PRME CHAPTER UK & IRELAND ANNUAL CONFERENCE
QUEEN'S BUSINESS SCHOOL, BELFAST
17-19 JUNE 2025
CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Partnering for Progress: Enhancing Collaboration, Building Communities and Navigating Conflict to Accelerate Agenda 2030

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST | QUEEN'S BUSINESS SCHOOL

PRME CHAPTER UK & IRELAND — Principles for Responsible Management Education

Queen's Business School, Queen's University Belfast, is honoured to host the **2025 PRME Chapter UK & Ireland Conference**, bringing together scholars, educators, practitioners, and students from across the UK, Ireland, and beyond.

In line with PRME's fifth Principle, Partnership, and the United Nations' 17th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), 'Partnerships for the Goals,' the conference theme, '**Partnering for Progress: Enhancing Collaboration, Building Communities, and Navigating Conflict to Accelerate Agenda 2030**' acknowledges the transformative power of partnerships in achieving environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

Partnerships that bridge sectors, institutions, and borders are critical to addressing today's most pressing sustainability challenges. However, while partnerships offer immense potential for driving impactful change, they also bring unique complexities, from managing conflicting priorities to ensuring genuine inclusivity. This conference will explore partnerships by considering the role of collaboration in enhancing progress towards the SDGs, the significance of community building for meaningful and lasting progress, and the challenges of navigating conflicts and tensions that may emerge within partnerships and between partners, especially in the context of an increasingly complex and volatile environment.

The conference theme also reflects the pivotal role business schools play in facilitating partnerships between academia, industry, government, and civil society in advancing sustainability. Through a plethora of collaborative activities, such as research partnerships, educational outreach, community and business engagement, impact initiatives, entrepreneurial start-ups or spin outs, business schools bring together stakeholders with diverse expertise and resources. These activities not only underscore business schools' efforts in developing students as ethical and responsible business leaders, they also facilitate business schools to act as bridges, connecting sectors and fostering collaborations that can address systemic sustainability challenges on a broader scale.

As in previous years, the 2025 conference welcomes those focusing on how teaching and learning drives the 2030 SDG agenda, but also seeks to provide a platform to celebrate and engage with research programmes and traditions recognised as intersecting with PRME. The conference organisers invite the submission of abstracts, interactive workshop proposals, paper development proposals, and from relevant pedagogical, research, and/or practitioners' perspectives. The conference will have three dedicated tracks relating to **Collaboration**, **Communities**, and **Conflict** in line with the conference theme. It is also possible to submit to an '**open**' track if your paper does not align with the emphasis of the track themes but does address the aims of PRME.

TRACK 1: ENHANCING COLLABORATION

The ambitious and interconnected targets of the SDGs demand collective action across sectors, disciplines, and borders. Collaboration serves as a vital catalyst, enabling the pooling of resources, sharing of knowledge, and harnessing of diverse expertise to tackle complex sustainability challenges and drive systemic change. Collaboration between governments, businesses, non-profits, faculty, and students can foster the co-creation of innovative solutions that address the interconnected nature of sustainability challenges (Mariani et al., 2022; Leal Filho et al., 2024). For instance, partnerships between universities and industries can lead to the development of cutting-edge technologies for renewable energy (Lerman et al., 2021), while alliances between NGOs and governments can help implement social programmes at scale (Selsky and Parker, 2005). The pooling of financial and technical resources is also crucial for addressing goals that require substantial investment, such as climate action or sustainable infrastructure (Rizzello and Kabli, 2020). Furthermore, authentic collaboration with local communities ensures initiatives are inclusive and contextually relevant, empowering those most affected by issues like poverty and climate change (Kubisch et al., 2020). By aligning efforts and avoiding duplication, collaborative endeavours maximize resource efficiency and amplify impact.

This track welcomes pedagogical, research, and/or practitioners' perspectives about the role of collaboration in enhancing the capacity for achieving the SDGs. Key topics may include (but are not restricted to) the governance, dynamics, opportunities, and challenges of collaboration between governments, businesses, NGOs, and academia (particularly business schools), across sectors, disciplines, and borders.

TRACK 2: BUILDING COMMUNITIES

Communities are central to achieving the SDGs, as they serve as both drivers and beneficiaries of sustainable development. The engagement of communities fosters local ownership, ensuring development initiatives are more sustainable and impactful. When communities are actively involved, they become stewards of progress, for example, as seen in environmental conservation projects where local groups protect vital resources for their livelihoods (Esteves et al., 2021). Community-building also promotes collective problem-solving, leveraging diverse insights, including indigenous knowledge, to develop context-specific solutions that align with global goals (Franco and Tracey, 2019). Strong, cohesive communities enhance resilience, providing critical support systems during crises such as climate change or health pandemics. Additionally, community-building advances equity and inclusion by amplifying the voices of marginalized groups like women, youth, and indigenous peoples (Mawere and Mukonza, 2024). This not only addresses systemic inequalities but also ensures that the benefits of sustainable development are equitably distributed, fostering a more just and inclusive society.
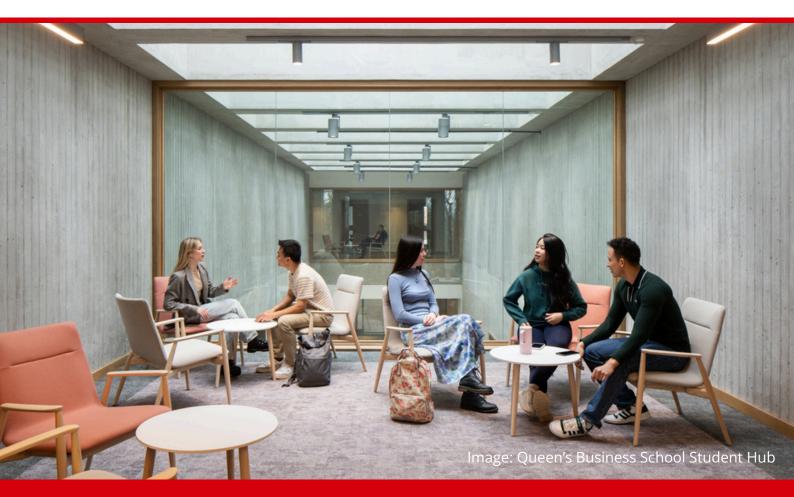
This track welcomes pedagogical, research, and/or practitioners' perspectives about community building for meaningful and lasting progress towards the SDGs. Key topics may include (but are not restricted to) the role of communities in all their forms (virtual, local, global, generational) in achieving the SDGs, acknowledging a range of factors such as community empowerment, social capital, trust, indigenous knowledge, bottom-up innovation, inclusivity, and resilience.

TRACK 3: NAVIGATING CONFLICT AND TENSIONS

Critics argue that the ambitious vision of the SDGs is undermined by significant concerns about effectiveness, equity, and unintended consequences. The broad framework, with its 17 goals and 169 targets, often leads to trade-offs, diluted efforts, and selective prioritization. For instance, countries may prioritize economic growth over environmental sustainability (Nieuwenkamp, 2017; Ferrón et al., 2022). Tensions have also surfaced in university protests over fossil fuel divestment or geopolitical conflicts like the war in Gaza, exposing paradoxes where institutions advocate for sustainability but may suppress dissent for financial or political reasons (Maina et al., 2020; Adams and Abdul, 2024).

The SDGs can perpetuate inequalities, with larger entities often dominating decision-making and marginalizing smaller voices. Critiques of their 'Western-centric' design suggest that culturally appropriate solutions from the Global South are often overlooked, fostering resistance (Chen, 2024). The voluntary nature of the framework further complicates accountability, enabling 'SDG-washing,' where stakeholders emphasize successes while downplaying shortcomings (Munro, 2020). In an era of political and economic volatility, including warfare and pandemics, these tensions highlight the need for resilient, inclusive, and accountable frameworks to sustain progress toward the SDGs.

This track welcomes pedagogical, research, and/or practitioners' perspectives about navigating conflict and tensions in an increasingly complex and volatile environment. Key topics may include (but are not restricted to) papers that explore conflicting priorities and trade-offs, power dynamics, cultural tensions, political tensions, 'SDG-washing', dissenting voices or 'woke-backlash', and how these tensions and conflicts can be managed and resolved to ensure continued progress towards the SDGs.

Image: Queen's Business School Student Hub

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions should be targeted towards an identified track associated with the conference theme, or the open track if addressing the objectives of PRME more broadly. They should contribute to advancing understanding or practice in responsible management and/or sustainable development. We invite you to select one of four formats for submission:

- **500-word abstract**: Authors who wish to be considered for conference presentations only are asked to submit a standard 500-word abstract.

- **1,500-word extended abstract**: Authors who also wish to be included in the conference book of abstracts, which will be published with a view to it serving as a pedagogical resource, are asked to submit a 1,500-word extended abstract. The book of abstracts will be disseminated via the PRME Chapter UK & Ireland website and PRME Commons platform following the conference.

- **Paper development proposals ('PRME in Progress')**: Authors at the earlier stages of a project who are not ready to deliver a full paper but would benefit from developmental feedback and the opportunity to engage in networking are invited to submit 500-word proposals for a 'Pecha Kucha' style presentation (a presentation style that uses 20 slides or images, each displayed for 20 seconds as the speaker is presenting).

- **Proposals for interactive workshops**: Authors who wish to submit a proposal for a 60-minute workshop are asked to complete the relevant template. In reviewing proposals for workshops, particular consideration will be given to sessions that are truly interactive in nature.

Templates in relation to each of the formats are available via the PRME Chapter UK & Ireland website <u>here</u>. In addition, we ask that all authors supply a short biography with a link to their preferred online profiles.

Please submit your proposals through the conference submission portal <u>here</u> by **Friday 28th February 2025 at 11.59pm GMT**.

Submissions will be judged based on the following criteria: (1) Relevance to track/theme; (2) Clarity, coherence, and originality; (c) Potential to stimulate engagement or debate; (d) Interest to PRME stakeholders. In addition, workshop proposals will be evaluated based on their potential level of engagement or interactivity.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Abstract/Paper Submission Deadline: 28th February 2025 at 11.59pm GMT
- Notification of Acceptance: 21st March 2025
- Conference Registration Opens: 7th March 2025
- Conference Dates: Doctoral Colloquium — Tuesday 17th June 2025, Main Conference — Wednesday 18th & Thursday 19th June 2025.

CONTACT INFORMATION & UPDATES

For any inquiries, please contact the Conference Organisers:

- **Dr Laura Steele (Conference Co-Lead): laura.steele@qub.ac.uk**
- **Dr Denise Currie (Conference Co-Lead): d.currie@qub.ac.uk**
- **Kelly Tagg (Accreditation Administrator): k.tagg@qub.ac.uk**

For more information and updates, please visit our conference website **here**.

ABOUT PRME

The **Principles for Responsible Management Education** (PRME) is a UN-supported initiative established in 2007 that aims to raise the profile of ethics, responsibility, and sustainability in business and management education through Seven Principles (below) focused on serving society and safeguarding our planet. PRME's mission is to transform management education and develop the responsible decision-makers of tomorrow to advance sustainable development.

PRME Chapter UK & Ireland (UK & I) is a member-based organisation that serves as a focal point of coordination and communication for the UK and Ireland based signatories of PRME. The Chapter works with higher education institutions and related bodies to support the integration of PRME and the advancement of the UN SDGs. For more information about the Chapter, please visit www.unprme.org.uk
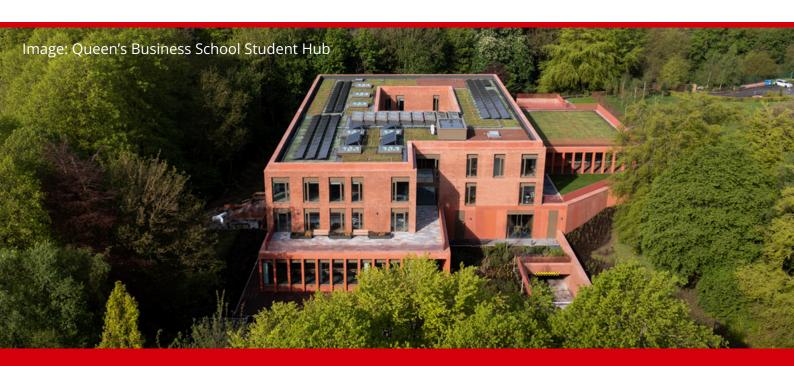
ABOUT QUEEN'S BUSINESS SCHOOL

Queen's Business School (QBS) at **Queen's University Belfast** offers world-class undergraduate, postgraduate, and executive education. The School has six core academic departments and one institute: the Departments of Accounting; Economics; Finance; International Business, Entrepreneurship, and Marketing (IBEM); Information Technology, Analytics, and Operations (ITAO); Organisation, Work, and Leadership (OWL); and the William J. Clinton Leadership Institute.

QBS is accredited by EQUIS, AMBA, and the Small Business Charter, holds an Athena SWAN Bronze Award, and has served as a PRME Champion institution since 2020. In addition, as a member of the Global Business School Network (GBSN), the School is connected through strategic partnerships across the world. Our MBA programme was recently ranked in the top 40 globally by Corporate Knights as part of its 2023 Better World MBA ranking which assesses the extent to which business schools integrate sustainability-related content within their curriculum.

Queen's Business School is delighted to host the 2025 PRME Chapter UK & Ireland Conference and looks forward to bringing delegates together to explore how partnerships can help us navigate challenges, foster meaningful collaborations, and create lasting communities in our journey toward Agenda 2030.

For more information about our work related to PRME, please see our 2024 PRME Sharing Information on Progress Report.

Image: Queen's Business School Student Hub

Image: Belfast City Centre

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