ANALYSIS OF UK BUSINESS SCHOOLS' APPROACHES TO SUSTAINABILITY

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of a Chartered ABS survey of UK business school Deans about their schools' approaches to defining and improving sustainability, as well as the relationship between the business school and parent university in relation to sustainability.

The survey was designed by a working group of representatives from Charted ABS member schools who have an interest in sustainability and the role of business schools.

The survey was circulated between December 2024 and March 2025 and responses were received from 35 member institutions of the Chartered ABS.

Overall, the survey results clearly indicate that addressing sustainability is a high priority for business schools. Sustainability is embedded within the schools' internal structures through dedicated goals, committees or working groups, leadership roles and targeted interventions to reduce environmental and societal impact. A strong emphasis is also placed on sustainability education, with 76% of schools having extensively embedded sustainability into their curriculum. All respondents reported offering specialist sustainability modules within their programmes, and over two thirds provided a sustainability research centre or group, specialist programmes or executive education courses with sustainability programmes. This highlights the schools' commitment to supporting the development of future leaders with a foundational understanding of sustainability issues.

Moreover, external frameworks and accreditation requirements play an important role in shaping business schools' approach to sustainability. Many respondents align their sustainability activities with frameworks including the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS) and the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), while accreditations, such as the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), are used in shaping strategic priorities and decision making.

Looking ahead, all respondents indicated teaching/education and research/knowledge exchange should be prioritised to increase sustainability impact in the future, with 91% and 88%, respectively, considering these activities a high priority. In addition, more than half of the schools considered executive education and operations activities a high priority for driving sustainability impact. This suggests that business schools identify opportunities to progress sustainability across all areas of their activity, emphasising their commitment to drive progress.

The findings also reveal that business schools have limited autonomy in establishing their approach to tackling sustainability, a trend consistent with findings from previous Chartered ABS Annual Membership Surveys in 2022 and 2023. 94% of the schools reported operationalising sustainability practices set by their parent universities, with restricted control over environmental and social policies. Although a higher degree of autonomy was reported for developing and implementing practices related to societal issues than environmental practices, the results still indicated a low level of autonomy.

Nevertheless, none of the respondents felt that an approach determined centrally had any adverse impact on addressing sustainability concerns. Furthermore, the survey findings show that even under a centrally determined approach to sustainability practices business schools are not entirely without influence and often go beyond the minimum requirements set by the university. All of the responding schools reported being able to influence their school's sustainability strategy to some degree, suggesting that, while decision-making authority largely belongs to the central university, business schools can still shape priorities and advocate for changes, as well as tailor the strategy to the business school context.

METHODOLOGY

The data presented in this report were collected from an online survey administered by the Chartered ABS between December 2024 and March 2025. The survey was developed by the Chartered ABS Research team in close collaboration with a working group of eleven representatives from Chartered ABS member schools who have an interest in sustainability and the role of business schools. The working group supported the establishment of the research objectives and provided oversight throughout the project and was comprised of the following members: Professor Alex Hope, Professor Baback Yazdani, Professor Hisham Farag, Professor Joanne Meehan, Professor Kamil Omoteso, Dr Loyin Olotu-Umoren, Professor Maria Piacentini, Professor Marian Garcia, Dr Mohamed Saeudy, Sarah Verbickas, and Dr Scott Taylor.

A literature review of sustainability in higher education was conducted prior to designing the survey to inform the research questions, which were agreed with the working group. The final instrument consisted of 26 questions that were organised around the four core areas of business schools' activities: teaching, research, internal operations, and external engagement.

The survey was circulated to Deans and Heads of Professional Services at Chartered ABS member business schools, with recipients asked to coordinate internally and submit a single response per institution. A total of 35 member business schools provided a full response to the survey.

HOW DO BUSINESS SCHOOLS DEFINE SUSTAINABILITY?

- The 35 responding business schools were asked how their school defines sustainability. Their written responses revealed that many schools aligned their definition with frameworks established by the United Nations (UN).
- Multiple schools said they had adopted the definition established by the UN's Brundtland Commission in 1987, *"meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".*
- In addition to this, several schools aligned their definition with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a framework consisting of seventeen goals that aim to improve the lives of populations across the globe as well as mitigate the dangerous effects of climate change produced by humans.
- Another three business schools disclosed they followed the UN's Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), an initiative consisting of seven principles centred around serving society and safeguarding that aims to increase sustainability in business and management education.
- Many of the definitions provided by the business schools included three key dimensions of sustainability – environmental, economic, and social – with several definitions integrating all three. For example, one school expressed their understanding that sustainable economic development can only be achieved by promoting the protection of the environment, social inclusion, governance, and accountability, a notion that is embedded in their teaching and research.

Environmental sustainability

- With regards to environmental sustainability, responses highlighted a need to safeguard the natural environment by minimising harm to it when carrying out responsibilities or tackling environmental challenges, such as achieving net-zero emissions.
- Several schools emphasised their dedication to becoming more environmentally friendly. One school reported that their sustainability strategy includes various environmental initiatives, such as plans to reduce direct and indirect emissions as well as an accredited system to manage their environmental impacts.

Social sustainability

- In relation to social sustainability, responses stressed the importance of social justice, ensuring that present and future societies are able to thrive in a healthy and equal way.
- One respondent commented that their school's definition extends beyond environmental sustainability to include social equity, integrating ethical leadership and responsible management into their education and practices.
- Another school emphasised the importance of social sustainability by highlighting their dedication to educating future business leaders to align business practices with ethical principles.

Economic sustainability

- Definitions integrating economic sustainability emphasised a need for economic resilience and to educate future business leaders to ensure business practices are aligned with ethical and sustainable principles.
- One school highlighted their dedication to offering an infrastructure that supports sustainable practices in teaching, research and daily operations as well as a research environment that can address the necessary questions for transformative changes in the economy and society.

How comprehensive is your school's understanding of its environmental and societal impact?

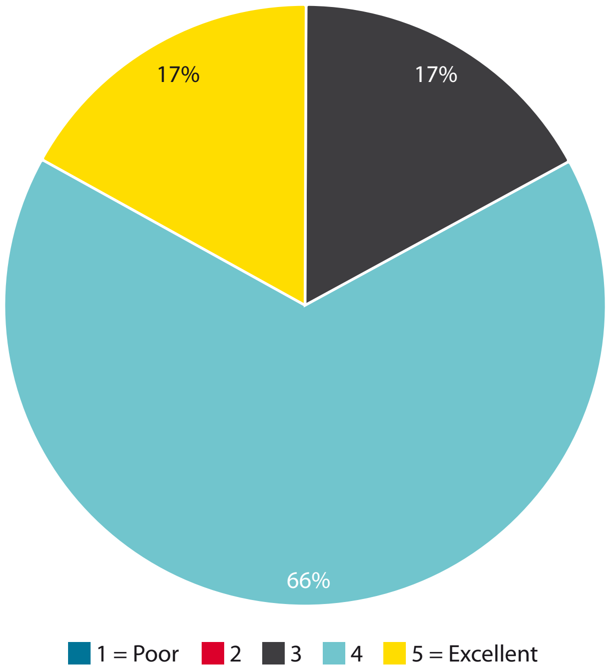

Figure 1: Business schools' level of comprehension of their environmental and societal impact.

- All respondents rated their understanding as 3 or higher, with the majority (66%) selecting 4, suggesting a strong understanding of environmental and societal impact among schools.
- The additional comments revealed that the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been used by several schools to deepen their understanding of their environmental and social impact.
- Another mechanism that was reported to have influenced schools' level of awareness and approach to these issues was the AACSB accreditation, as cited by two respondents.
- In their written response, one Dean highlighted that while their school has a clear vision for addressing its impacts, the progression of their sustainability goals is often constrained by a lack of control and the central university's financial priorities. As a result, important data is sometimes unavailable to the school.
- Another school stated that environmental impact is measured centrally by the university rather than at a faculty level, resulting in a more moderate understanding.

AREAS OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIETAL IMPACT UNDER REVIEW OR ACTIVE INTERVENTION

- Respondents were asked to provide details on which areas of their school's environmental and societal impact were under review and/or being addressed through active interventions. The responses covered several key areas:

Learning and teaching

- Programme curricula were under review or being adapted in several schools. Two Deans reported that sustainability has been embedded into their programmes, with one noting the introduction of two new sustainability modules.
- The UN SDGs had been integrated into programmes in three schools, with one Dean highlighting an ambition to embed SDGs into teaching and assessment across all undergraduate and postgraduate courses by September 2025. In addition to this, one respondent commented that their curriculum is under constant review to ensure relevance in the context of SDGs and environmental changes.
- Ongoing efforts to decolonise curricula were reported by two respondents.
- One school hosted a conference for students on sustainability in business, providing opportunities for students to engage with experts and gain insights into current sustainability challenges and innovations.

Research

- Multiple respondents cited their research as an area under review or actively addressed. One school had revised its research strategy to adopt a more thematic approach, aiming to build critical mass around social inequalities and maximise impact for the Research Excellence Framework (REF).
- One Dean stated that research outputs have been mapped against the SDGs and they have secured funding for multidisciplinary research on several of the goals.
- Ongoing efforts to decolonise research projects was also noted by one respondent.

Operations

Travel

- Several schools have addressed their environmental impact by reviewing travel policies. Multiple respondents said that sustainable modes of transportation were being encouraged, with one specifying a ban on domestic flights and another highlighting a voluntarist policy of no flying within Europe.
- One school led a campaign to promote car sharing, public transport and active travel with the aim of reducing emissions produced by staff and students' commutes.
- An institutional policy to incorporate slow or sustainable alternatives into research grants had been implemented in another school, with the respondent recognising that these are sometimes more costly than flying.
- Slow travel policies were introduced at two schools.

Waste

- Initiatives to tackle waste and promote recycling were reported.
- Two schools had implemented measures to minimise food waste, with one introducing an Events Framework to provide guidance on ordering food for events. This includes an 80% catering rule to account for no-show attendees.
- Another school had been tackling e-waste by rationalising internal communications and reducing email traffic through the use of Microsoft Teams.

Consumption

- Responsible consumption was promoted at five schools, with a focus on energy, water and sustainable purchasing practices. One school specified that it was installing energy-saving technologies to reduce overall energy consumption.

Nature-friendly grounds

- Some schools have enhanced their natural environment through tree planting, rewilding and creating sustainable gardens to re-green unused spaces.

Saïd Business School, Oxford case study - 'Walking the Talk'

Discover how Oxford Saïd Business School exemplifies their world-leading sustainability teaching and research.

Introduction

At Saïd Business School, University of Oxford, sustainability is not just a theme in our teaching and research - it shapes how we run the School every day. As a business school that has received global recognition globally for sustainability leadership, we believe credibility depends on aligning our operations with the standards we promote.

Decarbonisation

With an ambitious 2035 net zero carbon target year, we are taking significant and regular steps towards decarbonisation. A major milestone was the installation of six air source heat pumps at our Thatcher Business Education Centre. This £1.6 million project replaced gas boilers and, alongside improvements to our Building Management System, has helped achieve a 40% reduction in Scope 1 and 2 emissions compared to our 2018/19 baseline. We have also moved to a 'Zero Carbon for Business' electricity tariff and continue to generate renewable power on-site through photovoltaic panels.

Importantly, we focus first on cutting emissions directly rather than relying on carbon offsets. For us, net zero must be grounded in genuine decarbonisation.

Catering & waste

Our catering operations show how sustainability can be integrated into everyday decision-making. Working closely with our supplier, BaxterStorey, we have built a decentralised and seasonal supply chain that delivers on average 88% fewer road miles than a traditional centralised model - equivalent to saving 56 tonnes of CO_2e

in 2023/24. We have retained our Food for Life Bronze certification, confirming that the food we serve is fresh, local and responsibly sourced. All food waste is sent for anaerobic digestion and waste oil is converted into biofuel. In fact, we have achieved our third consecutive year of sending zero waste to landfill and reached a recycling rate of 43.4%, surpassing Oxford University's 2025 target of 40%.

Environmental Management

We have a certified ISO 14001 Environmental Management System (EMS), the international gold standard for managing environmental impact. This framework ensures that legal compliance and environmental performance are continuously reviewed and improved. The EMS is integrated with ISO 45001, Occupational Health & Safety Management, demonstrating that we do the upmost to care for both people and the planet.

Travel

Staff travel remains one of our most significant indirect emission sources. Therefore we rigorously apply the University's Travel Policy: domestic flights are not permitted, rail travel is prioritised where feasible and all flights incur an internal carbon levy. In 2024/25, 99% of flights were compliant with the policy, and the levy raised £52,000 to fund further decarbonisation initiatives across Oxford University.

Our experience reinforces a simple principle for business schools - if we teach responsible leadership, we **must** exhibit it in how we operate every day.

Case study provided by: Jack Stone, Head of Sustainability, Saïd Business School, University of Oxford

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- The review and implementation of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) interventions was cited by six schools as a means of addressing their societal impact.
- Enhancing EDI was reported as the strategic priority for one school as well as their central university, with the respondent highlighting an application for an Athena Swan Bronze award as recognition of promoting gender equality and the appointment of an Associate Dean for EDI at the School level.
- Another Dean highlighted initiatives to promote EDI in recruitment, staff development and student engagement, alongside support for underrepresented communities through scholarships, mentoring and outreach programmes.

Community engagement

- Community engagement was an area targeted by four schools. One respondent highlighted partnerships with local businesses, charities and government bodies to address sustainability challenges through consultancy projects and student led initiatives.
- Another school reported student involvement with local charities and associations, strengthening ties between the school and wider community.

Nottingham University Business School case study
Ingenuity Impact: Addressing social and environment challenges through social impact

Discover how civic entrepreneurship is creating lasting social impact through inclusive venture creation.

Ingenuity Impact tackles the UK's major social and environmental challenges through the creation of impactful new start-ups. Rooted in the concept of civic entrepreneurship, the programme brings together business schools, students, graduates, community organisations, local government, corporates and the third sector to develop new impact driven businesses.

Having now completed our tenth year, we are proud of the impact our programme has had on the under-served and underrepresented groups that have taken part. This year's cohort was our most diverse yet and the application of their lived experience has inspired all of us involved in the programme. In response to the British Business Bank's 2020 Alone Together report, we are proud of the role we have played in diversifying the start-up landscape.

Over the last decade we have supported over 4850 changemakers who, with the help of over 1370 volunteers created 536 new ventures that received £1.15m in grant funding. An external evaluation of the programme concluded we had delivered over £750k in net social impact through the creation of social enterprises by underrepresented individuals[1].

Last year's programme began in September 2024 with a series of outreach events across the country to highlight the biggest issues facing the UK and the role of civic entrepreneurship in driving change. With the support of academic colleagues from the Business School, participants were given the opportunity to work through the Ingenuity Process[2] to systematically contextualise their chosen challenges and begin identifying potential solutions. They were also invited to participate in the My Way Project[3] which supports those facing structural barriers to entrepreneurship to develop confidence and motivation and to build up their entrepreneurial, leadership and business skills.

The main programme of skills and training began in January 2025, with a flexible 16-week skills and training offering to help participants turn their initial ideas into viable, sustainable and profitable businesses. Our online Ingenuity Skills Hub provided step-by-step guidance for them to develop their ideas and an outline business plan. They also had opportunities to access bespoke advice and guidance through our one-to-one mentoring sessions and series of drop-in sessions with industry and academic experts.

Ingenuity Impact invited 30 participants to take part in the national competition and pitch for their share of a £75,000 funding pot. They received further mentorship and guidance and each delivered a 10-minute pitch to a panel of impact investors, Ingenuity partner representatives and industry influencers. Winning ideas ranged from a sewing education business to address clothing overconsumption through to a novel marine ecosystem technology to restore coral reefs.

For business school leaders wishing to adopt such an approach our Ingenuity creative problem solving pedagogy is freely available and open source . It is deployed annually by over 5200 students, 2100 entrepreneurs and 550 senior leaders across 3 continents.

Case study provided by: Professor Simon Mosey, Nottingham University Business School

[1] Our impact | Ingenuity
[2] Resources - The University of Nottingham
[3] Resources - The University of Nottingham

Does your business school operationalise sustainability practices which are set by your university?

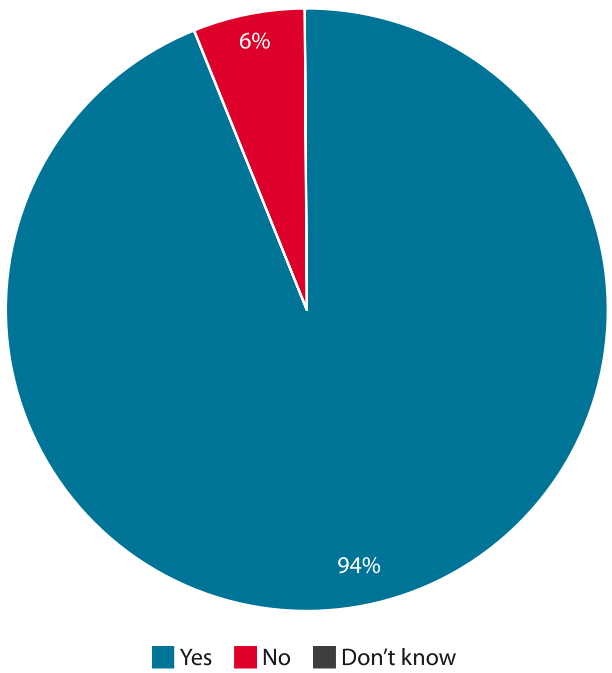

Figure 2: Proportion of business schools operationalising sustainability practices set by their central university.

- When asked whether their business school operationalises sustainability practices set by the university, 94% of respondents responded positively with the remaining 6% declaring they do not operationalise sustainability practices set by their university.
- In the additional comments one school noted that, while they operationalise university-wide sustainability practices, they also establish their own approaches in teaching, research, and partnerships that are aligned with their own strategic priorities.
- A similar point was raised by another Dean, who also noted that the school's practices are often adopted by other faculties and the central university.
- In contrast, another Dean reported working in the opposite direction by advocating for the university to adopt the school's practices.

Does your business school have a sustainability plan?

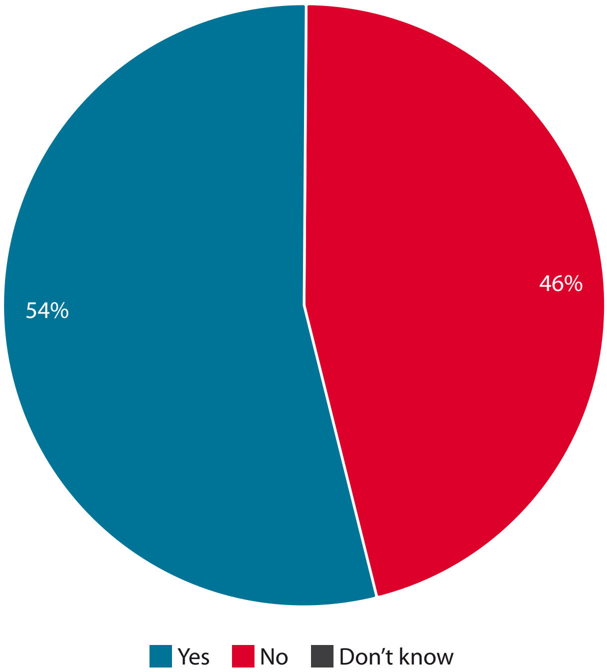

Figure 3: Proportion of business schools with a sustainability plan.

- Just over half of the respondents said that their school had a sustainability plan with the remainder saying that they did not, indicating a clear divergence among the schools.
- In the open-ended comments, some schools clarified they do not have a sustainability plan as they operationalise/directly follow their university's plan. In addition, some schools use their knowledge and influence to contribute to the work of their faculty and university.
- Moreover, a number of schools that do not have a plan exclusively dedicated to sustainability have embedded sustainability concerns and KPIs in different policies and strategic plans as well as embedded it in the curriculum and research activities.
- A few schools are currently developing a sustainability plan and for the schools which already have them, the plans most often cover the areas of education, research, operations, and engagement.

Is your school's sustainability plan more or less comprehensive than your university's plan?

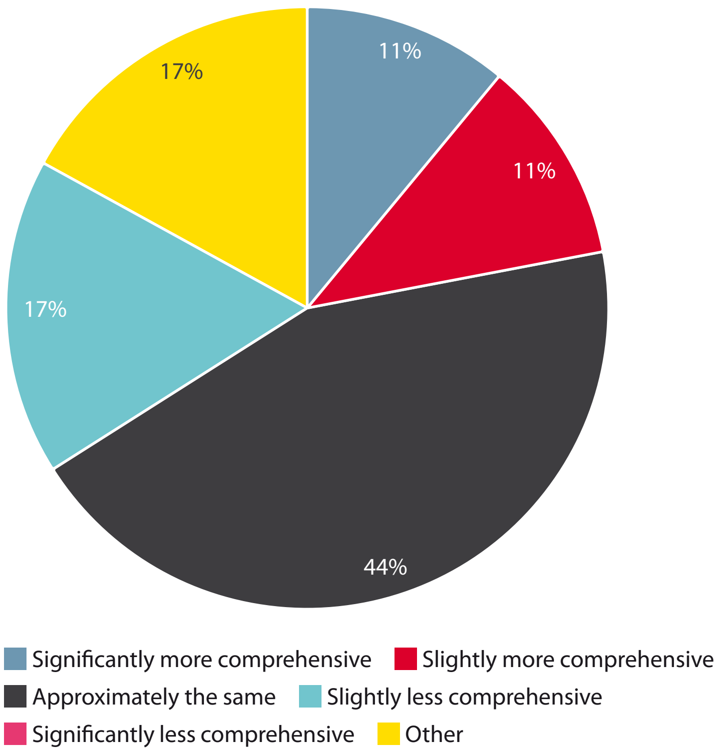

Figure 4: Comprehensiveness of business schools' sustainability plan in comparison to their central university's plan.

- Approximately 22% of responding business schools said their sustainability plan is slightly or significantly more comprehensive than their university's plan.
- Almost half of the respondents said their sustainability plan is approximately the same as their university's in terms of comprehensiveness and only 17% of schools said its slightly less comprehensive.
- Of the remaining 17% of responding business schools that selected 'Other', a couple specified that their sustainability plan is either derived from or as comprehensive as the university's plan but covers different areas which are specific to business schools and can better complement the university's sustainability plan.

From 1 to 5, what degree of autonomy does your school have in developing and implementing environmental practices independently of your university in the following areas?

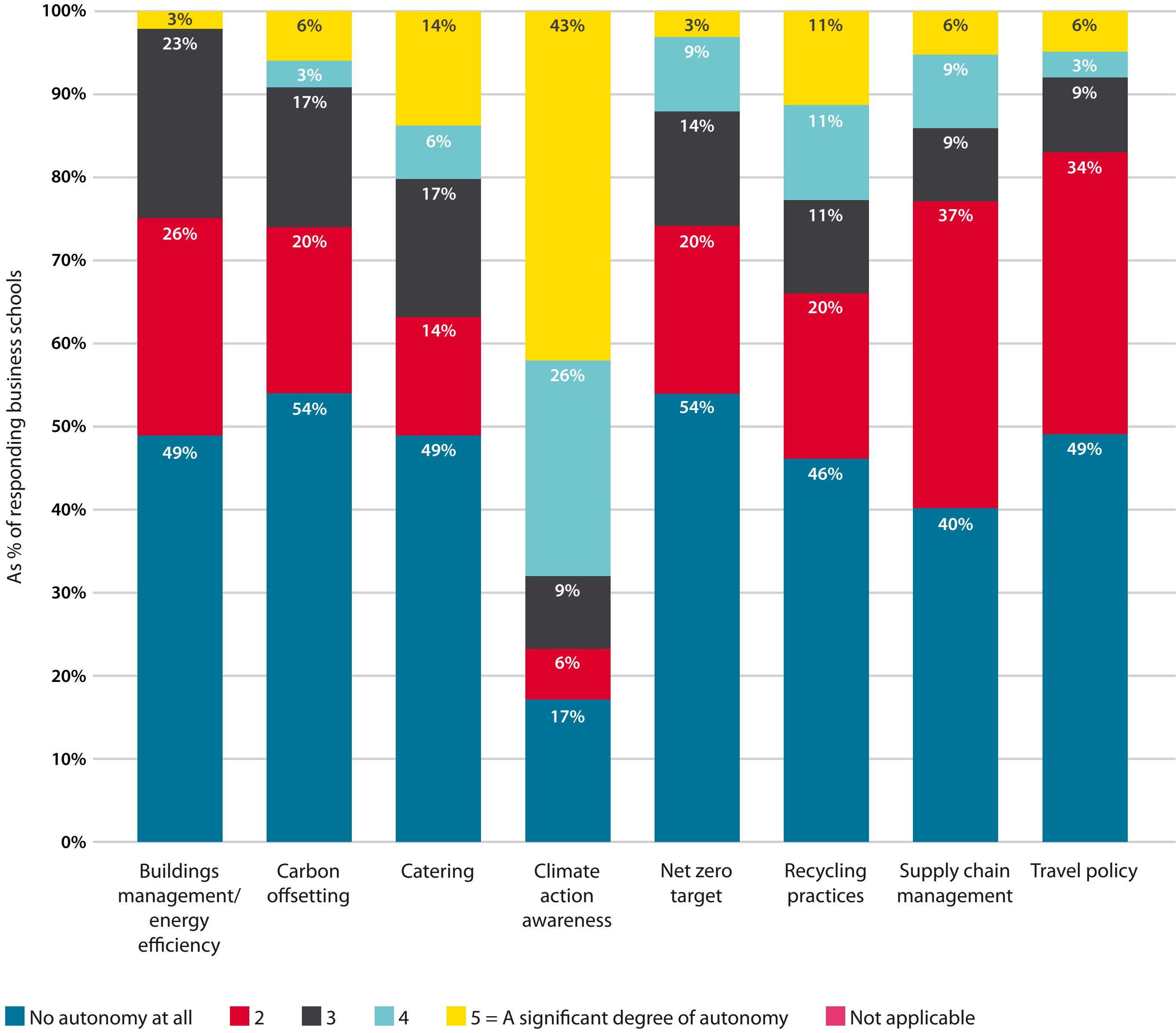

Figure 5: Business schools' level of autonomy in developing and implementing environmental practices independently by area of decision making.

- Respondents were asked to rate the degree of autonomy their school has in developing and implementing environmental practices independently of their university in a selection of eight different areas.
- 40% or more of the responding business schools reported having no autonomy at all over most areas, namely buildings management/energy efficiency, carbon offsetting, catering, net zero target, recycling practices, supply chain management, and travel policy.
- Nonetheless, responding schools appear to have more autonomy in the categories of catering and recycling with 37% and 33% of respondents, respectively, choosing a rating of 3 or more. This contrasts with the responses in areas such as travel policy where only 18% of respondents gave a rating of 3 or more, indicating a degree of autonomy.
- When it comes to climate action awareness, 43% of respondents reported having a significant degree of autonomy over the development and implementation of practices in this area, far more than for any of the other categories.
- The open-ended comments reinforced schools' limited autonomy in areas such as catering, travel policy, carbon offsetting, recycling, energy use, procurement and facilities management. According to the comments, this is because these areas are largely governed by university-level frameworks and resources, leaving business schools with minimal ability to set independent sustainability policies.
- Some respondents highlighted there is often collaboration between schools and the wider university and that often, alongside the implementation of the university policy, schools can develop their own initiatives.
- In contrast, some schools can lead on their climate action awareness since they maintain genuine autonomy over their communications, independent from university resources.

From 1 to 5, what degree of autonomy does your school have in developing and implementing practices related to societal issues independently of your university in the following areas?

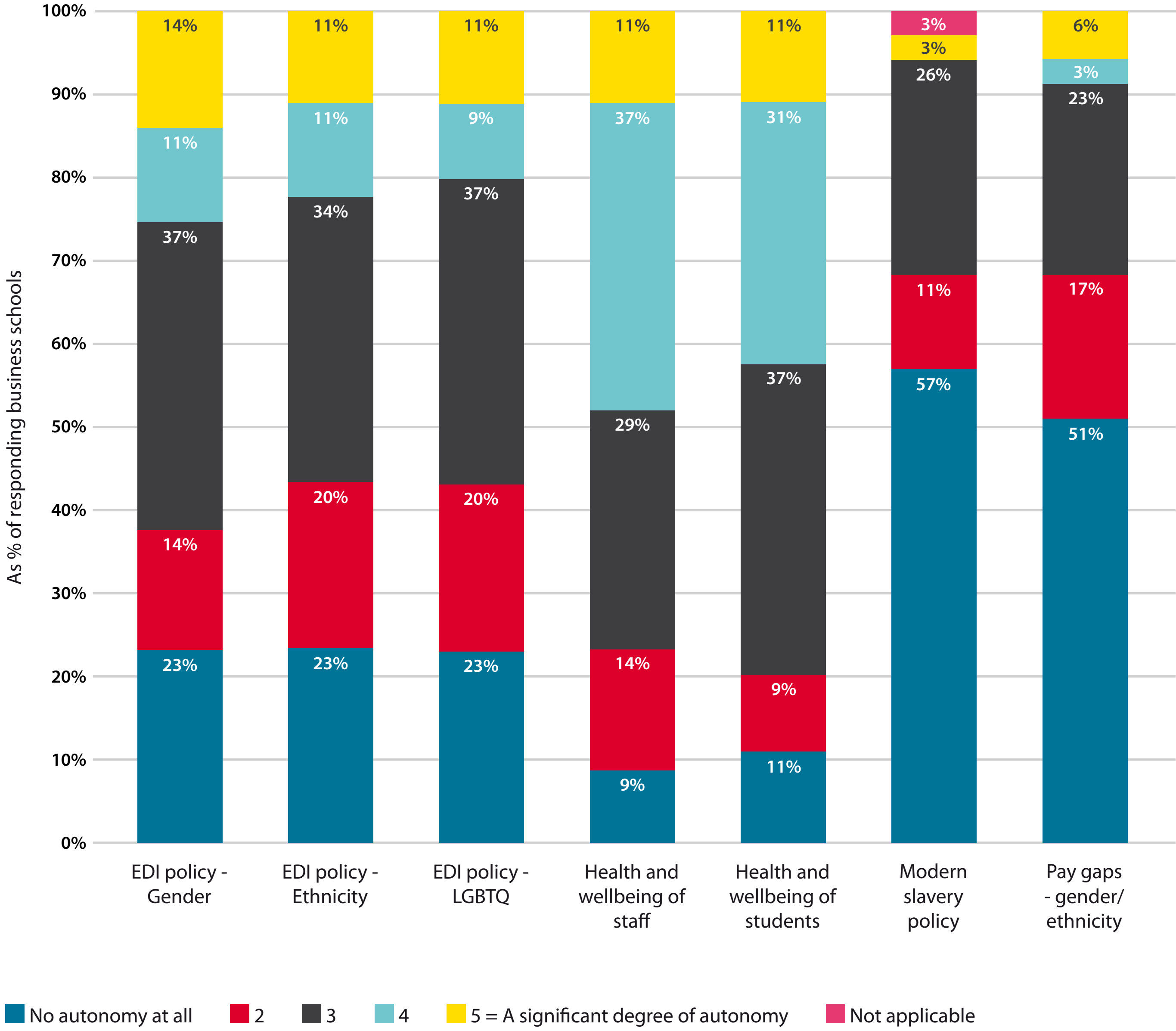

Figure 6: Business schools' level of autonomy in developing and implementing practices related to societal issues independently by area of decision making.

- The responding schools were asked to evaluate their degree of autonomy in developing and implementing practices related to societal issues independently of their university across seven different categories.
- In relation to modern slavery policy and pay gaps (gender/ethnicity), 57% and 51% of schools respectively, reported having no autonomy at all. As for the rest of the categories, namely EDI policy (gender), EDI policy (ethnicity), EDI policy (LGBTQ), health and wellbeing of staff, and health and wellbeing of students, we observe a greater degree of autonomy as the majority of responding business schools rated their degree of autonomy as 3 or more.
- Overall, despite schools having a higher degree of autonomy to develop and implement practices related to societal issues than environmental practices, the results show quite a low level of autonomy. The exceptions being health and wellbeing of students and staff, suggesting that schools have greater autonomy over local, internally focused issues than those with broader institutional scope.
- Similar to the previous question, the schools highlighted in the open-ended comments that they must adhere to university policy as a minimum standard. Here too, policies are determined and managed centrally, leaving business schools with a low degree of autonomy to alter university policies or independently set their own. Nonetheless, some schools noticed that there is a higher degree of autonomy when it comes to policy implementation. For example, some respondents referred to autonomy in implementing gender equality policies in line with Athena Swan.
- Moreover, one business school said they have higher autonomy in relation to their staff's health and wellbeing because the schools directly line manage their staff and respective workloads. Similarly, schools also have more agency in relation to the health and wellbeing of students, but this is comparatively more limited as some support structures are not exclusively within the school.

To what extent do you believe your school is able to influence the sustainability strategy and practices of your university?

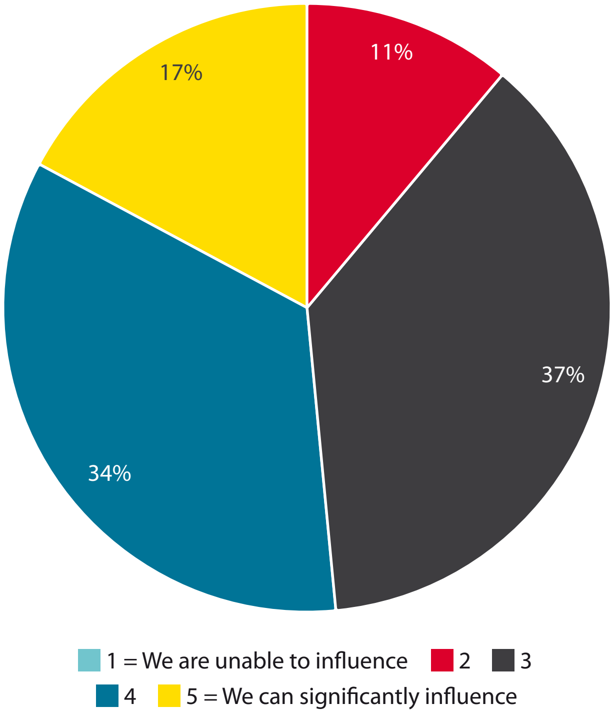

Figure 7: Extent to which business schools believe they are able to influence the sustainability strategy and practices of the central university.

- The schools were asked to consider the extent to which they can influence the sustainability strategy and practices of their university.
- No respondents gave a rating of 1, suggesting that all of the responding business schools are able to influence their university's sustainability strategy and practices to some extent. Only 11% of respondents gave a rating of 2 – noting that they have very little influence. In contrast, 17% of respondents indicated that they are able to significantly influence their university in this domain.
- Interestingly, the single largest share of respondents (37%) gave a rating of 3, indicating they are able to moderately influence their university's sustainability strategy and practices.
- In the additional comments provided, some respondents highlighted their significant impact. For example, one Dean reported that their university adopted a business school policy as a guiding document for its slow travel policy. A slow travel policy stipulates that when travelling for business staff should not fly within the UK and should choose slower travel methods (e.g. rail) depending on the length of the journey. Additionally, the school developed a sustainability training programme that is now being used by other faculties to raise awareness on sustainability issues.
- Meanwhile, other responses described a more moderate influence. Two respondents noted that business school representatives participate in university sustainability groups, providing opportunities to influence decision-making.
- In contrast, some schools reported limited influence. One respondent explained that while their university is receptive to sustainability concerns, financial constraints mean these issues are not a top priority.

Does your school have any of the following sustainability roles, structures or governance approaches?

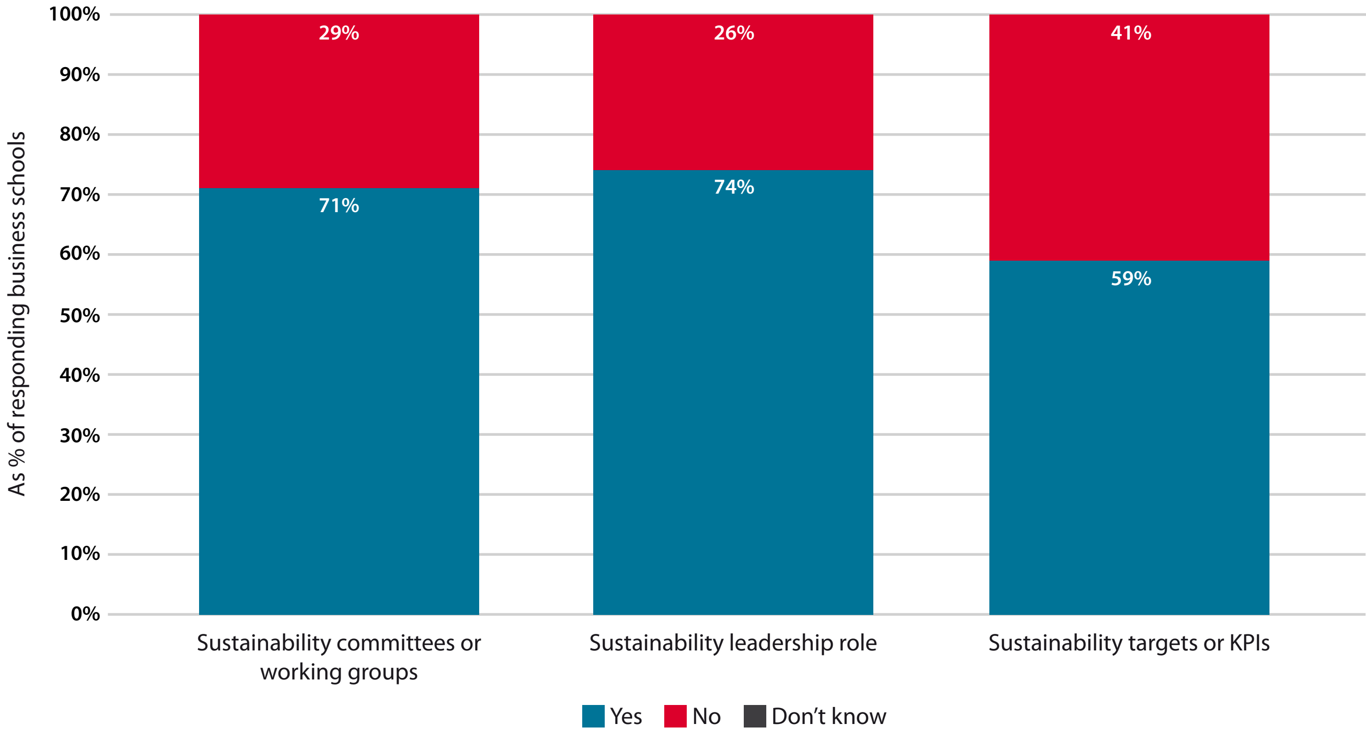

Figure 8: Proportion of business schools with specific sustainability roles, structures and governance approaches.

- Almost three-quarters of respondents indicated that their school have sustainability committees or working groups and a sustainability leadership role, whilst 59% noted that their school has sustainability targets or KPIs.
- The additional comments for this question reveal a nuanced landscape of sustainability governance approaches across business schools, demonstrating a shift from siloed structures towards integrated frameworks. Some schools noted that rather than establishing separate sustainability committees, they are deliberately embedding sustainability into existing governance structures: *"Sustainability is embedded in our existing governance structures rather than a separate group".* One school notes a specialist committee would *"draw away from the objective to embed sustainability as a cross-cutting mission"*.
- Some schools have both operational and academic sustainability leadership e.g. "operational Head of Sustainability and a faculty Director of Sustainability", and further to this, various titles such as Pro-Dean for Public Value, Director of Sustainability, Associate Dean of Ethic and Head of Sustainability. Interestingly, several respondents noted that their schools have grassroots initiatives with formal governance: *"The 'ground-up' approach we have means that many (not all) staff care greatly about our ethos",* this ties in with embedding sustainability as a cross-cutting mission, highlighting that schools and parent universities are working towards permeating sustainability into research, teaching, operations, and external engagement.
- There was a clear convergence around aligning sustainability initiatives with broader institutional strategies and external accreditation requirements such as AACSB and PRME standards. The comments also highlight an on-going period of transition and reflection, with several schools actively refreshing their approaches, developing new sustainability strategies, or appointing new leadership to strengthen their commitment to both environmental and social dimensions of sustainability. This evolution suggests business schools are moving beyond compliance-driven approaches to recognising sustainability as fundamental to their educational purpose and societal impact.

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS WITHIN BUSINESS SCHOOLS

- Schools with a sustainability committee/working group were asked about the roles serving in the group, who it reports to, how often it meets and its remit.

Governance structure

- Responses show a wide spectrum of organisational formality. Some schools have established formal committees with defined structures, such as a Sustainability Committee and ESR Committee, while others rely on informal, volunteer-based groups that are not formally constituted.
- Several schools operate hybrid models or are revising their governance, with some working to refresh structures or improve student engagement.
- This variation reflects different institutional approaches to embedding sustainability, with some preferring structured governance and others favouring flexible, grassroots engagement.
- Furthermore, sustainability groups generally report to senior leadership, though reporting structures may vary in complexity. Some possess simple structures, with groups reporting directly to single entities, such as the school's leadership team.
  In contrast, more complex structures have multiple reporting lines. For example, one school explained that their group reports to an accreditation committee who report to the senior leadership team. The multi-tiered, hierarchical approach reflects the cross-cutting nature of sustainability requiring integration across institutional hierarchies.
- Membership composition also varies. Some committees are senior leadership-led, while others adopt broader representation from academic staff, professional staff and students. Some schools emphasise functional representation - teaching, research, environmental sustainability, and wellbeing and partnerships, while others focus on departmental or divisional representation with nominated academic leads. Student involvement ranges from full membership to separate champion programmes. This diversity reflects different philosophies about who should drive sustainability initiatives.

Meeting frequency

- Frequency ranges from weekly, monthly, bi-monthly to once a year, though most groups meet quarterly. Groups that met more frequently were more operational focused such as working groups, whilst strategic groups tend to meet less frequently.
- Several respondents noted flexible approaches, with meetings increasing during active projects, indicating a more pragmatic approach and responding to operational urgency and taking a more tactical focus.

Remits

- Remits typically encompass multiple domains: education (embedding sustainability in the curriculum), research (mapping research outputs based on the UN SDGs), operations (net zero carbon), and external engagement (PRME report production, accreditation support).
- These themes reveal that sustainability governance in business schools is characterised by structural diversity, hierarchical complexity, inclusive representation, and varied operational intensity in response to expanding sustainability imperatives.

SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP ROLES WITHIN BUSINESS SCHOOLS

- Respondents who indicated that their school has a sustainability leadership role were asked about the remit of the role and who the lead reports to.
- The sustainability lead roles are consistently positioned at senior levels within institutional hierarchies, demonstrating the strategic importance schools place on sustainability leadership. The most common reporting line is directly to Deans. Several schools have adopted dual reporting structures that bridge academic and operational domains.
- For example, one respondent explained that the business schools' sustainability representative reports to both the Dean of Teaching and Learning and the Dean of the School, with distinct purposes noted for each reporting line. In another school, the sustainability lead reports to the Accreditations Manager and the Dean of the School, this dual accountability ensures sustainability initiatives align with both academic excellence and resource allocation.
- The seniority of reporting relationships extends beyond Deans to other high-level positions including "Director General", "Faculty PVC", and "Head of College".
- The landscape of sustainability leadership roles reveals remarkable diversity in titles, structures, and organisational approaches. Some institutions adopt a more traditional single-role model, with responsibility for sustainability held by a designated senior lead, including Director positions. Some respondents cited more specialised titles that reflect specific institutional priorities, such as public value or ethics, responsibility and sustainability.
- Some schools have evolved toward distributed leadership models. One institution exemplifies this through two academic leads for the school's sustainability centre, supported by an operational lead focused on embedding responsible practices and a subject convenor position. Another respondent described a similar but distinct arrangement, with dedicated leads for research and impact within their sustainability centre, alongside several other leads who support research activity across different subject areas.
- The evolution of roles varies significantly. One role "initially arose owing to the PRME work" but "has expanded into CLO and CLE activities, as well as the delivery of our own (school) Carbon Competency portfolio."
- The breadth of responsibilities assigned to sustainability leads demonstrates the all-encompassing nature of sustainability integration in business schools. Educational responsibilities feature prominently, with roles focused on "embedding sustainability within the curriculum", "develop and deliver the school's sustainability strategy", and ensuring "all programmes have a clear identity around UN SDGs".
- Research integration appears consistently, with responsibilities including "enhance our research in the area", "mapping research outputs based on the UN SDGs", and leading research through various centres and initiatives.
- Operational responsibilities are particularly detailed in some schools. With one noting

that their role provides an extensive list of "all operational sustainability workstreams" including "net zero carbon," "nature positive," "waste," "water," "sustainable travel," "sustainable catering," "reporting," and "ISO 14001" compliance. A respondent noted that the Director of Sustainability must ensure "alignment with the University's Climate Plan to reach net zero by 2030."

- Strategic and policy development features strongly, with roles responsible for "developing and implementing strategies that promote sustainability across all aspects of the Business School's operations, including environmental stewardship, social impact, and economic efficiency".
- External frameworks and accreditation requirements emerge as primary drivers of sustainability leadership roles and responsibilities. PRME (Principles for Responsible Management Education) appears most frequently, with dedicated responsibilities for "preparing Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME)'s annual Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) questionnaire" and managing "PRME activities throughout the school".
- Multiple accreditation frameworks require attention, with roles needing to "contribute to and be a member of both the AACSB & EFMD Quality Improvement System accreditations subgroups". Specific standards require dedicated focus such as the AACSB Standard 9: Societal Impact.
- Reporting requirements in some schools are extensive, including the need to "Report annually on School activity relevant to key ESD standards (e.g. ISO14001, Responsible Futures, PRME, People and Planet & Planet University League Tables, Times Higher Education Impact Rankings)".
- The collaborative nature of sustainability leadership roles is evident in the emphasis on working across organizational boundaries and with diverse stakeholder groups. Internal collaboration is essential, with roles required to "Collaborate with various strategic teams and individuals within the school", "work with the senior team", and coordinate with "our PRME and Education Leads".
- Many roles involve leading collaborative structures: "Chair and lead the RSM (Responsible and Sustainable Management) working group", "chair the school sustainability group", and "Sustainability Committee management". The boundary-spanning nature sometimes extends to engagement with strategies and initiatives at university-level.
- External stakeholder engagement is equally important, with responsibilities to communicate with "our students, our external stakeholders and (increasingly) our colleagues in the rest of the university".

SUSTAINABILITY TARGETS AND KPIS IN BUSINESS SCHOOLS

- Respondents who indicated their school has sustainability targets and KPIs were asked what the targets and KPIs are, how often they are reviewed and who is responsible for setting them and tracking progress. The table below gives examples from their written responses.
- Overall, targets and KPIs spanned environmental, social and educational dimensions of sustainability. The majority of respondents reported annual reviews of their targets and KPIs, although some noted more frequent review cycles, including quarterly reviews. Responsibility for setting and tracking sustainability targets varied, with some schools delegating the responsibility to a single individual, while in others responsibility was shared among a group, such as a Sustainability Committee.

Table 1: Examples of business schools' sustainability targets and KPIs and members responsible for target setting and tracking.

Targets	KPIs	Members responsible for setting and tracking
Achieving Net Zero	Energy consumption	Head of the Business School
Becoming nature positive by 2035	Waste generation	Head of Sustainability
Reduction of 50% in carbon emissions by 2030	Recycling efforts	Director of Sustainability
Providing carbon literacy training	Slow travel	Sustainability Lead
Integrating sustainability into curricula	Number of students enrolled in sustainability modules/ programmes	Sustainability Committee
Increasing staff and student engagement in sustainability activities	Percentage of SDGs covered in programmes	ERS Committee
Using ethical research practices	Number of research outputs related to UN SDGs	Faculty Executive Board
Enhance institutional practices to improve sustainability and justice	Percentage of staff and students engaging in sustainability initiatives	Central university
	Value of grant applications awarded on sustainability	
	Number of dissertations/ projects/work-based placements focused on sustainability	
	Number of research outputs relating to UN SDGs	

Does your school organise its sustainability activities around the UN SDGs?

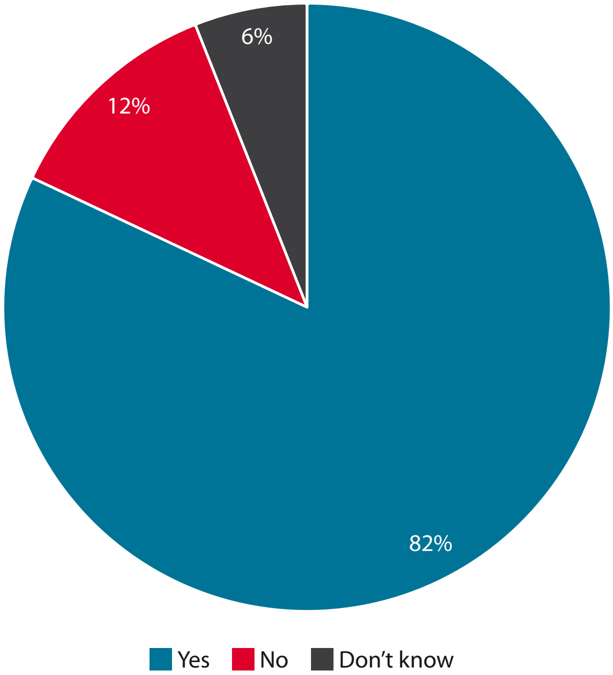

Figure 9: Proportion of business schools organising its sustainability activities around the UN SDGs.

- 82% of the respondents reported that their business school organises its sustainability activities around the UN SDGs, highlighting very strong engagement across the sector with this initiative.
- In the additional comments, two respondents highlighted that they are signatories of the UN's PRME and therefore, activities are organised, monitored and reported according to the SDGs. Another school noted that they specifically focus on goals 3, 8, and 12.
- In contrast, one respondent indicated that the school does not organise their activities around the SDGs as they are too narrow in scope. Another explained that, rather than structuring activities to be explicitly focused on the SDGs, they aim to embed SDG principles within them.

Table 2. Extent to which each UN SDG is a focus across business schools' core areas of activity of teaching/education, research/knowledge exchange, and operations.

	A focus across all three core areas	A focus across individual areas	Not a focus
SGD 1 - No poverty	13%	57%	30%
SDG 2 - Zero hunger	14%	45%	41%
SDG 3 - Good health and well-being	63%	31%	6%
SDG 4 - Quality education	69%	28%	3%
SDG 5 - Gender equality	74%	19%	6%
SDG 6 - Clean water and sanitation	12%	35%	54%
SDG 7 - Affordable and clean energy	30%	50%	20%
SDG 8 - Decent work and economic growth	55%	42%	3%
SDG 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure	41%	56%	3%
SDG 10 - Reduced inequalities	68%	29%	3%
SDG 11 - Sustainable cities and economies	33%	63%	3%
SDG 12 - Responsible consumption and production	66%	28%	6%
SDG 13 - Climate action	58%	35%	6%
SDG 14 - Life below water	0%	30%	70%
SDG 15 - Life on land	12%	35%	54%
SDG 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions	32%	54%	14%
SDG 17 - Partnership for the goals	57%	36%	7%

- Responding schools were asked to indicate whether each UN SDG was a focus within their core activities of teaching/education, research/knowledge exchange, and operations, either collectively or individually. Table 2 displays the extent to which each SDG was reported as a focus across all three core areas, across some areas or not at all.
- SDG 5 (Gender Equality) was most frequently identified as a focus across all three core areas, with 74% indicating a focus in teaching, research and operations activities. This was closely followed by SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), cited as a focus across all core areas by 69%, 68% and 66% of respondents, respectively.
- In contrast, SDG 14 (Life Below Water) was most commonly reported as not being a focus in any of the core areas, as indicated by 70% of the schools. This was followed by SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), each reported as not a focus by 54% of respondents.

Table 3. Areas of business schools' core activities where each UN SDG is a focus

	Teaching/ education	Research/ Knowledge Exchange	Operations	A focus across all three core areas
SGD 1 - No poverty	40%	47%	0%	13%
SDG 2 - Zero hunger	28%	38%	3%	14%
SDG 3 - Good health and well-being	13%	16%	13%	63%
SDG 4 - Quality education	28%	9%	3%	69%
SDG 5 - Gender equality	10%	13%	6%	74%
SDG 6 - Clean water and sanitation	15%	23%	8%	12%
SDG 7 - Affordable and clean energy	10%	33%	20%	30%
SDG 8 - Decent work and economic growth	30%	36%	6%	55%
SDG 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure	44%	53%	0%	41%
SDG 10 - Reduced inequalities	19%	19%	6%	68%
SDG 11 - Sustainable cities and economies	40%	53%	10%	33%
SDG 12 - Responsible consumption and production	22%	19%	0%	66%
SDG 13 - Climate action	29%	23%	10%	58%
SDG 14 - Life below water	19%	19%	0%	0%
SDG 15 - Life on land	19%	23%	8%	12%
SDG 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions	36%	50%	0%	32%
SDG 17 - Partnership for the goals	11%	32%	4%	57%

- Table 3 presents the UN SDGs identified as a focus within individual areas of business schools' core activities of teaching/education, research/knowledge exchange and operations.
- Within teaching/education, the most frequently cited SDG was SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), identified as a focus by 44% of the schools. This was followed by SDG 1 (No poverty) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Economies), each cited by 40% of respondents, and SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) at 36%.
- For research/knowledge exchange, SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure) and SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and economies) were the most prominent areas of focus for activities, each cited by 53% of the responding schools. Other commonly selected SDGs in this area included SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions), SDG 1 (No poverty) and SDG 2 (Zero hunger), as indicated by 50%, 47% and 38% of the schools, respectively.
- By comparison, operations received a lower proportion of responses at the individual level overall, suggesting that the SDGs are less integrated into this area individually. The most frequently selected SDG for operations activities was SDG7 (Affordable and clean energy), identified as a focus by 20% of respondents.

To what extent has your school embedded sustainability in its curriculum?

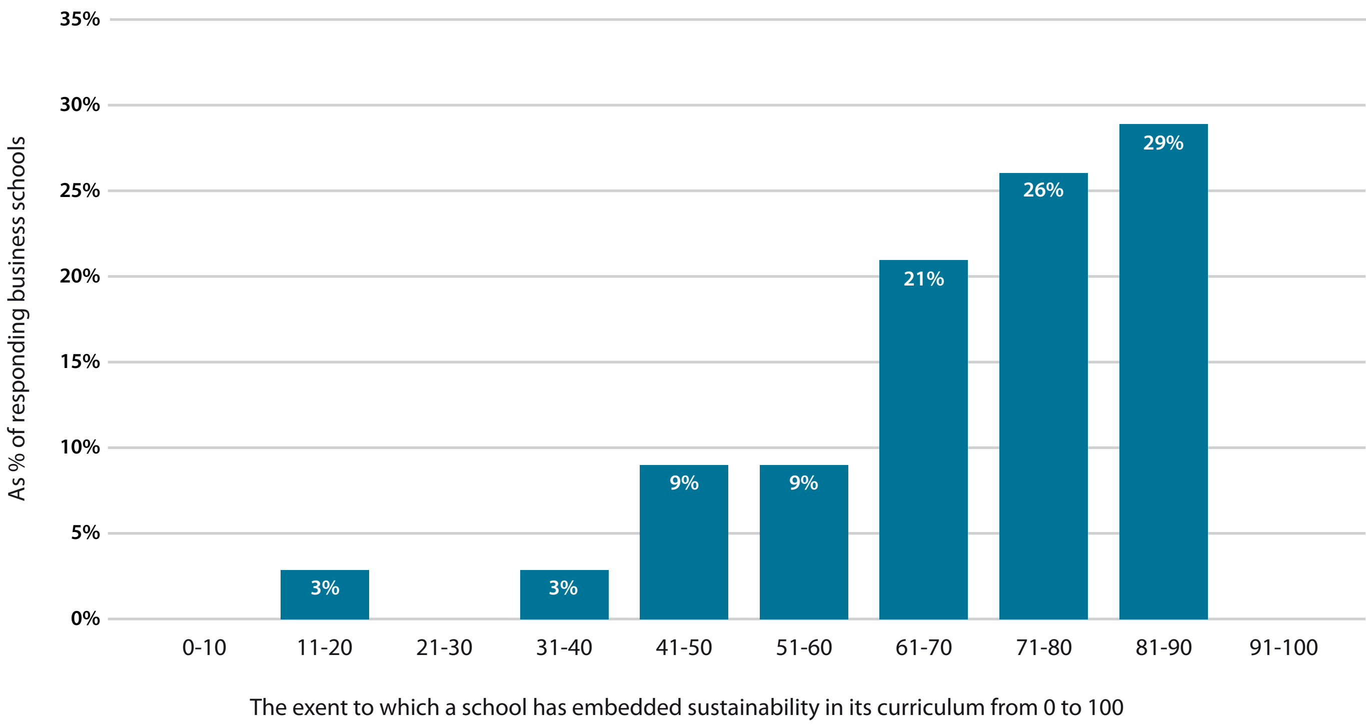

Figure 10: The extent to which business schools have embedded sustainability in their curriculum.

- The responding schools were asked to indicate the extent to which their school had embedded sustainability in its curriculum using a sliding scale from 0 to 100.
- Three-quarters of respondents gave a score greater than 60 (76%), indicating that the vast majority of schools have embedded sustainability in their curriculum to a great extent. Interestingly, the largest share of respondents gave a rating of 81-90 (29%).
- In the written comments provided, two respondents said that their school had embedded sustainability into all programmes. One noted that an annual end of programme survey revealed that the vast majority of undergraduate (95%), postgraduate taught (98%) and postgraduate research students (83%) felt confident in the competency of 'Ethical, Responsible and Sustainable Business Behaviour', demonstrating the effectiveness of the school's efforts.
- In addition to this, two respondents commented that sustainability is integrated into most modules. However, one explained that while sustainability is embedded into the majority of their modules, the school's offer of entire sustainability modules is limited.

SUSTAINABILITY IN BUSINESS SCHOOLS' PROGRAMMES AND CURRICULUM

- Respondents were asked to briefly describe how sustainability is being embedded across their curriculum and how their programmes are aligned with the sustainability goals of the industry. The responses revealed a range of strategies which are outlined below.

Integration through modules

- Several schools reported embedding sustainability through the introduction of dedicated modules. One school offered a compulsory *Business Ethics and Sustainability module* alongside optional modules such as *Sustainable Finance, The Challenges of Climate Change, Managing and Leading Sustainability and Research Methods in ESG.*
- Another school highlighted their offering of a module that enables students to explore sustainability from the perspective of the UN SDGs.
- For those not offering specialist modules, respondents noted that elements of sustainability are still integrated into modular content, with two schools commenting that all modules are required to have sustainability embedded within them.

Specialist programmes

- In addition to individual modules, two schools reported offering specialist postgraduate programmes focused on sustainability. One respondent indicated that they are currently developing new undergraduate and postgraduate specialist programmes.

Alignment with global frameworks

- A number of schools also described efforts to align their curricula with the UN SDGs. Four respondents stated that this alignment is communicated to students, with one school introducing a mechanism to identify where students are engaging with specific SDGs. Another respondent explained that enabling students to identify the coverage of UN SDGs not only informs module selection but also helps students articulate the sustainability-related skills and knowledge they have gained when applying for jobs.
- Two schools reported alignment between the PRMEs and their curriculum, with one specifying that learning outcomes are mapped to the PRME principles and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations are embedded into core units.

Continuous review

- Processes for monitoring and enhancing sustainability integration were highlighted by multiple respondents. One school explained that it conducts annual programme reviews incorporating industry input to ensure continuous improvement and alignment with the UN SDGs. Another noted that its curriculum is regularly refined based on employer feedback, accreditation standards, PRME principles and global sustainability frameworks to maintain relevance and impact.

Applied learning opportunities

- Applied learning opportunities were another key approach. Four respondents reported integrating sustainability into experiential learning, including extra-curricular activities that address real-world sustainability challenges as well as internships, placements and live projects with partner organisations.

External collaborations

- Some respondents cited external collaborations as a way to embed sustainability education. One school hosts events where industry professionals share insights, enabling students to engage directly with experts and deepen their understanding of sustainability in business. Another school delivers externally funded courses, such as Carbon Literacy and Circular Economy training, while another maintains partnerships with corporate sustainability leaders, financial institutions and professional bodies to ensure students develop the skills required to drive sustainable transformation.

Alternative approaches

- One respondent stated that they do not seek to explicitly align their programmes with industry goals. Instead, they have chosen to integrate Public Value principles into their programmes and modules.

Does your school's sustainability offering include any of the following?

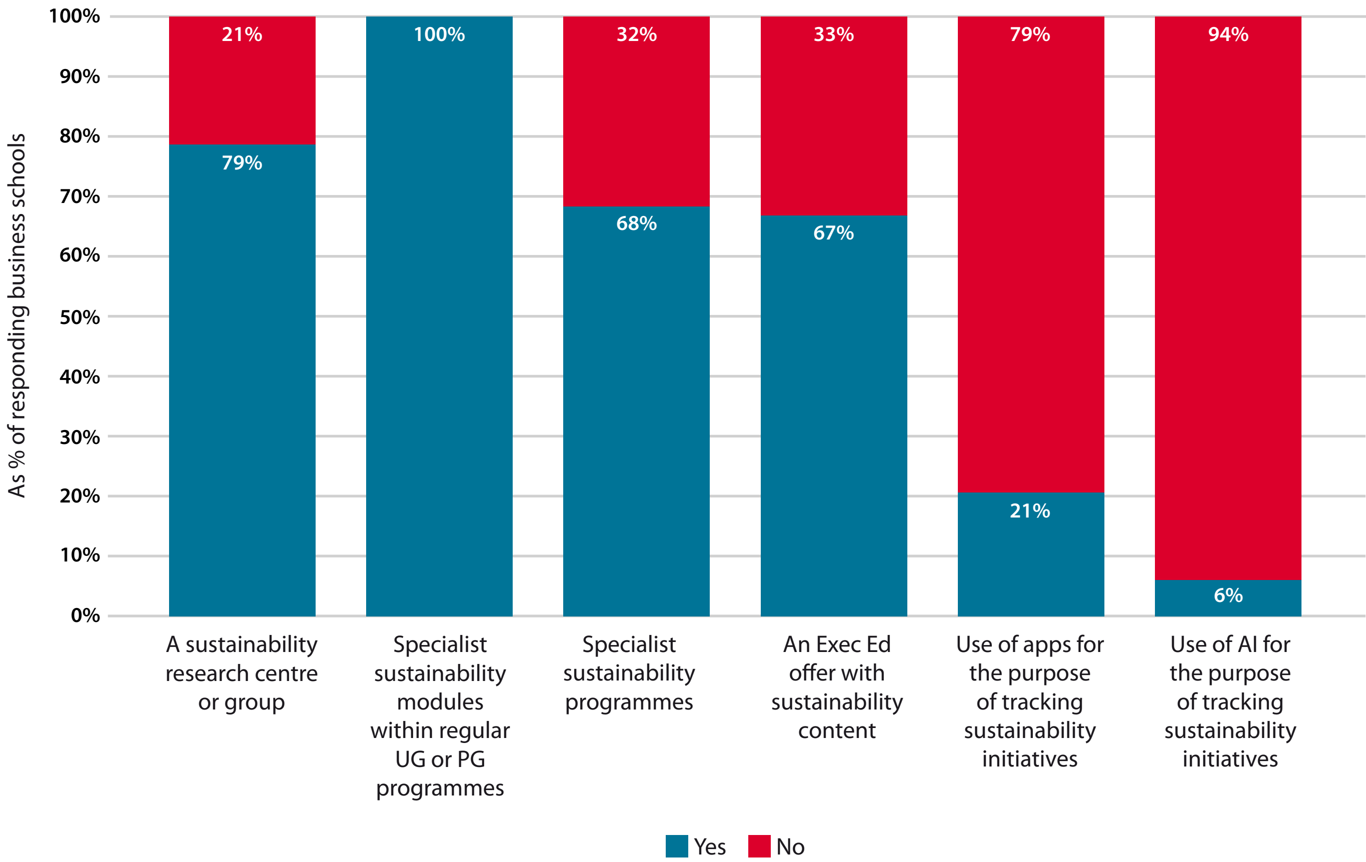

Figure 11: Types of sustainability offerings provided by business schools.

- When asked about the offerings included in their sustainability initiatives, all of the responding schools indicated that they offered specialist sustainability modules within their undergraduate or postgraduate programmes.
- In addition to this, over three-quarters offered a sustainability research centre or group, and over two-thirds a specialist sustainability programmes or an Executive Education course with sustainability content.
- However, apps and AI for the purpose of tracking sustainability are not currently widely adopted, with only 21% and 6%, respectively, using them.
- In the additional comments, one school noted that while they are exploring using AI to track sustainability initiatives, they are mindful of any adverse implications of AI, such as the increased energy cost in data centres.
- Another respondent explained that although they do not have a formal sustainability research centre or group, academics within the school have played instrumental roles in the development of several research centres focused on sustainability.

SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH CENTRES/GROUPS IN BUSINESS SCHOOLS

- The responding schools who indicated that their sustainability offering includes a sustainability research centre or group were asked to provide more detail about its objectives and activities. The table below summarises their written responses.
- Objectives varied in scope, ranging from enhancing sustainability at the business school level to addressing sustainability challenges in businesses and wider society. Activities were similarly diverse, including interdisciplinary research, industry partnerships and student mentoring schemes.

Table 4. Summary of the objectives and activities of business schools' sustainability research centres/groups

Objectives	Activities
Improve sustainability education	Research projects
Enhance the Principles for Responsible Management Education within the business school	Interdisciplinary research
Achieve UN SDGs	Consultancy
Support staff and student researchers within sustainability-related fields	Producing publications
Reinforce the university's position in the People & Planet's University League	Workshops
Identify and address the challenges faced by businesses	Partnerships with businesses
Establish future commercial sustainability practices and education	Student mentoring
Be a catalyst for positive societal and environmental change in the interaction of climate, business, policy and society	
Develop system solutions and tools to bring forth a sustainable economy	

Loughborough Business School Case Study
Rethinking steel: What circular infrastructure teaches business schools

Discover how circular infrastructure is reshaping the way organisations design, manage and reuse critical assets.

The transition to a circular economy is often framed as a technological challenge. In practice, it is just as much a coordination challenge. Moving from "make–use–discard" models to systems based on reuse, refurbishment and long-term asset management requires companies, supply chains and public bodies to rethink how decisions are made together.

A collaboration between Loughborough Business School and Brunel Design School explored this challenge through work with Adey Steel, a UK steel fabricator supplying major infrastructure projects including motorway gantries.

The project formed part of the NICER Programme's Circular Metals centre[1] and the InterAct Network+[2], both of which aim to support more sustainable and digitally enabled industrial systems. Adey Steel itself had already begun modernising its operations through digital transformation, supported by the Made Smarter East Midlands programme[3].

Researchers and industry partners came together to explore whether circular business models could reshape how steel gantries are designed and used. Instead of manufacturing structures for a single project, the group examined a future in which gantries might be refurbished, redeployed or even provided through service-based models across multiple infrastructure schemes.

To explore these possibilities, the team convened a collaborative workshop involving Adey Steel, supply chain partners and infrastructure stakeholders including National Highways. Using visioning and back-casting techniques, participants developed potential circular futures and worked backwards to identify the changes required in product design, manufacturing processes and supply chain coordination.

Case study provided by: Professor Jan Godsell, Dr Kamran Chatha, Dr Anna Mate, Loughborough Business School

[1] NICER Programme – Circular Metals Workstream, https://www.ncl.ac.uk/research/nicer/circular-metals
[2] InterAct Network – Made Smarter Innovation: Economic and Social Research Council Network+, https://interact-hub.org

[3] Made Smarter Adoption East Midlands, https://www.madesmarter.uk/adoption/in-my-region/east-midlands

One insight quickly emerged. The barriers to circularity were not primarily technical. They were organisational. For circular models to work, decisions about product design, manufacturing processes and supply chains must be made together, often across multiple organisations. Yet in most firms these decisions are still made separately. The workshop created space for what participants described as "blue-sky thinking", allowing industry partners to imagine possibilities that would have been difficult to explore within normal operational pressures.

Although the circular gantry model was not implemented immediately, the collaboration generated valuable learning. It strengthened relationships between the firm, its supply chain and university partners, and helped develop practical tools for exploring alternative business models and supply chain configurations.

Five lessons for business school leaders

1. Sustainability challenges demand multidisciplinary research.

The project required expertise from management and design disciplines. Business schools are well placed to convene these capabilities and translate them into new business models.

2. Future-shaping methods create space for innovation.

Visioning and back-casting enabled industry partners to move beyond incremental improvements and explore fundamentally different ways of organising infrastructure systems.

3. Impact grows through long-term partnerships.

Working with companies such as Adey Steel creates "living laboratories" where research, teaching and industry practice evolve together.

4. Leverage synergies across research and innovation activities to amplify impact.

Working across multiple research and education programmes, it was possible to engage more deeply with industrial partners and amplify impact, beyond that attainable as individual initiatives.

5. Create toolkits and self-help guides as a springboard for future impact.

Invest time and resources to turn insights from research into user friendly toolkits and methodologies that can be directly used by industry beyond the duration of a funded project. Work with partners to expand the reach and access to the resources.

As industries transition towards circular and digitally enabled systems, business schools have an opportunity to play a much larger role — not simply analysing industrial change, but helping to design the organisational models that will make it possible.

Does your school engage with local stakeholders in relation to sustainability issues?

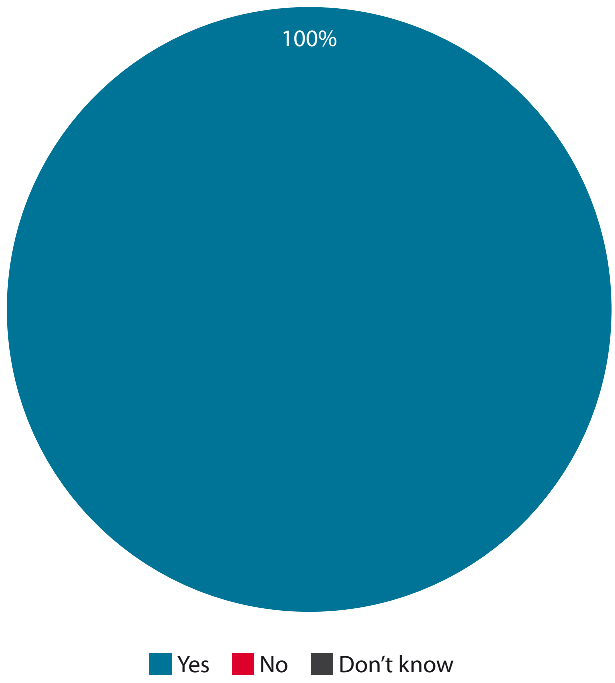

Figure 12: Proportion of business schools engaging with local stakeholders in relation to sustainability issues.

- When asked if they engage with local stakeholders in relation to sustainability issues, all of the schools responded positively.

HOW BUSINESS SCHOOLS ENGAGE WITH LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS IN RELATION TO SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

- Respondents were asked to provide a brief description of their activities with local stakeholders. The responses revealed a diverse range of activities, which are outlined below:

Supporting local businesses

- A commonly cited way of engaging with local stakeholders on sustainability issues was by supporting local businesses in tackling the sustainability issues they face. The Deans reported a range of initiatives aimed at improving business sustainability. For example, one school described a student-led consultancy programme where students conduct environmental audits for local organisations and recommend activities to improve their sustainability.
- Another school's faculty members ran an advisory service focused on enhancing the sustainability efforts of local SMEs using tailored advice, access to online resources and training. A similar initiative was reported by another school, who described a university-wide scheme that provides businesses, including local enterprises, with academic expertise and other resources to help them meet their sustainability goals.
- Furthermore, one respondent reported assisting local businesses in improving their sustainability in a range of ways, such as helping them implement more sustainable farming practices, reduce plastic usage, and explore sustainable packaging technologies.

Collaborating with local councils

- Four schools noted collaborations with local councils, with two schools specifying engagement with local waste teams. One school described engaging in a collaborative project with recycling teams from local councils that focused on addressing waste management. Another highlighted that their Marketing and Events students worked with the council's waste team to influence sustainable consumer behaviours. Moreover, one school noted working with its local council on travel initiatives.

Partnering with charities

- Another type of stakeholder the business schools were engaging with were local charities, as cited by three Deans. At one school, students could participate in an entrepreneurial challenge where they were provided with a small sum of money to grow an entrepreneurial business idea. The funds generated through the challenge are then donated back to the charity. Another school reported working with a range of third-sector organisations to address poverty in the local community and improve life outcomes. Examples included initiatives to enhance recruitment of community members from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Providing sustainability training

- Another way schools were engaging with local stakeholders was through providing training focused on sustainability, as cited by three schools. One respondent explained that their school had developed climate action training for local stakeholders, which is free to attend via an online platform. Additionally, another respondent assisted local organisations in becoming an accredited Carbon Literate Organisation through offering Carbon Literacy training. Another respondent reported offering sustainability training courses for the Chamber of Commerce.

To what extent is sustainability content embedded within the following programmes within your school?

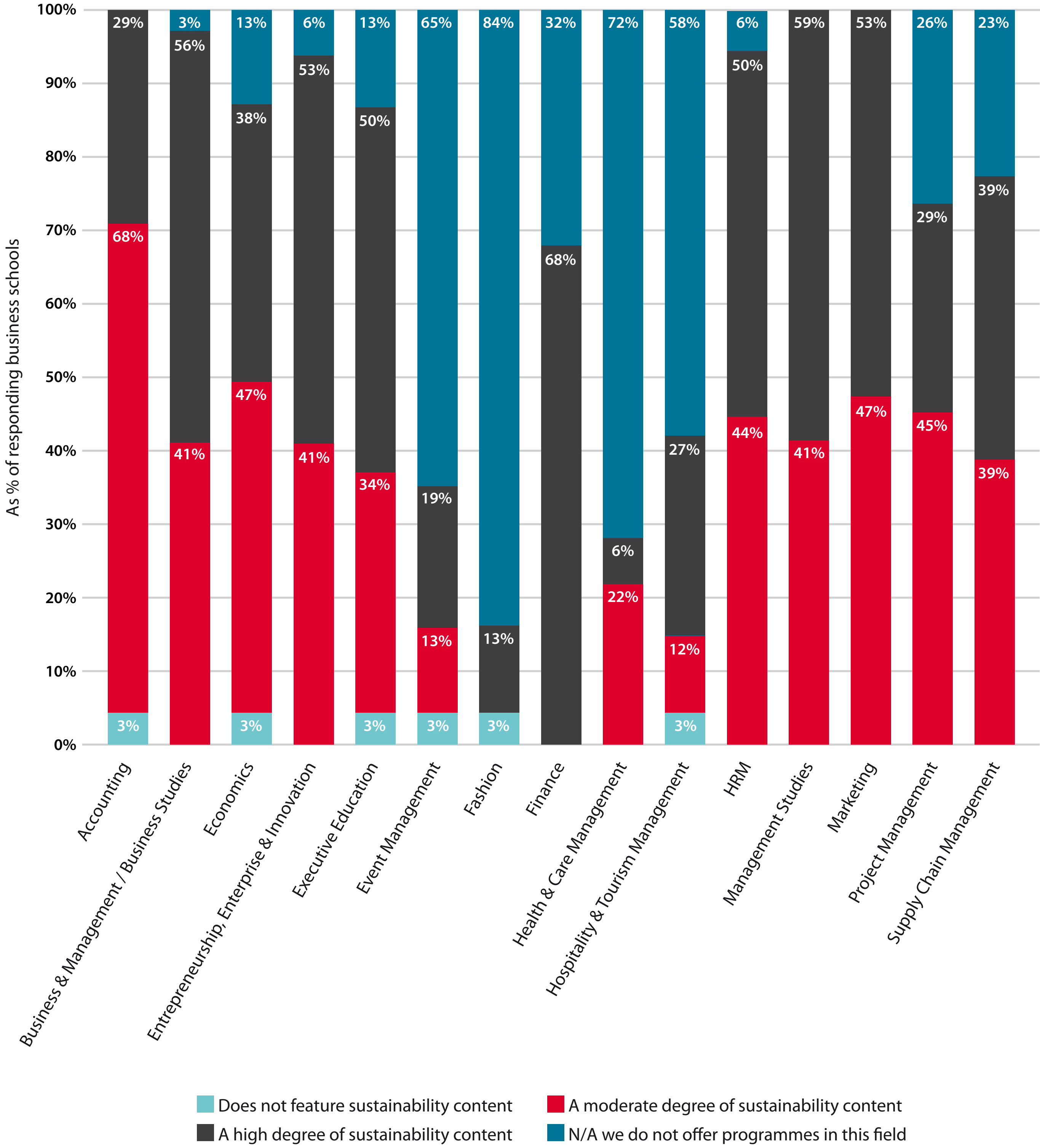

Figure 13: Extent to which business schools embed sustainability content into programmes offered within their school.

- Figure 13 illustrates the extent to which business schools integrate sustainability content within the programmes they offer by the field of programme. It reveals that sustainability content is featured in the majority of programmes to some extent.
- More specifically, all of the responding schools prioritised sustainability content within Finance, Management Studies and Marketing programmes. Notably, 97% integrated content into Accounting and Business & Management/Business Studies courses, followed by 94% in Entrepreneurship, Enterprise & Innovation and HRM courses. Around 85% did so for Economics and Executive Education programmes, while 78% and 74% included it in Supply Chain Management and Project Management programmes respectively.
- However, for certain programmes – specifically Event Management (32%), Fashion (13%), Health & Care Management (28%) and Hospitality & Tourism Management (39%) – a significantly lower percentage of schools reported integrating sustainability content to some extent. It should be noted that a significant percentage of schools did not offer programmes in these fields at all, which explains why sustainability content has a lower level of integration.
- The programmes for which the schools most commonly reported integrating sustainability content to a high degree were Management Studies (59%), Business & Management/Business Studies (56%), Entrepreneurship, Enterprise & Innovation (53%), Marketing (53%), Executive Education (50%), and HRM (50%).
- Of all the programmes, only 3% of schools indicated that they do not feature sustainability content in Accounting, Economic, Executive Education, Event Management, Fashion and Hospitality & Tourism Management programmes.

Is your school a signatory or member of the following initiatives?

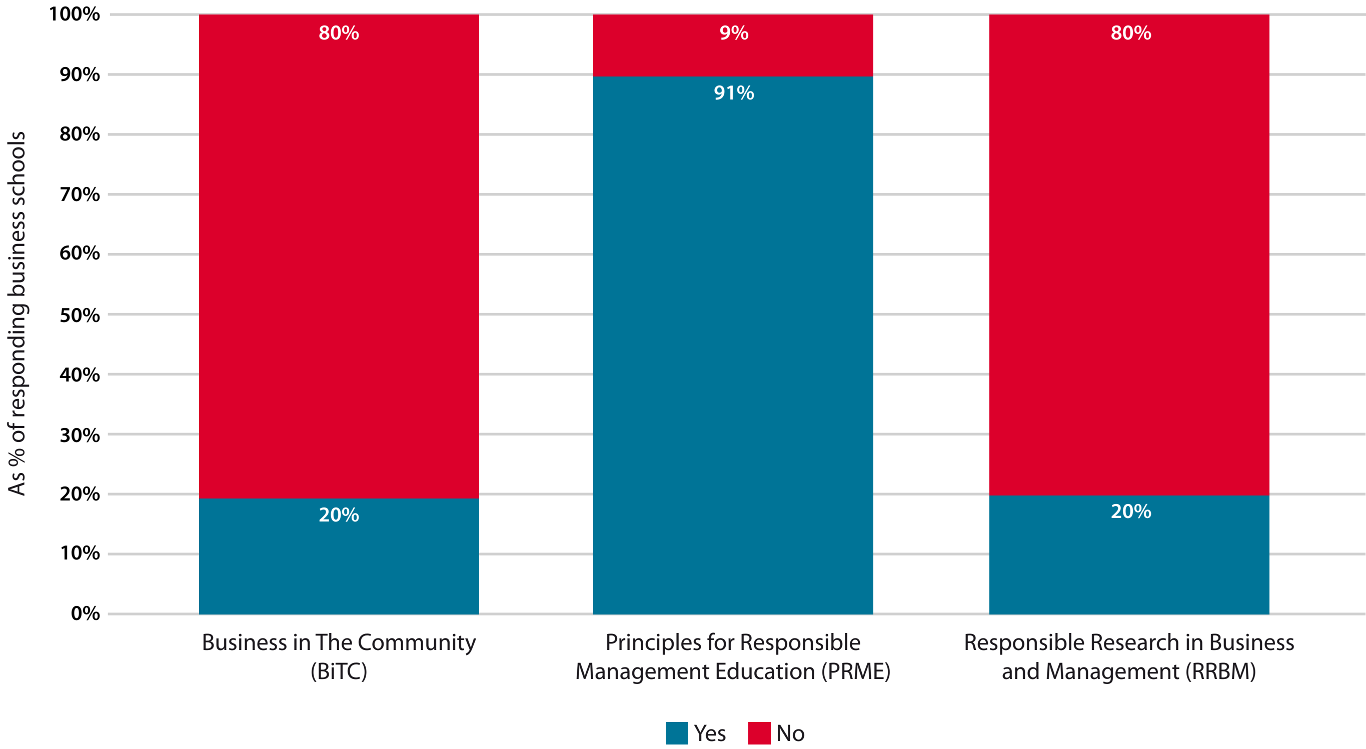

Figure 14: Proportion of business schools that are signatories or members of the specified initiatives.

- As displayed in Figure 14, the vast majority of the business schools who completed the survey were signatories or members of the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative (91%).
- 20% of schools are signatories to Business in The Community (BiTC) and the Responsible Research in Business Management (RRBM) initiatives.
- The schools were also asked if they were involved with any other initiatives relevant to sustainability. Two schools reported that they were PRME champions and another two schools reported that they were members of the Global Business School Network. One respondent noted that their school had obtained a silver and bronze Carbon Literate Organisation (CLO) award as well as a Carbon Literate Educator (CLE) bronze accreditation.

To what extent have the following accreditations influenced your school's sustainability activities?

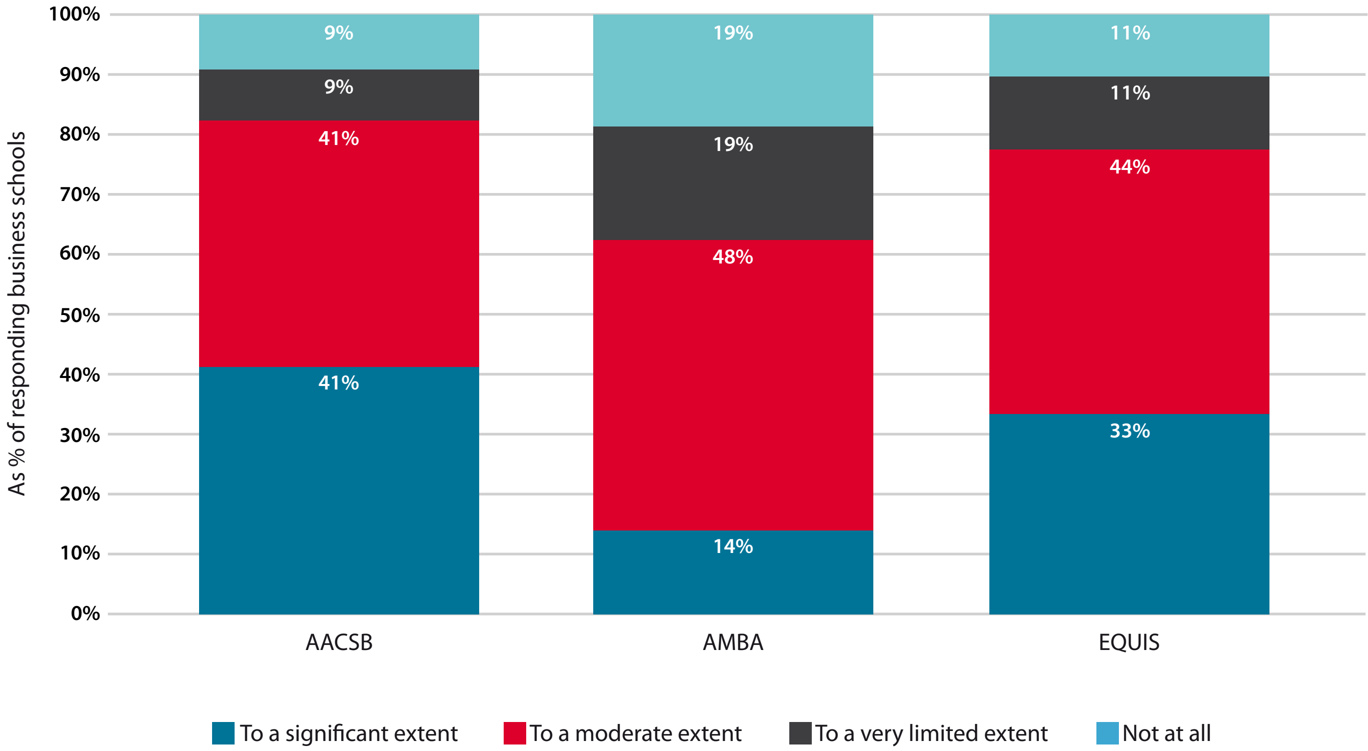

Figure 15: Extent to which business schools' sustainability activities are influenced by the specified accreditations.

- Figure 15 shows the extent to which the responding business schools who held accreditations believed that the accreditations had influenced their sustainability activities. The accreditation reported to have had the most impact on the responding schools' sustainability activities was the AACSB, with 82% reporting that this had a moderate or significant impact on such activities compared to AMBA (62%) and EQUIS (77%).
- In contrast, the responding schools with accreditations were more likely to report that AMBA had the least impact on their sustainability activities, with 38% indicating that this had a very limited or no impact. This was significantly greater than reported for AACSB (18%) and EQUIS (22%).
- The schools were also asked to provide written responses to give additional context. Some highlighted that while accreditation criteria influenced their sustainability activities, their predominant driver was the school's own sustainability commitment and strategy.
- With regards to AASCB, two schools highlighted how this had influenced their societal impact. One noted that it has enabled their school to identify key focus areas, leading to a concentration on the circular economy through a micro plan that reflects their strategic commitments. Another reported that the accreditation was key in formulating their schools' societal impact strategy.
- In relation to the influence of EQUIS, one school commented that this had been instrumental in directing the integration of sustainability into their educational offerings and community outreach. Another said that the accreditation had played a significant role in assisting their school to take a faculty-wide approach to designing, delivering, monitoring and improving their sustainability activities. The school noted that AASCB and AMBA also had a moderate impact on this.
- Four schools revealed that while they do not hold some of the accreditations, they are currently working towards obtaining them, with three highlighting aspirations to acquire the AASCB. One school also commented that despite not holding all three accreditations, their sustainability activities are still moderately influenced by them as the accreditations' stance on sustainability mirrors their own.

Which activities in your business school do you think should be prioritised to achieve greater sustainability impact in future?

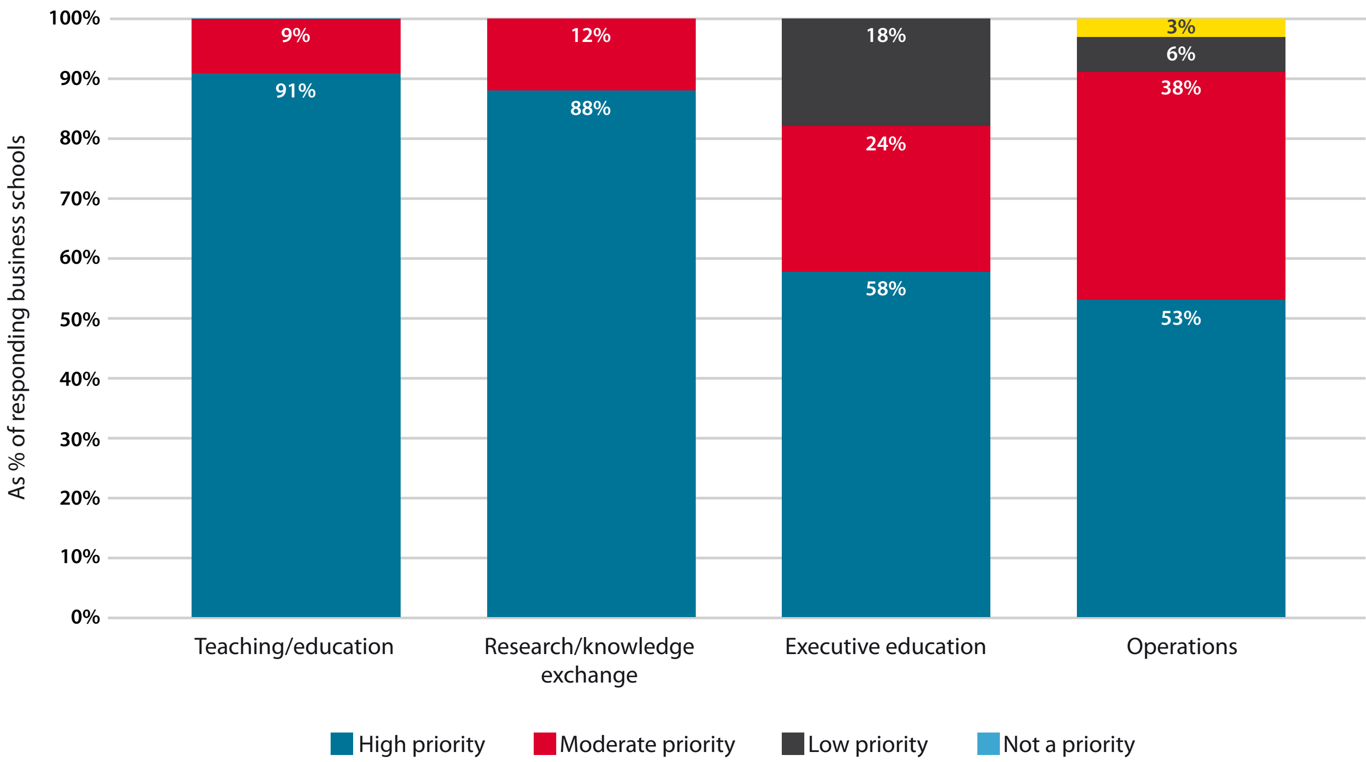

Figure 16: Extent to which business schools think activities should be prioritised to achieve greater sustainability impact in future.

- All the responding business schools indicated that both teaching/education and research/knowledge exchanges should be prioritised in their school to a moderate to high extent in order to achieve greater sustainability impact in the future. More specifically, 91% and 88%, respectively, considered teaching/education and research/knowledge exchange activities a high priority.
- Additionally, 82% and 91% of schools, respectively, indicated that they thought executive education activities and operations activities should be prioritised to a moderate to high extent. Notably, more than half of the business schools considered these activities a high priority.
- A further 18% and 6%, respectively, thought that Executive Education activities and operations activities should only be prioritised in their schools to a low extent. 3% of schools did not consider operations activities a priority whatsoever.
- Some schools provided additional written responses to the question. One commented that if teaching/education and research/knowledge exchange are maintained well then this is likely to have the most widespread impact, consequently improving operations and, particularly, Executive Education activities as a result.
- Other comments suggested business schools' lack of authority in determining how operations activities should be prioritised. One school highlighted a need for their central university to adopt a more progressive approach to operations. Business schools' lack of autonomy in operations could explain why significantly fewer schools considered operations a high priority in comparison to teaching/education and research knowledge exchange.

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