Embedding Responsible Management Education – Staff, Student and Institutional Perspectives

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Abstract

There is a resurgence in responsible management education, with business schools' considering its adoption as vital for business courses. Nevertheless, initiating institution-wide changes for responsible management education is an inherently complex activity in business schools, requiring not only revisions in their curriculum, but also sustained faculty and institutional support. This paper explores this complexity in one UK business school, a signatory to the Principles of Responsible Management Education, who have commenced a programme of change in RME. Based on primary data obtained from two workshops with the business schools' faculty, a student survey and a systematic analysis of the curriculum of four undergraduate degrees and two post-graduate degrees, we find that misalignment between faculty skills and institutional bureaucracy, together with an inconsistent focus on responsible management across the curriculum raises key challenges for its adoption. We extend the premise that significant change *in* RME, requires fundamental changes of a business school's own ethos of *what* responsibility means to itself.

Key Words

Responsible management education, business schools, curriculum design, Principles of Responsible Management Education, PRME, education for sustainable development.

1. Introduction

The importance of 'responsible management education' (RME) was revived after the financial crisis of 2007/2008. Business schools in particular were, yet again, accused of educating and developing business executives devoid of ethical values and an understanding of business responsibility (Rasche & Escudero, 2009). Management education was found to be inadequate for the needs of a corporatist world (Prinsloo et al., 2006).

There has been a rapid and at times exponential growth of business schools, specifically those in the United Kingdom (UK) over the past few decades (Wilson and McKiernan, 2011), with most being considered to be significant sources of revenue or 'cash cows' for UK Universities (Starkey et al., 2004). For instance, in 2013/2014 15% of all UK graduates came from a business and administrative based discipline; approximately 1.7 million students (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2015). Some scholars have raised questions about the fundamentals of business schools, with most arguing that these are built upon a traditional organisation centred worldview, which assigns centrality to business as a pivotal element for the success of society (Giacalone and Thompson, 2006; Ghoshal, 2005; Pfeffer and Fong 2004), thereby propagating the argument that 'profit' is the mainstay of business, as it is required to sustain society itself (Blasco, 2012, Samuelson, 2006). Parallel to this argument, other scholars have found evidence indicative of a deficiency in discussions of ethics, sustainability and responsibility of business in their endeavour to make these profits, at least in the UK business school context (Matten and Moon 2004; Rasche and Gilbert 2015).

A predominant approach through which the discussion of ethics, sustainability and responsibility *of* business can be integrated into business school education is through their curriculum. Researchers have identified varying approaches for doing so, ranging from the adoption of specialist degree courses (often found at the post-graduate level) or by offering standalone modules/subjects or the elective module adoption approach (See Matten and Moon 2004, Schimmel et al., 2013). The use of a more 'interdisciplinary approach' whereby 'responsibility' is focused upon and integrated across all traditional business management subject areas, such as marketing, economics, finance etc., has been proposed by Matten and Moon (2004), although recent research has highlighted the difficulties of implementing such an approach (Laszlo and Zhexembayeva, 2011). Other critics have also argued that overloading RME across a business school's curriculum can dilute its effectiveness with students (Sharland, Fiedler, and Menon, 2013) and at times even become a barrier for the

teaching of other topics (Exter, Grayson, and Maher, 2013). Extant research shows that while there is an increasing focus, in general across business schools, in the adoption of RME, the majority of this is through elective modules/subjects, detached from the core curriculum of business schools, thereby reflective of a "bolt on" approach towards RME (Louw, 2015).

From the perspective of UK Business Schools, we argue that RME should also focus on the research and enterprise activities, if a holistic student experience of business responsibility is to be delivered. In relation to research, the objective would be to change the focus of business school research towards RME, for example, research centres can support standalone and/or collaborative work around areas of sustainability, ethics and business responsibility. Potentially such an approach will not only help to further develop RME within the higher education environment but could also contribute towards enabling research-informed teaching and improving the overall research profile of business schools. The RME topic also lends itself quite well towards the creation of 'impactful' research (Smith, Ward, & House, 2011, Waddock, 2006). Enterprise on the other hand would require business schools to engage and promote additional activities, consisting of for example, staff and/or student led sustainability societies, volunteering programmes (McCallum, Schmid, and Price, 2013) and making stronger connections to areas related to the 'green agenda' of UK Universities, such as recycling, waste management schemes and sustainable procurement (Plewa, Conduit, Quester, & Johnson, 2014).

In this paper we focus on addressing two main research objectives: First, to identify faculty and student views of RME, specifically to identify factors which could impact upon its adoption within a business school and second, to examine the deficiencies of the present curriculum within the selected business school in relation to RME. We argue that in order for a business school to implement significant change *in* RME, not only do they have to manage key impact factors, but make systemic curriculum revisions supported by fundamental changes in their own ethos of *what* responsibility means to the business school itself.

2. Responsible Management Education and Business Schools

2.1 Responsible Management Education

Defining Responsible Management Education (RME), requires one to recognise that not only does it associate itself with other related concepts such as Education for Sustainable Development and Business Ethics Education (Matten & Moon, 2008), but its manifestation within business schools' curriculum is proliferated with many different programme labels. This was evidenced by Matten & Moon (2004) who found over 40 different programme labels for RME across business schools in Europe with over 25% of these programmes using 'sustainable development' and 16% selecting 'corporate social responsibility'. It seems therefore that in 'adopting' RME, business schools' tend to integrate synonymous and associated concepts, such as CSR, Business Ethics and Sustainability amongst others (Acevedo, 2013).

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is defined by UNESCO[1] as "a process of learning how to make decisions that consider the long-term future of the economy, ecology and equity of all communities" (UNESCO, 2009; 17), and by Jones, Trier, and Richards (2008; 342) as "an approach to learning that enhances the capacity to cope with the uncertainties inherent in a complex world that is facing unprecedented challenges". Collectively ESD emphasises the importance of refocusing business education, upon the wider sustainable development challenges evident at a global level.

Business Ethics Education, in contrast as defined by Christensen, Peirce, Hartman, Hoffman, and Carrier (2007; 348) comprises of "the business corporation's ethical role in society and its role in minimizing the destruction to, and maximizing the preservation of, resources for future generations". Thus, one can argue that to a greater extent Business Ethics perpetuates the need for business schools to educate and develop capabilities of students so that they can make ethical, sustainable and responsible decisions in the corporate world, thereby contributing to a sustainable future.

While acknowledging that there are fundamental assimilative characteristics across the above-mentioned definitions, we define RME as "any teaching, research or enterprise activities in the areas of ethics, sustainability and responsible corporate practices, which

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[1] The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

business schools engage with in order to develop a more responsible strategic focus". Our definition is supported by Haski-Leventhal, Pournader, and McKinnon (2015) and Rasche and Gilbert (2015), who collectively argue for the need for business schools to move beyond a mere focus on modifications to the curriculum but to also attain systematic changes in its research, pedagogy and organisational strategies, in enacting RME.

2.2 Impact Factors

Business School Faculty

The perceptions and role of faculty members in business schools in terms of propagating RME is considered to be of paramount importance. Research by Matten and Moon (2004), found that within European business schools', the faculty were considered to be a key driving force for supporting RME, followed only by business school leadership. This finding is supportive of Cowton and Cummins (2003), who emphasise the importance of passionate and enthusiastic business school faculty to lead change in business schools. Motivated faculty members have also been found to assist in the diffusion of RME within a business school's curriculum (See Fukukawa, Spicer, Burrows and Fairbrass 2013).

Nevertheless, there are aspects which could potentially impede business schools' faculty engagement with RME. For instance, non-specialists in RME may resist the adoption of RME due to a lack of personal interest (Sharland et al., 2013), or perception that RME is extraneous to the core values of a business school (Doh and Tashmann 2014). In this regard, a lack of specialists, or faculty members trained to teach in this area is an issue encountered within most business schools (Podolny 2009; Muff et al., 2013) with research evidencing a significant gap in knowledge in this area across academics from within business schools (Doherty, Meehan and Richards 2015).

Management/Leadership

Whilst staff motivation and involvement can play a key role in the institutionalisation of RME in business schools, if the processes and changes they are championing are not supported by the top management within a business school then the potential for any subsequent actions to lose its momentum is quite high (Muff et al., 2013). Top managerial support and understanding of the RME agenda can therefore by considered to be an imperative in order to gain and provide access to the resources required to make changes (Evans and Robertson, 2003).

Nevertheless, business school Deans have been found to encounter complexity when making decisions to adopt RME (or not), as they need to make a choice between balancing the need to preserve core institutional activity and the need to transform and change in order to remain relevant in the marketplace for business education (Zell, 2005; Shuayto, 2013). This complexity could be further exacerbated by potential faculty resistance, where the business school faculty may often prefer the status quo to remain constant, whereas the management of the business school needs to respond to external market drivers in order to remain competitive as an organisation, although this latter aspect has been described as lacking by Doherty et al (2015).

Top management support is also essential for any changes related to RME to be enacted due to their control of resources such as financial budgets and staff resource allocations (for example, time allocated for teaching and research) and ultimately would have the final decision-making power to decide upon RME within the business school. Prior research has outlined the associated problems in adopting RME when there is insufficient time and support provided for preparation of RME related courses (Beusch, 2014). Thus, top management impact upon the RME agenda is quite critical (Muff et al., 2013).

Students

Students can become an important factor not just in terms of the interest which can be generated by them for promoting RME within business schools but also in terms of sustaining that interest through higher levels of uptake by the students of modules and/or degree programmes focused upon RME. This interest and engagement coming from students have been found to drive course development in business schools (Christensen et al., 2007), with research by Kolodinsky et al., (2010) showing that the students that hold a more ethically idealistic view having a more positive perception of CSR, and therefore RME education.

Furthermore, the world of work which business school students are expected to enter and develop their professional careers in, is increasingly moving towards skills requirements related to ethics, social responsibility and sustainability. As noted in a past survey conducted by British Sky Broadcasting Group (2012) 70% of UK graduate trainees working in business related disciplines also agreed that sustainability was important to business, but only 35% believed they had received sufficient training in this area (BSkyB Group 2012). Thus, together with staff members student interest and uptake of courses and/or modules could

potentially be a key factor enabling RME in business schools, with the reverse (i.e. disinterest and lack of up take) resulting in a rejection of, or becoming a barrier towards enabling RME within business schools (Muff et al., 2013).

Ethos/Mission

As with business corporations, universities and indeed individual business schools have mission and vision statements to promote and signify the purpose and aim of the school. These statements often reflect the values of a university and the ethos as the fundamental character of an institution. Pfeffer and Fong (2004) note how business schools need to place a stronger emphasis on professional ethics and what their purpose is in relation to RME. Thus in order to ensure the adoption of a consistent and pervasive RME approach, we consider it important that business schools' ethos portrays it well.

PRME and Accreditation Bodies

The Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), aims to "inspire and champion responsible management education, research and thought leadership globally" (PRME, 2016), and is a global initiative for changing business education (Forray & Leigh, 2012). As of May 2016, there were 651 PRME signatories worldwide with 62 business schools from within the UK (PRME 2016). The key aim in becoming a PRME signatory is to align a business school's activities with the six principles of PRME focusing on purpose, values, method, research, partnership and dialogue. The PRME project can be regarded as, the "first large-scale global initiative for change in business education" (Forray & Leigh, 2012, p.301). Recent studies have however questioned the role of PRME in influencing substantial change in RME amongst its signatory schools (See Burchell, Murray, and Kennedy, 2014). Echoing the findings from other studies they suggest that PRME itself is not a driver for change but reflects the practices already in place within institutions (Louw, 2015; Sethi and Schepers 2014). Instead they offer the consideration that its primary impact may lie with "its facilitative capacity and the ability to enable active faculty members in utilising this capacity" (Burchell, Murray, and Kennedy, 2014; p.01), thus acting as a reflection of the values already instilled by the institution. Four further themes suggest PRME's capacity; (1) as a channel for debate and discussion, (2) as a framework for assessing progress, (3) to promote change and (4) as an external communications tool (Ibid).

Business Schools in the UK are primarily accredited by three main bodies; the UK based Association of MBA's (AMBA), the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS), a part of the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) based in Brussels, and the Association for the Advancement of Collegiate Schools (AACSB), with the prestigious 'triple crown' being awarded to the schools accredited by all three. As of September 2016 there were only 75 business schools worldwide that hold a triple accreditation and 68.2% of these are European (MBA Today, 2016). Thus, the reach and impact of these accreditation bodies and the potential influence upon business schools is quite significant.

Each of these accreditation bodies operate with the aim of regulating the quality of programmes and courses that business schools deliver (Wilson and McKiernan 2011). While all three of these institutions have RME related aspects within their standards with proposals for further integration of RME across their accreditation standards in the coming years (Cooper, Parkes and Blewitt, 2014; Wilson and McKiernan, 2011), similar to PRME, the manner in which business schools are required to incorporate RME content as an accreditation requirement is not explicitly described (Sharland et al. 2013), and therefore there is potential for business schools to reinterpret their extant RME activities; to tick a box required to gain an accredited status, with no intention of integrating real changes in RME.

2.2 Embedding RME: Extant Research

While there is a growing body of research studies examining RME and its numerous associated issues, those specifically focusing upon business schools' embedding of RME are scarce. We begin with the work of Doherty, Meehan and Richards (2014), who found evidence indicating that only a limited number of UK Universities have made an institutional level commitment to RME, as they have to other disciplines or areas of commitment such as employability, the skills agenda and the Research Excellence Framework. In their work investigating the pressures for and barriers to embedding RME, Doherty, Meehan and Richards (2014) further argued that business schools must respond to the pressing RME agenda as there is a clear gap between external market drivers and the ability of UK business schools to display commitment in response to these pressures.

Subsequent research by Rasche and Gilbert (2015), proposes that business schools can respond to these pressures by altering their structures, although with a risk that under certain

circumstances schools may decouple these structures from everyday practices and encourage a disassociation between commitment and actions. Thus, Rasche and Gilbeter (2015) advocates four conditions where such decoupling is likely to occur. First, when schools have limited resource availability (Young & Nagpal, 2013); second when business schools are facing resistance to change (Giacalone, 2007); third if schools are under pressure from competing institutional demands (Gentile & Samuelson, 2005) and fourth, when schools perceive institutional demands as ambiguous and hence believe that symbolic adoption will remain undiscovered.

Painter-Morland (2015) also offers a number of competencies that institutions can engage with in order to help alter the odds which she suggests are 'stacked against' the institutions striving to bring about systemic change related to RME. Curriculum change is proposed by them, as an important intervention and therefore in line with this, the need to raise awareness within teaching faculty. Building on this point it was suggested that students should be exposed to role models within the educational environment with the opportunity for guest lecturers from a variety of backgrounds. In order to help raise staff awareness it was indicated that faculty need to be presented with the opportunity to develop the capabilities that are aligned with RME and encouraged to harness their creativity and innovation towards this (Painter-Morland 2015). These capabilities are described as being paradoxical in nature with academics required to be both committed to RME, whilst keeping an open mind, competing and collaborating and striving for success whilst accepting failure (Schoemaker 2008).

Other extant studies which have attempted to identify specific factors, which propagate curriculum changes as a result of embedding RME within business schools, have found a strong association between the religious affiliation of the institution and the delivery of ethics related content (Evans, Trevino and Weaver, 2006; Rutherford et al., 2012). Business schools cannot operate within a stance of "ethical denial'' (Huehn, 2016; 182), and even in the UK, where religiously affiliated or faith-based business schools are not prominent (Arcario, 2014), the need for business schools to acknowledge the existence of post-materialist values within the curriculum is much needed.

Other studies have also found evidence supportive of the important role played by a business school's faculty and its dean in embedding RME (See Rutherford et al., 2012 and Burchell,

Murray and Kennedy, 2014). These studies have indicated that active business school faculty can use its facilitative capacity to further engender effective embedding of RME (Burchell, Murray and Kennedy, 2014). Another study which explored the role of PRME in influencing changes related to RME within business schools, found that while PRME itself does not provide a driver for change towards RME, it acts a reflection of the practices already present within institutions, and is akin to accreditation (Wilson and McKiernan, 2011).

3. Methods

In order to explore the inherent complexities associated with embedding RME within a business school, we used a case-study research strategy (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2009) consisting of a single case design.

Our selected case study is a UK based Business School, known henceforth as 'Bus-UK', which was established in 1965 and today comprises over 130 academic staff organised across four departments (Accountancy, Finance & Economics; Management; Logistics, Operations, Hospitality and Marketing and the Law School), teaching a wide variety of business subjects to a diverse student community of approximately 5300 students. BUS-UK delivers courses from degree level to post-graduate level, with full and part-time opportunities, as well as having an active doctoral research community in the School.

Adopting a sequential mixed methods approach (Creswell and Clark, 2007) towards our data collection, we combined qualitative and quantitative data gathered through three phases (Figure 1).

Insert Figure 1 here

Phase 1

We commenced our study by conducting two workshops with BUS-UK faculty. There were two main objectives associated with these workshops; first, we wanted to obtain faculty views pertaining to issues related towards embedding RME within BUS-UK and secondly, we wanted the faculty to deconstruct RME in order for us to arrive at broader associative terms for RME to be used in the document analysis in Phase 2. Participant selection for the faculty workshops were carried out to ensure a comparable presence of Programme Leaders

(PL) and Module Leaders (ML) from across the three subject-specific Departments of BUS-UK[2] as well as those representing the undergraduate and post-graduate degree programmes which were to be reviewed in Phase 2 (See Table 1 below for Faculty Participant data).

Insert Table 1 here

The thirteen participants were first introduced to the research study and were then given the UNESCO definition of Education for Sustainable Development. They were then asked to brainstorm in groups, around four questions: *(1) What are the contemporary issues that spring to mind in relation to this definition of ESD?, (2) What are the drivers of the issues that you have identified?, (3) What are the concepts that you identify as being critical from a responsible management/ ESD perspective that relate to these four areas? and (4) What are the concepts that you identify as being critical in your area of expertise/ teaching that relate to these four areas?*

The first two questions were intended to get participants to reflect on the issues from a personal perspective in order to gather key concepts around the definition without having these filtered through a 'professional' lens or bias. Subsequent to this participants were asked to look at the concepts generated though a professional lens. After the teaching focused discussion, we concluded each workshop with an overall group discussion regarding how RME could be addressed in each participant's area of teaching and what participants perceived as the main barriers and enablers for bringing a positive change into the curriculum of BUS-UK in this regard.

Phase 2

The broader associative terms generated as a result of Phase I (Table 2), were then used to analyse degree programme specific documentation using NVivo 10. We selected the largest degree programmes in BUS-UK, in terms of student enrolment, from three of its four departments. At an undergraduate level, we selected Business Management, Business

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[2] The Law School was not included in this research, as it was considered to be a non-business subject area

Studies, Event Management and Accountancy and Finance. At the Post Graduate level we reviewed: the BUS-UK MBA (due to its status as a flagship course) and the MSc in International Business (a course which has very high student enrolment). Programme Descriptors, Module Specifications and Module Handbooks were analysed using Nvivo 10 with searches made on the four key terms: Ethics, Resilience, Responsibility AND Sustainability (ERRS). In addition, where available, reading lists and assignments were also analysed.

Insert Table 2 here

Phase 3

Following Phase 2, we compiled a student survey using the NUS survey on 'Student attitudes towards and skills for sustainable development' (See Appendix A1), as principal guidance. The survey aimed to explore student attitudes towards RME, the extent to which the latter was experienced in courses in BUS-UK and their perceptions of the University's approach to RME as a whole. We used the Bristol Online Survey tool to distribute the link to the questionnaire via email to all undergraduate and post-graduate students within BUS-UK.

4. Findings

We present our findings in relation to the two specific research objectives underpinning this study.

4.1 Research Objective 1 –Factors influencing the adoption of RME in Business Schools Faculty Perceptions

Some of the key factors which the faculty identified as having a significant influence on BUS-UK's adoption of RME were systemic and bureaucratic hurdles within BUS-UK, lack of staff expertise and skills in RME, lack of student engagement in RME and the need to align RME with market opportunities as well as accreditation targets.

It was quite evident that while the faculty were enthusiastic about enabling changes in the curriculum related to RME, the associated administrative systems in place which is essential

for any curriculum changes to be adopted and institutionalised were deemed to have detrimental impacts, as illustrated below;

> "[It is also] about the [new] consumer law, and [time taken to] say [that] these are the options we offer [students] two years before we can actually offer students something different [is a major factor]"

> "I teach corporate reporting and advanced corporate reporting and we have this 'x' amount of space in the syllabus, four weeks [of teaching], I think [to discuss any] current issues [which] I change every year depending on what's topical and what's happening in the world."

> "I am sure there are [faculty] that would like to do [more on ERRS], but because of the structure of [our] 30 credit [core modules], it is difficult to [incorporate] these"

Some of the constraints identified were also externally associated with by the faculty, specifically the need to align any curriculum revisions with external professional bodies, which were accrediting specific degree courses;

> "Accountancy has things a bit different, in the sense that we've got some restrictions by the extensions we get from the professional [accounting] bodies"

> "Most professional bodies [also] have ethics built into their exam syllabuses. It is part of their curricula, so we do [need to] integrate it in [our] modules [but according to their requirements]"

Faculty were also frustrated by the lack of student engagement, even when optional or elective module choices were offered in relation to ERRS aspects.

> "Students won't come to any option [module] talks; they won't look at any information [about the modules] which is available. So usually from my own experience students would only come to my module upon some kind of recommendation by somebody else that was actually on the module [previously]. So the problem is [also about] how we get that information [about these modules] to students"

> "I mean at its peak I used to have about 30 students [for my module on Social Entrepreneurship], so I don't know what is going on and I think it's a major challenge, particularly if we recognise the growing theme around responsibility and sustainability, and then [find] that [student] numbers have been going down"

In addition to the above factors, faculty were quite cognisant of the need to develop ERRS skills and subject-specific knowledge across the academic staff, to improve staff confidence

which they felt would consequently impact upon faculty support for any proposed RME-related changes occurring within BUS-UK.

> "[Personally] I'm not comfortable discussing [ERRS] topics as I don't know enough [about them]".

> "I have mixed responses from students within a classroom [when I teach ERRS], but that could be down to the way I approach the subject rather than their interest per se".

There was also an acknowledgement of the need to emphasise in a more precise manner, the ERRS content which some faculty were already engaging students with into mainstream teaching across all modules. It also emerged that the faculty thought that there are probably more opportunities for doing this that are currently overlooked such as through the use of case-based discussions, reflective assignment components and through 'guest speaker' sessions, delivered by specialist staff with expertise in ERRS.

> "Most of these issues are [taught] but they are [offered] as optional courses [and], optional modules and therefore the vast majority of undergraduates leave the university with a very traditional view of what business does and how, and its lack of responsibility really"

> "The key problem we have is that these [topics] are still seen as niche and separate from mainstream teaching. And they shouldn't be."

> "I think all of the modules that I teach would probably have a session or something somewhere. Or trying to do maybe a case, or the assignment in some cases to raise issues for students."

> "I think that yes, primarily we have to teach the mainstream subjects but students are quite receptive so if we are including those themes in our weekly lectures and with a particular focus in at least one or two lectures out of twelve it will not hurt. And it will be consistent not only with the PRME agenda but it's also a good thing to do."

More broadly, the faculty viewed that substantive improvements could be made to the teaching, learning and assessment methods, through curriculum change. However, they also viewed the lack of specialists to be a key barrier in this regard and proposed intensive staff development if curriculum change is to be implemented effectively.

> "We need to be ambitious […] have an [ERRS] topic in each module. I am sure every module will have a need to cover at least one of the above mentioned areas"

"If these topics are to become part of modules on other subject areas, we need to Recruit academic authorities in this area rather than generalists, for example, marketing and logistics that may not be taught by people with much interest in or knowledge of ethics, so that is a big barrier"

"Only a limited number of staff have knowledge in this subject area so we certainly need staff development as [ERRS] should be embedded in the curriculum"

"We can change the module learning outcomes as a start so that all modules are aligned to ERRS areas for example, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) could be a good start"

"We should allow individual subject groups, in the Business School to implement this rather than having it dictated from above".

The workshop discussions also provoked a lively debate around *what* business schools are for and the need to engage in critical reflection on the moral responsibilities of BUS-UK in this area (i.e. what kind of students are we producing?) as well as the opportunities that ERRS may provide around differentiation of BUS-UK's 'offer' to business students in an increasingly homogeneous albeit competitive market place, including the potential advantages evident in relation to AACSB and other parallel accreditation systems, which emphasise the adoption of systematic integration of RME into the ethos of business schools.

"[we need to decide] are we business schools, leaders of business or are we followers? Because there is a move [towards] more progressive business schools, places where they design a whole new undergraduate [degree] programme which is all about responsibility. [We also need to ask] how many of BUS-UK students [would] want that, because they might think they want jobs with companies. So there is a kind of tension there on what we offer and [what our students want]"

"But what sort of business school do we want to be? Do we want to just be a follower of current business practice?, or are we actually trying to make sure that graduates from BUS-UK are different and more critical and are actually open to change? I think we are [at the moment] firmly in the first category"

"[Firstly] we [at BUS-UK] are not being responsible for what we are teaching; we are turning out [students] who collectively don't care about these issues"

"Yes we are very successful but why [would students] come to BUS-UK? I am not sure we really know [the answer]. So one thing I would like to say in the future with [our accreditation process] is something like - you come to BUS-UK we really do shape our curriculum towards these four things, and you will get an education in the classic ideas but also [in] this sort of flavour".

All Business School students (UG and PG) were emailed the student survey (Appendix I). 128 survey responses were received, with an even number being received from UK and International students. A representative sample from each year (Undergraduate Years 1-3 and Masters Level) as well as a small percentage of Doctoral students (Table 3).

Insert Table 3 here

However, in contrast to the faculty perceptions about a lack of student enthusiasm and engagement in RME subjects and topics, the student perceptions were quite different. 82% of students wanted BUS-UK to actively incorporate and integrate ERRS topics into the teaching curriculum. Students also agreed in general that ERRS issues needed to be actively incorporated and promoted by the university more broadly (Table 4).

Insert Table 4 here

Student perceptions about the present status of RME (noted as social and environmental skills in the survey) were quite positive as well (Table 5).

Insert Table 5 here

When questioned about the 'best way' to incorporate RME into degree courses, the preferred method was to build the associated skills, in Ethics, Responsibility, Resilience and Sustainability into existing content across the full course, further supported by associative extra-curricular activities within departments (Table 6).

Insert Table 6 here

It was also interesting that majority of students (over 70%) considered as the inclusion of teaching related to Ethics, Responsibility, Resilience and Sustainability within degree courses when selecting their choice of University to study at (Table 7). Finally, when asked about prioritisation of ERRS aspects in the future, two thirds of students in our survey stated that they would be prepared (all other factors being equal), to choose a graduate position with a starting salary £1000 lower than average (£20,000) in a company with a strong environmental and social responsibility record, indicative of a strong student support for RME in general. (Table 8).

Insert Table 7 and 8 here

4.2 Research Objective 2 – Extant deficiencies of the present curriculum in BUS-UK towards addressing RME.

At the outset our review of degree course documentation consisting of Programme Specific Documents (PSDs), Module Specific Documents (MSDs) and Module Handbooks, provided us with some interesting findings:-

   a. There was no 'golden thread' – i.e. consistent and substantive presence – linking the learning outcomes stated in PSDs, with those in the MSDs and evidenced by teaching, learning and assessment activities within the Module Handbooks, related to our selected RME perspectives of, Ethics, Responsibility, Resilience and Sustainability (ERRS).

   b. In effect the presence of ERRS across all degree and postgraduate degree programmes reviewed were quite inconsistent, with only the presence of standalone modules supportive of ERRS.

   c. Even where evidenced (as in b), not all elements of ERRS were present in the documentation, with a greater emphasis being laid upon ethics/responsibility than sustainability or resilience.

More precisely, as shown below in Table 9, across the two post graduate degree courses reviewed – i.e. MBA and MSc in International Business - we found evidence of only two

standalone modules, one on Ethical Leadership and the other on Corporate Responsibility and Governance. While the PSD does specifically contain ERRS learning outcomes, the embedding of these across the MSDs and Module Handbooks, albeit those which were non-specialist ERRS modules, were quite weak and inconsistent.

Insert Table 9

Across the four undergraduate degree courses, we reviewed (Table 10), the proportion of core modules explicitly referencing ERRS varied between 28% (in Accountancy and Financial Services - mostly for ethics) and 50% (in Business Management and Business Studies). The majority of reading lists available for review, within module handbooks, had very limited coverage of ERRS issues. It may be that a more in-depth analysis of reading lists and assignments would reveal a wider engagement with ERRS issues.

We acknowledge that a word/context review carried out on degree programme documentation, using NVivo 10 can only capture what is documented and not what actually occurs within a classroom environment. As evidenced from our staff workshop findings, some faculty seems to be engaged quite proactively with ERRS issues, particularly on specialist modules, but also more subtly in modules which are broadly non-specialist such as accountancy and finance for example. However, this type of engagement seems to be primarily led by personal interest and commitment of faculty, rather than as BUS-UK policy based upon a consideration for the key current and future issues businesses are dealing with (in particular those related to sustainability). Thus, we find that while there seems to be an implicit enthusiasm and interest amongst both faculty and students, of the importance of engaging with RME, this enthusiasm is not explicitly evident in a pervasive manner across BUS-UK's present curriculum.

Insert Table 10

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5. Discussion

In this research, we set out to examine why embedding RME within a business school could be a complex activity, by exploring the present status of and views about RME in a selected UK business school. As outlined in our findings, there was a lack of embedding of RME across the selected business school's curriculum, with a consistent presence of only standalone modules pertaining to the associated ERRS elements. We also found positive student support for RME and as opposed to our documentary evidence, a perception amongst students that RME *is* focused upon in the business school's curriculum. Clearly, this is indicative of an implicit focus on RME by faculty within the business school, through a variety of teaching, learning and assessment methods. Our findings also highlighted that while the faculty are enthusiastic about embedding RME, they are also wary of the potential institutional barriers which could arise either from within or outside of the business school. In effect, what our findings show is that any attempt to embed RME requires substantive business school-wide support, in terms of administrative, academic and resource based support, but also more importantly a determination to re-evaluate the ethos of the business school itself. We find that in the absence of the latter the former would become an inconsequential change.

To a certain extent our findings are supported by resource pressures identified by Doherty, Meehan and Richards (2015), where business schools, given their position as a 'cash cow' for UK Universities, are compelled to be cautious about any changes, specifically to its curriculum, which could undermine their ability to be competitive. The UK higher education environment is due to get even more competitive with the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and implementation of the UK Higher Education and Research Bill. The latter will see a lowering of the threshold that private providers have to meet to become degree-awarding universities and provide provision for single course providers to be awarded a University title. This increased competition for students is likely to increase the level of caution business schools employ around curriculum changes, at least in the short-medium term, until the consequences of these fundamental changes to the market place are better understood.

Furthermore, in accordance with Reay et al. (2013), we find that while the business school's faculty were enthusiastic about RME from a normative perspective, they do anticipate potential institutional barriers and therefore, could potentially resist significant change. This nature of academics as professionals characterizes how they have a tendency to support institutionalised practices (Ibid), and in instances where embedding RME requires a substantive disruption of these institutionalised practices resistance could arise even from within faculty, showcasing the autonomy of the academic profession. Rasche and Gilbert (2015), further argues that for business school faculty, expending energy into RME by engaging in substantive curriculum revisions, or by supporting extra-curricular activities associated with RME, does not provide them with career advancement, obtained under the current academic climate, often through achievements related to the 'research agenda' of the business schools. Giacalone and Thompson (2006: p269) summarise this career focused research agenda quite well by stating that "there is no asterisk for those who failed to make the projections due to exemplary ethics or socially responsible behaviour".

Although not evidenced through our research, Doherty, Meehan and Richards (2015) have also emphasised further complexity created by a lack of deeper understanding of RME and the external pressures for its adoption, at the senior leadership (or by top management) level of business schools. Concurring with the work of Bennis and O'Toole (2005), the authors stress the inherent drawbacks which business schools would encounter due to non-responsive management to this RME agenda.

Therefore, we argue that if business schools are to engage with substantive decoupling practices to embed RME, there could be two potential albeit contrary outcomes; decoupling could create a heightened disconnect between RME and the business school's educational practices leading to cynicism and possible resistance at an institution-wide level, or alternatively, it could lead to a positive change, resulting in the creation of a discourse around the future of RME within the business school, leading eventually to inspire recoupling activities (Parguel, Benoît-Moreau, and Larceneux 2011). Based on our findings, it can be argued that the potential for RME related decoupling to result in the former, thereby adopting a 'bolt-on' approach as opposed to an integrated method, is most likely unless the associated complexities are resolved beforehand.

6. Conclusion

While the UN PRME initiative identified as a soft mechanism for change (Burchell et al. 2014), due to its lack of formal regulatory requirements, nevertheless, it can also act an encouragement to those signatory institutions, who prefer its openness towards accepting innovative changes in RME (Exter et al., 2013) geared towards the adoption of a more long-term strategic agenda (Burchell et al., 2014). This is quite evident in this research study, which was undertaken as a commitment made by BUS-UK to PRME. Thus, we recognise the influence of PRME as a driving force towards organizational-level change in RME towards its signatory business schools. Nonetheless in order for RME to be embedded at a deeper level within a business school, there has to be a complete decoupling of its extant practices, commencing from a re-evaluation of the ethos of a business school, in effect answering the question 'what does a business school stand for?'.

To this effect, research by Painter-Morland (2015) suggests that both the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning business schools pose barriers towards successfully embedding RME. Our ontological assumptions about what management education 'is', she poses, influences our understanding of 'responsible management education'. This can be regarded in one manner as a scale; those individuals who already perceive management education as needing to embrace responsible, ethical and sustainable facets, will need less persuasion to increase RME content within business schools. On the other hand, those academics who bolster the profit focused mind set and therefore view management education in this regard, may need more convincing and hold a different understanding of the term 'responsible management education'. As such, changes that business schools need to engage with as part of a transformation towards supporting the implementation of RME are deep rooted in its core beliefs and values (Waddock, 2006). Business schools, and the academics within them, thus need to alter their overarching view of management education before they can begin to enact change.

Business schools should re-examine their ethos, ideally moving away from an organisation-centred worldview which supports the centrality of business *in* society, to a human-centred world view that sees business as only a one component within a larger social system.

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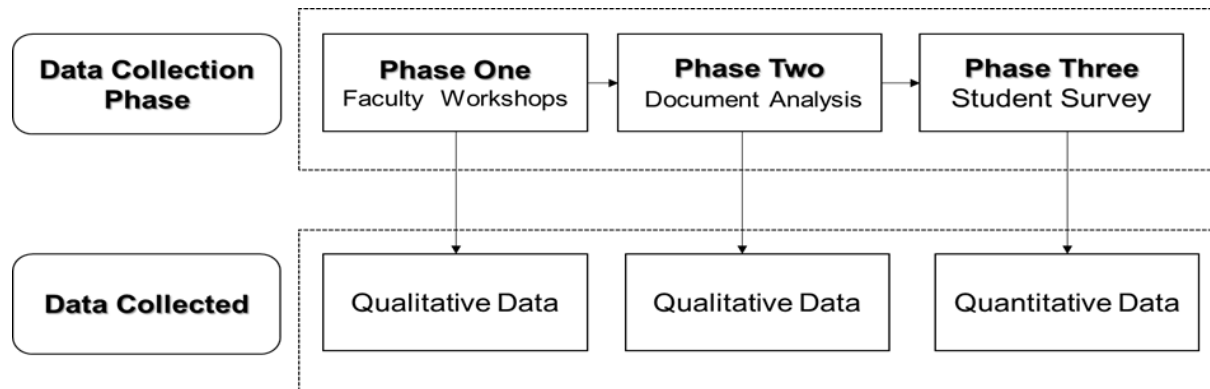Higher Education Statistics Agency. (2015). Online Statistics. from https://www.hesa.ac.uk/stats

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Figure 1 Data Collection Phases

Table 1 Faculty Participant Characteristics

Gender	Male 50%			Female 50%		
Age	40-49 42%		50-59 12.5%		60+ 12.5%		
Academic Level	Postgraduate 60%		Undergraduate 30%		PhD 10%		
Department Affiliation	Strategy, Economics and Marketing 50%		Accountancy & Finance 10%		People and Management 20%	Logistics and Hospitality 10%	
Course Admin Role	Programme Leader 40%			Module Leader 60%		
Discipline Specialism	Economics 16%	Supply Chain 16%	Managing People 16%	Management 16%	Marketing 16%	Sustainability 16%

Table 2 Key Descriptors for RME Resulting from Staff Workshops

Responsibility	Resilience
Integrated Reporting	Social Entrepreneurship
Diversity Management	Social Capital Walter
Migrant Workers	Social ownership/stewardship
Collaborative Consumption	Gender empowerment/equality-
Sharing Economy	Individual Agency/ Activism –
Circular Economy	Risk
Gift Economy	Individual Resilience
Voluntary Simplicity	Crisis Management
Social Marketing	Business Continuity Management
Economic Development and Social Justice	Tylenol Case
Charity Marketing	Contingency Planning
Cause Related Marketing	Overcoming difficult situations
Social Economy	Personal perspective
Actors in global society	Risk management
Company awareness of responsibility	Risk assessment
Even the 'goodies' sell out	Financial crises
Critical Thinking of Business and personal decision	

Sustainability	Ethics
Sustainable Entrepreneurship	Ethical HRM
Peak Oil	Personal Ethics
Environmental impacts	Professional Ethics
Wicked problems	Governance
Cross-Cultural management	Inequality and Discrimination
Climate Change	Social Accounting
Truths + Controversies	Ethical Consumption
Knowledge Management	Personal Responsibility
Globalization	Leadership styles
CSR + its prospect, criticisms and extensions	Fairness
Risk	Choices
SDGs	Ethical Leadership
Actors in global society	Good governance
Principles to guide us	Growth and development
Alternative methods of measuring performance	Actual ethics
Criticism of organisational performance	Professional ethics
Economic modules	Practice ethics
Bank Capital Ratios	Concepts of ethics
Risk and risk assessment	Honesty
Risk Planning	Integrity
Legacy of projects	Running projects ethically
Performance conformance	Transparency

Table 3 Student Survey: Summary of Student Characteristics

| Gender	Male 48%			Female 52%		
Age	17-21 42%	22-26 30%	27-31 9%	32-41 13%	42-51 6%	52+ 1%
Type of Student	UK National 50%		International 44%		European Union 6%	
Study Module [Part-Time/Full Time]	Full Time 94%			Part Time 6%		
Academic Year	Year 1 16%	Year 2 11%	Year 3 28%	Year 4 18%	Masters 21%	PhD 5%

Table 4 Student Interest in Teaching of Ethics, Responsibility, Resilience and Ethics

| To what extent do you agree that the BUS-UK should be obliged to integrate responsibility, sustainability , resilience and ethics elements into the teaching	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	39%	44%	13%	2%	2%
To what extent, if at all, would you say that you personally agree with the following statement: "sustainability, responsibility, resilience and ethical matters are something I would like to learn more about"	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	32%	46%	15%	4%	2%

Table 5 Student Perception of Current ERRS Offering

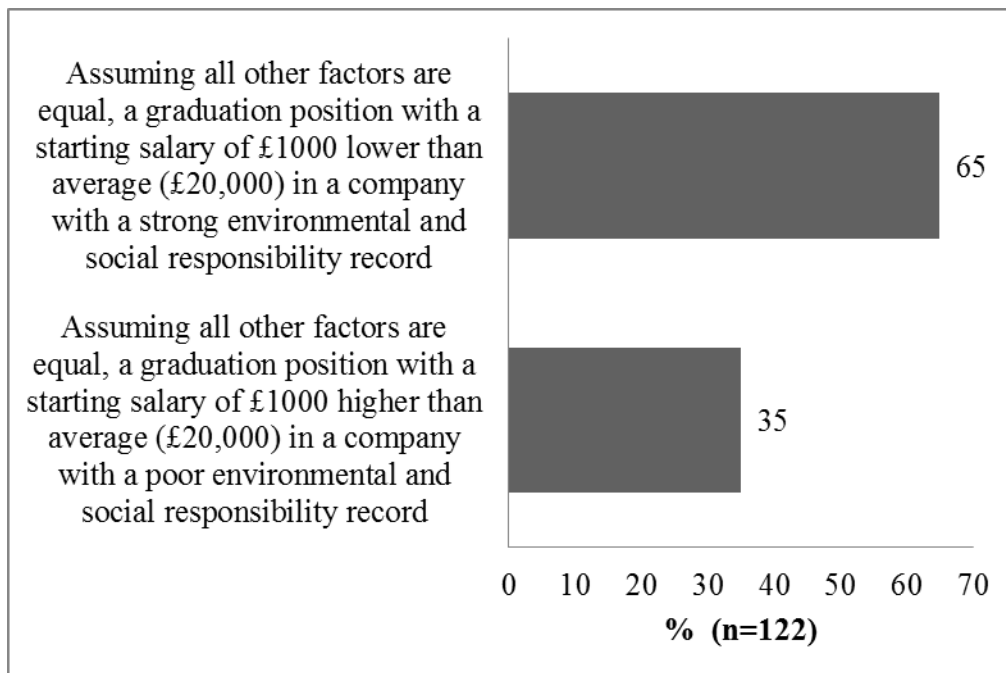| My university/Business School practices and promotes good social and environmental skills.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	23%	54%	19%	3%	1%
My course/course leaders practise and promote good social and environmental skills.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	28%	44%	20%	5%	2%

Table 6 Students' Preferred Method of Incorporating ERRS into Curriculum
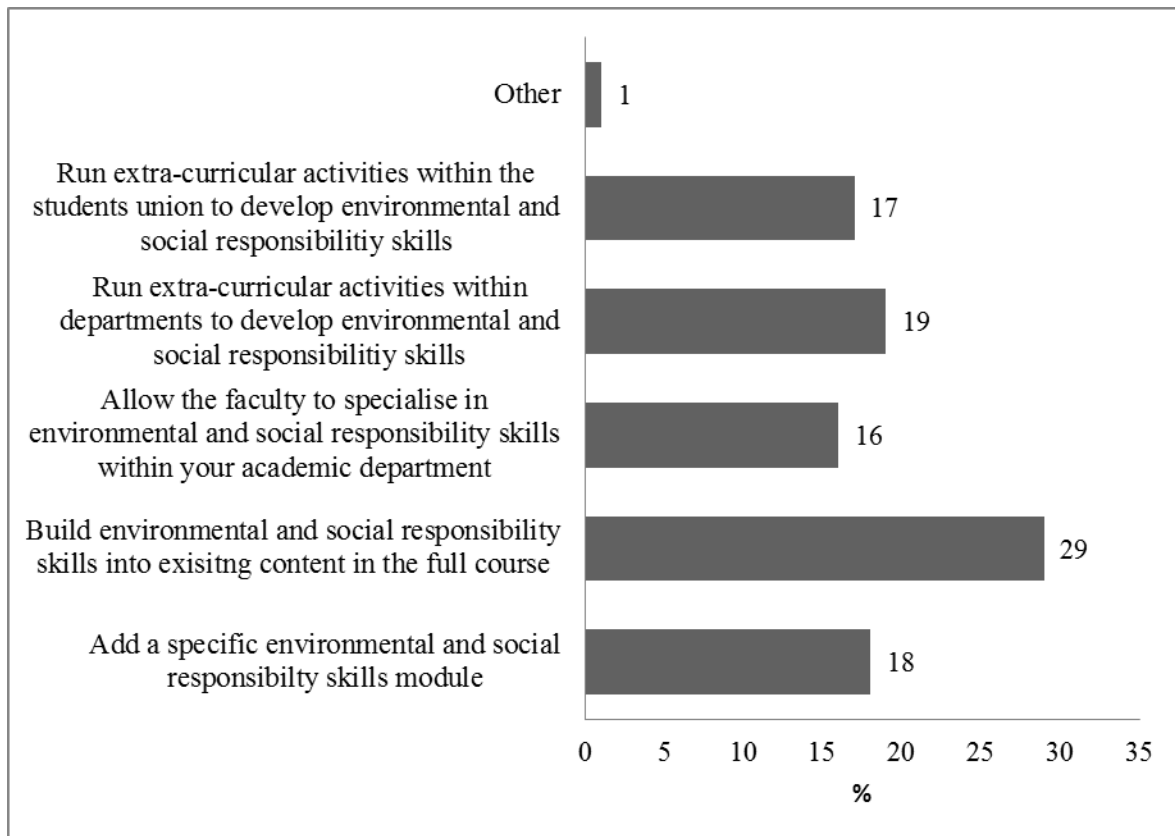
Table 7 Student Response when Asked about the Importance of ERRS in Choosing which University to Apply to
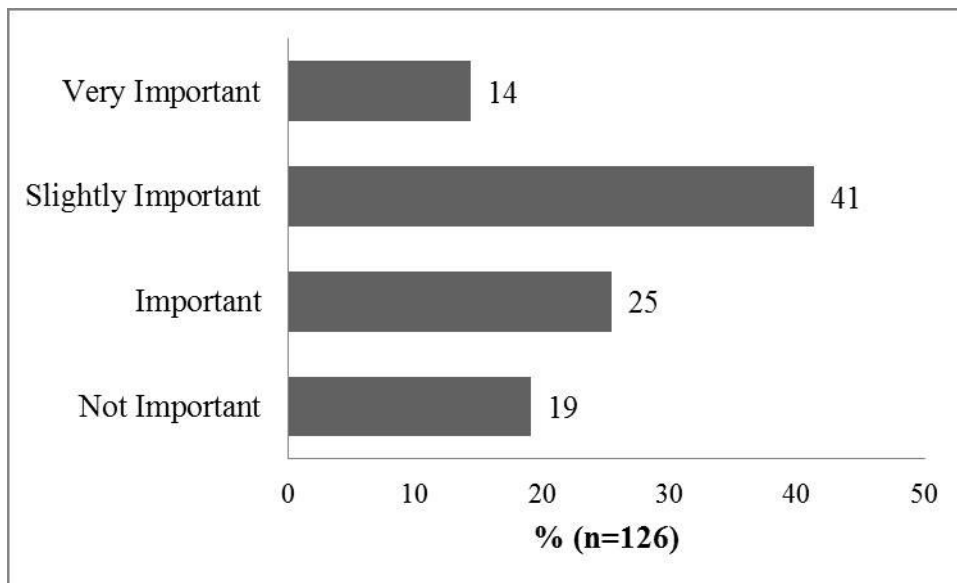
Table 8 Student Response to the Question 'We are interested in your prioritisation of social and environmental aspects in the future. Please select which option you would choose.

Table 9 Summary of the review of post-graduate courses.

	MBA	MSc in International Business
Programme Specification	Includes 'ethics and values management' as an explicit educational aim	An ERRS learning outcome was included in two International Business pathways: MSc in International Business with Tourism and MSc in International Business with Financial Services. However, ERRS was not embedded within the 'Intended Learning Outcomes' for the MSc International Business suite itself.
MDS's	ERRS[3] references only evident in four module MSD's (out of a total of 11 Core Modules). Only two of the four referenced an element of ERRS in learning outcomes. No other evidence of ERRS integration across programme and module specifications.	ERRS present in two MDS's (Strategic Management and Corporate Responsibility & Governance) out of a total of 8 Core Modules. No other evidence of ERRS integration across Programme & Module specifications.
Module Handbooks	No reference to ERRS in any module handbook, delivery schedule or any other aspect of the handbook other than in the 'Ethical Leadership' module.	No reference to ERRS in any module handbook Delivery Schedule or any other aspect of the handbook other than in the 'Corporate Responsibility & Governance' module.
Associated Reading Lists	Included for Ethical Leadership module only.	Included in Corporate Responsibility & Governance module. One reference in Strategic Management module.
Assignments	Not accessible	Not accessible

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[3] Ethics, Responsibility, Resilience & Sustainability

Table 10 Summary of the Review of Undergraduate Degree Courses

Document	Business Management	Business Studies	Accountancy & Financial Services	Event Management
Programme Specification	Refers to diversity, social responsibility, CSR and personal responsibility & resilience; sustainability primarily linked to organisational sustainability.	Refers to sustainable development as an explicit learning outcome.	No direct reference to ERRS terms; thought it does include demonstrating sound understanding of principles and practice.	No explicit reference to ERRS but refers to development of economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts of the sector.
Year 1	2/4 specs reference an element of ERRS with Introduction to Business Management doing this comprehensively.	1/5 core module specs (Contemporary Issues in Business) widely references ERRS. 1/2 optional module specs references ethics	2/5 core modules reference elements of ERRS, one explicitly, one implicitly. Latter linked to learning outcome.	No reference in four core modules. Fifth one not on Wisdom.1/2 optional modules implicit reference to some ERRS elements.
Year 2	1/5 specs reference ethics.	Core: 2/5; one explicit ERRS reference (ethics), one implicit reference. Optional: 2/4, one explicit ERRS reference, one implied.	2/5 explicit reference to one ERRS element (Ethics); 2 other modules make an implicit reference with one linked to a learning outcome.	1/6 core modules explicit reference and learning outcome linked to two ERRS elements. 2/2 optional modules both cover two ERRS elements with one linked to an assignment/essay.
Year 3	1/3 specs some limited ERRS reference.	Core: 1/2 explicit ERRS reference. Optional: 5/12 have an explicit reference to ERRS, with one of these (Business Responsibility and Sustainability) specifically referencing PRME agenda. A further 3 have an implied reference to an element of ERRS.	1/4 optional modules ERRS reference.	1/6 core modules has implicit reference linked to learning outcome. Optional modules: 1/2 explicit reference to one ERRS element.
Module Handbooks				
Year 1	3 explicit references to an element of ERRS	2/5 core module specs explicit reference, one of these (Contemporary Issues in Business) covers all ERRS elements. 1/2 optional modules reference ethics implicitly.	2/5 core modules reference one element of ERRS, one explicitly and one implicitly.	3/5 core modules have an explicit ERRS reference and two of these link to reading lists. 1/2 optional modules has an explicit reference linked to a learning outcome.

Year 2	3/5 make reference to an element of ERRS; one explicitly, two implicitly.	2/5* core modules explicit reference to one or two of ERRS; one has an implicit reference. Optional modules*: 2/4 have an implicit reference to ERRS.	2/5 modules reference one element of ERRS (Ethics); a third had a learning outcome in the module spec but no link through to the handbook.	3/5 core modules explicitly covered several ERRS elements and a further one module was implied. NB one core module handbook not found on system. 2/2 optional modules covered several ERRS elements and linked to reading lists.
Year 3	2/5 explicit reference to an element of ERRS; one implicit	Two core modules explicit reference to two ERRS components. Optional: 4/12 modules explicit reference to one or more ERRS components and one of these (Env. Policy and Business Responsibility) are linked to learning outcomes. 2/12 implicit reference to ERRS.	No reference in four core modules. 1/4 optional modules explicit reference to one ERRS element (ethics).	Three core module handbooks not found online for analysis. Of the remaining three, two explicitly referenced an element of ERRS. 1/2 optional modules referenced an element of ERRS and linked to a learning outcome.
Reading Lists				
Year 1	No reference in reading list	Several listed for Contemporary Issues in Business. None for all other modules.	No reading list references to ERRS.	2 modules included a reading list reference (one core, one optional)
Year 2	One reading list reference	No reading list references to EERS issues.	1/4 core options has an ERRS reading list reference.	1 reading list reference in implied core module. Both optional modules included several relevant reading list references.
Year 3	Two modules have one reading list reference	Five optional modules have a reading list references, two of them have several references.	Link to reading list (x3 references) for one optional module. One core module has a relevant reading listed but no reference to ERRS in handbook description.	1 reading list reference in a core module.

Appendix A1: Student Survey Questionnaire

1. **Gender** Male   Female   Choose not to say

2. **Age** (from a series of bands) 17-21, 22-26, 27-31, 32-41, 42-51, 52+

3. **Which type of student are you?** National/ EU/International student

4. **Are you a full time or a part time student?**

5. **What is your current academic year** – 1, 2, 3, 4, Masters, PhD

6. **How important were the following when choosing which University or college to apply to?**
   - The proximity of the university or college to home?
   - The position of the university college in league tables
   - How seriously the university takes environmental issues
   - Nightlife
   - How seriously the university takes global development issues
   - The position of the course in league tables
   - Attractiveness of location
   - The teaching methods
   - The reputation of the university
   - Reputation of the course
   - My course included sessions around sustainability and responsibility/ethics in relation to my subject

7. **Please rank the following skills in terms of their importance in being included in your course for a graduate in your field, where 1 is the most important and 8 is the least important**
   - Problem solving using many subjects
   - Consider the ethical issues of your subject
   - Adapt to new situations
   - Think of the whole system and the links when considering new ideas
   - Use resources efficiently
   - Plan for the long term as well as the short term
   - Act as a responsible citizen locally & globally
   - Take account of the environmental and social impact of your actions

8. **Thinking of your own personal view, how relevant is it to you that the following skills are developed through your university education?**
   - Problem solving using many subjects
   - Consider the ethical issues of your subject
   - Adapt to new situations

- Think of the whole system and the links when considering new ideas
- Use resources efficiently
- Plan for the long term as well as short term
- Acts as a responsible citizen locally & globally
- Awareness of how to incorporate sustainability into business activities and operations
- Conduct business in a responsible way

9. **To what extent do you agree that universities should be obliged to integrate responsibility, sustainability, resilience and ethics elements into the teaching curricula?**

Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

10. **To what extent if at all do you agree with the following statements?**
- My university/college practices and promotes good social and environmental skills
- My course/course leaders practice and promote good social and environmental skills
- My clubs/societies practices and promote good social and environmental skills
- My students' union practices and promotes good social and environmental skills

11. **To what extent, if at all, would you say that you personally agree with the following statements: sustainability, responsibility, resilience and ethical matters are something I would like to learn more about.**
   Agree/ Disagree

12. **To what extent, if at all, do you agree with the following statements:**
- Sustainability, resilience, responsibility and ethics is something which universities should actively incorporate and promote
- Sustainability, resilience, responsibility and ethics is something which all university courses should actively incorporate and promote
- Sustainability, resilience, responsibility and ethics is something all course tutors should be required to incorporate within their teaching
- Sustainability, resilience, responsibility and ethics is something which I would like to learn more about

13. **What do you think the most relevant way of including social and environmental skills within your course would be?**
- Add a specific environmental and social skills module
- Build environmental and social skills into existing content in the full course
- Allow the staff to specialise in environmental and social skills within your academic department
- Run extra-curricular activities within departments to develop environmental and social skills
- Run extra-curricular activities within the students' union to develop environmental and social skills

14. We are interested in your prioritisation of social and environmental aspects in the future. Please select which option you would choose

- Assuming all other factors are equal, a graduate position with a starting salary of £1000 higher than average (£20,000) in a company with a poor environmental and social record
- Assuming all other factors are equal, a graduate position with a starting salary of £1000 lower than average (£20, 000) in a company with a strong environmental and social record

15. Is there anything else you would like to add? (free form text).