

# Strategic Plan 2016-2020

KEMMY BUSINESS SCHOOL  
UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK



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# 1 MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

The formulation of a strategic plan offers the opportunity for KBS to engage in a process of reflection, self-assessment and engagement.

In common with many institutions in Ireland we have faced significant challenges in recent years. The fact that we have navigated these so well provides a context in which we can now plan for development and growth.

While we continue to face challenges, we can now imagine a future that sees us engage on an international stage in a manner that reflects our unique strengths and values.

This plan, which draws significantly from the university's new plan, Broadening Horizons (2015-19), builds on many of our achievements while situating us firmly at the centre of recent global and technological developments that bring both opportunities and challenges.

I would like to thank all who have contributed to the development of this plan in such a constructive and determined manner. It augurs well for our school that we now have a plan that is consistent with our values, focused in our mission and ambitious for our future.



**Dr Philip O'Regan**  
Executive Dean

**Kemmy Business School**  
University of Limerick

Implementing a vision  
to which we can  
all aspire





Building on our achievements,  
accentuating our distinctiveness  
and raising our international profile

## 2 CONTEXT FOR STRATEGIC PLAN

The development of a strategic plan offers the opportunity to imagine and implement a vision to which all can aspire.

In 2013, when we last engaged in this process, while conscious of the limitations imposed by a severe international financial crisis, we chose to be ambitious and outward-looking. And our achievements have been remarkable. Under a number of headings – research output, teaching quality, intake levels, international activities and accreditations – we have reached and even surpassed our aims.

As we move to the next phase in our development, we find ourselves in a position to build on these successes. Our Strategic Plan for 2016-2020 has been formulated, therefore, in a context that allows us to implement a mission and a vision that more comprehensively engage with broader university goals. These university goals, which emphasise building on our achievements, accentuating our distinctiveness and raising our international profile, provide an over-arching framework within which we can further develop KBS.

**The emphasis in our mission statement on academic excellence and social commitment connects to the ethos of the late Jim Kemmy, after whom the school is named.**

Jim Kemmy spent his life working for the betterment of all in society and the school's mission statement is a fitting reminder of the need to view education as a contributor to social good as well as a means to economic prosperity. His legacy finds its most obvious expression in a mission statement and values that emphasise excellence, diversity and social responsibility.

Operating in a dynamic environment in which technological developments have changed the manner in which information is disseminated and consumed, we need to be able to respond to transformations in the way learning takes place, in which traditional didactic models of teaching may no longer be appropriate. The world in which we operate is also changing with new entrants and new technological platforms introducing competition that is innovative, fast-moving and student-focused. The confluence of these technological and socio-economic changes presents both challenges and opportunities for KBS.

Throughout our history as a business school we have emphasised a set of core values that have informed the manner in which we address the needs and aspirations of our various stakeholders, including the business community, wider societal interests and, especially, our staff and students.

These core values find expression in a commitment to:

- » **Promote Learning and Discovery**
- » **Student Focused Education**
- » **Promote Social Responsibility and Ethical Behaviour**
- » **Protect Academic Freedom**
- » **Enhance Knowledge**
- » **Promote Access and Diversity**
- » **Future Orientation**
- » **Promote Inclusive and Sustainable Societies**
- » **Foster International Perspectives**
- » **Support Staff and Self-Development**
- » **Facilitate Involvement of Industry**
- » **Continuously Innovate and Improve**

The KBS Strategic Plan 2016-2020 has been developed with these values and contexts in mind. The embodiment of these values is to be found in the mission statement of the school:

**“As a leading Irish Business School in a public university system, KBS is committed to excellence in teaching, and to fostering knowledge and understanding of business and society within a diverse, research active and socially engaged environment.”**

The distinctive character and values of KBS, which draw on the legacy of Jim Kemmy, the employability of our students, the business-relevance of our engagements with all sectors and a unique international reach, is facilitated by an English-speaking provenance and diaspora. These equip us to meet the next phase in our development with confidence and ambition.

In these contexts, KBS has identified four key goals by which we aim to secure our mission, in the process building on our achievements, accentuating our distinctiveness and raising our international profile:

- » **To facilitate an engaged and distinctive student-centred education**
- » **To cultivate excellence in research**
- » **To further internationalise all relevant aspects of KBS**
- » **To contribute to our community of stakeholders in a responsible and sustainable manner**

An elaboration of the four goals identified above, together with the specification of particular action items by which they can be achieved, forms the core of the remainder of the document.

# 3 VISION AND STRATEGIC GOALS

## VISION

Our vision is to be a business school that delivers a distinctive educational experience, is research active, internationalised and socially engaged, with an international reputation for specialist areas of expertise.

## STRATEGIC GOALS

In order to deliver on this vision we have identified four clear strategic goals which will guide the direction of KBS over the next four years. These goals, which align with and are informed by the broader university's aims of building on our achievements, accentuating our distinctiveness and raising our international profile, are summarised below.



## ENABLING THE STRATEGY

We recognise that achieving these goals involves allocating and managing our various resources in an efficient and effective manner. In particular, we seek to provide opportunities for our staff to meet their career, personal and developmental goals and to contribute to the fulfilment of this plan.

To these ends we will ensure that resources are allocated to staff development, to targeted recruitment and to ensuring a working environment that prioritises the importance of our social and intellectual capital.

We will support our staff through programmes of staff development and upskilling that prioritise dignity, respect and work/life balance. We will develop processes and practices that work to align staff workload to specific institutional goals and to our mission. We will also work to attract and retain the best staff, emphasising qualities of excellence, innovation, diversity and leadership.



Prioritising the  
importance of  
our social and  
intellectual capital

## GOAL 1

TO FACILITATE AN ENGAGED AND DISTINCTIVE STUDENT CENTRED EDUCATION

KBS offers a distinctive, student-centred learning experience, built on excellent faculty and innovative modes of learning. Delivering an engaged quality of education in this manner is essential to developing students who can undertake a full and empowering role in business and society. It is also an approach that enables our students to develop relevant and innovative business skills, combined with an understanding of their responsibility as global citizens.

Globalisation and technological innovation provide new contexts within which engaged learning can occur. As we build on our achievements in this area, KBS will interact with new learning pedagogies, platforms and technological innovations.

## GOAL 2

TO CULTIVATE EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

With a research profile that already exhibits excellence in many dimensions, KBS will seek to extend and embed this culture across its full complement of activities. Reflecting the university's ambition to become increasingly research-led, KBS will encourage and facilitate a scholarly approach to research that embraces a variety of perspectives and paradigms, and underpins our teaching and international engagement.

Consistent with our founding ethos, we value industry-relevant, pedagogically-informed and impactful research activity. Embedding our research culture across departments, themes and clusters is important in attracting exceptional faculty and will serve to inculcate an interdisciplinary approach that leads to innovation and a positive impact on our wide range of stakeholders. These activities will be facilitated by a variety of support mechanisms and forms that include focused support for Horizon2020 and other international funding opportunities.

## GOAL 3

TO FURTHER INTERNATIONALISE ALL RELEVANT ASPECTS OF KBS

An outward-looking focus that recognises the dynamic impulses of globalisation, diversity and inclusiveness will be key factors in raising our international profile. Reflecting these imperatives, KBS will engage fully with the internationalisation agenda that is a key component of the university's strategic plan.

Recognising that education has now become a truly global activity, KBS will build on existing international partnerships in a manner that emphasises issues of quality, collaboration, impact and translation. This engagement will embrace research activity, student and faculty exchange, dual degrees, trans-national education and partnerships. It will emphasise our role as global citizens with a responsibility to promote responsible education, sustainability and equality at a global level.

## GOAL 4

TO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR COMMUNITY OF STAKEHOLDERS IN A RESPONSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE MANNER

KBS engages with a variety of stakeholders, communities and other groups ranging from our students to our international partners and collaborators. We commit to working with all of these in a manner that reflects our values and, in particular, our commitment to responsible, ethical and sustainable education. This will involve a commitment to evaluating our engagements in a way that fully appreciates our potential to impact society.

Our understanding of our role as global citizens will inform our activities with local schools, national policy-makers and international agencies.



# 4 ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE STRATEGIC GOALS

## GOAL 1

### To facilitate an engaged and distinctive student-centred Education

The key actions which will be taken to enhance the reputation of KBS for the provision of an engaged and distinctive student centred education are outlined in Table 4.1.

These initiatives will run in parallel to our on-going actions to utilise innovative teaching approaches and support faculty in evaluating and developing their teaching capabilities.

**Table 4.1:** Actions to facilitate an engaged and distinctive student-centred education

#### KEY ACTIONS:

- 1.1 Reaffirm our commitment to excellence in teaching and learning
- 1.2 Provide an engaged learning experience for students that leverages our distinctive cooperative education programme, industry partnerships and student attributes
- 1.3 Increase and enhance international opportunities for students
- 1.4 Pursue prestigious international accreditations, partnerships and networks
- 1.5 Embed and utilise technology enhanced learning across curricula to improve the student experience and promote excellence in teaching and learning
- 1.6 Increase taught postgraduate and doctoral enrolments in a sustainable manner consistent with our commitment to excellence in teaching and learning
- 1.7 Broaden the diversity of our student population



### 1.1 Reaffirm our commitment to excellence in teaching and learning

Excellence in teaching and learning is central to the KBS mission and we reaffirm our commitment to research-informed teaching and learning where student engagement is actively fostered by KBS faculty through a student-centred approach. Reflecting international pedagogical developments, we will encourage and support greater use of student-centred learning methods such as active, research-informed, discovery, problem-based and co-operative learning. Underpinned by UL's new teaching, learning and assessment strategy, our approach will be reinforced by a deep commitment to the principle that students should be actively engaged in their own education.

### 1.2 Provide an engaged learning experience for students that leverages our distinctive cooperative education programme, industry partnerships and student attributes

The distinctive features of KBS business programmes will be leveraged in a way that promotes the student experience. Features such as our cooperative education programme our pioneering role in entrepreneurship education and close industry ties see students learning in hands-on real-world environments which results in graduates who are knowledgeable, proactive, creative, responsible, collaborative and articulate. Our commitment to regular programme reviews and accreditation will ensure that these qualities are secured and enhanced.

### 1.3 Increase and enhance international opportunities for students

KBS is committed to increasing and enhancing international opportunities for students. We will increase the numbers of outgoing students on Erasmus and dual degree programmes as well as continuing to welcome and value incoming students. We will actively encourage student exchange through promotion of and education in the international opportunities available.



### 1.4 Pursue prestigious international accreditations, partnerships and networks

International accreditation standards and benchmarking against international partners and networks along with an internal quality improvement ethos will drive the quality of KBS teaching and learning. Faculty exchange and sabbaticals will continue to be supported so that we are always developing and improving the student experience based on international best practice.

### 1.5 Embed and utilise technology enhanced learning across curricula to improve the student experience and promote excellence in teaching and learning

KBS will employ technology in a manner that promotes engaged learning. Furthermore, KBS acknowledges the needs of our students themselves to be technologically able and operationally agile. Therefore KBS students will have appropriate technologies built into their programmes that will not only improve the student experience but make our graduates more employable.

### 1.6 Increase taught postgraduate and doctoral enrolments in a sustainable manner consistent with our commitment to excellence in teaching and learning

Given our commitment to excellence in teaching and learning KBS will increase postgraduate and doctoral enrolments in a sustainable manner. In particular KBS will look at alternative modes of delivery to achieve this.

### 1.7 Broaden the diversity of the student population

Conscious of the value of a learning environment characterised by inclusiveness, access and diversity, KBS is committed to broadening the diversity of the student population on a wide range of criteria including culture, provenance, age, background and experience.



**GOAL 2**

## To cultivate excellence in research

Research activity is one of the defining characteristics of university life, and informs our teaching, internationalisation and stakeholder engagements. Consistent with this, and reflecting the university's ambition to become a research-led university, KBS will seek to capitalise on the opportunity to embed, develop and foster a research culture that values excellence, inter-disciplinarity, scholarship and impact.

Table 4.2 below outlines the actions which will be taken to cultivate excellence in research.

**Table 4.2:** Actions to cultivate excellence in research

**KEY ACTIONS:**

- 2.1 Champion excellence in research
- 2.2 Support faculty in their research engagement and activity
- 2.3 Develop and strengthen international research collaborations
- 2.4 Diversify and grow research funding
- 2.5 Foster a vibrant research culture across the School and develop our PhD programme
- 2.6 Develop the translational impact of KBS research

Valuing excellence,  
inter-disciplinarity,  
scholarship & impact



### 2.1 Champion excellence in research

We encourage ambition in both the quality of our research and the outlets in which it is published, at a level individualised to the context and position of the researcher. We monitor our improvement in quality through a variety of measures taking into account norms and citation practices within different disciplines and those which apply to inter-disciplinary work. Useful measures include indices such as the ABS Academic Journal Guide and ISI as well as Scopus and the University of Limerick list of prestigious book publishers.

### 2.2 Support faculty in their research engagement and activity

The School will provide support to faculty in pursuing excellence in their research through a variety of means. We will continue to promote sabbatical and special research leave programmes, and to support faculty in presenting their work at suitable conferences. Appropriate training will be provided regularly in areas such as research methods, time management, PhD supervision and bibliometric techniques.

### 2.3 Develop and strengthen international research collaborations

In order to extend the reach and impact of the School's international research collaborations and to encourage international co-authorship, we will audit our existing international networks and partnerships in 2016 and institute measures to build on this thereafter. We will support faculty in exploring appropriate funding channels to maintain and strengthen these links and to host international research conferences, and we will prioritise the hosting of visiting researchers who can make a contribution to research activity within the School.



### 2.4 Diversify and grow research funding

Recognising the growing importance of non-exchequer research revenue, we will identify suitable sources of research funding and grow and diversify our funding base. Faculty will be supported in tandem with the Research Office in pursuing funding from a range of sources including Horizon 2020, European Commission, Marie Curie and other private and public sources.

### 2.5 Foster a vibrant research culture across the school and develop our PhD programme.

We will support research activity at all levels to develop a vibrant research culture with a focus on departments, themes and clusters. Our PhD scholars are a significant driver of research activity, and we aim to develop and grow our PhD programme with a particular focus on mentoring new PhD supervisors, and to involve our PhD scholars in the full research life of the School. We will continue to host seminars featuring external and international speakers, and also prioritise the presentation of our own work within the School, and facilitate both formal and informal peer mentoring.

### 2.6 Develop the translational impact of KBS research

Recognising that our connections to external stakeholders form part of the distinctiveness of KBS, we will map and develop the translational impact of our research. In particular, we will champion its dissemination to industry and other organisations, to communities of practice and to wider society. We will recognise publication in practice-facing publications, commercialisation and contributions to public policy, and support the development of suitable impact cases. Training will be provided on the incorporation of impact measures at all stages in a research project.

## GOAL 3

### To further internationalise all relevant aspects of KBS

A more interdependent world, driven by ever improving technologies provides us with new and stimulating opportunities; it also elicits some varied and interesting challenges associated with international production and with working and competing in a global labour market. For example, interpersonal and inter-organisational relationships increasingly cut across multiple cultures and this requires employees to interact with individuals from other nationalities who possess different values and mores. Participating productively in this changed environment requires both a willingness to embrace new realities and also a readiness to actively engage with a multicultural world. It is incumbent on a modern business school to actively encourage and facilitate a global mindset and culture and to simultaneously harness the individual uniqueness associated with one's own culture and history.

We will seek to deepen and accelerate our internationalisation activities in a manner that will enhance our performance. Key areas of focus include the deepening of relationships with our current international partners in student and faculty exchange, an increase in international non-EEA students as a proportion of our student population and a step-wise shift in our research collaboration/publications and funding with international partners. Of central importance will be securing and maintaining prestigious international accreditations. Where new international collaborations are developed, the focus will be to expand the geographical reach outside of the EU in conformity with Government priorities in this area.

KBS commits to the following actions and metrics to promote and to measure our internationalisation efforts.



**Table 3.3:** Actions to further Internationalise all relevant aspects of KBS

#### KEY ACTIONS:

- 3.1 Appoint a faculty member to champion internationalisation
- 3.2 Undertake actions to further embed cultural diversity at KBS across our engagements with stakeholders
- 3.3 Build upon current international research networks and deepen relationships with new international partners, including the development of dual degrees
- 3.4 Enhance the international profile of KBS and increase the range and diversity of partners outside of the EU
- 3.5 Achieve and maintain prestigious international accreditations
- 3.6 Reflect the global environment into which students will emerge in all programmes and curricula
- 3.7 Leverage our network of KBS international alumni
- 3.8 Embed internationalisation and diversity as central features of all KBS activities



## engaging on an international stage

### 3.1 Appoint a faculty member to champion internationalisation

Recognising the central importance of this ambition the school will appoint an Assistant Dean with responsibility for internationalisation.

### 3.2 Undertake actions to further embed cultural diversity at KBS across our engagements with stakeholders

Fulfilling this ambition will involve a series of engagements with staff, faculty and students, highlighting the importance of diversity in both business and society. In particular, it will involve attracting international students and faculty. It will also be captured in both curricula and new programme development.

### 3.3 Build upon current international research networks and deepen relationships with new international partners, including the development of dual degrees

Involvement in international research networks will assist us in our ambition to produce high impact research output and in attracting non exchequer funding as well as raising our international profile. The development of dual degrees with first-tier Business Schools is an important component of building an international reputation. We will develop our existing strengths in the Erasmus programme and other similar schemes. We will encourage a greater uptake from faculty of UL's sabbatical programme.

### 3.4 Enhance the international profile of KBS and increase the range and diversity of partners outside of the EU

These goals can be achieved through a variety of mechanisms which would, inter-alia, include an increase in the number of international conferences, summer schools and meetings hosted by KBS faculty during the period of the plan. The challenge of improving our global reach should be addressed through focused engagements with particular regions/countries in line with UL and Government priorities.

### 3.5 Achieve and maintain prestigious international accreditations

In an environment in which issues of quality and reputation are increasingly important, we will actively pursue international accreditations that match our mission and vision. To this end we will seek accreditation from AACSB, EFMD and AMBA, as well as other programme-specific accreditations.

### 3.6 Reflect the global environment into which students will emerge in all programmes and curricula

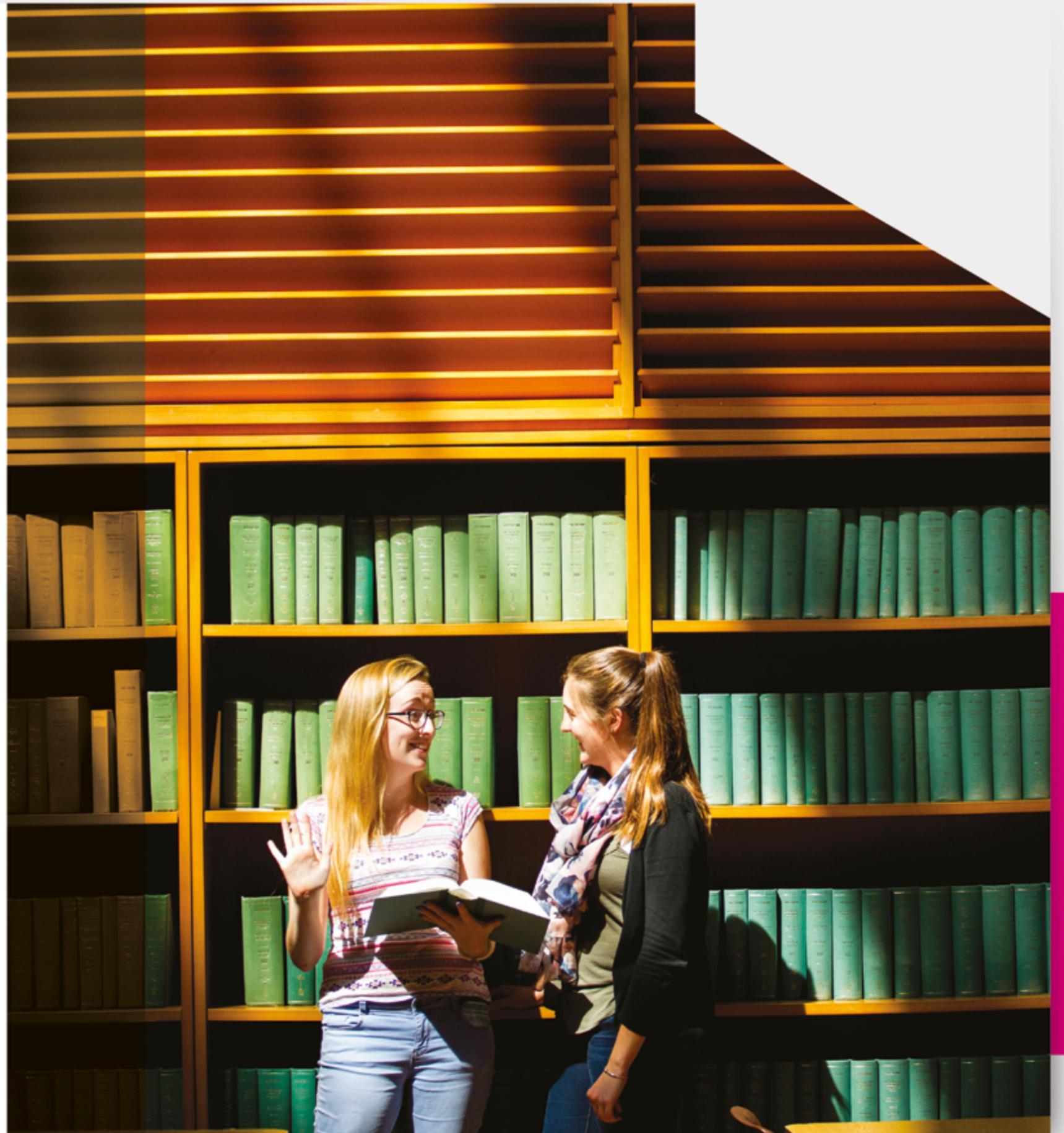
In order to prepare students for the contemporary global business environment it will be necessary to continually update curricula on all programmes and for faculty to actively engage with current and forthcoming challenges in market-relevant ways.

### 3.7 Leverage our network of KBS international alumni

Our alumni represent a valuable asset in the effort to bring the KBS to a global audience and during the life of the plan the networking with our national and international alumni will be accelerated. A faculty member will be appointed to take charge of this major initiative.

### 3.8 Embed internationalisation and diversity as central features of all KBS activities

The increased focus on Internationalisation in recent years at the KBS has already delivered some significant dividends. The successful development of partnerships with very prestigious institutions across Europe is particularly noteworthy and is an endorsement of the calibre of faculty and students at the KBS. The doubling of non EEA students at the school over the last four years and the outstanding performance in terms of the number of international students enrolled on postgraduate courses is significant. The focus on dual degrees as a mechanism to build relationships with leading business schools will be a vital component of the strategy and will require support from the University administration. Resource allocation will reflect the prioritisation of all internationalisation initiatives.





excellence,  
diversity & social  
responsibility

GOAL 4

**To contribute to our community of stakeholders in a responsible and sustainable manner**

KBS and the University of Limerick have a long and proud tradition of regional, national and international engagement. This is reflected not only in our role as champions of various outward-facing initiatives, but also in our connectedness and engagement, which frequently resonates with the legacy of Jim Kemmy, for whom the school is named, echoing his commitment to both social justice and scholarship. In a world facing global human and ecological crises, in which issues of belonging, transparency and identity are common themes, KBS will take the opportunity to further its mission with an emphasis on issues of responsibility, sustainability and ethical behaviour.

We will particularly focus on the impact of business practices, financial structures and fiscal policies in delivering on this goal in our teaching and research. We also recognise the need to prepare our students to participate in this society as active citizens. Because this carries with it both rights and responsibilities we will actively involve our students in targeted initiatives to promote their engagement and participation in the decision-making processes of society. We will also look to how our key resources, both tangible and intangible can best be deployed in the service of our wider group of stakeholders.

**Table 4.4:** Actions to contribute to our community of stakeholders in a responsible and sustainable manner

**KEY ACTIONS:**

- 4.1 Champion civic engagement and support the Limerick 2030 Vision
- 4.2 Increase collaboration with local schools and ensure greater access by students from a variety of social backgrounds
- 4.3 Contribute to global initiatives that promote responsible and sustainable education
- 4.4 Increase the number of KBS students participating in the President's Volunteer programme
- 4.5 Collaborate with local, national and international partners
- 4.6 Lead in establishing issues of responsibility and ethical behaviour as qualities that inform our activities



#### 4.1 Champion civic engagement and support the Limerick 2030 Vision

KBS recognises its role and responsibility as part of University of Limerick in contributing to the development of the local area. To this end, we will champion civic engagement and with a focus on the region, supporting both student and faculty involvement in relevant initiatives, coordinating these as appropriate to ensure maximum effectiveness. We will work with on-campus entities such as Nexus to develop entrepreneurial skills in a new generation of business leaders. We will also continue our policy of making the resources of KBS, including skills and physical facilities, available where appropriate to support the development of a vibrant city and region.

#### 4.2 Increase collaboration with local schools and ensure greater access by students from a variety of social backgrounds

The UL Strategic Plan commits to widening the diversity of the student population, underpinned by the central tenets of social justice, equality and inclusion. KBS will contribute to this goal by continuing to support access for students from different social backgrounds and by engaging in outreach programmes to local disadvantaged schools and other targeted groups of students.

#### 4.3 Contribute to global initiatives that promote responsible and sustainable education

KBS, through its active involvement in international networks related to the UN Global Compact and PRME, has been in a position to further a number of international initiatives contributing to responsibility and sustainability in business education. We will continue this involvement, taking a leadership role where appropriate. Conscious of UN SDG 4, "Ensure inclusive and equitable, quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all," we will engage with groups affiliated to UN PRME whose purpose is to build capacity in education in less developed countries. Where feasible, we will make our relevant teaching and research material available as widely as possible to support and promote this aim.



#### 4.4 Increase the number of KBS students participating in the President's Volunteer programme

The President's Volunteer Award has been established to harness, acknowledge and support the contribution that students at the University of Limerick make to their communities. As a School we recognise that we have a responsibility to promote the level of interaction between our students and community groups, both local and international. Increasing student participation in the President's Volunteer Award will also provide students with an opportunity to gain practical work experience in a supportive environment.

#### 4.5 Collaborate with local, national and international partners

Connection to our communities at all levels is vital in order to develop and support mutually beneficial and impactful activities. This connectivity informs our teaching and our research, provides opportunities for students to engage with practice and for researchers to deliver research which makes an impact for industry, society and the wider community. We will continue to support staff and students in impactful collaborations with appropriate partners which deliver value both within and beyond the University boundaries.

#### 4.6 Lead in establishing issues of responsibility and ethical behaviour as qualities that inform our activities

Through our active involvement in PRME we champion teaching and research initiatives which contribute to the goals of the UN Global Compact, seeking to ensure that KBS graduates will become responsible decision-makers with an awareness of long-term issues of sustainability. We will participate in initiatives which support this objective, and map the graduate attribute "Responsible" through all of our programmes. We will ensure that ethical behaviour and the values of the School characterise our engagement with our wider group of stakeholders.



# 5 IMPLEMENTATION

A detailed implementation plan will accompany this strategic plan, building on input from departments in response to the emphasis in Broadening Horizons on devolved planning. This will allow for a more flexible and responsive approach to planning as well as immediate and calibrated responses at school and departmental level.

As part of a focused approach to communication with staff and our various stakeholders, we will establish coordinated and embedded processes that allow for timely and substantive interaction.

Regular presentations at Faculty Board meetings will allow for both reporting and accountability, while simultaneously accommodating more immediate feedback from faculty.



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