

# **PRME SIP Report**

**Peter Faber Business School**

**Australian Catholic University 2019**

## Contents

Overview .....	3
Principle 1  Purpose .....	4
Principle 2   Values.....	5
Table 1: Institutional Values .....	5
Figure 1: Strategic Focus Points .....	6
Table 2: Staff Commitment to Values and Mission .....	6
Principle 3   Method.....	7
Table 3 Principles of Catholic Social Thought .....	7
Principle 4   Research.....	9
Table 4: ACU Research ratings.....	9
Principle 5   Partnership.....	10
Principle 6   Dialogue.....	11
Principle 7   Organisational Practices .....	12
Table 4: Institutional Commitment to Sustainability .....	13
Future Directions .....	14

## Overview

This report is submitted by the Peter Faber Business School within the Faculty of Law and Business at the Australian Catholic University (ACU).

ACU is a publicly funded university which draws on the traditions of the various entities which have amalgamated over the past 30 years to create this national educational institution. ACU is also a member of the International Federation of Catholic Universities.

ACU is a relatively young university and officially commenced operations on 1 January 1991. The establishment of the University was the result of the amalgamation of four existing Catholic higher education institutions:

- Catholic College of Education Sydney
- Institute of Catholic Education in Victoria
- McAuley College in Queensland and
- Signadou College of Education in the Australian Capital Territory.

Since this time the university has expanded through a series of amalgamations to incorporate more than 20 historical Catholic entities.

Currently the University has over 35,000 students and more than 100,000 alumni. Despite being relatively young, ACU has forged a distinctive identity and has a strengthening reputation in the university sector.

Specifically ACU is ranked in the top

- 2% of universities worldwide (*Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2020*. Percentage calculated as ACU's world rank as a proportion of the total number of universities in the world)
- 80 universities in the Asia-Pacific region
- 351-400 in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings
- 100 young universities in the world
- 40 Generation Y universities and
- 10 Catholic Universities globally.

As a University based on the Catholic tradition ACU has a strong commitment to sustainability. This commitment has been strengthened in recent years with the publication of *Laudato Si*, the Papal encyclical on “care for our common home”.

Within the framework of Catholic Social Thought, the concept of “stewardship” and in particular stewardship of creation is a strong driving force to ensure that the University is committed to a sustainable approach not only to education but also to the management and support of educational systems including buildings, energy usage and waste management.

ACU's commitment to making a difference to society is recognised internationally in the *Times Higher Education Impact Ratings* as follows:

- 101–200 in the world for our positive impact on society.
- 25 globally for good health and wellbeing (SDG 3).
- 40 globally for quality education (SDG 4)
- equal 55 globally for gender equality (SDG 5).
- equal 58 globally for decent work and economic growth (SDG 8).

ACU's commitment to sustainability is demonstrable throughout the management, teaching and research of the University. This report updates prior reports on progress made towards the implementation of PRME principles at ACU.

## Principle 1| Purpose

We will develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large and to work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy.

As outlined in the ACU University wide sustainability policy the focus on, and pursuit of, sustainability is directly related to the mission of ACU as a Catholic University. More details of the policy in practice will be given under Principle 7 however at the outset it is important to note that the Catholic Church, through its social teachings, has a strong emphasis on sustainability and environmental impact including the writings of the last three Popes ie

- Sollicitudo Rei Socialis – St Pope John Paul II
- The Environment and Ten Commandments for the Environment – Pope Benedict XVI
- Laudato Si (Our Common Home) – Pope Francis.

Sustainability in the context of Catholic Social Thought (CST) explicitly addresses environment concerns via the concept of “stewardship” however there is a broader context of sustainability with respect to human dignity and flourishing which underpins all element of CST. In the Peter Faber Business School these notions are captured in the extended mission statement:

“The Peter Faber Business School seeks to develop reflective business leaders and independent learners who are global in their outlook, ethical in their actions and practical in the application of their professional skills. [short form mission statement]. It does this by engaging in business practices which strive to

- contribute to the common good, uphold the dignity of work and create goods and services which meet authentic needs;
- foster an appreciation of the dignity of all people and the interconnectedness of nations as a global community;
- develop the skills to connect diverse experiences and knowledge into new insights; and
- ensure an appropriate balance of theoretical, practical and research engaged learning experiences.”

The School mission derives from the broader university mission and drives all aspects of the school’s activities including teaching, research, service and interaction with stakeholders including students. The focus on the common good refers to the concept that a key role of business is to help create the conditions for people to flourish, assuring fulfilment as human beings.

The School mission explicitly addresses the issue of sustainable value for business and society, especially in dot point 1 and the focus on ethics, as well as the global economy through “global outlook” and dot point 2.

Within the University responsibility for driving the sustainability agenda, and implementing the University’s sustainability policy, rests with the Director of Properties and the Manager, Sustainability. Within the School, the responsibility for ensure that all students are exposed to the sustainability agenda rests with the Discipline Leaders who develop and maintain the curriculum. There are four disciplinary clusters within the School. These are Managing Money, Managing People and Organisations, Managing Markets and Working with Technology. Further information of the curriculum and curriculum management is given in Principle 3.

## Principle 2 | Values

We will incorporate into our academic activities, curricula, and organisational practices the values of global social responsibilities as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact

The mission of the School was outlined in Principle 1 as the guiding framework for learning, teaching and research regarding sustainability and business practice in the Peter Faber Business School. In the wider context of the University articulates three core and five focus values which guide all faculties. These are summarised in Table 1.

**TABLE 1: INSTITUTIONAL VALUES**

CORE VALUES	FOCUS VALUES
Truth	Equity
Academic Excellence	Diversity
Service	Accessibility
	Well being
	Sustainability

These values are closely aligned with the values of PRME and global sustainable development goals. As values which guide all four faculties in their programs. These values underpin the strategic plan of the University. The strategic plan for 2020-2023, *Impact through Empathy*, has six strategic focus points or pillar. These are summarised in Figure 1.

Key relevant goals contained within *Service, Stewardship and Sustainability* for the next three years include:

6.3 Ensure long-term fiscal sustainability and ethical stewardship of financial and non-financial resources; and

6.8 Take bold and decisive action on environmental, social and economic sustainability, and the eradication of modern slavery

Further discussion of institutional approaches is provided under Principle 7.

ACU's commitment to making a difference to society is recognised internationally in the *Times Higher Education Impact Ratings* as follows:

- 101–200 in the world for our positive impact on society.
- 25 globally for good health and wellbeing (SDG 3).
- 40 globally for quality education (SDG 4)
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**FIGURE 1: STRATEGIC FOCUS POINTS**



Awareness of the values and the importance of the values is embedded across the University. In a regular biannual staff satisfaction survey, *MyVoice*, staff reported strong knowledge of and support for the mission and values (Table 2)

**TABLE 2: STAFF COMMITMENT TO VALUES AND MISSION**

STATEMENT	ACU	SECTOR BENCHMARK
I am aware of the values of the University	94%	76%
I believe in the University's values	90%	75%
I understand ACU's mission	95%	n/a

At the Faculty and School level this commitment to values infused business education is enacted in the following ways.

- All units include the application of at least one principle of Catholic Social Thought (CST) – see also Principle 3 and Table 3;
- All students undertake a community engagement project as part of their studies; and
- Students have further opportunities to undertake extra curricular values based activities.

## Principle 3 | Method

We will create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.

All units within the Peter Faber Business School, regardless of discipline, integrate at least one of the principles of Catholic Social Thought. This ensures that students completing a degree in business at ACU explicitly address the issues of stewardship, global community and responsibility.

Integration is achieved by ensuring that one assessed learning outcome includes CST. For example students will be assessed on how the principle of stewardship might relate to the implementation of IT solutions or how the option for the poor can be used as a principle to minimise exploitation in supply chains.

**TABLE 3 PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT**

PRINCIPLE	DEFINITION
Common good	The purpose of organisations, the people working within them, is to strive to create the social and economic conditions within which people are able to flourish
Human dignity	All persons have an inherent worth regardless of race, colour or creed – to be treated with dignity is a right not a privilege to be earned
Option for the poor	The purpose of economic activity is to advance all members of society including the most poor and vulnerable
Solidarity	People are dependent on one another and have a responsibility to ensure that all persons have the opportunity to better their lives
Stewardship	People and organisations have a responsibility to ensure the proper use of resources, whether these are natural, financial or human resources
Subsidiarity	Decision making should occur at the lowest relevant level in an organisation – those who are closest to a situation should have input into the decision making process
Workers' rights	All people have a right to decent and productive work and just wages – all workers have an obligation to work conscientiously thereby contributing their talents to the common good

Business units which explicitly address social and environmental issues include *Social Entrepreneurship* and *Social Impacts of Marketing*. In these units students have the opportunity to study PRME principles in more depth. Those students who undertake social entrepreneurship also have the option to participate in the University of San Diego Social Enterprise Challenge which provides them with the opportunity to create and extend global networks of like minded students and staff.

In addition to the business units, all students must undertake the “core curriculum”. The core curriculum consists of three key units. These are

***Self and Community: Exploring the Anatomy of Modern Society*** which provides students with frameworks and principles to assist in understanding of how issues relating to the dignity of the human person and the realization of the common good may be addressed in their personal and professional lives now and in the future.

***Justice and Change in a Global World*** which develops student your understanding of the dignity of the human person within the context of a global community and develop the skills and knowledge to become an active agent for change in an interconnected and interdependent world.

**Community Engagement: Building Strengths and Capacity** in which students undertake a practical 1-2 week (35-70 hours) placement with a community organisation working directly with the less fortunate and contributing their skills and time to the organisation.

These units are mandatory for all students regardless of program and reflect the commitment at a whole of institution level to the SDGs.

Additional ways in which the Peter Faber Business School has provided a focus on principles of responsible management in practice is through process reform. Specifically the School has

- moved to a blended learning approach in which extensive resources are provided electronically in preference to hard copy.
- where practical, textbooks are not used and when they are used staff must make a case for the use of a textbook which is not available as an e-book. E-books are the preferred text format.
- unit outlines are no longer provided in hard copy
- staff are monitored for excessive use of printing/photocopying
- assessment is all submitted and graded online thus eliminating the need for printed copies of assessment.

With respect to internationalisation and global leadership, the School has also introduced the concept of the Virtual Global Classroom. The Virtual Global Classroom enables students to engage in an international experience without the need for international travel.

Specifically the VGC works with partner universities across the world to engage students studying similar subjects. A group assessment is created where groups consist of students in Australia and students in a partner university working on the same topic. This allows students to gain a deeper understanding of the differences in culture, expectations and society while applying this understanding to a specific business problem such as a business plan or market analysis.

By allowing students to undertake an international experience without leaving home there are no costs to the environment in terms of travel yet students still benefit from directly engaging with peers internationally.

Where students do choose to travel, there are multiple opportunities available. These include study during non traditional teaching periods at the university's Rome campus as well as accompanied study tours and opportunities through the flexible course architecture to undertake a semester study in a partner institution.

At a postgraduate and executive level the Peter Faber Business School addresses the needs of the not for profit sector with a dedicated Graduate Certificate in the Management of Not for Profit Organisations. This program is available both for individual study and via organisation based cohorts.



## Principle 4 | Research

We will engage in conceptual and empirical research that advances our understanding about the role, dynamics, and impact of corporations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value.

Quality research is a key policy driver at Australian Catholic University. The research intensification agenda has changed the focus of research outputs from quantity to quality. This move has been supported by the academic workload model which no longer rewards staff on a simple formula based on number of outputs but rather on a more complex process of considering both quantity and quality.

Research quality in Australia is measured on a three year cycle by the government through the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) process which rates research outputs on a scale of 1 through to 5. ACUs 2019 results are as follows:

**TABLE 4: ACU RESEARCH RATINGS**

RATING	DESCRIPTION	DISCIPLINES
5	Well above world standard	Medical and health science, Psychology and Cognitive Science, Cardiorespiratory Medicine and Haematology, Clinical Sciences, Cognitive Sciences, Nutrition and Dietetics, Human Movement and Sports Science, Nursing, Public Health and Health Services
4	Above world standard	Education, Philosophy and Religious Studies, Curriculum and Pedagogy
3	At world standard	Studies in Human Society, Law and Legal Studies, History and Archaeology, Education Systems, Business and Management, Political Science, Sociology, Historical Studies
2	Below world standard	Creative writing, Language Communication and Culture,
1	Well below world standard	n/a

It is particularly noteworthy that at the time of signing up to PRME, the then Business Faculty research in business and management was rated at 1 – well below world standard. In 10 years and over three assessment cycles the rating has moved consistently upwards and this trajectory is expected to continue.

Within the School the prime research focus has been on meaningful work, wellbeing and sustainable HRM. With the appointment of research active staff across the range of disciplines this work is expanding to include entrepreneurship, gratitude and person-centred IT solutions.

In the context of the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 two sub goals are of specific relevance to PRME. These are

3.3 Translate research into economic, social, environmental and cultural impacts to advance social progress and effect positive change in our communities.

3.4 Enable research-informed learning and teaching that is innovative, engaging and responsive to the changing demands of society.

To better enable the embedding of research with impact across the University a review of research structures is being undertaken. Currently the School has a proposal under review for the creation of a research centre focussed on wellness and sustainable HRM practices.

## Principle 5 | Partnership

We will interact with managers of business corporations to extend our knowledge of their challenges in meeting social and environmental responsibilities and to explore jointly effective approaches to meeting these challenges.

ACU has a clear commitment to engaging with business corporations, not for profit partners and other key stakeholders. To this end it has two core structures to enable cross institutional consistency and support the engagement process. These are

**Office of Strategic Partnerships:** which provides a central point of contact and coordination for partners. ACU partnerships are multi-faceted relationships based on shared values and strategic interests. The Office supports excellence and innovation in teaching and learning, the pursuit of knowledge and critical enquiry through research, and service to the community.

**Stakeholder Engaged Scholarship Unit (SESU):** this is a new unit which has been created in line with the new strategic plan. The SESU allows for collaboration with partners without potentially compromising the research quality and research intensification agenda. The outputs of the Unit will be in the form of reports and position papers rather than journal articles and will not be reportable in the context of ERA.

The commitment to expanding partnerships with organisations with aligned values is clarified in the new strategic plan as follows:

5.3 Strengthen industry and community engagement to create tangible results toward significant issues facing society now and into the future, through Catholic partnerships, mission-focused research and executive education.

Within the context of the Peter Faber Business partnership activities take multiple forms. Some examples include:

- Developing partnerships with like minded organisations such as Bank Australia which positions itself relative to other banks as providing an ethical alternative
- Providing student placements and community engagement opportunities only with those organisations which reflect the values of ACU and PRME
- Annual industry and research symposium engaging partners as speakers and attendees
- Undertaking commercial research as consultants on topics of relevance such as the impact of the concept of licence to operate as opposed to purely legal approaches.

The national Head of School is a member of the Board of the International Association of Jesuit Business Schools. In 2019 she participated in the 25<sup>th</sup> annual conference on a panel discussing what constitutes a flourishing business school with a specific focus on the sustainability agenda. Sustainability is the over arching theme of the Jesuit business schools conference series and this commitment was renewed in 2019 for another five years.

As an active member of IAIBS this provides the Peter Faber Business School with the opportunity to develop links with sustainable business schools and programs world wide.

## Principle 6 | Dialogue

We will facilitate and support dialogue and debate among educators, students, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organisations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability.

ACU's commitment to dialogue is summarised in the Strategic Plan as follows:

5.5 Strengthen our position as a vital feature of the Australian university landscape, and major player to drive ethical and informed public policy.

The university has a strong media presence commenting on issues of social importance and the Vice Chancellor and President regularly writes columns for the key national press (*The Australian*). The Marketing and External Relations Directorate is responsible for the coordinated presence of ACU and ACU research and commentary and provides university wide support for staff who wish to engage in media activities.

Staff within the School regularly comment on their areas of expertise in the media with the most common outlets being radio and newspaper interviews. A major point of discussion in the media in 2019 was well being at work with staff research being widely reported via multiple channels. In addition this work was used as the basis of professional development workshops run by School staff for the national professional body, the Australian Human Resources Institute.

In addition both the School and university run multiple external events with stakeholders to boost dialogue in the community about issues of social importance. At the School level these include:

- Annual business symposium – a one day event aimed at engaging start-ups, small businesses and family owned businesses in the Sydney region;
- Research symposia focused on the Schools academic research; and
- Contributions to the annual Catholic Stakeholder Events – this annual dinner is a dialogue on issues of social importance and is lead by the Vice Chancellor and the Archbishop of Brisbane. Topics discussed recently include Indigenous education (2019), social cohesion (2018), environmental sustainability (2017).

Further opportunities for dialogue occur through both the community engagement program and a variety of co curricular activities which are available to staff and students.

The Office of Engagement at the University provides multiple opportunities for engagement on key social and environmental topics as well the opportunity for staff to receive up to one week of time release from their employment to engage in approved topics.

An example of a business staff member who has been granted time release is a member of staff who was granted two weeks time release to work directly with refugee support organisations to deliver a series of workshops on hope and gratitude and increased understanding of Australian cultural norms.

## Principle 7 | Organisational Practices

We understand that our organisational practices should serve as example of the values and attitudes we convey to our students

Sustainability is a core strategic principle of ACU's future planning and there are multiple proof points of this principle in action. The principle states

We acknowledge the importance of responsible and ethical management for the long-term success of the university and the protection of the environment. It is the behaviour and actions of our staff and affiliates that make ACU an outstanding organisation

Environmental sustainability is a key part of the ACU mission to promote the common good and social justice. The University recognises its responsibility to cut its environmental impact and place sustainability into its decision making, teaching and research.

The University has set up a position National Sustainability Manager to support sustainable practices as well as an overarching Sustainability Policy. The policy sets out the sustainability principles which guide ACU practice.

The University's sustainability principles are:

1. "The University establishes objectives and targets to strategically reduce the University's environmental impacts, promote the wellbeing of its students, staff and the communities that it engages, and enhance its financial sustainability;
2. The University publishes sustainability objectives, targets and performance data in online channels accessible to students, staff and to the community, to enable open discussion and understanding of ACU's commitment to sustainability;
3. The University provides information and infrastructure to students and staff so that they can adopt sustainable practices at the University;
4. All ACU graduates understand how sustainability contributes to a world that protects the natural systems that support life and promote the dignity of all people;
5. The development of ACU's campuses promotes the well-being of all staff, students and visitors to the University, and incorporates principles of sustainable design."

Also contained in the policy are ACU's sustainability objectives which are:

1. "To become and exemplar of the application of Laudato Si' within ACU and the Australian and global Catholic communities;
2. To apply resource efficiency, behaviour-change, building design and the application of new technologies to reduce environmental impacts;
3. To design, construct and refurbish buildings and grounds to minimise the lifecycle environmental impacts of their operation while improving the wellbeing and productivity of staff and students;
4. To integrate the theory and practice of sustainability into students' learning;
5. To enable research that helps to solve problems of social inequity and environmental degradation;
6. To provide opportunities for students and staff to take action on campus to support ACU's sustainability goals."

With respect to implementation, the university has identified six key areas of action. These areas, actions and outcomes are outlined below. These are taken directly from the University's reporting of sustainability and sustainability actions.

**TABLE 4: INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY**

	COMMITMENT	SAMPLE ACTIONS
<b>Energy</b>	ACU is one of Australia's most energy-efficient Universities and is committed to a further 7% increase in its energy efficiency by 2020 (compared to 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retro-fitted LED lighting</li> <li>• Adjusted temperature settings</li> <li>• Installed real time monitoring of energy performance</li> <li>• Procurement of energy efficient devices</li> </ul>
<b>Water</b>	ACU is one of one of Australia's most water-efficient universities and it remains committed to twice the level of water-efficiency of the Australian University sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACU has over 550,000 litres of water-tank capacity in use at our campuses, and another 140,000 litres of storage capacity under construction or planned</li> <li>• installed a range of water efficient appliances, such as low-flow shower-heads, waterless or low-flow urinals, dual flush toilets and drip irrigation</li> <li>• planting drought tolerant plants</li> </ul>
<b>Waste</b>	Reduce waste and increase recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACU produces around 750 tonnes of waste per year and diverts around 55% of that total away from landfill</li> <li>• waste diverted from landfill is sent either to a recycling facility (95%) or to a specialised facility to generate energy (5%)</li> </ul>
<b>Transport</b>	Green transport policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide end of trip facilities such as bike lock up points, lockers and showers</li> <li>• Commuter surveys to better understand staff and student transport needs</li> <li>• Provision of video and teleconferencing facilities to reduce inter-campus travel</li> </ul>
<b>Buildings</b>	ACU is committed to the construction and renovation of its buildings to high levels of sustainability	Sustainable design features as standard for new and renovated buildings including high efficiency lighting, water conserving taps, toilets and showers, light sensors, wood sources from sustainably managed plantations etc
<b>Carbon</b>	ACU monitors its annual greenhouse gas emissions as part of its standard measurement and reporting of its environmental impacts	ACU has one of the lowest levels of greenhouse gas emissions among Australian Universities, with the latest data indicating that it has the second lowest level of emissions after the University of Tasmania, which benefits from sourcing the majority of its electricity from Tasmania's low-emissions hydropower turbines

## Future Directions

The Peter Faber Business School plans to continue its commitment to PRME and the SDGs in an increasingly structured and embedded way. In addition to the achievements made to date specific plans for 2020-2021 include:

1. The appointment of a PRME Coordinator in the School to oversee the process of implementation, data collection and reporting.
2. The development of an interdisciplinary undergraduate major (1 year FTE study) in sustainability which will be available to students studying the Bachelor of Commerce.
3. Implementation of incentives to conduct research projects in areas of specific relevance to PRME and the SDGs.
4. Development of PRME and SDG focussed assessments.
5. Investigation of partnerships with like minded organisations.