

# RESEARCH 4GOOD



UNIVERSITY OF  
**BATH**  
SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

ISSUE THREE



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**HOW AI CAN OFFER A  
HELPING HAND**

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**9 PILLARS OF RESPONSIBLE  
MANAGEMENT EDUCATION**

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**WHAT MAKES PEOPLE  
SUSCEPTIBLE TO  
CONSPIRACY THEORIES?**

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Editorial: Emma Senior  
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## WELCOME MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Welcome to the latest issue of **Research4Good**, a magazine showcasing some of the exciting research being carried out here at the University of Bath School of Management. I am proud of our successes in recent years, and am grateful to all of you who have played a part in these.

Across these pages, you'll learn about some of the surprising applications of artificial intelligence being explored by our academics – from supporting in the workplace to developing critical thinking skills and even augmenting cultural experiences.

We're also taking a look at how to tackle fast fashion by breaking down garments' cost per wear, examining how entrepreneurial values are passed down through families, and delving into what makes people likely to believe in misinformation and conspiracy theories.

We're considering what responsible management education means to our faculty, and what the future holds for the International Centre for Higher Education Management.

I hope you enjoy finding out more about what we're achieving here at Bath. If you're interested in finding out more or would like to receive email newsletters from us, please do get in touch at [researchoffice@management.bath.ac.uk](mailto:researchoffice@management.bath.ac.uk)

**Professor Steve Brammer**  
Dean of the School of Management

# UPDATES FROM THE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT



## PROFESSOR MAIRI MACLEAN WINS PRESTIGIOUS AOM AWARD

Professor Mairi Maclean received the Academy of Management's Daniel A. Wren Research Award for Contributions to Management History at the 2025 AOM Annual Meeting.

The award was presented to Mairi, along with her co-author Professor Charles Harvey from Newcastle University, at the July 2025 conference in Copenhagen.

The prize was established by the Academy's Management History Division to honour individuals whose scholarship has made an enduring impact on the field. It recognises exemplary work that not only advances understanding in the discipline, but also models rigour, intellectual courage and sustained academic commitment.

"It is very humbling that the selection committee feel that our work has made a profound impact on the field of management history, and leaves me almost speechless,"

says Mairi. She continues: "This is, for me, a truly great honour."

Mairi's research centres on the importance of history in contemporary business life, and the necessity of theory to illuminate underlying dynamics. Her work with Charles Harvey has convinced her of the need for dual integrity, and equal respect for the academic virtues of both business and management history and organisation theory.

Mairi is Associate Dean (Faculty) within the School of Management, as well as a member of both the Centre for Business, Organisations & Society and the Future of Work research centre.

Professor Steve Brammer, Dean of the School of Management, adds:

"This award is a fantastic recognition of Mairi's work. It is testament to the strength of her research and her dedication to scholarship in management history."

## CONTINUED SUCCESS IN EQUIS ACCREDITATION

In January 2026, the School of Management was awarded a five-year EQUIS accreditation for the third consecutive time.

Five years is the maximum accreditation duration awarded by the EFMD Quality Improvement System, and only a small proportion of business schools have achieved this three times.

This recognition from EQUIS represents the highest international standard for business education and research, and reflects our shared commitment to excellence and ambition for the future.

Professor Steve Brammer, Dean of the School of Management, says: "This achievement is the result of the outstanding contributions of colleagues across the School – academic staff, professional services teams, students, and partners. Securing EQUIS accreditation for the next five years further strengthens our global reputation and provides a strong foundation for continued success."



## BATH ANNOUNCED AS POLICING ACADEMIC CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

A new Policing Academic Centre of Excellence (P-ACE) was created at the University of Bath in October 2025 to improve connections between academic researchers and police forces.

Funded in partnership with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), a £4.5million investment will see each of the UK's nine new P-ACEs promoted across the policing sector as an accessible source of leading academic experts aligned with policing's Areas of Research Interest (ARIs) and evidence needs.

They will support policing with adopting new technologies, developing new tools and techniques, improving training and skills, and increasing public safety.

"This provides the opportunity to build better and stronger relationships across UK policing, addressing complex, enduring challenges such as countering violent extremism and safeguarding vulnerable populations," says Dr Olivia Brown.

She continues: "Our P-ACE will mobilise existing multi-disciplinary expertise to provide a rapid response to policing priorities."



## RESEARCH4GOOD PODCAST: LISTEN NOW

In the relaunched Research4Good podcast, School of Management academics speak to Professor David Ellis about how and why their research is contributing to a better world. Topics covered in season 2 so far include the impact of RuPaul's Drag Race, how games can teach us about cybersecurity and why remote working isn't working for everyone.

Scan the QR code above to listen on Spotify – you can also find us wherever you get your podcasts.

## OUR RANKINGS

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2026:

Top 132 in the world

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS BY SUBJECT:

Top 150 in the world for Business and Management Studies

QS BUSINESS MASTERS RANKINGS 2026:

Top 50 in the world for MSc Marketing

QS GLOBAL MBA RANKING 2026:

Top 50 in Europe

QS SUSTAINABILITY RANKINGS 2026:

56th globally

THE GUARDIAN UNIVERSITY GUIDE 2026:

5th in the UK for Business and Management

THE DAILY MAIL UNIVERSITY GUIDE 2026:

9th overall in the UK

THE COMPLETE UNIVERSITY GUIDE 2026:

1st in the UK for Marketing

3rd in the UK for Business and Management

# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, REAL INSIGHTS

Meet the researchers deepening our understanding of how AI can enrich our lives.



Artificial intelligence is big business. The AI market in the UK is valued at more than £72 billion, and almost 70% of people in the UK use AI in various forms – whether it’s at work or at home. But how can these tools act as a helping hand, as well as a revenue driver or engaging education tool?

“We like to say: imagine a Chattable Avatar as being a bit like the paintings that come to life in Harry Potter,” says Dr Deborah Brewis. “You can talk to them in real time and get an adaptive response.”

Deborah, a member of the Future of Work research centre, is one of a large number of academics within the School of Management exploring the possibilities of how artificial intelligence can be deployed in novel ways. One of her current projects is examining how AI could power digital visitor guides – Chattable Avatars – for cultural sites such as museums, art galleries and libraries.

The research team, formed as part of South West England’s GW4 network, believe that these avatars could help to boost visitor engagement by interacting with users and answering questions. The avatars use a large language model to mimic the tone of predefined characters – think, for instance, of being able to hold a conversation with a steerage passenger aboard the SS Great Britain or of speaking to a long-dead artist about their inspiration for a famous painting.

So far, Deborah and her colleagues have created a prototype Chattable Avatar and conducted stakeholder workshops with local museum representatives to identify potential benefits and obstacles to adoption.

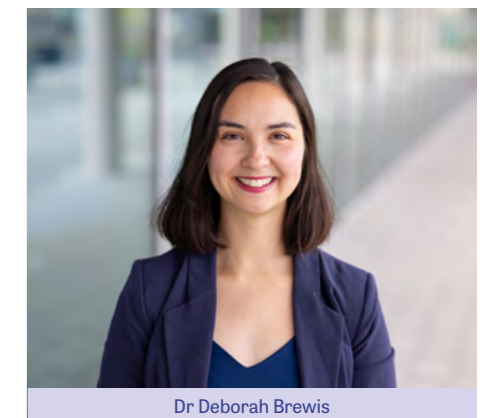
“There is real enthusiasm and appetite in the cultural sector for tools that can boost visitor engagement with exhibits,” Deborah explains. “We found that among some infrastructural challenges, the biggest concern is – naturally – the trustworthiness of AI. How can we guarantee that the AI will give accurate information, can’t be easily

‘broken’ and will respond ethically? Solving this will be essential.”

They identified that these interactive additions could empower visitors by bringing history to life, allowing them to shape the visitor experience themselves, as well as driving interest on social media. They could also enable organisations to provide an outstanding visitor experience even when short-staffed. However, there were concerns around cost, maintenance, and the pitfall of potential avatars falling into the ‘uncanny valley’ of being almost-but-not-quite lifelike.

The team believe that some of these challenges to buy-in could be addressed by how the avatars are framed: rather than authoritative sources of fact, they could be positioned as narrative extras. What’s more, they could be used to offer visitors the experience that best suits them and their needs, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. For instance, the information given could be adapted to varied age groups, or language tailored to differing needs.

“Along with being an engaging experience for visitors of museums and heritage sites, one of the exciting things about this is that the experience could be personalised to diverse groups with different skills and interests,” Deborah explains. “The hope is to improve accessibility to culturally significant sites and add to the impact of the visitors’ experience once there.”



Dr Deborah Brewis



## TAILORED TRAINING ON DEMAND

The ability of AI to tailor information in incredibly short timespans is also of interest to Professor Melih Celik from the Smart Warehousing and Logistics Systems research centre (SWALOS). He is part of an Innovate UK-funded team – also comprising SWALOS Director Professor Vaggelis Giannikas and PhD student Sina Khodaei – that partnered with Internet of Things company Logidot to investigate the potential of AI as a training tool for warehouse operatives.

“Their question to us was: with the growth of AI, how can we best implement such tools on the warehouse floor?” Melih explains.

The researchers worked with stakeholders in industry to identify their needs and consider how AI could meet them; they hope to build on this to produce a prototype in future projects. The team focused on how an AI chatbot could be used to train new warehousing staff, as well as to answer questions and troubleshoot problems for existing employees.

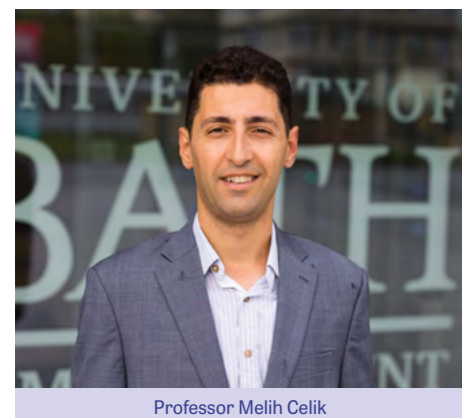
“The traditional way of doing this [sort of training] is you sit in a classroom and you’ve got a bunch of people who work in the warehouse all [being shown] a bunch of PowerPoint slides, whereas with this approach you’ve got personal trainers for everybody,” he says. “Plus, it’s on demand as well. You don’t have to be present in a classroom where you’re looking at the teacher, and the students don’t need to be available at the same time.”

It’s also, as Melih points out, incredibly versatile. It’s rare to have multiple people

working through identical workflows during the day, so training could be implemented to address even subtle differences in their needs. “I also don’t think there’s anything in our methodology that prevents another industry from taking an approach like this,” he asserts.

By limiting the data that the models behind the chatbot can draw upon for its answers, the risk of hallucinations (false yet plausible-sounding answers) is avoided. However, Melih doesn’t believe that AI will entirely replace human presence in the classroom:

“I don’t think [AI tools] are going to replace us. I think we will need that human touch and, at the end of the day, that’s what people are signing up for when they register for our courses and come to our lectures – but it’s going to make that human contact much, much better.”



Professor Melih Celik

“The most important thing is to go to people as early as possible and just ask: what would help you and what do you want?”

## EFFICIENCY IN THE CLASSROOM

Dr Teslim Bukoye, Associate Professor in the School’s Information, Decisions & Operations division agrees that AI can have beneficial applications in education. Research he carried out with colleagues from the Universities of Bristol and Huddersfield has demonstrated that AI can aid in the development of critical thinking skills.

“It started with a simple observation: AI text generators moved from ‘interesting novelty’ to ‘everyday study habit’ almost overnight,” he says. “In business schools especially, students were using tools like ChatGPT to speed up reading, drafting and sense-making, but the big unanswered question was: what does that do to critical thinking?”

He continues: “The speed of adoption made it feel urgent to study what was actually happening, not what we feared or hoped was happening.”

The team set out to answer this question by sampling a group of over 100 postgraduate students, split into a control group and an intervention group.

Both groups completed two sets of critical thinking questions, with the intervention group using ChatGPT to aid their preparation for the second test.

The results indicated a statistically significant improvement in the performance among the group that had used AI, particularly when it came to remembering, understanding and applying knowledge. The effect was less pronounced when it came to analysis and evaluation, and not apparent upon creativity.

“Practically, this suggests a shift in how we teach and assess,” says Teslim. “If AI can take some of the friction out of early-stage learning – such as summarising and proofreading – we can deliberately re-invest class time and assessment weight into higher-order thinking: justification, critique, triangulation of sources and defensible decision-making.”



Dr Teslim Bukoye

Teslim asserts that the responsibility lies with educators to develop their teaching in a fashion that steers students efficiently towards deeper thinking by freeing up headspace through AI, while also ensuring that students also continue to challenge their assumptions. Essentially, he views AI as a thinking partner rather than an answer machine.

“It is not ‘plug in AI, get better thinking,’” he cautions. “The net outcome depends on guardrails: assessment design, AI literacy, expectations around verification and a culture that rewards reasoning over polish.”

## SUPPORT IN THE WORKPLACE

It might be tempting to assume that rapidly developing technology such as artificial intelligence is a young person’s game, when in fact AI tools can offer valuable support to older adults. Dr James Fletcher, Assistant Professor in Digital Futures, warns against this narrow viewpoint: “We often call it ‘digital ageism’, this assumption that older people just don’t engage with new technologies.”

James’ recent work – carried out with Institute for Digital Security & Behaviour colleague Dr Olivia Brown – has identified ways in which technologies such as AI can support people with dementia in the workplace, helping them to remain employed for longer.

“One of the things that people with dementia can struggle with – outside of the memory problems that most people traditionally associate with the condition – is particular speech problems such as finding the next word in a sequence,” he explains. “It just so happens that we have now invented what are basically super text predictors. Generative AI tools are incredibly good at predicting the next word. This can potentially fill in that exact gap for many, especially administrative, workers with dementia.”

James suggests that digital workspaces incorporating generative AI into applications such as e-mail and memo programs can enable workers with dementia to focus on other skills, such as networking – “often older workers are a little bit better at [soft skills] simply by virtue of having been in the market for a long time”. In order to be helpful and avoid confusion, however, James feels that their integration into user interfaces must be seamless.

One of the crucial facets of implementing tech in this manner, James emphasises, is co-creation rather than simply making and acting upon assumptions about what people will want or find helpful. He explains:



Dr James Fletcher

“The problem is that we have fantastic ideas and we go out and develop them, thinking we’re going to help all of these older people to live better lives in the world. Then we meet a user for the first time and it turns out that our assumptions about their lives were entirely wrong.”

The solution? “The most important thing is to go to people as early as possible and just ask: what would help you and what do you want?”

## PERSPECTIVES ON AI

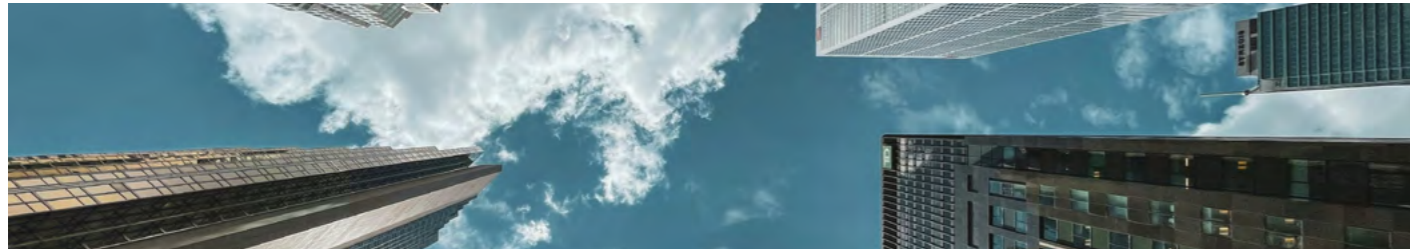
Scan the QR code to watch academics from across the School of Management share their thoughts on a broad spectrum of issues around artificial intelligence, from scepticism and ethical use through to the environmental impact.



Dr Olivia Brown

# CLIMATE OF SUCCESS

Find out about the research from our Accounting, Finance & Law Division examining environmental pressures on firms.



## HEAT VS HOLDINGS

Does rising mercury also make for rising bank balances? Research led by Professor Dimitrios Gounopoulos examined the link between increasing temperatures and the size of cash reserves held by firms.

“Temperature affects economic risk, productivity and financial constraints, which in turn influence liquidity needs,” explains Dimitrios.

He continues: “Higher or more extreme temperatures increase uncertainty by disrupting production and raising operating costs, leading firms and households to hold more cash as a precautionary buffer.”

The study took data from publicly listed US firms from 2001-2021, and calculated the long-term average temperature trends for the counties in which these firms’ headquarters are based. The researchers then modelled these trends against the companies’ cash holdings – measured as a ratio of cash to book assets.

What they found was a strong positive association between upwardly trending temperatures and cash reserves. In fact, average temperature rises of one standard deviation led to cash holdings increasing by just over 3%.

What’s more, in firms facing greater financial constraints – whether due to smaller size, younger age or lack of access to credit – the effect is even more pronounced, likely due to the relative precarity of their situation.

## PRESSURE TO INNOVATE

Firms’ exposure to climate change comes in multiple forms – including physical risks, regulatory risks and, conversely, opportunities. Pressure to react to this through ‘eco-innovation’ can come from both internal and external factors.

“Eco-innovation refers to a company’s ability to reduce environmental costs and impacts while creating innovations in environmental technologies and eco-friendly product or process designs,” explain Dr Pietro Perotti, Dr Fanis Tsofigkas and School of Management PhD student Kangding Wang.

They compared levels of eco-innovation – measured through metrics such as use of renewable energy and the development of sustainable products – with information from analysts and earnings conference calls indicating firms’ perceived exposure to climate change. They looked at data from 2002-2021 on US public firms.

Those facing higher levels of exposure were significantly more likely to demonstrate eco-innovation: an increase of one standard deviation in climate change exposure correlated to an almost 35% higher eco-innovation score.

Pietro, Fanis and Kangding conclude: “Our results suggest that firms facing higher climate change exposure are more committed to eco-innovation, and that institutional pressures encourage more proactive and comprehensive strategies for sustainability and long-term competitiveness.”

## THE COST OF CATASTROPHE

The impacts of extreme climate events are far-reaching. “They can severely disrupt agricultural productivity, depress labour income, impair human welfare, devalue financial assets and undermine corporate performance,” asserts Dr Lu Xing.

Lu is part of a team, alongside colleagues from Zhejiang University and Shenzhen University in China, that examined the impact of such events on the implied cost of equity capital (ICOC) – a forward-looking prediction of investors’ returns.

The researchers compared ICOC data from thousands of firms across 38 countries worldwide with these countries’ exposure to extreme climate events such as storms, floods and droughts. The data showed a significant positive correlation.

They believe this is due to increased operational volatility, information asymmetry and agency conflicts such as insider trading amid the markets facing such climate-related catastrophes.

The effect, however, was less pronounced among companies whose income streams were spread across multiple countries – as this dispersion provides a buffer against shocks in a single territory – but more pronounced in climate-vulnerable industries such as agriculture or energy.

“In view of our findings, policymakers should improve climate risk disclosure and transparency to reduce uncertainty and increase information availability following extreme climate events,” suggests Lu.

# CONSIDERING THE COST

Could providing customers with clothing’s ‘cost per wear’ help to combat fast fashion?



“In the supermarket, for products such as milk – or even cosmetics – you always have price per unit listed on the shelf, so you can compare the pack sizes for which is more cost effective. Whether it’s price per 100ml, for example, or even measurements like price per five washes on detergent,” asserts Dr Lisa Eckmann, Assistant Professor in Marketing at the Bath Retail Lab. “Clothing also doesn’t typically last forever, because it experiences wear and tear. Cost per wear is essentially just unit pricing.”

Lisa’s recent research has focused on the idea of ‘cost per wear’ (CPW) as a way for consumers to determine the value for money offered by the garments they purchase. The metric is calculated by dividing the cost of the item by the number of times it can be worn before it needs repair or replacement: in general, the more durable the item, the lower the CPW – even if the upfront cost is higher. This could also have major benefits in terms of sustainability if it could be used

to nudge buyers towards one good-quality item instead of repeatedly replacing cheap fast-fashion items.

As a researcher studying consumer psychology, Lisa was intrigued by whether access to cost-per-wear information would inform purchasers’ decisions:

“Research has shown that consumers often do not think about how often they will wear a garment when shopping for clothes. Providing some kind of cue in this environment is helpful to remind people as they make their decision,” she explains. “How would consumers react if they saw the cost per wear explained on a label or on a product webpage, just as an additional piece of information?”

To test this, Lisa and her co-author Professor Lucia Reisch from Cambridge Judge Business School carried out a series of online studies in which participants were asked to imagine they were shopping for a particular

item of clothing. They were each presented with two options – similar in every regard, bar quality and price. One group was shown the CPW data (such as the CPW itself and the number of wears this value was based on) alongside the items, while the control group was not.

## Take your pick

The research demonstrated that this information did have an impact on consumer choices, with participants showing a stronger preference for the higher-quality items that were likely to last longer when they had been shown the CPW data. This effect was, however, less pronounced when CPW could not be compared across options, or when it came to items chosen for special occasions – where repeated wear is often less of a concern.

In practice, Lisa suggests that CPW could be measured using something similar to abrasion cycles – a measure currently used for upholstery fabrics, in which textiles are repeatedly rubbed by wire mesh to determine their resilience. She does, however, note that third-party testing and quality assurance marks would likely be required to build consumer trust.

“Some of the participants, when presented with the cost per wear, said, ‘Well, it’s just another marketing tactic!’” she notes. “We found that if CPW information is combined with independent third-party certification, this alleviates consumer skepticism and can even outperform general durability.

With fast fashion currently responsible for around 10% of global carbon dioxide emissions, it’s clear that something needs to change in how we fill our wardrobes. Could reframing pricing be the key?

“Many consumers are not interested in sustainability if it seems to come with a higher price tag,” Lisa concludes. “Cost per wear turns it around by saying, ‘Well, actually it’s an economical choice that you’re making. And, by the way, it’s also more sustainable!’”

# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Nine academics from the School of Management share what responsible management education means to them.



Acting responsibly as a business school can take myriad forms, from what we include in our curriculum to the pedagogical approach we take. Here at the School of Management, our commitment to Research4Good runs through all we do – including our degree programmes. We have been signatories of the UN's Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) since 2015 and are delighted to be acting as hosts for the 2026 PRME UK & Ireland Chapter Conference.

We're proud to be home to the International Centre for Higher Education Management (find out more on pages 18-19), and our dedication to excellence, sustainability and social good is consistently recognised in our performance in rankings and accreditations.

In an increasingly polarised world, facing geopolitical instability, financial uncertainty and climate crises, ensuring that our education equips students for the future is more important than ever. With that in mind, we asked academics from across our faculty: what does responsible management education look like to you?



## 1 GOING BEYOND PROFIT

“To me, responsibility in relation to management education encompasses three core duties. First, the duty to develop in our students an appreciation that management is not just about profit or value maximisation, but is also about offering dignity and meaning through work; contributing to regeneration of the natural environment; and creating and sustaining vital communities.

“Second, the duty to support our students to succeed in the world, to be organisation-ready, and to have the capacity to generate change through their contributions. Responsible management education has to be practice-oriented.

“Third, the duty to encourage students to have high aspirations for themselves and for each other, and to develop the capabilities to pursue ambitious goals confidently yet respectfully.”

**Professor Steve Brammer,**  
Dean of the School of Management

## 4 KEEPING STUDENTS CENTRED

“If we are to practise responsible management education, we need to pay as much attention to the pedagogic process as we do to the content. Of course, the pedagogic process must be student-centred. In designing it, we should think about the diverse backgrounds, needs and approaches to learning that our students represent, and about how to create the most inclusive and engaging learning environment for all.

“Decisions about the content of responsible management education should be guided by a vision to facilitate students' development as professionals and citizens who will know what needs to be done in order to make organisations and societies better places to work and live, and will feel the urgency to implement this knowledge.”

**Professor Martyna Sliwa**

## 2 PRIORITISING INCLUSIVITY

“Responsible management education is not only about what we teach, but also how we teach and who we teach. I believe we have a responsibility to prepare the next generation of leaders and entrepreneurs to cope responsibly and resiliently with uncertainty, while also helping them to develop sustainable attitudes to prosperity that protect both people and planet.

“By using inclusive teaching approaches – such as amplifying diverse voices through the cases and readings we select – we can therefore model the importance of sustainability, equity and ethics in managerial practice.

“Anticipating and removing barriers to inclusion across the student journey is critical to improving access, outcomes, and representation.”

**Professor Layla Branicki,**  
Director of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (Management)

## 5 REMEMBERING PRIVILEGE

“For me, a responsible management education is that a student walks in on day one and continues throughout their education to learn that what they will be given is a position of privilege, where they get to decide on how resources and opportunities are distributed in the systems of enterprise that they will govern.

“I think we should be emphasising that our students are stewards of resources. We need to be working with them on what this form of stewardship would look like, because there's no template for responsibility. There isn't a textbook with the answers, for when you get out into your job, of how to be responsible so I think we need to orient them around this notion.”

**Dr Annie Snelson Powell,**  
Director of the International Centre for Higher Education Management

## 3 AVOIDING AI OVER-RELIANCE

“Responsible management education implies the application of situated knowledge produced by researchers who can justify their choices in the research process. This knowledge, in turn, serves as a basis for learners to change the conditions under which said knowledge was created. This encourages them to develop a stake in how learning shapes social practice – something that AI cannot develop.

“That means that learning is conditional: it is both confined by environmental factors under which it takes place, but also seeks to change these factors in ways that corresponds to the principles of responsible management education (PRME). That is why the UN's PRME highlights that 'to be responsible is to be attentive to impact and time.'”

**Professor Dirk Lindebaum**

## 6 MAINTAINING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE VIVA

“My recent work has focused on the role of the viva in responsible education. In the age of generative AI, it is increasingly important to have vivas as part of the doctoral examination process to ensure that candidates have mastery of their thesis. Given that doctoral requirements are constantly evolving, and with the number of stakeholders attempting to shape their outcomes ever increasing, it is important to capture, reflect upon and even codify expected outcomes.

“Without this, the growing expectations set upon doctoral work risk overwhelming participants with additional layers and perhaps contradictory requirements that – given the relatively short time span of the examination process – cannot be realistically achieved. The focus must remain on candidates demonstrating their competence, and encourage them to go beyond a formulaic approach in their thesis.”

**Dr Ludovic Highman**



## 7 EDUCATION OVER TRAINING

“Responsible management education is often framed in terms of essential content, such as societal issues, grand challenges, or exemplary leadership. Yet it also requires attention to how we teach and learn. It is about creating space to educate, not merely train: fostering curiosity, cultivating critical thinking over time, and developing knowledge for long-term growth rather than immediate solutions.”

“In this sense, responsible management education is not only preparation for a first job; it lays the foundations for lifelong learning about the multidimensional and complex world we inhabit, and which we must learn to look after together.”

**Dr Igor Pyrko,**  
Director of MRes and PhD Studies

## 8 BROADENING COURSE MARKETING

“Responsible education in a business school means actively addressing structural inequities by widening access for underrepresented and disadvantaged communities. This year, the School of Management achieved an important milestone – with an uptick in undergraduate recruitment from lower socio-economic backgrounds.”

“Yet sustainable progress requires deeper reforms in our values, systems and culture to embed widening participation – not only in access but in how we support these students, reconciling educational integrity with social justice. For example, with a team of marketing and professional services staff, I am leading a research project exploring how to make the marketing of our courses more accessible to prospective applicants in order to reshape perceptions and highlight our commitment to diversity and inclusive student voice.”

**Dr Monia Mtar**

## 9 PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

“Responsible management education focuses on preparing future leaders to make fair, ethical and well-judged decisions in an increasingly complex world. It extends well beyond environmental concerns, engaging with issues such as children living in poverty, animal species at risk of extinction, and gender equality within organisations. It encourages students to reflect critically on power, responsibility and the long-term consequences of organisational decisions, which often extend well beyond the firm.”

“As today’s students will shape the organisations and markets that influence society, it is essential that they develop a strong sense of responsibility. By emphasising core principles, responsible management education prepares graduates to lead with integrity and a genuine commitment to the wider world.”

**Dr Soheil Davari,**  
Director of Accreditations

# FAMILY VALUES

## Could your family background make you more disposed to entrepreneurialism?

Entrepreneurship isn’t for everyone. It requires certain personality traits, as Dr Na Zou identifies: “In a way, being an entrepreneur is not only a rational calculation of cost and benefit: you also need to have a willingness to put in lots of effort. You need to have commitment towards learning and adaptation, and also willingness to engage in risk and uncertainty.”

But where do these traits come from? One suggestion is that we develop them as a result of the family environment in which we grow up. Na, a member of the Centre for Research on Entrepreneurship and Innovation (CREI), highlights the existence of evidence from prior literature that demonstrates higher concentrations of entrepreneurs in certain regions – even when these areas have historically faced regimes such as communism that have sought to stifle individual business efforts. “It seems that there is something related to the entrepreneurial culture, which remains [despite external circumstances],” she explains.

She continues: “It could be that there are entrepreneurial cultural values that are ‘sticky’, that are very resilient to institutional shocks. But it left me thinking: how?”



We must go deeper looking at individuals and families to see if there’s something going on at the more fine-grained level.”

If your parents or grandparents were entrepreneurs, then, are you predisposed to follow the same path? Na’s research suggests so.

Her study took nationally representative longitudinal survey data from rural China,

covering over 18,000 adults born between 1940 and 1985. She compared their occupations with the class label assigned to their family during the 1947 land reform from rural China – which sorted the population into groups such as poor peasants, rich peasants, labourers and landlords. This designation continues to be passed on along the paternal line to the present day.

### Then and now



Rich peasants and landlords were “relatively more entrepreneurial” in this agricultural society, Na argues. Their descendants who came of age under Mao’s communist regime were, she found, 3% more likely than the general population to be entrepreneurs. And those who came of age after his death? This cohort were 5% more likely to have founded their own business, with this latter increase reflecting a growing openness to capitalist activity within Chinese society.

“What we see is that in both of these generations – among individuals who were born in the same year and grew up in the same county – differences in family class background predict these varying likelihoods to become entrepreneurs when holding everything else constant,” she summarises.

The research also suggests that individuals from entrepreneurial families have

stronger work ethics, more favourable learning attitudes and are more risk tolerant, compared with their peers from non-entrepreneurial families.

The fact that entrepreneurial traits appear to endure through generations, despite sociopolitical movements that aim to stamp them out, indicates that proximity to these ideas at an individual or household level can have a huge impact, explains Na.

“What I take away from this is that if we would like to encourage more entrepreneurship, then we really need to build more opportunities for people who aspire to be – or never thought about becoming – entrepreneurs to be exposed to these ideas through initiatives such as mentoring,” she asserts. “This would hopefully enable other people to pick up these values and follow their dreams.”



# I WANT TO BELIEVE

The research expanding our understanding of – and empathy for – conspiracy theorists.

“I’ve spent many nights on a beach in Worthing trying to prove that the Earth is flat using lasers and the horizon,” says Dr Tim Hill. “Turns out, each and every public experiment I’ve been to, we [end up saying], ‘I think we’ve set it up wrong. It’s an equipment problem.’ It’s usually an ‘us’ failure.”

What leads someone to believe, contrary to all scientific proof, that our planet is flat? Or, indeed, in any of the myriad conspiracy theories that abound? This is the question investigated by Tim’s recent ethnographic research, which took him undercover with such groups to examine their ‘awakenings’ – the moments when people begin to buy into such beliefs. These can range from the fairly harmless and entertaining, like Tim’s Flat Earther evenings on the beach, all the way up to dangerous and outright xenophobic far-right conspiracies such as the Great Replacement Theory.

“No one’s born a conspiracy theorist,” he explains. “The big lesson is that the transition to a position where you suddenly believe that doctors are trying to kill you through the use of vaccines, or that the Covid-19 pandemic doesn’t really exist and in fact was just a conspiracy to keep us in their own homes for a climate emergency lockdown – that journey, that process, it can happen in a matter of months.”

## Pain and loss

Tim’s research identified that, for many, it is personal experience that moves them from healthy levels of scepticism to a conspiracy theorist. He points out that “the people who believe in these things aren’t stupid” but instead feel they have been gravely let down by authority figures.

Examples, he suggests, might include people who have lost loved ones in a hospital where they perceive medical staff to have made a mistake; or those who have lost jobs due to the government not stepping in to save a cherished national industry.

“When the state lets people down, they go searching for answers,” Tim asserts. “It’s in the process of joining online groups – which are usually led by some entrepreneurial type who wants to make a name for themselves – that things get slightly more dangerous and risky.”

Emily Godwin, a PhD student from Bath’s Institute for Digital Security & Behaviour supervised by Tim, has investigated how memes can also play a part in the online spread of conspiracy theories. Her research analysed memes posted to Covid-19-related social media communities on Reddit. She found that they fell into three broad themes:

“Conspiracy theories for many people provide that sense of tight, strong ties to people, that solidarity that is often lacking.”

‘deception’ by authorities and conspirators; ‘delusion’ among the public; and ‘superiority’ of conspiracy believers who see themselves as committed to ‘free thinking’.

“We see that memes play a significant role in reinforcing the culture of online conspiracy theorist communities,” says Emily. “Members gravitate towards memes that validate their worldview, and these memes become an important part of their storytelling. The simple, shareable format then enables a rapid spread of harmful beliefs.”

## A shared pastime

This sense of community centred on a shared perspective is, Tim suggests, one of the most appealing elements. “It fills a huge, glaring gap in the UK’s culture and social scene, which is that people don’t have serious hobbies. They don’t have things where they can unwind and feel part of the community,” he explains. “Conspiracy theories for many people provide that sense of tight, strong ties to people, that solidarity that is often lacking.”

Conspiracist communities are often deeply social, he points out, with an interactive element that he likens to a collaborative treasure hunt to find the next clue to unpick a deep mystery. Tim is also keen to dispel the myth that conspiracy theories are entirely unscientific. While their content is unfalsifiable and unverifiable, its dissemination in many ways mimics the conventions of science – with people discussing their theories and receiving critical feedback from peers at conferences and seminars.

If we can understand truth behind the myths, and the factors that play into someone’s awakening into conspiracy theories, what does it tell us about how the process could potentially be reversed?

“This is the million-dollar question that I’m asked all the time,” says Tim, “and it would be very, very helpful to say that there is a silver bullet solution here, but there isn’t.”

No one actually has an equivalent of a deradicalisation programme. Anecdotally, the people that I know who have gone through the other end, they explain that it’s when they realise the people who they look up to are just as corrupt, if not even more corrupt and selfish than the celebrities and politicians that they once derided.”

Understanding the processes by which people become entangled in conspiracy theories and their communities, however, can offer valuable insight that could be used in future to help prevent vulnerable people from being exploited by malicious actors with a self-serving agenda. As Tim asserts: “Once you are in the rabbit hole it’s very hard to get out and by understanding the ways in which people over time become conspiracy theorists, hopefully we can stop people going down that quite dangerous path.”



Dr Tim Hill



Emily Godwin

# SPOTLIGHT ON: INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

Centre Director Dr Annie Snelson-Powell explains why global connection is important and how EdTech is changing the game.

## What are your own current research areas?

I've always had a fascination with how organisations discuss their strategies – the things that they say and how plausible that is, because it's often quite noble. I found it particularly intriguing to look at this area because it brings up the purpose of organising, especially around social good. So I've been looking at the relationships between how organisations talk about their social responsibilities and how they implement those.

In terms of more specific themes to my research, one strand is around legitimacy signals. I've done work with colleagues here in Bath and in the US about how sustainability standards connect with a firm's performance on sustainability. Looking at that is really interesting, because it's not linear.

I've been thinking about how business schools, too, signal their legitimacy and their commitment to values around social justice and climate change.

## How and when did you first get involved with ICHEM?

An important part of ICHEM is its relationship with our DBA in Higher Education Management. I was brought in from the start of my PhD to teach on the DBA, which was about 14 years ago.

For the past six years I've also been supervising DBA students, and then I took over as a Co-Director with Professor Jürgen Enders about a year ago. As he moved into retirement over summer 2025, I became the Director. I've been handed the keys to the castle, as it were!

## Tell us about some of the recent research coming out of the Centre.

We have so much going on! Professor Martyna Sliwa has recently co-edited a book on inclusive pedagogy, which is really interesting. Professor Dirk Lindebaum has been publishing some really thought-provoking work in management journals, developing a deeper understanding of the implications of digitisation, especially AI, on learning.

One of my DBA students, Michael Salmon, has been writing about this relatively new genre of policy work that happens in universities and the professionalisation around it. Another DBA student of mine, Doaa Gharzeddine, has published research with Professor Dan Davies on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and what they mean in universities. There's such variety in the research that the DBAs produce.

## Where do you see the Centre's future direction?

ICHEM has such a strong legacy. How do we preserve its rich heritage and what it stands for, for the hundreds of people who are actively part of the Centre? While we're driving a path forward, we need to continue to enrich and connect ICHEM with the university ecosystem internationally.

We already have the ICHEM seminar series, which has been running for decades and acts as a networking and knowledge sharing hub. We are also starting to host writing retreats for researchers in higher education, and right now we're beginning to plan our next ICHEM conference for summer 2027.

Hopefully we'll be drawing and building upon the extraordinary work that has gone before, which is this strong sense of a centre that's there to ask the most important questions that universities face around the world.

We're in a much less certain environment than we were when I first joined the Centre in 2012 [but its role has never been more important as] a platform to have these discussions and debates, given the political nature of the world. We also need to think about how that polarisation contains implications for how we conceive ourselves as part of this interconnected HE system.

## How is the rapid advance of tech such as AI affecting higher education?

From the work we've carried out so far, it appears to be true that learning technologies are often designed for users and students directly, more so than for delivery of education in a university classroom. This could mean that over time it will be the users who come to demand certain technologies more than it is the universities who decide [on] and curate those technologies. So there's this balance between how students want to learn and what university educators want to do with the technologies [universities are] already using. Students come into university already technologically oriented.

Before now, we would say that the university would decide whether they had Moodle or a different platform, for example, but it feels that there'll be more movement in technologies in use, and we could see more flexibility in future – in this way giving students more power and universities relatively less say.

The ecosystem for education based on EdTech is kind of disturbing who's in control of how education is delivered and what learning even is. It's shaking the foundations for sure, and we won't know what that means for decades to come.



## SIZE AND SCOPE

Thanks to its strong connection to the School of Management's world-leading DBA in Higher Education Management, ICHEM boasts a membership of hundreds of academics and practitioners working across the globe.

"We're the only university research centre of higher education in the world, that we know of, that is based within a management school," explains Annie. "It's a very distinctive and recognisable niche, and I think that many of our DBA students really appreciate the way that we look at problems from this management perspective."

# VETTING YOUR OWN PERFORMANCE

How norms can be enforced by what we desire and fear in the workplace.

How do you perceive yourself and your performance at work? This could be a key factor in how much you conform to the ideals of your organisation – a process known as occupational identity regulation. Research by former School of Management PhD student Dr Sarah Page-Jones and Professor Andrew Brown, Associate Dean (Research) examined this phenomenon in vets.

The study comprised formal interviews, as well as informal conversations and observations, with a sample of 39 vets at all levels of seniority working at a single chain

of veterinary practices. Vets were chosen as the profession is both high-status and competitive, with prevalent issues around stress and burnout.

“It is well-established that prestigious organisations and elite professions exercise control over their members by offering them seductive, desired identities; our novel finding is that control is also enforced through feared identities,” says Andrew.

Their findings demonstrated that participants held both these ‘desired’ and

‘feared’ identities in their minds – which fed into their self-reflection and acted to either reinforce or modify their behaviour, respectively. This was further underlined by what participants viewed as a culture of surveillance, leading to a lack of resistance against organisational norms.

The researchers identified that this cycle of pride, guilt and self-evaluation, combined with the feeling of being constantly watched, led to power being constantly asserted over the vets by their employer.

## Desired identities

*“I’m very, very good at picking things up super early and diagnosing things that I know so many vets would miss.”*

The vets studied were keen to be viewed as competent by their peers and skilled at saving animals by their clients. They enjoyed demonstrating their knowledge and living up to a heroic image.



## Feared identities

*“I [accidentally] gave the cat a much higher dose of the medication than it needed and it’s one obviously with a narrow safety margin... [it] still upsets me that I made a mistake like that.”*

In contrast to the desired identities, the vets also expressed distress and even trauma at having made errors. They worried about being perceived as endangering – or even killing – the animals in their care.



## Self-examination

*“I always question myself and try and think should I have done something differently.”*

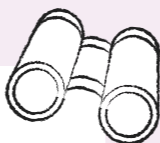
Both the desired and the feared identities were basis for self-reflection, with the participants revealing pride in their work and wishes for public acclaim, often contrasting with guilt over missteps and concern about public denigration.



## Surveillance

*“We have [Morbidity & Mortality] meetings pretty much monthly, so, every minor mistake that people make with drugs and stuff like that we discuss.”*

Vets working at the chain felt themselves to always be under the watch of their peers, both formally and informally. This acted alongside their self-reflection to moderate their behaviour, simultaneously fostering high standards and an atmosphere of anxiety.



“Neural networks are such powerful engines, which you can apply to any problem.”



**ARJUN CHATTERJEE** is a fourth-year PhD student in the Accounting, Finance & Law division.

He explains his work on how AI can be applied to financial markets and the unexpected similarities between stock markets and airflow dynamics.

“What we’re trying to do with my research is create models for figuring out the probabilities of where asset prices might move. For example, Apple prices might be \$100 today, but what are the odds they’re going to be \$105 tomorrow? Or \$95?”

“We can build mathematical models that dictate these underlying probabilities. However, unfortunately a lot of these models tend to be extremely difficult to work with. They don’t have easy solutions. And so we almost always have to apply some sort of approximation: that’s where I come in. We have been trying to use AI models to build these approximation algorithms. Neural networks are such powerful engines, which you can apply to any problem.”

“My master’s was in aeronautical engineering. I think that financial markets are somewhat similar to modelling airflow. It might sound a little weird, but both are highly complex, non-linear systems that require extreme modelling.”

“With finance there’s an added element in the sense that if you run an experiment on airflow 100 times, it’s the same result 100 times, but a stock market is going to behave differently every single time because people learn, they adapt. So there’s this dynamic element within it, which seemed like a really interesting problem to try to tackle.”

“First and foremost, the thing about Bath that really caught my eye was the Doctoral College. I think a lot of people don’t appreciate just how massive it is compared to other UK universities and the amount of support that you get. I remember in my orientation, it’s that [that] I was really taken aback by – exactly how much the University does for doctoral students.”

“Secondly, I just really got along with my supervisors, Professors David Newton and Dimitrios Gounopoulos – immediately, it just kind of clicked.”

## Making comparisons

“My PhD has taken the three-paper format. Within this, the first paper was a comparative study between different neural networks to identify if there are any features and certain algorithms that make them better at approximating as needed. We found there are certain models with inbuilt inductive biases, and these tend to outperform the more general models.”

“For the second paper, we took these features and then we built our own neural network. And, amazingly, it ended up working. I think it was twice as fast as the current academic benchmark and it was a lot more accurate in certain regions of

the solutions. The third paper, which I’m currently wrapping up, is trying to apply our novel algorithm to more interesting options, pricing contracts and so on.

“I think a lot of the real-world use cases will be for high-frequency trading firms, hedge funds that work with low-latency trades – basically, people who are going to be trading at really high speeds.”

“One of the main benefits from applying our method is that you can bypass having to solve an entire set of equations and get instantaneous pricing. There’s a speed element as well as an ease-of-use element. We hope that it has a benefit for investors. I do think there is something in here for everybody who wants to try to trade options contracts.”

“When it comes to studying a PhD I feel like oftentimes passion only gets you so far. I feel like it really burns for about three months in a little honeymoon phase where everybody’s really excited and wants to get on with it.”

“It’s all fine and dandy until you come across the first really difficult paper that you’re trying to get through, and then everything just hits at once. You’re like, ‘Why am I here? What am I doing?’ Things like passion and enjoyment can run out really quickly, so make sure you’re doing the PhD for the right reasons and for yourself.”

# LEADING PUBLICATIONS

Recent publications from our academics in AJG4 and 4\* journals.

**Amaral, C**, Kolsarici, C, **Ikonen, I** & Robitaille, N 2025, 'AI-Driven Behavioral Nudges for Organizations: An Integrative System for Sustainable Resource Management', *Marketing Science*.

**Ananth, P**, Baer, M & Deichmann, D 2025, 'Developing Problem Representations in Organizations: A Synthesis Across Literatures and an Integrative Framework', *Journal of Management*, vol. 51, no. 6, pp. 2212 - 2244.

**Augustine, G**, Hedberg, L, Choi, T-U & Lounsbury, M 2025, 'Wasted? The Downstream Effects of Social Movement-Backed Occupations', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, vol. 70, no. 1, pp. 23-68.

Bardhi, F, Corciolani, M, Dalli, D & **Maraj, V** 2025, 'Beyond Buying: Extending the Concept of Acquisition in Consumption', *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*.

Danatzi, I, **Hill, T**, Karpen, IO & Kleinaltenkamp, M 2025, 'Curating the Crowd: How Firms Manage Social Fit to Stage Social Atmospheres', *Journal of Marketing*.

Dion, D, **Pavlyuchenko, R** & Prokopec, S 2025, 'The Enrichment Economy: Market Dynamics, Brand Strategy, and Ethics', *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 89, no. 2, pp. 96-118.

**Gounopoulos, D**, **Huang, W** & Yang, M 2025, 'Innovation and Annual Report Readability', *Research Policy*, vol. 54, no. 8, 105301.

LeBaron, G, Spence, L, **Crane, A**, **Soundararajan, V** & **Bloomfield, MJ** 2025, 'Feminist Value Creation: The Pursuit of Gender Equality', *Academy of Management Review*.

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Marku, E, Di Guardo, MC, **Patriotta, G** & Allen, DG 2025, 'Technology Emergence as a Structuring Process: A Complexity Theory Perspective on Blockchain', *Journal of Management*, vol. 51, no. 7, pp. 2916 - 2945.

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**Rofcanin, Y** & Budhwar, P 2025, 'Reinvigorating the Micro Foundations of Human Resource Management (HRM): A Narrative Review', *Human Resource Management Journal*.

**Sergeeva, A** & Zott, C 2025, 'How Founders' Values Enable Business Model Innovation in New Ventures: The Case of Magnum Photos', *Strategic Management Journal*.

Wang, Y, Zhang, M, **Roehrich, J**, Ma, R & Zhai, Y 2025, 'Scaling Emerging Healthcare Technology: Managing Paradoxical Tensions in a Connected Health Platform', *Journal of Operations Management*.





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