Circular Economy in curriculum in five Sri Lankan universities. This will provide students with the necessary skills and knowledge to promote sustainable development in Sri Lanka. The launch of MSc and BSc in Waste Management and Circular Economy in the curriculum of five Sri Lankan universities is a significant milestone in promoting sustainable development in Sri Lanka. It will provide students with the necessary skills and knowledge to promote circular economy principles in their future careers.

In conclusion, the TESS project is a significant step towards promoting sustainable development in Sri Lanka. By promoting circular economy adoption in higher education institutions, we can reduce our environmental impact and promote economic growth.

## **SMEs as Social Enterprises: Regional Disparities, Access to Finance, Strategic Intentions, and the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Led by Dr Jose Manuel Liñares-Zegarra (EBS) and Prof. John Wilson (University of St Andrews), this project explores the evolution, financing challenges, and future strategic intentions of UK social enterprises, which are private enterprises that pursue social or environmental goals. The Longitudinal Small Business Survey (LSBS) was used to identify social enterprises and examine their regional outreach, financing, and the impact of COVID-19. The study aimed to investigate the factors that drive SMEs to adopt a social or environmental mission, their interaction within the small business ecosystem, the demand for finance, and the impact of COVID-19. The results of this research have contributed to filling the evidence gap in this area and providing practitioners and policymakers with an update on the current state of social enterprises in the UK and highlights the importance of social enterprises in tackling societal challenges at the regional and local level. The study potentially serves as a foundation for future discussions about policies that can support the sustainability of social enterprises and their contribution to society.

The project was funded by Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Key results were presented in the ERC-BEIS Longitudinal Small Business Survey Dissemination Event, which played an important role in disseminating the results of the project, raising awareness of the challenges and opportunities facing UK social enterprises, and fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing among practitioners, policymakers, and other stakeholders in the small business ecosystem.

### **Web links and further information:**

[Policy Briefing](#) [Report](#) [EBS News](#) [BEIS event](#)

## **Gender, Ethnicity, and Access to Finance: Evidence for UK Social Enterprises**

Also led by EBS academic **Dr Jose Manuel Liñares-Zegarra** and Prof. John Wilson (University of St Andrews), this study analyses funding issues affecting social enterprises, particularly those led by women and Minority Ethnic Groups (MEG). Social enterprises generate income through trading activities to advance their social, ethical, and environmental goals. The research shows that these organizations rely less on traditional forms of finance such as bank loans, overdrafts, and leasing, but are more likely to obtain grants from the government and local authorities. This creates a mismatch in securing funding, as there is a greater demand for grants and less for traditional sources of finance. The study revealed that women-led social enterprises are less likely to use equity finance and loans from business partners, but apply for bank loans more often, yet have a lower chance of receiving funding than their male-led counterparts. MEG-led social enterprises use fewer government grants and face a lack of bank funding, which negatively impacts their sustainability. These findings emphasize the need for more support to provide appropriate finance to social enterprises based on their business model and characteristics of their management team. The project was funded by Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

**Web links and further information:** Research paper: <https://www.enterpriseresearch.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/ERC-ResPap102-Gender-Ethnicity-and-Access-to-Finance-Linares-ZegarraWillson.pdf>

## **Accelerating Women's Enterprise**

Accelerating Women's Enterprise (AWE) is a collaborative project helping women on either side of the English Channel to increase their knowledge and personal skills to start and grow a successful business. The project team, including Co-I EBS academic Dr Young-Ah Kim, supported women through new training workshops, face to face advice, mentoring and online learning, all developed specifically for women. The programme is delivered by a consortium of partners in the UK and France. In addition, Dr Kim supervised a PhD student who is a research officer for this project. This PhD student (Dr Ekoua Jose-Maria Danho) completed the PhD well within 3 years and has just become a lecturer at University of Greenwich. The programme was funded by the European Commission to the value of £146,298+ 125,971.72€.

EBS is a partner in this EU project and other EBS academics are involved:

[Accelerating Women's Enterprise](#)

## **Mitigating potential isolation of early-career researchers**

Dr Christina Ferreira's research and publication look into the detrimental consequences of academic isolation on well-being and professional development. Academic isolation is associated with a perceived lack of agency in terms of one's engagement with the field, and it represents a key challenge for academics, particularly among early-career researchers (ECRs). Along with her co-authors, Dr Ferreira is committed to mitigating academic isolation because colleagues have experienced how it disproportionately affects scholars who are insulated from the main research centres. To disseminate knowledge about academic isolation and its negative effects on career progression and longevity in their field, the group has developed and is now delivering professional development workshops (PDW) and training sessions intended to assist PhD students, post-docs, and junior faculty members in overcoming obstacles to their integration into their research field.

[Research article](#)

## Examples of research publications

EBS academics publish cutting-edge research about sustainable management practices, the environment, CSR, and circular economy issues. Here we present an illustration of recent activity.

**Marta Arroyabe (EBS) J.C. Fernandez de Arroyabe**, (2021) The implementation of circular economy models in UK small and medium enterprises: a pilot study of East England & London.

Kim, KA and **Kim, YA**. (2023) "A New Model 'SEED (Street Economics for Emergence Development)' of Regional Innovation in the Crisis of Regional Extinction and Low-Density Economic Environment: An Exploratory Study of Neo-RIS (regional innovation system) in the New Local Era," **Korean Comparative Government Review**, 26(4), 231-254. (\*This paper is cited in a Korean national policy project report by Ministry of Interior and Safety).

**Ramakrishnan Ramanathan**, Yanqing Duan, Tahmina Ajmal, Katarzyna Pelc, James Gillespie, Sahar Ahmadzadeh, Joan Condell, Imke Hermens, Usha Ramanathan (2023), "Motivations and challenges for food companies in using IoT sensors for reducing food waste: Some insights and a roadmap for the future", *Sustainability*, 15(2), 1665. (Special issue on "New Multidisciplinary Approaches for Reducing Food Waste in Agribusiness Supply Chains.").

Sibai, O., Brunk, K., Belkhir, M., Brouard, M., Campana, M., Dalmoro, **M.**, **Ferreira**, M.C., Figueiredo, B., Scaraboto, D. and Smith, A., (2022) Market-centric pathways for racial inclusion: the case of # MyBlackReceipt. *Advances in Consumer Research*.

## Events & Initiatives

Academics, students, professionals, organisations, and other stakeholders can tap into our School's vibrant research culture through regular talks, seminars, and other events, which take place through the academic year. Below is a snapshot of the events held by EBS since the last PRME SIP.

### EBS Elevate Essex Employability Forum

The Elevate Essex Employability Forum (3E's Forum) is an EBS employability initiative aimed at promoting employability and entrepreneurship among EBS students before and after graduation. Successfully launched last year (2022). The forum was founded by **Dr Joshua Obeng-Nyarko** in 2022, and Joshua remains Director today. The aims of the 3E forum rests on 2 pillars:

#### Pillar 1

To contribute to the EBS employability strategy of the EBS as it seeks to address the problems of graduate unemployment of our student community. The EBS aim to support our students in the best possible and one of the ways is by bringing them in contact with successful entrepreneurs, industry leaders, successful alumni. This not only broadens their horizon, but widens their industry connection and networks before graduation. The 3Es or Elevate Essex activities complement this EBS strategy through the annual events where guest speakers from industry and alumni are invited to speak to and interact with our students.

#### Pillar 2

To help address the problem of inequality and employment challenges faced by our BAME and First-Generation students in the graduate job market before and after graduation. Through the seminars, workshops, and conferences, Elevate Essex invites targeted industry leaders, successful entrepreneurs and alumni entrepreneurs to come and inspire our disadvantaged members of the community. The aim among others is for our students to develop the self-confidence to approach their careers after graduation either as entrepreneurs or employees.

The theme for 2023 event was 'Graduate Employment and Entrepreneurship'. At this event we successfully invited Venture Capitalist, successful entrepreneurs, professional accounting firm, Essex Startup and thriving alumni entrepreneurs to speak to and interact with our students during the event. In 2022 event, we focused on BAME and First-generation students and the challenges they face in the job market. It is our hope that the Elevate Essex Forum would help to address some of the graduate unemployment challenges facing EBS students and graduates.

## EBS Sustainability Event

**EBS Dean Professor Claudia Girardone** recently held the inaugural Sustainability Day at EBS, an event which celebrates sustainability within Business education for all those involved in its delivery. The day, co-organised with **Dr Nicholas Beuret**, was a great success featuring speakers from across the school and guests from other institutions, setting a precedent for further annual events.

### Sustainability at Essex Business School

## Sustainable Essex

EBS currently holds a Gold Award from the Sustainable Essex awards initiatives, an internal environmental accreditation programme run by the Sustainability Team at Essex. It brings staff and students in a department together in a team and provides them with a tangible framework to make their department more sustainable whether that is in the office or at home.

The EBS Accreditation Team put together a compelling case evidencing the excellent work that has happened to support

Sustainability in the School, including promoting sustainable travel, providing recycling points throughout the school, hosting the inaugural Sustainability Day at EBS, and making sustainability a key priority for us as a School, incorporating issues of sustainability in our programmes wherever possible.

### Celebrating our Gold Award

## Sustainable and socially conscious? The reality of 21st century business

The 'Sustainable and socially conscious?' webinar event series took place in early 2022, open to prospective postgraduate students keen to exploring how sustainability impacts every area of business and what this looks like in both theory and practice. Expert academics delivered five individual webinar events which explored issues of food water in improving sustainability of food chain supplies, the circular economy and fairness, ethics, and inclusivity in organisational change. Over 700 people registered to attend.



## The Future of Food Symposium 2023

Led by EBS academic **Dr Jordan Lazell**, the 4th Future of Food Symposium took place in early 2023 and focused on the food insecure position of thousands of households across the UK and the organisations supporting them.

Rising levels of hunger across the UK has placed millions of households in precarious, food insecure positions. Families are facing tough choices between heating, eating and travel, amongst several other demands, all rising in cost. At the same time community organisations have effectively responded to support vulnerable groups, meeting the demand for emergency food provision and utilising food as a vehicle for social good to enhance people's lives in their local community. However often the importance of these organisations is over-looked. Described as the 'fourth emergency service', this is a sector helping millions but having to negotiate considerable challenges to sustain their longevity.

This event provided a space to share, reflect and progress in moving towards a more sustainable food system for all. This event recognised that food is an important medium through which the life prospects of the most vulnerable groups in society can be improved. These organisations are at the centre of critical work in not only alleviating food insecurity but providing training and social experiences as well as encouraging and showcasing more sustainable community food practices.

Participants of this event learnt about and debated a number of cross-cutting themes linked to combatting food poverty. The event aimed to provide practitioners with a space to reflect on issues such as the need to address nutritional deficiencies; the high expense of fresh, healthy food; the low quality, compromised nature and short shelf life of food donations, and the overall right for vulnerable people to have fair access to affordable food, amongst other issues.



# SHARING KNOWLEDGE



Sharing our knowledge and research with businesses, policymakers, the wider community and across academia is an important part of how we make a positive impact on society. We engage with external stakeholders through our executive education programmes, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, and research projects and events to co-create and share knowledge that improves both enterprise and the lives of others.

## **Knowledge Gateway and the Innovation Centre**

EBS has a long history of collaboration to nurture business and support job creation. Essex is designated as a University Enterprise Zone, which incorporates the Knowledge Gateway research and technology park, Parkside Office village which is home to many thriving businesses, the EBS building, and the Innovation Centre which opened in June 2019. This important development of 34,000 sq. ft provides the space plus the vital hands-on support to help up to 50 start-ups and small businesses scale-up and succeed, and it is also home to a state-of-the-art creative digital studio,

Studio X and the Essex Startups team, as well as the Essex local Chambers of Commerce. EBS helps support these hugely impactful activities, including the Angels@Essex invitation-only investment platform that links angel investors to entrepreneurs with innovative ideas, with disruptive bleeding-edge tech companies securing a hugely impressive £16.1m of funding in just 18 months after being supported by Angels@Essex (as evidenced in the University Enterprise Zone's 2021 annual report).

# Essex Startups

Essex Startups, led by the Head of Startups **Andy Mew**, is a free student support service providing enterprise education initiatives that cover co-curricular and extra-curricular delivery models.

Essex Startups create programmes that embed key skills in our students with the emphasis on applying these for themselves, to launch new ventures, or in industry-based scenarios, to develop work experience and labour-market readiness. A key aim for the team in academic year 2022/23, has been to address inequality in the start-up ecosystem, which restricts opportunities for female founders and black and minority ethnic founders.

In November 2022, the Essex Startups Team launched two six-week initiatives – EMPOWER (for female founders) and BE ME (for black and ethnic minority entrepreneurs) – to provide new opportunities for these groups to participate in training, attend workshops, and access to finance.

Alongside this, iTeams – an extra-curricular business consultancy challenge – has focused on embedding responsible leadership and sustainability into students.

Over eight-weeks, ca. 40 students participate in a programme of applied learning to solve real-world business problems.

In 2022, iTeams included a problem statement from Arma Karma, an insurtech start-up, whose business model includes donating 25% commission to environmental charities. Arma Karma's two founders are Chris Frogner, a former EBS graduate in Banking and Finance and Ben Smyth, who studied at Essex in the Department of History and Politics. And in 2023, Junari, a business who help manage IT asset disposal in a circular, sustainable, environmentally friendly way was featured.

The two examples above are a clear demonstration of the commitment to ensuring that students are aware of ever-evolving challenges in the areas of enterprise and entrepreneurship. They underscore a dedication to adapting our approach to developing students and graduates who are relevant to the current landscape, responsive to changing trends, and responsible in their thoughts and actions.



## Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

The UoE has successfully secured more Innovate UK KTP funding than any other university in the East of England or London. We are ranked 1st in the UK for Knowledge Transfer Partnerships.

### Examples of EBS KTPs:

**Brightstar Financial**, a 24-month project that examines current working practices and embeds leading-edge management theory to drive operational efficiency in a leading financial advice SME. This interdisciplinary KTP is led by EBS **Professor Jay Mitra** and **Dr Haider Raza** from the School of Computer Science and Electronic Engineering, with a value of £185,971.

**Simarco**, a 27-month project aimed at developing new-to-sector knowledge across a range of management science disciplines to enable long-term strategic planning and sustainable growth in an ever-changing socio-economic landscape. Led by EBS academics **Dr Noelia-Sarah Reynolds**, **Dr Juneho Um** and **Professor Matthew Allen**, the KTP was awarded funding of £205,337.



# THE FUTURE

In 2021, we committed to engaging in ground-breaking research on sustainability, more fully integrate PRME values into our curriculum at all levels and expand our projects on sustainability. We have reported our achievements since the last PRME SIP but recognise emerging needs and new work to be done. We now commit to the following objectives.

- We will continue actively incorporating PRME values into our curriculum within all our undergraduate and postgraduate courses with a higher integration towards SDGs.
- We will continue to engage in ground-breaking research in the areas of ethics and sustainability for the benefit not just of the for-profit organisations but also for the public sector, social enterprises, and voluntary sector organisations.
- We will continue planning and delivering activities for students and staff members that will be based on equality, diversity, and inclusivity.
- We shall continue implementing projects that can teach sustainable action, to support our physical environments as well as the well-being of our local and international communities.
- We will support the wellbeing and mental health of students and staff members, encouraging action and involvement in initiatives also via the aid of our mental health champions, for sustaining a resilient learning community.

## **Reporting for EBS**

Dr Manuela Nocker – Senior Lecturer in Organisation and Sustainability

Maricia Klincke – Accreditation Manager

Chloe Warren – Marketing Manager

