

# 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. This considered extension until 2022 affords us the space to assimilate the impact of COVID and forge a path to develop and grow.

In common with many institutions in Ireland we have faced significant challenges in recent years. In successfully navigating these challenges, we had created a platform for future development and growth. This platform and the dedication and hard work of our KBS team gave us a significant advantage in meeting the challenges of the COVID pandemic.

While the pandemic continues, there are many reasons to be optimistic that we will return to a new normal. How that new normal manifests itself it not yet clear but I earnestly believe that we are ready to face new challenges with great optimism.

This extension to our existing strategic plan draws from the university's Broadening Horizons (2015-19) and UL@50 (2020-2025) strategic plans. Our plan 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.

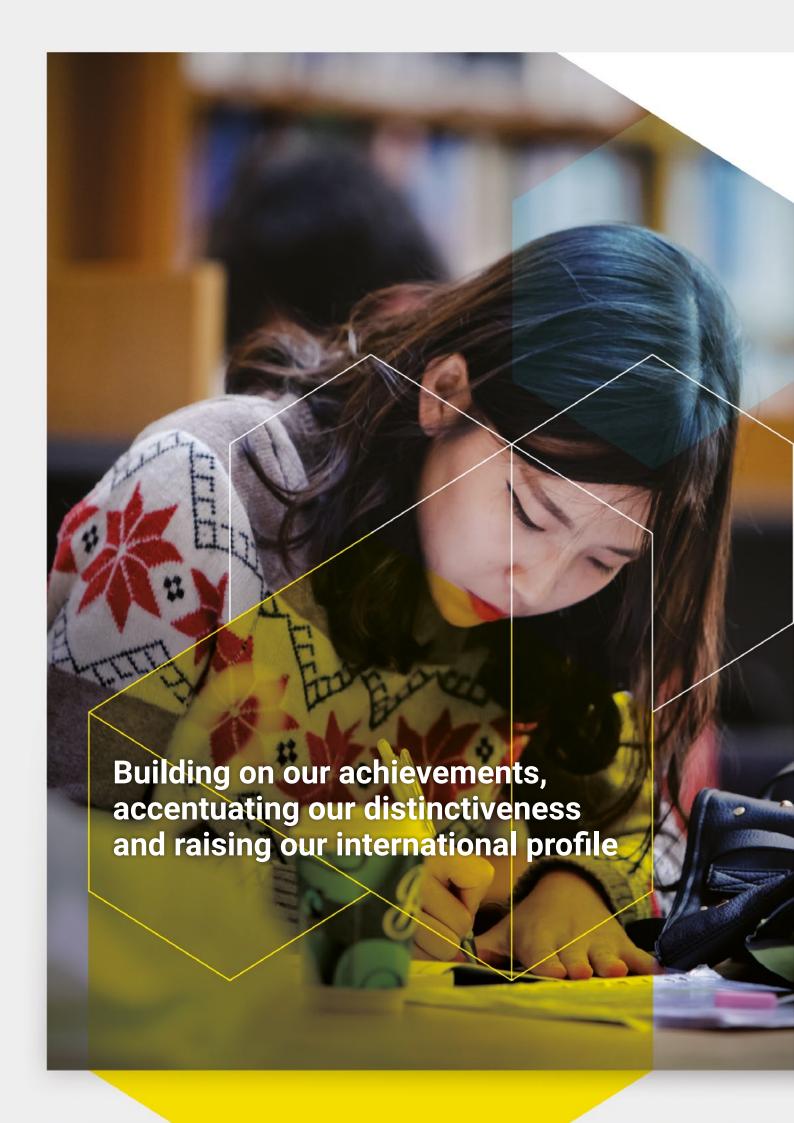
I would like to thank all who have contributed to the development of the plan and this extension in such a constructive and determined manner. It augurs well for our school that we now have a plan that is consistent with our values, focused in our mission and ambitious for our future.



Prof Finbarr Murphy Executive Dean

Kemmy Business School University of Limerick





# 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. 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 2016-2022 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 2016-2022 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.





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 going forward. 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.









# GOAL 1

TO FACILITATE AN ENGAGED AND DISTINCTIVE STUDENT-CENTRED EDUCATION

GOAL 2

TO CULTIVATE EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

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 leverage our skills in technology enabled learning (TEL) pedagogies, platforms and technological innovations to enhance our teaching and provide a unique learning experience.

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 pedagogically-informed industry-relevant, 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 build on our funding successes both internationally (e.g. Horizon 2020 and ESRC) and nationally (e.g. SFI and EPA) and invigorate our commitment to Horizon Europe and other funding opportunities both nationally and internationally.

## GOAL 3

TO FURTHER
INTERNATIONALISE ALL
RELEVANT ASPECTS OF KBS

# GOAL 4

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

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. We will draw on our global KBS alumni to join in our activities. This engagement will embrace research activity, student and faculty exchange, dual degrees, transnational 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.

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. We will continue to work to ensure that the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are incorporated into our teaching, research and physical environs.





# 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 Continue to strengthen 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 Continue to broaden the diversity of our student population, including students through our *University of Sanctuary* status





### 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 Continue to strengthen technology enhanced learning across curricula to further improve the student experience and promote excellence in teaching and learning

KBS utilises technology in a manner that promotes engaged learning in order to develop and upgrade our capabilities. Furthermore, KBS acknowledges the need for our students to be technologically able and operationally agile. Therefore, KBS students will have appropriate technologies built into their programmes that will improve the student experience and learning.

# 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 Continue to broaden the diversity of the student population, including students through our University of Sanctuary status

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.





### 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, interdisciplinarity, 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 and scholarship in research
- 2.2 Support faculty in their research engagement and activity
- 2.3 Continue to focus and develop our key research priorities including interdisciplinary research
- **2.4** Further expand and strengthen international research collaborations
- **2.5** Continue to diversify and grow research funding with a particular focus on EU funding
- **2.6** Foster a vibrant research culture across the School and develop our PhD programme
- **2.7** Disseminate the impact of our research among our key external stakeholders





### 2.1 Champion excellence in scholarship and research

In pursuing research excellence and scholarship, 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 interdisciplinary 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

To further increase research quality and output, 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 Continue to focus and develop our key research priorities including interdisciplinary research

Building on our research engagement and activities across departments, clusters and themes, we will further focus and develop our research priorities to reflect key areas of strength, excellence and growth. Recognising the increasing importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and funding, we will actively pursue interdisciplinary research opportunities to further build research capacity and impact.

### 2.4 Further expand and strengthen international research collaborations

We will further extend the reach and impact of the School's international research collaborations and encourage international co-authorship. 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.



### 2.5 Continue to diversify and grow research funding with a particular focus on EU funding

Recognising the continuing importance of non-exchequer research revenue, and building on our funding track record, we will identify suitable sources and grow and diversify our funding base with a particular focus on EU funding opportunities. Faculty will be supported in tandem with the Research Office in pursuing funding from a range of sources including Horizon Europe, European Commission, Marie Curie, Science Foundation Ireland and other private and public sources.

### 2.6 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 within the School with a focus on departments, themes and clusters. 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. As a significant driver of research activity, and we will continue to enhance our PhD programme with a particular focus on mentoring new PhD supervisors, as well as supporting and developing our PhD scholars and involving them in the full research life of the School.

### 2.7 Disseminate the impact of our research among our key external stakeholders

Recognising that our connections to external stakeholders form part of the distinctiveness of KBS, we will champion the impact of our research to industry and other organisations, society and the wider community. We will recognise publication in practice-facing publications, commercialisation and contributions to public policy, and support the development of suitable high impact cases. Guided by UL's Research Impact programme, our focus will be on excellent research that has a measurable impact beyond academia.





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 furthUndertake 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 Continue to 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 as a central feature of all KBS activities

- 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, as well as engaging with the University of Sanctuary programme in UL.

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 and other short-term faculty mobility schemes.

3.4 Continue to 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 EFMD, AACSB, AMBA and Athena SWAN, as well as other programme-specific accreditations.

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

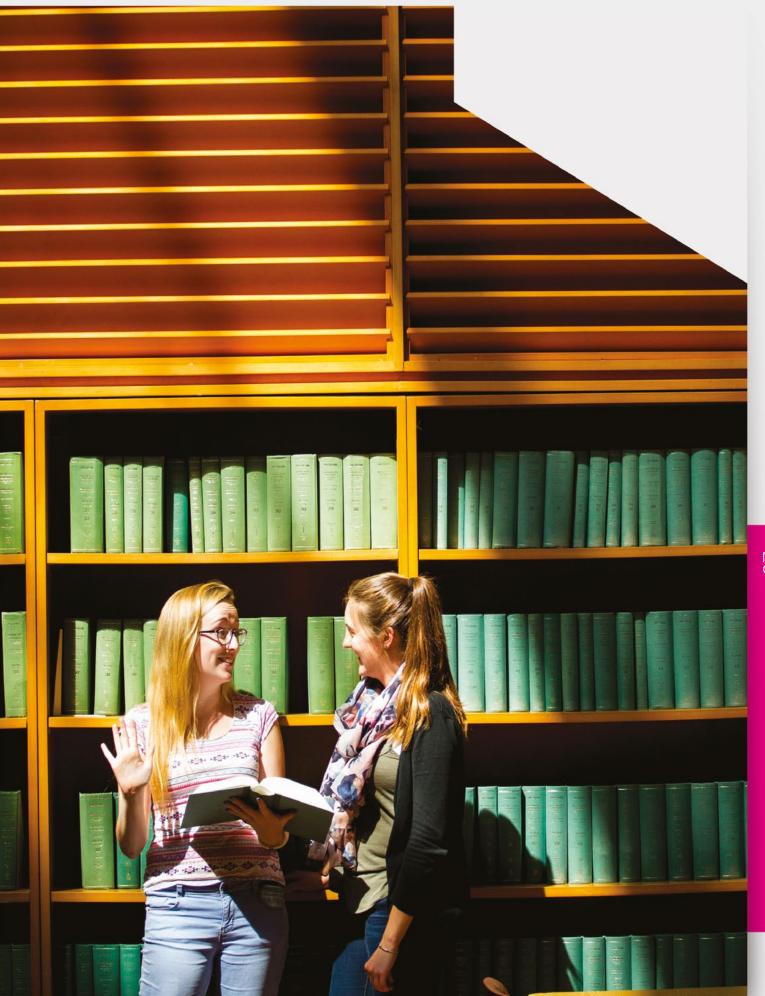
In order to prepare students for the contemporary global business environment, it will be necessary to continually update curricula on all programmes and for faculty to actively engage with current and forthcoming challenges in market-relevant ways.

### 3.7 Leverage our network of KBS international alumni

Our alumni represent a valuable asset in the effort to bring KBS to a global audience and during the life of the plan the networking with our national and international alumni will be accelerated.

# 3.8 Embed internationalisation as a central feature of all KBS activities

The increased focus on internationalisation in recent years at KBS has already delivered some significant dividends, particularly in terms of the considerable increase in the number of international students enrolled at KBS. The successful development of partnerships with prestigious institutions across Europe is particularly noteworthy and is an endorsement of the calibre of faculty and students at the KBS. Going forward, we will focus on dual degrees as a mechanism to build more strategic partnerships with leading business schools.







# 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 and to align our strategic initiatives with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We are conscious that our community of stakeholders includes internal as well as external groupings, and this entails a commitment to engage our staff, students and networks as far as our influence extends, in areas of sustainability, diversity and responsibility. With this in mind, we recognise the need to prepare our students to participate in society as active citizens, both during their time as students and beyond. We will support the work of our staff, recognising the contributions they make in civic engagement, and the societal and policy impact of their research and teaching. Partnering with external stakeholders in the community and in business is a key way of extending our impact in this area. 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 to enable them to pursue their own goals of sustainability and innovation.

**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 Foster student diversity through access initiatives
- 4.3 Contribute to global initiatives that promote responsible and sustainable education
- 4.4 Increase KBS students' civic engagement and outreach
- 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 Foster student diversity through access initiatives

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 in two main ways: (a) by directly engaging in outreach programmes to local disadvantaged schools and other targeted groups of students, to raise access ambition; and (b) by supporting the UL Sanctuary programme to facilitate access to KBS programmes by refugees and international protection applicants.

### 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 also continue to engage with groups such as the Global Business School Network (GBSN) 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 KBS students' civic engagement and outreach

KBS will work to increase the number of our students participating in the President's Volunteer Award, which has been established to harness, acknowledge and support the contribution that students at the University of Limerick make to their communities. We will also actively foster and support student engagement nationally and internationally through student organisations such as Enactus, and through participation in international student engagement opportunities.

### 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.

# 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.



# 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.



