



**Principles for Responsible Management Education
(PRME Initiative)**

Sharing Information on Progress Report

June 2012

Background

This is a progress report of the Kemmy Business School (KBS) at University of Limerick, Ireland, updating our earlier report of 2010. The Kemmy Business School (KBS) was established in 1972 as a College of Business within the University of Limerick. The College was renamed in 2003 as the Kemmy Business School in honour of Jim Kemmy, former Alderman and Mayor of the City of Limerick, and in recognition of a generous €5m donation from a local philanthropist. The overall mission of the KBS, which is very much inspired by the life and work of Jim Kemmy, is to serve a wide group of stakeholders, including business and the wider community.

The KBS is academic home to almost 3,000 students and over 100 faculty and staff led by Dean, Philip O'Regan. Through its four constituent departments – Accounting & Finance, Economics, Management & Marketing and Personnel & Employment Relations – the KBS offers a varied portfolio of eight undergraduate and twenty postgraduate programmes, as well as full-time and part-time research degrees.

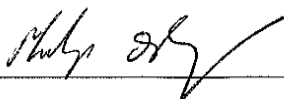
The KBS is at the time of writing in the process of formulating a new Strategic Plan, mirroring the main elements of the University of Limerick strategic plan, Pioneering and Connected. The KBS plan in its current iteration commits the School to four strategic goals:

- The further development of student-centred education;
- The strengthening of the School's excellence in research;
- Internationalisation of all aspects of the KBS;
- Leadership in contributing to economic, social and community development.

Since the last progress report to PRME, the School was officially opened in November 2010. This occasion was marked by the launch of the KBS Chronicle, a key communications medium between the School and our key stakeholders - alumni, students, the business community, second-level schools, other business schools in Ireland and overseas and the public at large. This year, the University of Limerick signed up as an academic participant in the UN Global Compact, and became a signatory of the Rio+20 Higher Education sustainability initiative. The University also joined the Talloires Network, an international association of institutions committed to strengthening the civic roles and social responsibilities of higher education.

The KBS is happy to renew its commitment to engage in a continuous process of improvement in the application of the Principles for Responsible Management Education, which are so close to the core values of the Kemmy Business School.

The remainder of this progress report summarises recent developments under each of the six principles of PRME.



Dr Philip O'Regan

Dean, Kemmy Business School

Principle 1

Purpose: We will develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large and to work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy.

The initiatives outlined in our previous report – teaching in the sustainable development module delivered to students on the BSc in Energy and fostering entrepreneurship skills among our own business undergraduates – are continued through 2012.

Some more recent examples include:

- We have expanded the Peer Supported Learning within the KBS, which gives fourth year undergraduate students the opportunity to work as leaders with first year students taking accounting modules. Peer Support Learning Groups create a student-led, supportive and non-threatening environment for teaching and learning. The students learn to take more responsibility and develop skills of cooperation, mentoring and support.
- Postgraduate students who have developed skills as administrators of communication style and personality type tests are encouraged to provide this service *pro bono* for jobseekers and those facing redundancy.
- Students on an MSc programme which features a field trip to South Africa are encouraged to engage with a KBS-based Irish NGO working with the township communities they will visit as part of the trip, and to develop a plan to assist one of their partner organisation in the townships.
- All students in University of Limerick are invited to engage in the University's [President's Volunteer Awards Programme](#), working with local charities and social entrepreneurship bodies. In the past year, UL students and staff have given in excess of 75,000 hours of volunteer service to a range of organisations involved in local, national and international causes. This level of commitment has also been recognised internationally through the award of 5-Stars for Engagement for the University of Limerick by international evaluation agency, QS Stars.
- Postgraduate Marketing students participate in the Global Google Marketing Challenge, working in teams to develop and online marketing campaign for a local charity or start-up enterprise. Two student groups have been global semi-finalists.

Principle 2

Values: We will incorporate into our academic activities and curricula the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact.

Principle 3

Method: We will create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.

The last two years have seen a significant expansion of the CSR and ethics curricula in the KBS. In the coming year, new specific CSR/ethics modules will be offered on four postgraduate and two undergraduate programmes in addition to maintaining the offerings on the MBA and BSc in Energy modules. In addition, the issue of responsibility features prominently in other subjects taught in the KBS.

Some examples from the period since our last SIP include:

- A post-graduate module on International Project Management includes as a specific learning outcome *“Identify the principles of sustainability and the role of the project manager in promoting corporate and social responsibility within the business enterprise”*
- In Strategic Management modules at both undergraduate and MBA level, students explored the link between market driven strategy, loss of control and damage to environmental quality of life with a focus on the BP Deepwater Horizon spill. Also in the undergraduate strategy module, the class discussed the impact of Alexander the Great on Persian Civilisation and questioned the relationship between the brilliance of the military strategy and its alignment or otherwise with human progress. The class were introduced to Socrates and used his social ethical stance as a frame to formally understand the origins of western thinking on ethics.
- In Organisational Behaviour, students complete a case study on sweatshops in the supply chain
- In the area of Human Resource Management (HRM) a case on CSR will be included in an undergraduate module in the coming academic year. MBA students also complete an assignment about how corporate citizenship activities and CSR-focused HRM activities contribute to employee engagement and commitment. Students also study Work Design and Employee Wellbeing, with projects focussing on such issues as survivors of redundancies, immigrant workers, etc.
- Social entrepreneurship is an increasingly important aspect of students’ coursework on entrepreneurship.
- In other modules, the values of the UN Global compact continue to be addressed obliquely and in a pervasive way, dealing with topics such as moral hazard in Insurance, ethics in tax planning, research ethics, sustainable marketing and consumption, ethical issues around auditing and accountability, etc.

Principle 4

Research: We will engage in conceptual and empirical research that advances our understanding about the role, dynamics, and impact of corporations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value.

The research strategy of the KBS focuses on four themes: work knowledge and employment; services, economy and tourism; entrepreneurship, innovation and marketing; and public policy, enterprise, governance and sustainability. Within this framework, faculty continue to research on topics relevant to this principle.

Some recent examples include:

- Professor Tom Garavan is completing a major research project involving five organisations involved in CSR and sustainability. These are: CRH, Bord na Mona, Fexco, Merck, Sharpe and Dohme (msd) and Esb. Professor Garavan is studying the relationship between corporate citizenship activities and employee engagement and the mediating impact of organisational identification and perceived organisational support on that relationship.
- Dr Naomi Birdthistle carried out research on the skillsets of ethnic entrepreneurs and the gaps in terms of support agencies and the assistance being given to ethnic entrepreneurs in the Mid-West of Ireland.
- Dr Sheila Killian has co-presented work done with postgraduate students on CSR and community engagement, and on female entrepreneurship among disadvantaged communities, and has recently published "[*Corporate Social Responsibility: a Guide with Irish Experiences*](#)", the first book to focus on Irish SME experiences of CSR.
- Dr Darragh Flannery has researched the impact of various financing schemes on access to higher education among young people in Ireland.
- Dr. Maria Lichrou and Dr. Annmarie Ryan are co-supervising PhD work on the role of consumerist practices in the green economy.
- Dr. Elaine Doyle studies the impact of business ethics classes on the ethical reasoning levels of students, involving the students in the process as a self-development tool.

Faculty continue to engage in scholarship as well as research in the field in order to inform their own teaching and further research. For instance faculty from the KBS attended an International Labour Organisation course on CSR and ILO standards, and apply the lessons learned there in ongoing teaching and research, while others are researching the best teaching methodologies to deploy in business ethics classes.

Principle 5

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

The Kemmy Business School continues its tradition of remaining close to business, and of working closely with business leaders. This aspect of our engagement is even more important in the current economic crisis in Ireland, which brings a range of new challenges to business, particularly small and medium sized enterprises.

As outlined in our previous SIP, all undergraduate students at the KBS are required to undertake a period of work experience in a business setting during their programme of study. They also continue to engage with local business as part of their coursework, particularly in the Business Consulting module as outlined previously. Other recent examples include students on the MSc Global Business and International Management working with Carambola Kidz, a local supplier nationally of healthy children's lunches, to develop a strategic plan with a focus on retaining their ethos of social responsibility, and MBA students of CSR providing direct advice to small Irish firms on how to develop a CSR strategy.

Faculty also work directly with business. John Heneghan of the KBS continues his direct engagement with local businesses operating in disadvantaged areas of the city of Limerick, as does Dr Briga Hynes. Dr Naomi Birdthistle has assisted a number of local businesses to focus more on eco-friendly products. Dr Briga Hynes acts as project evaluator for Social Entrepreneurs Ireland (www.socialentrepreneurs.ie) and was involved in the Review Group for their Social Entrepreneurs Awards Programme 2012.

A group of KBS faculty have recently initiated an ongoing partnership with a local school to develop world-class entrepreneurship curriculum for young teenagers. Students in the KBS are also guided by KBS faculty through an “adopt a class” programme to mentor second-level students in disadvantaged areas.

Principle 6

Dialogue: We will facilitate and support dialog and debate among educators, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organizations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability.

A conscious effort is made to disseminate the research of the KBS in an accessible and useful way, so as to encourage dialogue in as wide a group of stakeholders as possible. For example, Dr Birdthistle's research on supports for ethnic entrepreneurs was disseminated to the support agencies throughout Ireland to inform them of the training needs identified in the findings. To formalise this process, a [monthly research bulletin](#) is produced by the KBS, summarising useful research and making it available widely.

Some other examples include:

- John Heneghan of the KBS recently organised a public event on Credit Lending to SMEs, sponsored jointly with Limerick Chamber of Commerce and attended by the relevant government minister. This was a useful networking event for smaller business and feeds directly into government policy.
- Dr Sheila Killian, Dr John Garvey and Frances Shaw of the KBS produced a report entitled "*An Audit of Irish Debt*" to make the pressing issue of Irish sovereign debt accessible for a wide range of social actors. Following the publication of the report, they were invited to address the relevant government committee, further facilitating debate on the issue.
- Dr Sheila Killian had a speaking role at the March meeting of the UN Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters. The meeting addressed the role of international tax structures in alleviating poverty in developing countries.

Since our last SIP, the level of engagement with local and national media has increased, with KBS faculty regularly invited to discuss economics, taxation, corporate social responsibility and other pressing issues.